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# THE Nigeria Standard



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## NLC seeks new wage reflecting cost of living

**The Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) has said the commencement of negotiation of the new National Minimum Wage in 2024 would be based on the prevailing cost of living in the**

**country.** Mr Joe Ajaero, NLC President, said this at the ongoing 19th edition of the NLC 2023 Harmattan School, organised by the Congress on Tuesday in Abuja. The theme of the event is

Building Workers Skills for Policy Engagement. The Harmattan School is part of the NLC National Schools where it trains and empowers members of its affiliated unions through skills development. Ajaero, represented by

Mr. Benjamin Anthony, Vice-President of NLC, said it was necessary for government at all levels to recognise that life and living conditions are exceedingly difficult. "The removal of subsidies on petroleum

products has further worsened the challenges faced by working people. "That is unleashing severe pain and contributing to galloping inflation and increasing inequality and poverty. "We must reckon that a

well-motivated and well-remunerated workforce has a positive impact on productivity and national development. "As we anticipate the commencement of negotiations for the

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**The Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) on a peaceful demonstration demanding implementation of new National Minimum Wage**

### Senators put under pressure to pass 2024 budget

Despite reports indicating that the National Assembly would pass the 2024 Appropriation Bill of N27.5tn on Tuesday, December 19, 2023, senators are yet to get a copy of the budget for scrutiny, the source has reliably gathered. However, last Friday both the Senate and the House of Representatives passed the budget for a second reading.

Speaking during the plenary session, the Deputy Senate President, Jibrin Barau, hinted that the budget might be passed by

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## PLSG, ready to pay gratuities, other benefits

By PETER TITLE

The Executive Governor of Plateau State, Governor Barr. Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang, has said his administration was poised towards the disbursement of gratuities, death benefits, and pension arrears amounting to approximately N20 billion, covering the period from 1985.

Stressing his administration's dedication to the welfare of workers, the governor insists that every worker deserves his/her rightful wages. He emphasized that it was on this account, certain amount of money was set aside monthly for the payment of gratuities, death benefits and pension arrears. Governor Mutfwang made these remarks on

Monday during the opening of the Plateau State Government/Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) and Trade Union Congress (TUC) retreat on effective social dialogue for industrial relations. The event, held at Jonggrand Hotel, Bukuru, Plateau State, focused on the "Time is Now" mantra. "The welfare of civil servants is of utmost

importance; thus, we have cleared the backlog of inherited salaries spanning over four months. We are up to date with salary payments and have approved the disbursement of the 90% Consolidated Medical Salary Structure (CONMESS) and a 75% hazard allowance. "Likewise, we have

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Mutfwang

## News

### NLC seeks new wage reflecting cost of living

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National Minimum Wage in 2024.

"We seek the understanding of all stakeholders to ensure that we use this opportunity to arrive at a minimum wage commensurate with the prevailing cost of living," he said.

He said that the ultimate goal, though, is to establish a living wage that covers the cost of living and make allowance for some savings by the workers.

Ajaero said that the recent assault on workers and their leaders in Imo poses a grave threat to freedom of association and collective bargaining.

"This is as enshrined in Section 40 of the 1999 of

the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as amended and the ILO Conventions 87 and 98 on Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining.

"This should unequivocally be condemned by all people of goodwill. The only thing that can assuage our pains is for the Imo Government to address all labour issues.

"They are also to return the so-called 'ghost workers' to their jobs, pay all outstanding salaries and pensions and call back all victimised workers to their jobs," he said.

On the theme of the event, he said it was apt given the importance of skill and knowledge in policy processes and engagements.

"In the ever changing

world of work, as trade unions, we should prepare ourselves to engage with the employers in the workplace and government in the interest of the workers and the masses.

"In order to efficiently engage in any policy, the trade unions must equip their members to understand policy making processes, its implementation, monitoring and evaluation," he said.

Speaking, Dr Vanessa Phala, ILO Country Director to Nigeria, said the world of work was undergoing rapid changes, driven by technological advances, climate change, among others.

She said that these changes were affecting workers and trade unions, thereby posing new challenges and opportunities for collective action and advocacy.

### Gov. Mutfwang harps on peaceful coexistence

**By PETER TITLE**

Plateau State Governor, Barr. Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang, has reaffirmed his administration's dedication to fostering a united and prosperous Plateau, despite the challenges confronting the state.

He emphasized the collective responsibility of all citizens in building a peaceful and unified Plateau where people of diverse tribes and faiths coexist harmoniously.

Governor Mutfwang made these remarks at the annual thanksgiving concert of Yeshua Kingdom Foundation, held at the 10 Commandments, Dwei, Du, Jos South Local Government Area of Plateau State.

"We aspire for Plateau to stand united under God, united in the purpose of God, and united in the pursuit of God. I trust that God will bring this vision to fruition in the coming years," he declared.

Expressing gratitude for the citizens' fervent prayers for the sustenance of peace amid challenges, Governor Mutfwang expressed optimism that Plateau would emerge victorious. He likened the current challenges to the journey from Egypt to the Promised Land and assured citizens that God would lead them to the land of promise.

"We are confident that God will guide us through the obstacles and grant us

the strength to overcome the challenges ahead. This battle is not ours but the Lord's," he emphasized.

He appreciated the former Governor and President of Yeshua Kingdom Foundation, Sen. Jonah David Jang for bearing the burden of bringing people together to praise God, and said the event ushers in the Yuletide season which is characterised by love, exchange of gifts and unity.

Governor Mutfwang encouraged people to utilize the festival of praise as a means to draw closer to God, acknowledging the prevailing spirit of prayer in the state and urging citizens to continue in that direction.

President of Yeshua Kingdom Foundation and former Governor of Plateau State, Senator Jonah David Jang, expressed gratitude for God's intervention in Plateau's affairs. He clarified that the ministry's vision centers on worshipping God and carrying out His will, emphasizing its interdenominational nature.

The Guest Preacher, Pastor E.A Adeboye, represented by Apostle Emmanuel Kure, urged



**Mutfwang**

believers to be open to God, allowing Him to dwell in their hearts as they walk in truth to please the Lord.

The thanksgiving concert was attended by approximately 5000 worshippers, including dignitaries such as the Gbong Gwom Jos, Da. Jacob Gyang Buba, Speaker, Plateau State House of Assembly, Amb. Gabriel Dewan, Secretary to the Government of the State, Arc. Samuel Jatau, Chief of Staff Government House, Engr. Jeremiah Satmark, Chairman PDP Plateau State, Hon. Chris Hassan, former Senate Minority Leader, Simon Mwadkon, former Minister Water Resources, Ngo Sarah Reng Ocheke, Head of Service, Plateau State, Mrs Rauta Dakok, Commissioners, among others.

others.

### Group tasks NASS, INEC on BVAS' in elections

NIGERIAN Human Rights Community, NIHRCO, has urged the National Assembly and the Independent Electoral Commission, INEC, to work with the State Independent Electoral Commission, SEIC, to ensure that Bimodal Voters Accreditation System, BVAS, are used in local elections.

The group, which stated that local government elections are as important as national elections, stressed that if a transparent democratic system is put in place at the grassroots, Nigerians are bound to reap the reward.

It also called on NASS to create special intervention funds to assist the State Electoral Commission to meet democratic obligations in line with the fiscal support given by the Federal Government to INEC.

NIHRCO spoke after observing last Saturday's local government election in Ekiti State.

It commended Ekiti for a peaceful election, saying the exercise has once

again demonstrated the quality of leadership in the state.

"The local government election was not perfect, but it represented a remarkable achievement in building sustainable democratic culture in Nigeria," the group said in a statement signed by its Programme Officers, Mr Taiwo Adeleye and Fredrick Ojinika.

"At this time that Nigeria faces internal threats to democracy and growing concerns about public trust, it is important to deepen democracy and strengthen governance at the grassroots. This is exactly what has happened in Ekiti State. We commend what appears to be the high moral ground of the Governor of the State, Mr Biodun Oyebanji who earlier embarked on a non-violence campaign across the state, using the extensive media space ahead of the Local Government election," NIHRCO said and urged other state governments that have not conducted local government elections to do so.

### PLSG, ready to pay gratuities, other benefits

**Continued from page 1**

granted a 75% Hazard Allowance to other health workers, including the Joint Health Workers Union (JOHESU) and the National Association of Nigerian Nurses and Midwives. Additionally, measures are underway to address longstanding issues such as gratuities, death benefits, and pension arrears, with the last gratuity payment made in 1985," he said.

Governor Mutfwang highlighted the significance of training and retraining of civil servants for efficient service

delivery. He pledged his administration's commitment to initiatives aimed at enhancing the performance of the workforce.

"Under my leadership, we will consistently uphold the values and ethics of the civil service, fostering an environment for all sectors to thrive. Our guiding principles include fairness, justice, and equity in our treatment of every worker.

"The time is now for mutual benefit, industrial harmony, worker welfare, training, prompt payment of salaries, and promotions. With God's

grace and your cooperation, we shall seamlessly achieve these goals," he stated.

Also speaking, the Head of Service, Plateau State, Mrs. Rauta Dakok, explained that the joint retreat is the first of its kind in Plateau. She expressed optimism that the training would enrich the workforce and foster a mutually beneficial relationship between the government and union leaders in order to provide them with insights into policy development to enhance the civil service.

### Senators put under pressure to pass 2024 budget

**Continued from page 1**  
the lawmakers on December 19 before embarking on their Christmas and New Year break.

Despite Senators applauding President Bola Tinubu for his good intentions for the country, however, many of them decried the failure of the executive to provide the details of the budget.

The budget was passed for a second reading and referred to the Committee on Appropriations after being put to a voice vote by Barau, who presided over the session.

"The budget is hereby referred to the Committee on Appropriations and the committee is mandated to submit the report to this chamber on December 19," Barau stated.

The source, however, gathered on Tuesday that despite that the budget was referred to the Committee on Appropriation, copies of the budget had not been made available to senators for adequate scrutiny.

The source also said that



**President Tinubu presenting 2023 Appropriation Bill to the joint session of National Assembly.**

the Senators were being put under pressure by the presidency to pass the budget even though details had not been made available.

"The National Assembly is expected to pass the budget before 31 December. But till now, the Senators don't have a copy of the budget for scrutiny. They are under pressure to pass the budget even

without details available," a Senator said.

The source earlier reported that President Bola Tinubu last Wednesday presented to a joint session of the National Assembly the 2024 Budget, which he christened, 'Budget of Renewed Hope'. The Senator, who spoke on condition of anonymity, asked how the senators were expected to pass a national budget without

having the necessary details.

"We don't know whether so many things are padded in the budget. Making a copy of the budget available to Senators would allow them to look into all the sectors and make informed contributions during the debate. It will even afford us the opportunity to know how it affects different senatorial districts," the senator added.



# Business & Economy

## Philanthropy, public service in challenging times

**Philanthropic organizations are increasingly playing important roles in the development of Nigeria as the citizens endure worsening cost of living crisis. These organization, registered as foundations, are reaching into their deep pockets to fund diverse causes and offer succor to citizens across the country. ETIM ETIM writes.**

In challenging economic situations, philanthropy provides opportunities in many areas of need and supports projects and endeavours that might not have received adequate government funding. The art of giving back to the society has the power to influence lasting social change; touching many lives, potentially for generations. Philanthropy is therefore one of the cornerstones of a stable society.

### ADVERTISEMENT

In the last one year, we have highlighted the activities of some of these philanthropic organizations and presented them as agents of social and economic empowerment. In this piece, we shall focus on the Aig-Imoukhuede Foundation and its roles in creating a culture of excellence, effectiveness and integrity in public sector organizations. Since 2021, the foundation has been organizing intensive leadership capacity-building programme for senior public service staff in Nigeria and other African countries. Known as AIG Public Leaders Programme (AIG PLP), it offers these emerging public sector leaders a unique opportunity to develop their capacity and acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to drive change in the public service. It is run in conjunction with University of Oxford's Blavatnik School of Government which provides the teaching faculty. Already 161 Africans, mostly Nigerians, have benefitted from it, while another 68 are currently in training.

For each participant, the foundation spends £11,000 for the executive programme. Over £1.87 million (well over two billion Naira at today's exchange rate) has already been spent on the three cohorts. Executive Vice Chairman, Mrs Ofovwe Aig-Imoukhuede says the criticality of the public sector is the reason for the intervention. Her words: "The public service plays a crucial role in society by providing goods and services for citizens. Research shows a clear correlation between a country's social and economic development and the efficiency of its public service. The public sector is crucial in implementing plans, policies and ultimately creating an enabling environment for businesses and residents of a state to thrive. In Nigeria, the quality of public service delivery has consistently been declining for decades across board. Public institutions are characterised with unqualified and poorly motivated staff, institutionalised corruption, resistance to change, poor cooperation, red tape, bureaucracy etc. At the heart of our work to actualise our goals is our commitment to building a critical mass of public sector leaders who are equipped with the skills, knowledge, and tools required to lead and sustain reforms".

Read also: [Ford Foundation West Africa urges sustainable philanthropy in the sub-region](#)

The first week of the programme is an intensive and immersive residential course featuring lectures, workshops, case studies and simulations led by Blavatnik School faculty. It's a very demanding programme, engaging participants through classroom discussions, practical exercises, simulations and group work. Prof. Chris Stone, a faculty member, says the participants



have been outstanding. "They are smart, experienced and deeply committed to the civil service and public service. I think the energy so evident in the programme comes from meeting each other and reinforcing one another's personal integrity and desire to participate in the improvement of their institutions", he told me. In addition to partnering with Aig-Imoukhuede Foundation, Blavatnik School of Government is also working in support of broad civil service reform in Brazil (in partnership with the Lemann Foundation) and in the UK (in partnership with the Cabinet Office). But the partnership in Nigeria with the Aig Imoukhuede Foundation and the Office of the Head of the Civil Service of the Federation was the first of these and remains hugely inspiring to others, according to Prof Stone, a professor of Practice of Public Integrity at Oxford. He is confident that the impact of the AIG PLP Programme is already being felt through more than 100 individual projects initiated by the participants over the last three years, from automated property registration to improved public broadcasting to improved utilisation of hospitals. The bigger potential in the programme is for a wholesale transformation of the civil and public services, with greater delegation of authority, stronger public/private partnerships, greater use of digital tools, and strengthened public integrity.

Indeed, the participants themselves have attested to the transformative power of the training they've received. Ms. Zukiswa Mgolomba, 37, is the deputy chairperson of the National Public Service Commission of South Africa. At 37, she's spent 14 years working in various roles and many departments in her country. She attended the second cohort of the programme and graduated early 2023. For her, the one-year programme turned out to be one of the most transformative learning experiences for her and she told me that she was able to take away three major lessons from the programme. First, as leaders in Africa, the programme taught her that she can push the boundaries of what is possible in the continent for the benefit of women and children. Second, she learned about the power of technological advancement in automation of her work to deliver quality service and third, she learned

about the criticality of the roles of ethics and integrity in and out of the workplace and why it is absolutely import for Africans to maintain these values with all the complexities in the public service. She commended the programme as "an excellent initiative that fosters African partnership between nation states".

AIG PLP is designed on the premise that executives ascending the ranks of government departments, agencies and ministries must maintain exemplary performance in their current role while developing the new skills and perspectives needed to take on a top leadership role. For Mr. Akinyemi Abayomi, the Head of ICT in the Lagos Office of NAFDAC, it was the first advanced management programme he's attended in his over 15 years in the public service, and the experience was quite transformational. "For one, the faculty was very good; they were open and sincere, and the lectures align totally with my interest in integrity, strengthening processes and work ethics", he said. The three major lessons he learned about the Theory of Change; organizational strengthening and integrity have changed him forever. Said he, "After the programme, I was able to bring ISO 27001 Information Security to NAFDAC which means that for any project implemented at NAFDAC, we have to inject integrity into it and one's personal integrity is very paramount in anything one does".

Caroline Kendagor, Principal Magistrate in Nairobi, Kenya, is currently participating in the program, and she's acquiring new skills rapidly. The programme provided her the opportunity to visit Nigeria for the first time, and, according to her, she liked the weather, food and the warmth of the people. But more than that, she's learned some skills in decision-making; how to create a culture of teamwork and "I now see the concept of accountability and responsibility from a whole new angle". She said that it was interesting to learn about the challenges that cut across the public service in the continent and "the innovative solutions that the various sectors are employing". "The program has so far broadened my thinking about the importance of culture change strategy as the program I oversee is a new concept", she told me last Saturday morning.

For Navy Commander Ibrahim Madu whose natural passion is leadership development, AIG PLP is a life-changing experience and he's "benefitting maximally from it", as he told me. His schedules are understandably tight, but the young officer tries to stay calm under intense work pressures. A 2007 graduate of Nigerian Defence Academy (NDA) – the prestigious Kaduna-based military university – Madu joined the Navy immediately after graduation; and today, he is a Navy Pilot/Flying Instructor. "I have attended many courses, but the AIG PLP is mind-blowing and very enlightening", he enthuses, adding that Nigeria's problems are tied to the leadership challenge, and so there is a strong need to enhance our capacity and knowledge of our leadership in every sphere. He is also a member of Cohort Three and so far, he's learned about the importance and technicalities of decision making and the criticality of integrity in life and work. His words: "As Africans, we are easily influenced by our cultures, religions and the tensions between our own personal integrity and the organizational integrity. In addition, there is also the diversity in the work place. So, the challenge for a leader is to strike a good balance among all the contending forces". Navy Commander Madu is grateful to the programme's faculty which, according to him, is from "the best university in the world" for bringing fresh perspectives to teaching. "Despite my busy schedule, I am determined to complete the programme" he concluded.

Other alumni are also effusive in their testimonies. Engr. Uchechi Ijeoma Edosomwan, a deputy general manager at Nigeria Airspace Management Agency (NAMA), says the AIG PLP is the one of the advanced management programmes she's attended. Even with a Masters degree in electronics and telecommunications and a leadership position in the federal public service, she did not feel fulfilled without acquiring leadership skills and training. So, when she saw the advert early in 2021 for the maiden edition of the programme, she quickly applied. "We went through a rigorous and highly competitive selection process", she said. The programme started on

September 6, 2021 and has had a lifelong impact on her career and life. Her communications skills and ability to lead through others have improved considerably. "I have become more creative with more innovative ideas to improve my department's service delivery and there's a clear succession plan in her department", she said.

For her capstone project in the programme, she developed and standardized the on-the-job training manual for Air traffic Safety Electronics Personnel (ATSEP) in NAMA. The OJT manual, a 125-page document ensures the right knowledge, skills and competency-based tasks are taught. It was so earned impactful that it earned her a commendation letter from her management. She applies two key learning concepts: – strengthening organizational effectiveness and harnessing digital technology.

Reflecting on the activities of her foundation, Mrs Aig-Imoukhuede is convinced that the success of the intervention is already visible through the impact created by programme participants in their respective organizations during and after the programme. "We consider our programme successful when AIG PLP alumni continue to foster cultures of excellence, effectiveness and integrity within the public sector. Ultimately, we would consider the programme successful when a significant positive change in the delivery of public goods and services to Nigerians and Africans can be traced to the critical mass of public sector leaders who have gone through our capacity-building programmes. We have a long-term ambition to train 3,000 public servants", she said.

In addition to the AIG Public Leaders Programme, the foundation also offers scholarships and fellowships to Nigerians, and has recently instituted an endowment fund to reward deserving federal civil servants every year for their diligence, productivity and good conduct. A cash award of N500,000 is given to each of the selected civil servants during the Civil Service Week every year, and for this year, President Bola Tinubu was impressed enough to commend the foundation publicly.



# Business & Economy

## FG to revoke unused oil licences

THE Nigerian Upstream Petroleum and Regulatory Commission has said the Federal Government is planning to revoke unused oil exploration leases that companies were granted but have not been able to carry out any exploration activities on them.

The Chief Executive Officer, Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission, Gbenga Komolafe told Reuters on Monday that only companies with viable technical and financial backup would get to keep their leases.

"Based on PIA (Petroleum Industry Act), the commission is focused on delivering value for the nation so only firms that are technically and financially viable will keep their leases,"

Komolafe said.

Komolafe said the commission would initiate reviews of these leases and awards of new leases would be "subject to specific terms and conditions."

According to latest data from the NUPRC, although about 53 exploration leases were issued from 2003 till date; over 60 per cent of the prospecting licenses issued to local and foreign oil firms had expired.

Out of the 53 licences, 33 have since expired and not renewed, including four which are held down by contract disputes. The leases have not been automatically revoked, but the regulator is no longer willing to let the companies hold on to leases indefinitely.

The PIA enacted in 2021 empowered the regulator to

review the technical and financial capabilities of companies holding oil exploration leases.

Investments in oil exploration in the country have been few and far between as oil majors exit onshore and shallow water assets due to rising insecurity and sabotage of oil infrastructure and legal disputes with communities in the Niger Delta.

The sector has since been bogged down by low investments in exploration activities, coupled with low crude oil production as a result of theft from pipeline vandalism.

THE Federal Government has signed an agreement for the establishment of a 1 Gigawatt (GW) Solar PV Manufacturing plant in the country as part of efforts to provide reliable energy to its people.

The Infrastructure Corporation (Infracorp), signed the agreement with Solarge BV of the Netherlands and the African Green Infrastructure Investment Bank at the ongoing 28th session of the Conference of Parties (COP28) in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Lazarus Angbaso, the Chief Executive Officer of Infracorp, said the objective of the project is to revolutionise Nigeria's energy sector and elevate the economy to \$1 trillion through sustainable and climate-resilient infrastructure.

"The project focuses on local manufacturing, green manufacturing and renewable

## FG secures 1GW solar PV manufacturing plant

energy, equipment manufacturing, and climate-resilient infrastructure," he said.

During the summit, Adebayo Adelabu, the Minister of Power, noted that the current power situation in the country is dire, with insufficient transmission infrastructure, limited distribution capacity, and various challenges hindering generation.

While commending the Infracorp-led consortium for successfully securing a manufacturing plant in Nigeria, Olawale Edun, the Coordinating Minister for the Economy, said available data indicates a substantial market size for solar energy in Nigeria and the West

African region.

Edun said the establishment of a solar PV manufacturing plant in Nigeria has the potential to address various socioeconomic challenges and bring about positive impacts across different sectors.

On the other hand, Doris Nkiruka Uzoka-Anite, the Minister of Industry, Trade & Investment, who said that the establishment of the Solar PV Manufacturing plant will be a significant catalyst for Nigeria's industrial sector, stressed that energy infrastructure is the foundation for innovation, job creation, and prosperity, paving the way for a brighter, more sustainable future.

## Trade surplus hits 5-yr high on weaker naira

NIGERIA'S trade surplus surged to the highest in five years and three months in the third quarter of this year largely on the naira devaluation, a BusinessDay analysis of the latest foreign trade statistics report has shown.

The report by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) shows that Africa's biggest economy recorded a positive trade balance of N1.89 trillion for the fourth straight time in Q3, a 166.2 percent increase from N708.9 billion in the previous quarter. It improved from a trade deficit of N409.4 billion on a year-on-year basis.

A trade surplus which is an economic measure of a positive balance of trade occurs when a country's exports exceed its imports.

The country's total trade increased to N18.8 trillion in Q3 from N12.2 trillion in the previous quarter. It also grew year-on-year by 52.8 percent from N12.3 trillion.

"Nigeria's total merchandise trade in Q3 rose significantly due to the increase in exports and imports resulting in a positive trade balance," the NBS report said.

It added that the significant rise in exports and imports in the quarter compared to the preceding and corresponding quarters was largely driven by an increase in trade activities within the period.

"Looking at the data, crude oil exports increased significantly even as non-oil exports decline," Israel Odubola, a Lagos-based research economist, said.

He said the official rate also weakened between the second and third quarter. "In essence, the increased trade surplus can be linked to the devaluation effect, with the country getting more naira from export proceeds per dollar."

According to Odubola, having a positive trade surplus is favourable to the current account as it helps to reduce external pressure. "Trade surplus is quite significant in current account composition."

Exports are in dollars, so the exchange rate would automatically lead to a jump in exports, Muda Yusuf, chief executive officer of Centre for the Promotion of Private Enterprise, said.

The Central Bank of Nigeria in June merged all segments of the foreign exchange market into the Investors and Exporters window, and reintroduced the willing buyer, willing seller model.

The naira has continued to depreciate against the dollar and other major foreign currencies since then.

The official exchange rate increased from N463.38/\$ to N927.19/\$ as of Friday. At the parallel market, the naira depreciated to N1,164/\$ from 762/\$.

The high cost of sourcing FX was one of the major factors that pushed Nigeria's inflation rate to an 18-year high of 27.33 percent in October from 26.72 percent in the previous month, according to the NBS.

"Exports would improve significantly because the naira is weaker which would attract more dollar inflows whether in the form of trade or any other form," Abiodun Keripe, managing director at Afrinvest Consulting, said.

He added that stable crude oil prices and the gradual recovery in oil production also contributed to the trade surplus. "Even though the sector is still in negative; the rate of contraction is declining which is speaking to the increase in oil put."

Crude oil production is a major source of revenue for Nigeria's economy. According to the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission, the country produced 1.35 million barrels per day in September this year from 998,602 barrels per day in April. On a year-on-year basis, it also rose from 937,766 barrels per day in September 2022.

Data from information websites like Oilprices.com and Statista, show that global Brent oil prices averaged at \$93.7 per barrel in September from \$82.5 per barrel in January.

A breakdown of the NBS report revealed that the value of total exports in Q3 stood at N10.3 trillion indicating an increase of 60.8 percent when compared with the value of exports in Q2 (N6.44 trillion) and by 74.4 percent when compared with the value recorded in Q3 of 2022 (N5.93 trillion).

The value of total imports stood at N8.46 trillion in Q3, this represents an increase of 47.7 percent compared with the value recorded in Q2 (N5.73 trillion) and increased by 33.3 percent against the value recorded in the corresponding quarter of 2022 (N6.34 trillion).



Komolafe

## P/Harcourt Refinery December deadline heaps pressure on NNPC

WITH 26 days to the end of December, the deadline for the completion of the Port Harcourt Refinery revamp, the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) is facing mounting pressure to deliver on its promise.

On November 23, the state-owned oil company confirmed that the Port Harcourt refinery will take off in December 2023.

"I can confirm to you that by the end of December this year, we will start the Port Harcourt refinery," Mele Kyari, the group chief officer of NNPC Limited said during a meeting with lawmakers on November 23.

Apart from Kyari, Ibrahim Onoja, the managing director of Port Harcourt Refining Company (PHRC), also assured that the procurement process for the rehabilitation of the refinery was 98 percent complete.

"Our long lead items are on site; instrumentations are on site. We have completed most of the procurement that we need to do. The refinery has gone over 98 percent," Onoja said on Arise TV.

However, analysts who spoke to BusinessDay say until the facility commences operation on the said date, it will be difficult to convince Nigerians that it is not going to be business as usual.

"To be candid, I have no idea anymore about what will happen, particularly as the

goalpost has been shifted many times," said Jide Pratt, country manager of Trade Grid.

"As we postulate and count on the promise yet again, the need to ensure we produce 1.6 million barrels of oil per day (mbpd) at least in December is critical to making these projects happen," he said. "I would be pleasantly surprised if the PHC refinery is up and running by January 2 in the new year."

Lufman Agboola, a Lagos-based energy analyst said the December deadline for Port Harcourt, and any of the other refineries in the country is unrealistic.

"So, what is the ground for believing them this time around? What is the basis for believing them? And the GCEO of NNPC does not have a history of saying the truth," he added.

Agboola noted that several government officials have made similar pronouncements in the past without any results.

Nigeria has imported more than 5.52 billion litres of Premium Motor Spirit, popularly called petrol, since the removal of the petrol subsidy on May 30, 2023. This is despite the high foreign exchange crisis across the country.

"The first hurdle is getting the refineries to function in at least 50 percent capacity, the second hurdle is securing crude oil for them to work with," he added.

The first government official to pledge Nigeria's end to petrol importation was the late Rilwanu Lukman, Nigeria's former oil minister between 2008 and 2010.

Lukman promised the then government was committed to ending Nigeria's petrol importation by fixing the chaotic condition of its four state-owned refineries.

When oil prices fell in 2015, the then opposition leader urged the government to "stop stealing from Nigerians and allow them to enjoy the relief that has come to consumers of petroleum products globally."

In his response to the fuel scarcity in the country in March 2015, Buhari criticised past governments and former President Jonathan for failing to fix refineries and leaving Nigerians at the mercy of fuel imports.

In the interview, which lasted 23 minutes, Kachikwu promised to deliver on the completion of the refineries, noting that he was committed to ending Nigeria's importation of petroleum products.

"2019 is the target time... I target 2019. If I don't achieve it, I will walk...I put the date and I will achieve it," the minister stated during an interview on the BBC World Service programme, HardTalk, anchored by Stephen Sackur in 2017.

Olufemi Oladapo Soneye, NNPC's corporate

communication officer, however, dismissed the doubt.

## DMO opens offer for FGN savings bonds

THE Debt Management Office (DMO) has initiated a subscription process for two-year and three-year Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) bonds for December 2023 with an interest rate of 12.287 per cent and 13.287 per cent respectively, according to a statement on the DMO's official website.

The subscription period is set to last for five days, running from December 4th to December 8th, 2023. The bonds will mature on March 13th, 2024.

The statement reads, "Under the Debt Management Office (Establishment) Act 2003 and the Local Loans (Registered Stock and Securities) Act, CAP. L17, LFN 2004 DEBT MANAGEMENT OFFICE on behalf of the FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OF NIGERIA Offers for Subscription and is authorized to receive applications for the Federal Government of Nigeria saving bonds."

The interest rate for the two-year bonds stands at 12.287% per annum, while the three-year bonds offer an interest rate of 13.287% per annum.

The statement also specifies the settlement date for both bond offerings as December 13th, 2023, with coupon payments scheduled for March

13, June 13, September 13, and December 13.

These bonds will accrue interest payments every quarter.

The DMO outlines the units of subscription as "N1,000 per unit, subject to a minimum subscription of N5,000, and subsequent multiples of N1,000, with a maximum subscription limit of N50,000,000."

Interested investors are

encouraged to contact stock brokerage firms listed as authorized agents by the Debt Management Office (DMO) and the bonds are traded on the NGX (Nigerian Exchange Group).

It is important to note that FGN bonds are fully backed by the federal government of Nigeria.



Oniha



## Business & Economy

# Nigeria's economic trajectory: From boom to gloom

**A reflection on Nigeria's macroeconomic behavior. The pillars of macroeconomic policy are fiscal policy and monetary policy with foreign exchange policy subsumed in the latter. ISAAC NWAOGWUGWU writes.**

A disaggregation of these provides key variables that constitute an embodiment of the macroeconomic outlook; economic growth, employment, aggregate investment, general price level, interest rate, money supply, savings, taxes, public expenditure, public debt, exchange rate, and balance of payment position.

The stability or otherwise of these variables are reflective of the economic health of a polity and are certainly consequent on the decisions we make at the micro-levels – individuals, households, and firms.

These decisions are largely the byproducts of our propensities to consume, save, invest, import, and export.

They result from our cultural, political, and socio-economic consciousness of the present state of the economy and the capacities to drive same towards predetermined targets, but unfortunately, Nigerians carry on as if the state of the economy is devoid of our individual and collective actions and conveniently 'push' the blame to 'others'.

In recent years the Nigerian economy has been characterized by instability. The exchange rate has tumbled, raising the degree of uncertainty in the foreign exchange market to an unprecedented level.

Before our eyes, we saw the US Dollar exchange for more than N1,300 in the parallel market and for slightly above N1,000 in the Official window.

The External Reserve of \$33.23 billion reported in the Third Quarter of 2023 is not just the lowest the country has recorded in two years but is also incapable of sustaining the nation's external commitments or obligations for seven months given the country's annual import bill of \$53.61 billion as at December 2022.

Public Debt stock (Domestic and External) has maintained its surge and devastating impact on the budgets and general public financial management strategy.

It has risen from N49.85 trillion in the first quarter of 2023 to N87.38 trillion in the second quarter, representing a growth rate of 75.27%.

Inflation has become a drunk variable. Its rise has been steep and continuous leaving a trail of its destructive impact on the value of money, wealth, and quality of life of the populace.

The latest report from the Bureau of Statistics put the indicator at 27.3 percent. The average Inter-Bank Call rate remains high at 24% while Monetary Policy Rate has been increased to 18.75%.

These are clear indications of inflation targeting monetary



**Tinubu**

policy which is yet to yield a visible result.

In the same vein labour market indicators have sustained their rise without a wedge. The spirited surge of stock and flow variables of unemployment no longer makes news headlines even as the 'workshops' of idle minds and hands of the youth attain a catastrophic level.

Domestic saving is low thereby necessitating an inflow of foreign capital to augment the domestic capital accumulation. Interestingly, the reverse flow of this principal ingredient of production has gained currency with some highly reputed multinational corporations relocating offshores, including to our neighbouring countries.

This evidently shows that what the country attracts is basically 'transit' foreign capital. It may not be out of place to say that confusion beclouds strategic policy decisions to deal with the multifaceted macroeconomic crisis in the country.

High-interest rates, the complicated structure of taxes, high tax regimes, the rascality of the judiciary, the weak rule of law, the inordinate behaviour of the security operatives, corruption, the menace of revenue agents, and the sorry state socio-economic infrastructure have added fillip to the binding constraints of the cost of doing business in the country while limiting the production capacity of the economy.

Expectedly, the cumulative impact of the above scenario is an

economy in dire stress as reflected in its primary fiscal target of economic growth.

Computation done with data from different issues of the Central Bank of Nigeria Statistical Bulletin shows that although the goal of economic growth has been on the front burner of government policy the figure recorded since 1971 has not been quite impressive, especially for an economy that sees quantum leap in the volume of goods and services produced (Gross Domestic Product) as the be-all and end-all of macroeconomic policy.

An attempt has been made here to assess the economic growth performance of the economy under five periods; 1971-1980, 1981-1987, 1988-1999, 1999-2010, and 2011-2022.

As can be seen from the table below, the GDP growth rate has been erratic. It was 5.55% between 1971 and 1980 and declined to -0.33% for the period, 1981-1987 before rising with fluctuations to 2.36% between 2011 and 2022.

Of great interest here is that the substantial growth achieved between year 200 and 2011 was lost in the succeeding period of 2011-2022.

Similar trends are also observed in the sectoral composition of the GDP – Agriculture, Industry, Manufacturing, and Services.

Column 3 of the table captures the growth rates of per capita income for the five periods. It

was negative for the first three periods which fall under 1971-1999.

It recovered from the sub-zero level to 4.85 between 2000 and 2010 before declining to almost zero between 2011 and 2022.

These figures speak volumes as they reflect the welfare level of the citizenry. In a nutshell, they simply say that the welfare of an average Nigerian has been on the decline since 1971 except the decade, 2000-2010.

Unfortunately, the lackluster response of the government to the deplorable condition of the average citizen has been sustained.

It also suffices to have a look at the fiscal indicators from the table below. The ratio of fiscal balance to the GDP has generally been stable and within a tolerable limit even as the ratio of revenue to GDP (relative fiscal capacity) captures the inability of the government to mobilise revenue that is commensurate with the size of the economy.

The ratio has stagnated around 14% even though expanded fiscal capacity was naturally supposed to be accompanied by increased size of the economy consequent of rebasing of same in 2014.

The domination of total revenue by oil revenue has become a permanent feature of Nigeria's fiscal operation since 1971 with the ratio being above 71% is indicative of structural problems of revenue mobilization of the government especially concerning non-oil

taxes.

It is also very glaring from this table that the ratio of capital expenditure to total expenditure of the federal government has been below 50% except for the period, 1986-1999 when it was 76.18%.

Worthy of note here is that this variable is below 30% between the years 2000 and 2022, the current dispensation of democratic governance.

This raises serious questions about the capacity of the government to grow and develop the economy. If capital formation cannot be deepened through increased capital expenditure, an incontrovertible fact is that the country will have to perpetually depend on capital imports to usher in the much-expected growth and development.

Another ugly picture from the above table is the dominance of the federal government in the total expenditure of the federation.

In fact, except for the period, 1986-1999 when the apex government accounted for only 36.45% of the total outlay of the country, the figure was generally above 48% thereby connoting stiffening of the fiscal operations of the lower-level governments whose revenue and expenditure actions are supposed to impact on the people directly.

The picture of Nigeria's weak macroeconomy as seen above is unpalatable and fails to show the preparedness of an economy to be on a growth and development path.

These outcomes cannot be disassociated from poorly designed macroeconomic policy, weak implementation of those poorly designed policies, and general policy summersaults.

This has been the case even when different regimes of government unequivocally stated, time and again their commitment towards stabilizing the macroeconomic variables and repositioning the economy.

The department tendencies of the state, state agents, and institutions as derived from the philosophy of governance or absence of the same, the rule of law, and the response from the public determine macroeconomic behaviour.

The picture can only be different when the attitude and orientation of the government and the citizens on public policy matters change.

**Isaac Chii Nwaogwugwu, PhD. The author is an Associate Professor of Economics at the University of Lagos**

## Politics

### Benue Assembly confirms caretaker chairmen, suspends 4 members

From **TERESE TUHWA, Makurdi**

THE Benue State House of Assembly has confirmed Governor Hyacinth Alia's nominees for the local government caretaker committees.

In a voice question put by the Speaker, Mr. Aondona Dajoh, the House confirmed twenty-one (21) nominees while nominees for Agatu and Oju Local Government Councils were dropped by the assembly.

In another development, four members of the Benue state house of assembly have been suspended for three months for constituting a clog in the smooth running of the legislative business of the House.

Those suspended include Solomon Gyila, representing Gwera West state constituency, Douglas Akya representing Makurdi



**Alia**

South, Dyako Ashwa representing Konshisha state constituency and Anthony Agom of Okpokwu state Constituency.

The motion for their

suspension was moved by Majority Leader of the House, Mr. Saater Tiseer and was seconded by Peter Ipusu of Katsina-Alaa West State constituency.

From **TERESE TUHWA, Makurdi**

WORRIED by the internal political wranglings within the Benue State chapter of the All Progressives Congress (APC), a body of APC elders from the three senatorial districts in the state under the aegis of Concerned APC Stakeholders have intervened in what they described as unnecessary distractions".

The forum which rose from a meeting with Governor Hyacinth Iormem Alia at the conference hall, Governor's Lodge, Makurdi while addressing news men said it was worried by the recent attacks on the governor and government of Benue State on social media.

It pointed to the content of a communique it saw on social media under the leadership of APC local government chairmen as well as the resolution of the State Working Committee in respect to leadership, meeting and party activities.

The forum said it sees the internal wrangling as a deliberate attempt to

### Concerned APC stakeholders intervene in Benue APC crises



**Ganduje**

distract Fr Hyacinth Iormem Alia led administration from fulfilling his campaign promises to the people of Benue state.

It regretted that the unfortunate outing by the APC local government chairmen has opened a vista for the opposition to take full advantage which culminated in a recent motion sponsored by an opposition senator (PDP) from the state against the government of Benue State.

Led by a former President of the Senate, Chief Ameh Ebute and assisted by Chief Barnabas Gemade, retired General Lawrence Onoja and other prominent Benue elders, the concerned APC stakeholders distanced itself from the actions of the local government chairmen and party executive committee.

It lamented the inability to explore all necessary avenues

for proper engagements before resorting to unnecessary media outings that have further escalated what would have easily been managed internally by the party.

The stakeholders acknowledged that at several meetings and fora, elders of the party as well as executives had cause to pass a vote of confidence on the governor and applauded his leadership style.

It is on that basis that the concerned elders forum have found it necessary to address the public and ask all concerned party members to desist from further outings and stop any impending actions that would cause disunity in the party.

The forum advised Governor Alia to discountenance all distractions and focus on developing the state.

### EPT: SDP yet to file petition - Group

From **AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja**

A group of lawyers in Kogi State, under the aegis of United Front For Democracy (UFFD), has alleged that the Social Democratic Party and its governorship candidate, Muritala Ajaka is yet to file a petition challenging the outcome of the November polls where the APC candidate was declared winner.

The group warned against an alleged clandestine plan to assist Social Democratic Party and its candidate, Muritala Yakubu Ajaka to file the petition through the backdoor.

The group noted that the approved time to file the petition elapsed on the 3rd of December, 2023 and any attempt to railroad the petition will amount to abuse of the constitution and Electoral Act.

The group vowed to challenge any act inimical to the furtherance of section 134 of the Electoral Act.

The Convener, United Front for Democracy, Barr. Yetunde Olubunmi Shaibu, in a press conference held on Monday in Lokoja, said they have credible intelligence that the

SDP candidate is yet to file his petition against the winner of the election, Usman Ododo of the All Progressives Congress, 22 days after the declaration of results.

Barr. Shuaibu disclosed that the 21 days window ended at the midnight of December 3, 2023, saying, "Section 134 of the Electoral Act is very clear as to when an electoral petition can be filed with all allegations and evidence relating to the petition front-loaded.

"By virtue of Section 134 of the Electoral Act, the SDP has failed to file their petition within the period allowed by law and should therefore be made not to waste the time of the Honourable Panel."

Barr. Shuaibu however, alleged that the SDP and its candidate, Muritala Ajaka were still preparing their petition with the intention of filing same within the week and having it backdated so as to make it look like it was filed within the legally stipulated duration.

This must not be allowed to happen in the spirit of justice, equity and fairness," the lawyers said.

They therefore called on the Election Petition Tribunal

for the Kogi State Governorship Poll to "switch on its light to fish out some members of the tribunal likely to do the illicit transaction.

Barr. Shaibu stated, "As a Civil Society Organisation, the United Front for Democracy is non-partisan. Our commitment is to protect democratic values and ensure that our judiciary is not slaughtered on the slab of political desperation and corruption.

"Our organisation has credible intelligence that the candidate of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) is yet to file his petition against the winner of the election, Alh. Ahmed Usman Ododo, 22 days after the declaration of results. The results of the election were declared on Sunday, 12th November, 2023. The 21 days window elapsed at the midnight of December 3, 2023. Section 134 of the Electoral Act is very clear as to when an electoral petition can be filed with all allegations and evidence relating to the petition front-loaded. By virtue of Section 134 of the Electoral Act, the SDP has failed to file their petition within the period allowed by law and should therefore be made not to waste the time of the Honourable Panel.

"The wisdom of the Electoral Act is that anyone with credible evidence should be able to put such forward within the legally stipulated period. We are however disappointed that the SDP is about to lose the opportunity to test the law with a competent petition. The People's Democratic



**Ajaka**

### Senate appoints consultant for sports

From **JIDAUNA YANUNG, Abuja**

THE Senate committee on sports has appointed Bashir Hayatu Abubakar as its consultant.

This was contained in a letter of appointment signed by the Chairman of the Committee on Sports, Senator Suleiman Kawu Sumaila which copies were made available to the National Assembly press corps in Abuja.

Bashir Hayatu is a sports administrator born in Kano State. According to the letter, "You are expected, with the wealth of experience garnered over the years at your disposal, to bring this assignment to an enviable level of professionalism and also demonstrate a higher level of ethical standard in the discharge of your responsibilities."

The entire committee members and the secretariat anticipate relishing a robust



**Kawu**

working relationship with the consultant, urging him to work harmoniously with the clerk of the committee for efficient and effective service delivery towards achieving the committee's statutory obligation.

Abubakar holds a Master of Arts (MA) from City University of London, United Kingdom, a renowned sports administrator who has served the sector in various capacities.

## Politics

# Obasanjo's afro democracy

**With the steady erosion of democratic legitimacy in Africa and the strong wind of undemocratic change of governments that is blowing across the continent from Burkina Faso to Mali and from Niger to Gabon, the conversation on the future of democracy on the African continent continues. The latest intervention in this conversation has come from Olusegun Obasanjo, a former military Head of State of Nigeria, who was later democratically elected its civilian president. MAJEED DAHIRU writes.**

African statesman, whose image looms large on the world stage as a champion of freedom, democratic good governance, anti-corruption and unity of the African people, Obasanjo's experience as a major player in epoch making events in Nigeria and Africa for more than half a century places him on a legitimate high ground to speak on the burning issues of democracy and good governance in Africa.

Speaking at the high-level consultation on rethinking Western Liberal Democracy in Africa held at the Olusegun Obasanjo Presidential Library in Abeokuta, Obasanjo posited that western democracy as being practiced in Nigeria and other African countries, should be re-examined or moderated. According to Nigeria's former president, his position has become imperative because western liberal democracy has not delivered on good governance and progressive development for the continent. While describing western liberal democracy as not home grown enough and never took into account African history and multi-cultural peculiarities hence excluding the views of the majority, Obasanjo suggested its replacement with what he termed "Afro Democracy" as according to him "the essence of any system of government is the welfare and well being of the people—all the people."

This latest intervention from Obasanjo has elicited mixed reactions with many agreeing or disagreeing depending on the prism through which his views are being viewed. But as divided as opinions are on the opinion expressed by former president Olusegun Obasanjo, all is not well with Nigeria's democracy and many Nigerians share his frustrations about the state of affairs in Africa's largest democracy. And such is the frustration that 24 years after unbroken democratic rule since the transition from military to civil



Obasanjo

democratic rule in 1999, the much anticipated dividends of democracy in form of welfare and security for the Nigerian people remains elusive leaving many Nigerians hopeless, helpless and questioning the relevance of democracy in the socio-economic development of their beloved Nigeria.

Democracy has so lost its hitherto iron clad legitimacy, which was underscored by the popular dictum, "the worst democratic government is better than the best military regime" that Nigerians are now looking back with nostalgia to the days of military rule and drawing comparisons, which suggests their lot was better then than now. That after 24 years of democracy, Nigeria is

currently ranked one of the most law," clearly shows that a corrupt, terrorized, pauperized, country such as Nigeria, where impoverished and traumatised individual freedoms are limited country in the world means by tribe, religion and region of democracy no longer makes sense origin and where impunity to many Nigerians and are like rather than rule of law reign Obasanjo seeking sundry supreme hardly qualifies as a alternatives in place of the current liberal democracy. On the liberal democracy as long as such contrary, Obasanjo's Afro an alternative delivers on welfare Democracy; an illiberal super imposition of African traditional

However, while Obasanjo is right rulership system along tribal about the state of affairs in lines on representative Nigeria, it is important to point out democracy is Nigeria's current clearly that Nigeria's problems are democratic reality.

not caused by liberal democratic This sort of super imposition in practices. Nigeria is only a liberal a country whose federating democracy in name but not in units are structured along tribal reality. A simple definition of lines have combined to birth the liberal democracy as "a worse form of ethnic and democratic system of government religious identity politics, which in which individual rights and has rendered Nigeria's freedoms are officially recognised democracy as neither liberal nor and protected, and the exercise of democratic as the core element of power are limited by the rule of of democratic citizenship

**"However, while Obasanjo is right about the state of affairs in Nigeria, it is important to point out clearly that Nigeria's problems are not caused by liberal democratic practices. Nigeria is only a liberal democracy in name but not in reality. A simple definition of liberal democracy as "a democratic system of government in which individual rights and freedoms are officially recognised and protected, and the exercise of power are limited by the rule of law," clearly shows that a country such as Nigeria, where individual freedoms are limited by tribe, religion and region of origin and where impunity rather than rule of law reign supreme hardly qualifies as a liberal democracy. On the contrary, Obasanjo's Afro Democracy; an illiberal super imposition of African traditional rulership system along tribal lines on representative democracy is Nigeria's current democratic reality."**

democracy is good governance for all, that of identity driven Afro democracy is a corrupt patronage system for a privileged few sectional champions in government.

That Nigeria is currently suffering from corruption induced socio-economic and security challenges is because corrupt practices such as nepotism, cronyism, favouritism, sectionalism and all elements of prebendalism are legitimate cultural tools to get a slice of the national cake by the representatives of the various tribal sections of the country. It is this identity politics motivated corruption that has made the scourge cancerous, endemic and intractable, hence rendering Nigeria's democracy prostrate and unable to yield dividends in the form of improved security and welfare for the people.

Elsewhere in Africa, identity politics driven Afro democracy has reduced many countries to sorrow, tears and blood. It was Afro democracy that enthroned Hutu power over Rwanda, which eventually led the country into a civil war and eventual genocide against its Tutsi people. And from Gabon to Togo, Sudan to South Sudan and from Chad to Equatorial Guinea, Afro democracy has enthroned a ethnocentric, corrupt and inept political leadership that have left these African countries unable to provide welfare and security for its people.

Democracy by its nature is liberal and remains the best form of government developed by man. And Nigeria's aspiration should be a progression towards true liberal democracy along with all its essential elements of democratic citizenship, rule of law and administration with the principles of equity, fairness and justice to all without prejudice to race, ethnicity and creed. To move Nigeria towards the ideal liberal democracy it and every other African country should be, President Olusegun Obasanjo, a pan Nigerian nationalist with a reputation for excellent diversity management should deploy has vast political capital to kickstart a movement for democratic rebirth of Nigeria from Afro democracy to liberal democracy.

To this end, President Obasanjo should lead a deliberate political process that begin to galvanise and mobilise Nigerians to realign their democratic choices with their individual and collective socio-economic and security interests away from their ethnicity or religion in order to cure the cancer of identity politics in Nigeria.

required to drive democratic processes is lacking. It is the pervasive culture of politics of tribal identity, which is at variance with liberal democracy that is the problem of Nigeria's democracy. And to correct the defects in Nigeria's democracy will be to overcome the challenge of identity politics arising from the preponderance of identity dissonance in the current polity.

Whilst liberal democracy involves broad based political coalition of peoples of diverse background around common economic, security and social interests, Afro democracy is mostly a narrow political movement a long tribal lines to project sectional interests. And whereas, the reward for political participation in a liberal

# IMAGES

## MUTFWANG WITNESSES BESTS' 60TH BIRTHDAY THANKSGIVING/WEDDING SOLEMNIZATION

Plateau State Governor, Barr. Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang on Sunday witnessed the 60th Birthday Thanksgiving Service of Prof. Mrs. Kachollom Best, wife of Prof. Shedrach Best a Chieftain of the PDP and the solemnization of marriage ceremony at the COCIN RCC Jos, Sarkin Mangu Street, Jos



Governor Mutfwang (left) with the Head of Service, Barr. Rauta Dakok during the service



Cross section of government functionaries at the Service



Leading Pastor of the Church, Rev. Cletus Gwam (right) presenting the wedding certificate to Mr. & Mrs. Mathias Fumbish



Rev. Cletus Gwam (middle) joining Mr. & Mrs. Walle as husband and wife



Prof. Shedrach Best, Prof. Mrs. Kachollom Best with Mr. James Mannok, onetime Director of Press Affairs, Government House, Jos



Leading Pastor, Rev. Cletus Gwam (right) praying for the family of Prof. Best



Guest Preacher, Rev. John Nash (rtd) former COCIN RCC Chairman, Jos delivering sermon



Prof. and Prof. Mrs. Best, children and relations during the 60th birthday Thanksgiving service

PHOTOS: DANLADI DUK



## Politics

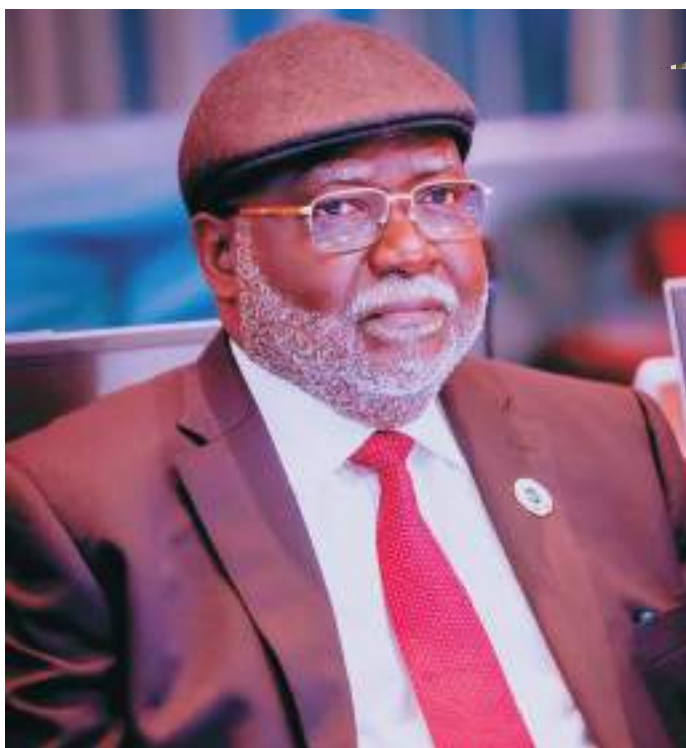
# Elections: When shall we stop going to court (1

*Is there something with the presidential system of democracy we have twice adopted for ourselves that necessitates involving the courts where judges are made to be the ultimate arbiter between contestants? HASSAN GIMBA writes.*

In 1979, it was the judges who decided who emerged as the president between Alhaji Shehu Shagari and Chief Obafemi Awolowo when they told the nation what two-thirds of nineteen should be in a judgment that is more of a compromise between the spirit of the law and political practicality. The requirement to be the president was a majority of votes and national spread, determined by the ability of a presidential candidate to score 25 percent in at least two-thirds of the states of the federation. Nigeria then had nineteen states with Lagos as a state and federal capital, therefore avoiding the controversy associated with Abuja now.

In the presidential election held on the 11th of August, 1979, Alhaji Shehu Usman Aliyu Shagari of the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) got 5,688,857, defeating his closest rival, Chief Obafemi Jeremiah Awolowo of the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), who garnered 4,916,551 in an election where the total registered voters were 48,633,782 with 16,846,533 voting. That represented 33.77% for Shagari who won in nine states, and 29.18% for Awolowo. The Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO) headed by Michael Ani thus declared Shehu Shagari the winner of the 1979 presidential election.

By the declared results, Shehu Shagari got 25% of the votes cast in twelve states, namely: Bauchi, Bendel, Borno, Cross River, Gongola, Kaduna, Kwara, Niger, Plateau, Rivers and Sokoto. The 13th state was the issue. It was Kano State – where he scored 243,423 votes, equivalent to 19.4% of the 1,220,763 votes cast in total. A dispute thus ensued over whether Shehu Shagari had met the required threshold, with arguments centred on his 25% win in twelve states and 19.4% in Kano State. But Shagari argued that his 19.9% in Kano represented two-thirds of the 12/3 that was two-thirds of 19



Ariwoola



Yahaya

states. And so Chief Obafemi Awolowo went to the Special Election Petition Tribunal at Lagos, which started on the 4th of September, 1979. In just six days, the Election Tribunal dismissed the appellant's claims, affirming Shehu Shagari's victory. Not satisfied, he went to the Supreme Court. The justices that heard his appeal were Atanda Fatai Williams, Mohammed Bello, Mohammed Uwais, Andrews Otutu Obaseki, Kayode Eso, Ayo Gabriel Irikefe and Chike Idigbe. On 26th September 1979, Williams, who was the presiding judge, and others decided the case in favour of Shagari, with only Eso dissenting. The Fourth Republic came in after the presidential elections held on 27th February 1999. The result was a victory for Olusegun Obasanjo of the People's Democratic Party, who defeated Olu Falae on a joint

Alliance for Democracy/All People's Party ticket. Out of the total registered voters of 57,938,945, 30,280,052 voted with Obasanjo getting 18,738,154 (or 62.8%) and Falae got 11,110,287 (or 37.2%) of the votes. Olu Falae contested the election at the tribunal where he, among other allegations, said Obasanjo was an ex-convict and a member of a secret cult, the Ogboni fraternity. Falae went to the Court of Appeal on March 15 and on Friday, April 16, 1999, Justice Dahiru Musdapher entered judgment in favour of Obasanjo. It is worth noting that the first election in 1979 was conducted with the presidential election coming first; however, the beneficiary reversed the order in 1983 and the NPN won with 48%. Chief Obafemi Awolowo this time did not go to the Supreme Court after losing at the tribunal, claiming that it would amount to a waste of time. He also hinted that it may take one year to gather evidence of the rigging by Shagari's party.

We have also seen that an election was held in August and the petition hearing started in the first week of September at a special tribunal that gave judgement within a week. An appeal went to the Supreme Court which decided on it by the 26th of that month and the swearing-in of the president took place on October 1. Again, the presidential election came first in 1999, but by the next round of elections in 2023, the sequence was reversed with that of the president first. Judgement in the petition by Falae against the election was also delivered within a month.

From the elections of 1979 and 1999, we can deduce a reasonable, fairly tolerable process. But in each case, four years later, beneficiaries invariably put their interests first before that of the nation. And in this, there is always collaboration with the electoral body that is anything but independent, from the way its managers are appointed and how the body is funded. You ask why the electoral timetable is always reversed after the first election. In 1983, sensing dissatisfaction among the people with the way the country was being governed, the ruling NPN, afraid of defeat, capitalised on Shehu Shagari's perceived likeability and reversed the timetable.

Afraid that the party would lose states and legislators, which could affect the electoral fortunes of the sitting president, the executive decided to start from the top. They relied on what they christened the "bandwagon effect" to commit electoral heists, calling it a "landslide" victory. Opponents and critics

derisively called it a "moon slide".

In 2003, the same fear of losing, threat from General Muhammadu Buhari's foray into the presidential race, altercation with his deputy, Atiku Abubakar, and knowing how wary his party and governors were of his dictatorial tendencies, made Obasanjo, in cahoots with the electoral umpire, reverse the election timetable to start with his and that of the National Assembly. Filled with paranoia, he assumed that he would be sacrificed once others won their elections, and so he engineered the reversal of the order of the elections.

The calculation was that the governors and the party structure would of necessity fight for him to win because his defeat would also signpost theirs. And they know him: if he lost the election, Obasanjo would make sure every one of them lost theirs. The National Assembly easily became accomplices because the arrangement also favoured their political survival. Plus, he introduced the politics of "Ghana - Must - Go."

We will consequently look to see if at any point there is always a convergence by the executive, legislature and judiciary against the ordinary voter for their interests other than that of the nation. Afterwards, we will look at electoral litigations and why the political class deliberately jettisoned the process where election petitions were concluded before the inauguration, as we saw in 1979, 1983 and 1999. **Hassan Gimba is the publisher and Editor-in-Chief of Neptune Prime.**

***It is worth noting that the first election in 1979 was conducted with the presidential election coming first; however, the beneficiary reversed the order in 1983 and the NPN won with 48%. Chief Obafemi Awolowo this time did not go to the Supreme Court after losing at the tribunal, claiming that it would amount to a waste of time. He also hinted that it may take one year to gather evidence of the rigging by Shagari's party. We have also seen that an election was held in August and the petition hearing started in the first week of September at a special tribunal that gave judgement within a week. An appeal went to the Supreme Court which decided on it by the 26th of that month and the swearing-in of the president took place on October 1."***

NEWS

# NAF, KDSG clarify Kaduna village bombing

From JOHN FWAH Kaduna

THE Nigerian Air Force (NAF) and Kaduna State Government have clarified the Sunday alleged bombing of villagers at Tudun Biri village in Igabi Local Government Area of Kaduna State on Sunday night.

There had been claims that a jet dropped a bomb around 9 pm on Sunday, when villagers gathered for a Maulud celebration, leaving several casualties.

The Air Force, through its spokesman, Air Commodore Edward Gabkwet, in reaction to the report, noted that NAF has not carried out any air operation in Kaduna within the last 24 hours.

Gabkwet called on journalists in the country to pay due diligence on reports before publishing unverified and unconfirmed reports.

Meanwhile, the Kaduna State Government says it has received briefings on Sunday night's attack which left several people dead and others injured.

A statement by the Overseeing Commissioner, Ministry of Internal Security and Home Affairs, Samuel Aruwan, said search and rescue efforts were still on, while "dozens" injured have been evacuated to a hospital.

"In a meeting presided over by the Deputy Governor, Dr Hadiza Sabuwa Balarabe, which had in attendance heads of security agencies, religious and traditional leaders, the Nigerian Army



SL Rabe

explained the circumstances which led to the unfortunate and unintended attack.

"The General Officer Commanding One Division, Nigerian Army, Major General VU Okoro, explained that the Nigerian Army was on a routine mission against terrorists but inadvertently affected members of the community.

"The Deputy Governor at the end of the closed door meeting, conveyed the condolences of the Government and People of Kaduna State to the families that lost their loved ones, and prayed for the repose of the victims' souls.

"As of the time of this update, search-and-rescue

efforts are still ongoing, as dozens of injured victims have been evacuated to Barau Dikko Teaching Hospital by the government.

"Heads of security agencies who attended the meeting include the Commissioner of Police, MY Garba, and Director of the Department of State Services (DSS), Abdul Eneche. Others include : the Chairman of the Kaduna State Chapter of Jam'atu Nasril Islam (JNI), Professor Shafi'u Abdullahi, who led other religious leaders.

Also present at the meeting was the District Head of Rigasa, Alhaji Aminu Idris in whose domain the incident occurred", the statement concludes.

From JIDAUNA YANUNG

THE former First Lady of Zamfara State, Hajiya Aisha Babangida has urged Nigerians to support the needy, the vulnerable around them.

She made the call in Abuja weekend, during the celebration of 2,000 vulnerable children.

The event was organised by the Global Initiative for Peace, Love and Care in collaboration with the Dickson Sanomi Foundation.

Speaking further, Mrs Babangida said there will be peace in the country if those in need are taken care of.

According to the former First Lady, "We can support anybody even if you don't give them all the money in the world, you can give them words of encouragement. You can pray for them.

"So everybody really must remember that we all come from an ecosystem. We should learn to support each

# Former First Lady makes case for the vulnerable



Babangida

other to have peace and secure our nation."

Also speaking at the event, the founder of Dickson Sanomi Foundation, Mr Igho Sanomi said the foundation

has been touching lives for 17 years.

He stated that it is the spiritual responsibility of Nigerians to rise to meet the needs of the vulnerable.

# PWDs empowered with skills

From ABBAS GUNGURA, Bauchi.

NO fewer than 60 persons with disability enjoyed skills acquisition training in Bauchi organized by United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and Al-Muhibah Foundation, recently.

This was disclosed by the Bauchi State Programme Officer of UNFPA, Deborah Tabara, at the commemoration of the 2023 International Day for Persons with Disabilities.

She unfolded that the

gesture was a collaboration between UNFPA and Al-Muhibah Foundation of Gov. Bala Mohammed's wife, Hajiya Aisha Mohammed, aimed at assisting the beneficiaries to be financially independent and employers of labour.

Tabara explained that all the beneficiaries were females, and would be trained in some skills like soap making, baking, frying of beans cake, tofu as well as cash gift of N30,000 and N20,000 respectively as start-up capital after the training..

"UNFPA promotes human rights and social inclusion of persons with disabilities particularly, women and young people.

"Our goal is to expand access to sexual and reproductive health services as well as information and education for people that need it most.

"Today, and everyday, UNFPA stands with persons with disabilities globally, in their call for action to protect and promote their fundamental rights and support their leadership in shaping more inclusive,

peaceful societies for everyone," she assured.

The UNFPA Programme Officer Commended and thanked Al-Muhibah Foundation for its continuous partnership and appreciated the Office of the Wife of the Governor for the commitment and passion in helping women and girls in the state.

Also speaking, Hajiya Aisha Mohammed, said in an effort to create a more inclusive world, it was crucial to break the barriers that hinder the full participation of persons with disabilities.

She said "let us create an environment that empowers them well to reach their full potential regardless of their abilities.

"Employment is a key aspect of empowerment. Let us advocate for the workplace, embrace diversity by recognising that each person, regardless of their ability, has unique talent to offer.

"Creating an inclusive work environment is not just morally imperative but also a means of unlocking untapped potential," she said.

# KOSA set 83 adjudged the most active set

By JIDAUNA DARING

IN the spirit of giving back to their school, Alma-mater, the Kuru Old Students Association (KOSA) Set "83", Government Science School (GSS) Kuru has been adjudged as the most active one among other sets of the association.

Amb. Bagudu Hirse, KOSA Set "61" stated this in his capacity as a chairman during the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of set 83, held at GSS Kuru, Plateau State, last Saturday.

He commended the Set "83" for the good work that they were doing in the school and also for keeping the flag of their Set flying high. He described the contributions of Set "83" to the school as a welcome development to the education sector in the state.

Amb. Hirse called on other KOSA sets to emulate the contributions of Set 83". He added that he would do everything possible to ensure that other sets become active so as to contribute to the progress or development of their school Alma mater since education remains the bedrock of any given society.

Governor Caleb M. Mutwang of Plateau State who was represented by the Commissioner for Youth and Sports, Hon. Bashir Lawadi, applauded the Set 83 for valuing their Alma-mater. He said that, what they was doing was not a misplacement of priority on the education sector in the state.

Guest Speaker on the occasion, Prof. Patricia M. Lar, who spoke on the theme "The role of alma-mater association in sustaining development in its alammata." Congratulated KOSA set "83" for being a rallying point among other set of the school.

Prof. Lar while encouraging the formation of school alma-mater, said that alumni give opportunity for set members to come together to interact or rub-minds, particularly on issues that affect their school's alma-mater. She pointed out that alma-mater also serves as problem solving alternative platform where members can contribute their quota in diverse ways at all times.

She maintained that lack of proper funding has affected

the standard of education in Nigeria, Specially at the secondary level. She called on government to commit more resources to the education sector.

Earlier, in his welcome remarks, the KOSA set 83 coordinator, Dahiru Liman, appreciated the academic non academic staff and senior students of the school for the holistic mentoring they received in Kuru.

Liman said this has prepared them to integrate into the Nigerian society and contribute their expertise in the growth and development of the Local Government Administration, State, Federal, organized private sector community based organizations, interfaith based organizations and international organizations among others.

He maintained that Plateau State requires comprehensive overhaul to restore the lost glory of quality education.

He added that the task of restoring quality education requires collaboration with relevant stakeholders and among such are alumni associations.

Liman also used the occasion to call on the KOSA National President to constitute a committee that would harmonize interventions by the various sets and equally explore the possibility of setting up a trust fund for the school.

He explained that KOSA Set 83 would continue to harness its resources to sustain development of their alma mater.

In his remarks, Principal, GSS Kuru, Mr. Davou Nash, expressed happiness and felicitated with KOSA Set 83 on the occasion of their 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary after leaving the school. He commended them for their giant strides in uplifting their alma-mater to higher heights.

Mr. Nash also showered accolades on Set 83 contributions such as the renovation of the kitchen and dining hall on several occasions, donations for sporting equipment, the e-library and refurbishing of the Table Tennis hall among other interventions.

The principal remarked that the importance of Parent, Teachers Association (PTA) and alumni cannot be over emphasized considering their



Mohammed

News

Christian faithful admonished to show love during yuletide

By JIDAUNA DARING

WIFE of the Plateau State Governor, Barr Mrs. Helen M. Mutfwang has said that Christmas season reminds hope and joy that Jesus Christ brought to the world through his birth.

Barr Mrs. Mutfwang stated this on the occasion of the 2023 annual Christmas Tree Lighting, held at the premises of Plateau Radio Television Corporation (PRTV), Rayfield, Jos, last Friday.

She said the event remains a very special day in Plateau State as it always marks the beginning of the yuletide season by lighting up the Christmas tree.

The First Lady pointed out that the Tree Lighting remains a practice that was traced back to decades which has eventually become a significant activity for the state and other Christians outside the state.

She commended the management and staff of PRTV, under the leadership of the Acting General



Mutfwang

Manager of the corporation, Mrs. Rita Kachollom Pam, for a well planned event. Mutfwang also applauded them for contributing immensely to the preparation process that made the epoch making event a huge success. "As we perform the Christmas Tree Lighting, may our homes, hearts, offices and environment be illuminated with kindness, happiness, prosperity and God's blessings. Let us share our love and gifts with our neighbours, and all who come

our way".

Barr Mrs. Mutfwang urged politicians and elites in Plateau State to rededicate themselves to pursuit of unity and peace in the state, as captured in the theme for this year's Christmas Tree Lighting: "Love, Peace and unity".

She thanked Plateau people for the mandate given to her husband, Barr Caleb M. Mutfwang as Executive Governor of Plateau State. She reassured the citizens of the state that the governor is providing the purposeful leadership required to make the state a conducive home or place for everyone in the state.

support the growth of 4G, 5G, and fixed broadband access.

Boakye sought NCC's support in navigating the legal and regulatory hurdles associated with landing the submarine cable in Nigeria. He also revealed that Meta, through a consortium, plans to simultaneously land the 2Africa cable in Lagos and Akwa-Ibom States. This strategic approach aims to connect the unconnected while offering enhanced and affordable access to those already connected.

Dr. Maida emphasized that the NCC places great importance on compliance with industry laws, regulations, and guidelines. He assured Meta and other investors of regulatory support as long as they operate within the guidelines set by the Commission.

This commitment to a level-playing field for all licensees and stakeholders, is crucial for sustaining healthy competition and ensuring sustainable growth in the Nigerian telecoms sector.

The NCC's endorsement of Meta's undersea cable initiative, aligns with Nigeria's vision of expanding connectivity and building a thriving digital economy. With the support of regulatory bodies like the NCC, Meta's investment in the 2Africa Cable project could significantly contribute to bridging the digital divide and fostering economic development in Nigeria and across Africa.

NCC pledges support for Meta's Undersea Cable Initiative

From DORCAS PANKYES

THE Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) has expressed its readiness to support Meta (formerly Facebook) in its endeavor to invest in Nigeria's digital economy.

Dr. Aminu Maida, the Executive Vice Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of NCC, stated that the Commission is committed to backing law-abiding investors like Meta who align with the government's agenda of promoting a robust digital economy.

During a visit to NCC's headquarters in Abuja, a delegation from Meta, led by Kojo Boakye, the Vice President for Africa, the Middle-East, and Turkey, met with Dr. Maida. The purpose of the visit was to congratulate Dr. Maida on his appointment and to discuss Meta's ongoing efforts to bring the 2Africa Cable project to Nigeria.

The 2Africa submarine cable, spanning 45,000 kilometers, is set to become one of the world's largest subsea cable projects. Boakye explained that the cable will connect Europe (via Egypt), Asia (via Saudi Arabia), and Africa, delivering a design capacity of up to 180 terabytes per second (Tbps).

The system, which is expected to go live in 2023, will provide much-needed internet capacity and reliability across Africa and

Earlier in her remarks, the Acting General Manager, PRTV, Jos, Rita Kachollom Pam expressed delight and said that the event was an annual one. She added that the corporation will continue to sustain the event since it aimed at promoting love, peace and unity irrespective of faith.

Mrs. Pam maintained that the Tree Lighting usually ushers Christian faithful into Christmas festive season which symbolizes hope and renewal.

She appreciated the First Lady for the tremendous support given to the corporation for the event. Pam added that this year's celebration was 19<sup>th</sup> edition since its inception in 2004.

In his exaltation, Senior Pastor, Covenant Ministry International, Rev. Dunka Gomwalk, said that Jesus Christ is the reason for the Christmas season. He advised Christians all over the world to maintain close relationship with God at all times.

Rev. Gomwalk emphasized the need to invest more in gospel music among the young people, adding that gospel brings about life transformation or development.

Our correspondent reports that the event featured fireworks, presentations by Ngas choir, gospel artist presentations and goodwill messages among others.



Walking a tight rope

RECENT happenings in Nigeria points to the fact that the country is walking on a slippery and tight rope. All of the economic indices that are supposed to tell our story on the go are all bleak. The Dollar to Naira exchange rate is scary and there seems to be no respite in sight. Each day you wake up, you are greeted by stories that kill your morals and make you wonder why God created you a Nigerian. Basic issues as simple as feeding are way beyond the reach of the common person not to talk of the acquisition of luxury items which used to be the lot of most Nigerians before now.

On a daily basis the price of foodstuff change. If you visit the market in the morning and go back to the same market and, indeed, the same store in the evening you are most likely to buy that same item you bought in the morning at a much higher price. When you ask why the sudden jerk up in price you would be told that the stuff you are buying is new and cost differently. Incidentally, the common people do not support themselves. They take advantage of the slightest opportunity to squeeze money out of their fellows without thinking twice. They make a meal out of every little issue and make it look as though they are even doing you a favour by selling at that price.

Education seems to be the exclusive right of the well to do. The children of the poor do not have same opportunities like those of the children of the well to do. They cannot access good schools outside the country and even the ones in the country charge exorbitant fees that scare even the so called middle class whose purchasing powers have been frittered by the unfriendly economic policies of government. And, to make matters worse, institutions owned by government are not funded but are instead asked to contribute 40% of whatever they generate to the coffers of the government. Capitalism not the welfare of the citizenry is what matters

to our policy makers. Government does not provide funding yet it expects these institutions to contribute to its IGR. I think it is trite knowledge that you reap only where you sow yet the opposite is the case here. If you want a process to develop and work, it is only reasonable that you provide the basis on which it will thrive and grow. Funds should and must be made available if a system is expected to flourish. How much has government invested in these institutions that it is expecting returns?

Now, conditions in our country does not even allow the individual realise his potentials. Insecurity in all parts of the country reduces the creativity of the individual to near zero. And, government seems to be impotent in the face of these. Individuals have been able to create fiefdoms in the country and run these as their personal

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Look at our roads. Government borrows huge sums in the name of developing our infrastructure yet we spend days travelling short distances thereby wasting precious hours which would have been put into productive ventures. Do we really have reasons why our infrastructure should be so poor when our engineers in other climes have been described as the best and top notched?”

The case of the North East and part of the North Western part of the country suffices here. Boko Haram and other criminals reign supreme and government is impotent in the face of these. Recall General Abacha of blessed memory once said that if an insurgency last more than 24 hours, the government is involved. Are we to take it therefore, that the sponsors of these unnecessary distractions is the government or its agents?

Look at our roads. Government borrows huge sums in the name of developing our infrastructure yet we spend days travelling short distances thereby wasting precious hours which would have been put into productive ventures. Do we really have reasons why our infrastructure should be so poor when our engineers in other climes have been described as the best and top notched?

The same can be said of our health system. We export the best health personnel to the rest of the world yet we have the least developed health institutions in the world. We have a penchant for cutting corners when it comes to dealing with our country. We are the most corrupt when we are asked to manage our affairs by dipping our hands into the common till. We think that it is by amassing stupendous wealth that we create security for ourselves. We fail to appreciate that if we create the right conditions for everyone, it would be much better for all of us. There are so many examples of people who stole so much but died as paupers.

We need to look at ourselves again and change our ways. We need leaders who would lead from the front not those who would serve themselves, their tribe, region and those who share the same faith with them. Indeed, we need a followership that would support their leaders and urge them to do what is right. This is the only way we can strive to change our ways and begin to build a better country.

News

# Religious harmony will propel development - Mutfwang

BY PETER TITLE

IN line with his administration's commitment to fostering religious tolerance, Plateau State Governor, Barr Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang, has urged Christians and Muslims in the state to enhance peaceful coexistence for the advancement of development.

Governor Mutfwang made the remark on Sunday during the 60th birthday thanksgiving service of Prof. Kachollom Best at COCIN, Sarkin Mangu Street, Jos, Plateau State.

Describing Prof. Best as a dedicated Christian whose positive impact on society is noteworthy, Governor Mutfwang encouraged her to persist in her selfless service, leveraging her valuable experience to shape society positively.

"I celebrate my dear sister, a woman devoted to God and humanity. May the wisdom to bless humanity abundantly accompany the platform that God has granted you," said Governor Mutfwang.

Reflecting on COCIN Church, Sarkin Mangu's resilience during challenging times, he expressed delight in the collaborative efforts between the Christian and Muslim communities in preserving and protecting the church.

The governor expressed hope for sustained peace between the church and the predominantly Muslim community, emphasizing the need for such harmony to serve as a model for other



Mutfwang

communities. "I commend the Muslim community for defending the church. Let us continue to encourage our Muslim brothers to coexist harmoniously. Living in peace and trusting God for wisdom is essential in managing a pluralistic society," he added.

He extended gratitude to Plateau citizens for their unwavering prayers during the state's challenges, expressing confidence in eventual triumph through divine intervention. The governor urged the youths to prioritize knowing and serving God in their formative years, emphasizing that such a foundation helps prevent

costly mistakes in life.

Rev. John Nash (rtd), who was the Guest Preacher, drew inspiration from Acts 4:1-13, urging believers to deepen their understanding of God and serve Him faithfully.

Prof. Kachollom Best, expressed thanks for reaching the milestone of 60 years. She acknowledged the role of Jesus in providing solace during challenging moments and appreciated her husband, Prof. Shedrack Best, the entire family, and the church for their support and prayers. She prayed to God to continue to grant her continued wisdom for the journey ahead.

Our correspondent reports that dignitaries from all walks of life, graced the occasion.

By DORCAS PANKYES

IN a regional CEO panel organized by McKinsey & Company at the United Nations Conference on Climate Change (UNCCC), Mr. Mele Kyari, the Group Chief Executive Officer (GCEO) of NNPC Ltd, emphasized the need for a "just, differentiated transition" in Africa to effectively utilize its resources for the benefit of future generations.

Speaking alongside global energy leaders from the United States, Holland, and Oman, Mr. Kyari highlighted the importance of understanding Africa's unique circumstances when addressing the impact of climate change on energy businesses. He stressed that a differentiated approach is essential, considering that 75% of Africa's population lacks access to electricity and relies heavily on biomass as an energy source.

Mr. Kyari emphasized the urgency of closing the energy gap for Africa's growing population, especially as Nigeria is projected to be among the top 10 global economies by 2035 and the third-largest in terms of population. To achieve net-zero emissions by 2050, he emphasized the need to address the issue of energy poverty.

Nigeria, with its vast natural gas reserves, expected to reach 600 trillion cubic feet, is utilizing gas as a driving force for its energy transition. NNPC Ltd., under Mr. Kyari's leadership, is working on establishing a regional gas pipeline network to supply natural gas across the African continent and increase its Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) exports.

To further support the transition, NNPC Ltd is

# NNPC boss advocates just Energy Transition in Africa



Kyari

committed to eliminating gas flaring in its projects. The captured gas will be directed towards the development of power plants, boosting nationwide electricity supply, creating employment opportunities, and driving the industrial and economic growth of the nation.

In a demonstration of NNPC Ltd's dedication to a net-zero future by 2025, the company recently became the first state-owned oil company to join the United Nations Global Compact, reinforcing its commitment to sustainable practices.

Mr. Kyari's call for a just energy

transition and his efforts to drive Nigeria's energy sector towards sustainability have gained recognition at the COP28 Conference. As conversations on finding sustainable solutions for a decarbonized energy future continue, his perspective and initiatives are expected to contribute significantly to Africa's energy landscape and the global fight against climate change.

On his part, Mr. Joshua OsheOlorunsogo, 25, said given the huge value of the programme, he hopes it will be sustained, going forward.

# Gov Yahaya presents 2024 budget estimate of N207.7b

By WILLIE ATTAH, Gombe

GOMBE State Governor, Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya, has presented the State's 2024 budget estimate of N207,750,200,000.00b to the State House of Assembly.

Making the presentation, Sub-Population and the PMTCT subpopulation.

Thereafter, the following activities unfolded the following day: An awareness walk starting from CBN Garden to the APIN Office in JUTH Old site, Jos, where Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) like WHO, CISHAN, NEPWHAN, APYN, ASHWAN, PLASHEMA, HMB, SPHCB, NMA, WHO, APHPN, SFH, APIN, KP Secretariat, Nigerian Red Cross and SMOH were in attendance. They delivered their goodwill messages respectively.

Delivering her speech at the event, the Acting Executive Director of Plateau State AIDS Control Agency (PLACA), Mrs. Martha Swomen, emphasized on the theme saying, "putting communities on the driver's seat of HIV response in Nigeria with support from the Community leaders, religious leaders and traditional leaders will not only ensure ownership, but increase domestic funding and sustainability of the HIV/AIDS response at all levels.

Meanwhile, the WAD Planning Committee Chairman, Rev. Chris Damcher, said that HIV among other illnesses was the easiest to manage because it was not a killer disease like it used to be, hence the need for communities to take lead in fighting the spread of HIV.

are strategic, forward-looking and people-oriented.

The sectoral allocation in the proposal showed that the economic sector is allocated N89,581,200,000.00b; Social Sector N23,612,500,000.00b; General Administration N4,879,500,000.00b while Law and Justice N2,426,800,000.00b.

In the economic sector, the Ministry of Works, hHousing and Transport got the highest allocation of N50,962,500,000.00b followed by Water Resources, Environment and Forest Resources which was allocated N18,365,600,000.00b.

In the social sector, the Ministry of Education was allocated the highest sum of N8,103,800,500.00b followed by the Ministry of Health which was allocated the sum of N5,953,200,500.00b.

# Governor Bala Mohammed NASCP approves 861 for PMTCT

By EZEKIEL DONTINNA

THE National AIDS, STIs Control Programme of Federal Ministry of Health (NASCP), has, through the support of Global Fund (GF), approved the scale up of over eight hundred and sixty-one (861) sites for Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission of HIV (PMTCT) towards the prevention of transmission to newborn babies in Plateau State.

The State Commissioner of Health, Dr. Cletus Bako Shurkuk, disclosed this recently at the press briefing on the occasion marking 2023 World AIDS Day, held at the conference hall of the Ministry of Health at JD Gomwalk Secretariat, Jos, the Plateau State capital.

The commissioner said, "the World Health Organisation (WHO) has set aside every 1st December as WORLD AIDS DAY" since 1988 (about 35 years). The first ever international day for global health in which United Nation Agencies, government and Civil Society Organisations joined to campaign around specific themes related to HIV.

"To this end, National AIDS, STIs Control Programme of Federal Ministry of Health (NASCP) through the support of Global Fund (GF) scaled up Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission of HIV (PMTCT) in all the states of the



Shurkur

Federation with 861 sites in Plateau State towards prevention of HIV transmission to all newborn babies with an overall approach of "Finding all, Testing all, Treating all and Reporting all pregnant mothers.

"In line with this year's theme: "Let Communities Lead", NASCP supported the training of twenty (20) Community Mobilizers per LGAs to effectively drive in demand creation to all pregnant women of which

Plateau State is at the verge of concluding her training. Global Fund (GF), through NASCP is distributing dual test kits for HIV/Syphilis to all the states", he disclosed.

Shurkuk expressed confidence that Plateau State was one of the states that have attained HIV treatment saturation of having 49,539 people currently on treatment, but over 95% of the clients were virally suppressed which was a giant stride, hence the need to bridge the unmet treatment gap amongst the Paediatric



Yahaya

## Interview

# We will work to unite Ngasland

**Recently, a new Ngolong was selected for Ngasland, 8 years after the demise of the former Ngolong Ngas in 2015. Chindapba Ngop engaged the new Ngolong on what he intends to do to drive the development process of his people and help foster peace and unity amongst his people. Excerpts:**

**HOW does it feel to emerge as the Ngolong Ngas, a paramount ruler of one of the largest ethnic groups on the Plateau after so much controversies over the stool?**

First of all, I give God the glory for this development. And also use this opportunity to express my profound gratitude to the Executive Governor of Plateau State, His Excellency, Barrister Caleb Mutfwang. I also appreciate the Plateau State Joint Traditional Council, under the leadership of Da Jacob Gyang Buba, the Ngas Development Association (NDA), under the able leadership of Nde Gonen Gofwen, the Pankshin/Kanke Traditional Council, Ngas Elders Forum, religious leaders, Pankshin/Kanke political office/tittle holders, the Ngas Youth Movement and the entire Ngas nation for their unanimous prayers and support to see that the vacant stool of Ngolong Ngas is filled, so as to bring about unity, peace, love, prosperity and the overall development of our people at home and in the diaspora.

As for ascending to this enviable throne as the 7th Ngolong Ngas, I feel its God's wish that it is time for me to serve my people in this capacity. However, I will not deny the fact that there were some controversies that arose as a result of the contest for the exalted stool. And, these controversies have no doubt made Ngas nation to be culturally divided and has suffered socio-political and economic losses for the past eight years as a result of the vacuum created by the demise of His Royal Highness, late Nde Joshua Dimlong of blessed memory who joined our ancestors in June 2015.

Of course, what seemed to be controversial over the delay to fill in the vacant position stemmed from some long standing unresolved chieftaincy issues at some district levels which needed to be settled before the selection into the vacant stool. Happily, sometimes in September this year, ten of us excluding two district heads who were yet to receive their appointment letters out of the 12 Districts Gazetted under the law, met and resolved to approach government on our desire to select a leader amongst us to fill the vacant stool. Thereafter, the ten of us were invited by the Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs for a meeting. The meeting was beneficial and all of us came out from the meeting with a lot of excitement. We were given three weeks



**Ngolong Ngas**

within which to decide a date for the selection.

After the expiration of the three weeks given by the ministry, a 3-man committee headed by Mr. Francis Bot, came down to Pankshin and met with the ten of us for yet another chat and we collectively fixed October 13, 2023 for the selection.

On the day fixed for the selection, shortly after the presiding officer had made his remarks, the district heads of Kabwir, Amper and Wokkos staged a walk-out protest, saying that those District Heads that have had their districts upgraded to the status of chiefdoms should not be allowed to participate in the selection process. But to my limited knowledge, the legal notice of 1978 of membership has not been repealed, in that wise, they still retained their membership of the electoral college for selection. The selection took place on October 13, 2023 and I have since received my letter of appointment from government.

**"Did it ever cross your mind that you might be the next Ngolong Ngas? If so, how have you prepared for the exalted position?"**

Well, I have never contemplated occupying the vacant stool. I therefore, consider myself privileged to have ascended to this exalted throne. Even though to a great extent, there are challenges ahead in my new assignment, but having served as the District Head of Garam, one of the oldest districts in Ngasland with my

experience at the grassroot, I am fully equipped to serve as the custodian of the culture, customs and traditions of the Ngas race. But as human beings, our minds are always free to learn and as it is often said, self-knowledge has no end and it is an "endless river".

**In any contest, the aftermath is bitterness in some quarters. How do you intend to win over those that are feeling slighted and unite your kingdom?**

In truth, yes, I know three of my colleagues who were and are still aggrieved over my selection, which is natural in any contest. But I am trying my best to reach out to them and also to plead with them to sheathe their swords in the overall interest of the Ngas nation. Let's come together and join hands to work for the benefits of our people who have been without a leader for 8 years.

In any leadership, position, only one person can occupy the top position at a time, but the process cannot be run by one person. Because a tree cannot make a forest. I, therefore, wish to kindly borrow a phrase from our elder of repute, Nde General Gowon, to say that the whole process was a "no victor no vanquished" scenario.

**What are your plans to develop your domain?**

Well, my first plan is to make

consultations with leaders of noble minds such as: traditional rulers, Ngas Development Association, Elders Forum, religious leaders, youth leaders and political leaders so that we can forge a way forward that will bring peace unity and development to Ngas land. And, together we will work hard to bring Ngas nation to limelight once again.

Again, I want my reign not to be felt by only the Ngas race or my family or my contemporaries but by extension, I will try and build bridges of unity and love with our neighbours and other tribes across the state and beyond. Above all, I will make myself a veritable partner in the act of governance in Plateau State to attract development to my domain.

**As an experienced Chief, what are the likely challenges of your new office?**

I don't see challenges in leadership as anything abnormal. As I have said earlier, the new office will definitely come with its challenges and we shall try our utmost best to tackle them. Security is one of the big challenges we have in most of our communities today. Therefore security is going to be one of my top priorities. I am calling on government to strengthen the traditional institutions to enable the traditional rulers contribute in improving the security architecture of the state.

Again, I have observed with dismay where moral decadence has eaten deep into the fabric of our youth at a frightening dimension. Our youths now seek pleasure in drug abuse, violence and crimes. We are going to liaise with relevant bodies to see that we reduce it

to the barest minimum. We will ensure that our youth are engaged in agriculture and other meaningful ventures.

**There were so many people from the royal lineage who were interested in the exalted position of the Ngolong Ngas. What would you say gave you the upper hand over them?**

I was not at any advantageous position over my colleagues who were vying for the position. I just said let me try my luck and in fact, with the cordial relationship I had with most of them, I engaged them in talking and they graciously stepped down for me.

In fact, I regard myself as a man of destiny because I was selected not on account of riches or position of responsibility; therefore I am not better than any of them in anyway. I want to thank them immensely for their support.

Nde Jika urges Ngas people to imbibe the spirit of forgiveness, unity, love and tolerance so as to bring about peaceful co-existence irrespective of their religious differences. The monarch promises to sustain the dignity, integrity and preserve the cultural heritage of the Ngas nation.

Nde Jika Golit was born on July 16, 1964 in Garram District of Kanke Local Government of Plateau State to the royal family of Nde Golit Gokum Mangme 1 and Mama Goltumwa Kopripba Bekatda of Pet village of Garram District.

Before ascending to this position, Nde Jika Golit was the District Head of Garram District in Kanke Local Government Council of Plateau State. He is happily married and blessed with seven children, 6 males and 1 female.

**"I was not at any advantageous position over my colleagues who were vying for the position. I just said let me try my luck and in fact, with the cordial relationship I had with most of them, I engaged them in talking and they graciously stepped down for me. In fact, I regard myself as a man of destiny because I was selected not on account of riches or position of responsibility; therefore I am not better than any of them in anyway. I want to thank them immensely for their support."**

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## Foreign News

# Netanyahu's corruption trial resumes amid Israeli war

A corruption trial against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu resumed on Monday after a two-month pause due to the continuing Gaza war. He did not attend the hearing.

Netanyahu has been charged with fraud, bribery and breach of trust in three cases filed in 2019. He can be sentenced to up to 10 years in jail and/or a fine if convicted in a bribery case.

The first session of Netanyahu's corruption trial was on May 24, 2020. The trial has been prolonged because it was initially paused due to COVID-19 and more recently, because of Israel's war on Gaza following the October 7 attack by Hamas.

Netanyahu, who is the first sitting Israeli prime minister to face court as a defendant, has denied any charges and claimed that the indictments were part of a politically charged witch-hunt against him by his rivals to remove him from office.

He can only be removed from office if convicted, which can also lead to him being sentenced to punishment. Netanyahu and the state could each choose to appeal the ruling. Doing so would take the case to the country's Supreme Court, further prolonging a resolution.

Netanyahu, who faced months of protests against his controversial judicial overhaul plan, has been accused of using the legislation to circumvent his legal troubles.

The high-profile trial is



Netanyahu

expected to last several more months. An appeal process, if necessary, could take years.

The Israeli leader is exempt from attending the court hearings, but he may be asked to testify within a few months, according to Yedioth Ahronoth newspaper.

Minister David Amsalem of Netanyahu's Likud party called the resumption of proceedings during the war "a disgrace".

"War? Captives? ... No, no. The most important thing now is to renew Netanyahu's trial," Amsalem posted on X on Sunday.

Netanyahu remains highly unpopular and many Israelis

blame him for security lapses leading to the October 7 Hamas attack – the deadliest since Israel's founding in 1948.

Netanyahu, the longest-serving Israeli prime minister – brought far-right Israeli politicians into government and boosted illegal settlements on Palestinian lands – pushing aside the political process for a Palestinian state as envisaged in the Oslo Accords of the 1990s.

Long before the current war erupted, the killings of Palestinians by Israeli forces and settler violence had skyrocketed.

## Republican field shrinks to four for presidential debate

THE Republican field has shrunk to just four candidates for its final presidential primary debate on Wednesday in Alabama.

Ron DeSantis, Nikki Haley, Chris Christie and Vivek Ramaswamy were the only candidates who qualified to appear in the last bout, the party said.

The debate, the fourth of the primary race, required candidates to have 80,000 donors and 6% in two US polls.

Republican frontrunner Donald Trump is once again skipping the forum.

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With the field narrowing, and only weeks to go until the early-voting state of Iowa

casts its first ballots on 15 January, pressure is building on candidates to show they are capable of taking on Mr Trump for the Republican nomination.

The debate will be hosted by NewsNation at 20:00 local time (01: 00 GMT) and is taking place at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa. It will be moderated by a panel of conservative-leaning journalists - including former Fox News host Megyn Kelly.

The qualifications are the strictest of the debates so far.

Earlier on Monday, North Dakota Governor Doug Burgum dropped out of the race as it appeared unlikely he would be allowed to participate on the debate

stage.

Mr Burgum, who had struggled to make his mark in previous debates, hit out at the process in his statement, saying the thresholds set by party leaders were "taking the power of democracy away from the engaged, thoughtful citizens of Iowa and New Hampshire".

Former Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson - an outspoken critic of Mr Trump - remains in the race, but also missed out on a spot on the stage. He is achieving around 1% support in national polls.

"The fourth debate is another fantastic opportunity for our Republican candidates to share our winning agenda with the American people," party chairwoman Ronna McDaniel in a statement on Monday night.

Media caption, Watch: A year ago we asked Americans about Trump running again

She noted that former Republican President Ronald Reagan visited the same campus during his successful re-election campaign in 1984 "just before cruising to a landslide victory".

The third debate in Miami, hosted by NBC, featured heated exchanges between biotech millionaire Mr Ramaswamy, former UN Ambassador Haley and Florida Governor DeSantis. Eyes will likely be on Mrs

UNCERTAINTY is growing over Western backing for Ukraine amid Russia's intensifying campaign to knock out the country's energy infrastructure.

The White House has warned the United States Congress that funds designated for providing aid to Ukraine would run out by the end of the year, in a letter made public on Monday. The European Union is also facing difficulties in agreeing on a new 50 billion euro (\$54bn) lifeline for Kyiv.

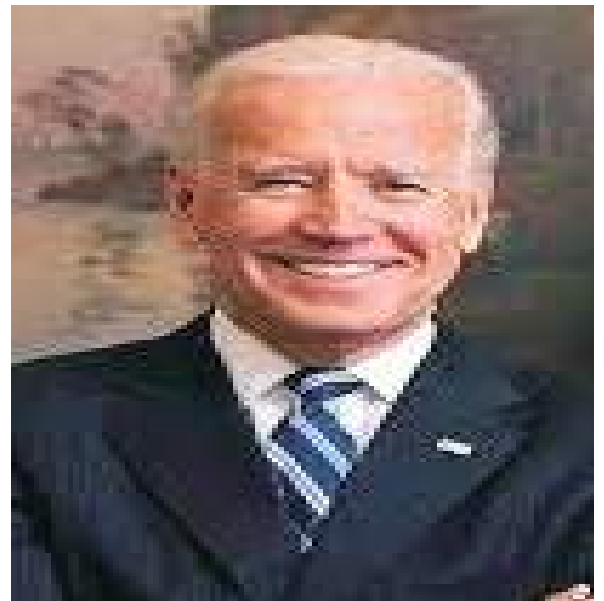
"I want to be clear: without congressional action, by the end of the year we will run out of resources to procure more weapons and equipment for Ukraine," the director of the US Office of Management and Budget, Shalanda Young, wrote in a letter to House Speaker Mike Johnson.

In the face of an upcoming harsh winter of intensifying Russian assaults on civilian infrastructure, the lack of funding could mean defeat for Ukraine, warned the budget director. "If Ukraine's economy collapses, they will not be able to keep fighting, full stop," she wrote.

The US narrowly averted a government shutdown last month, with a last-minute bill keeping federal agencies funded through the new year, but leaving out key foreign aid initiatives.

The US, Ukraine's biggest single-country donor, has sent more than \$40bn in aid since Russia's invasion in February 2022. In October, US President Joe Biden asked Congress to approve \$105bn

## US and EU struggle to agree



Biden

in national security funding, which would include support for Ukraine.

But right-wing congressional Republicans have expressed increasing scepticism towards approving more funds for Ukraine and some \$61bn in additional aid funds are now being held up by the US Congress.

"There is no magical pot of funding available to meet this moment. We are out of money – and nearly out of time," Young wrote, urging Congress to act "now".

At the same time, the EU is struggling to pass its own funding package, which would be part of the bloc's future joint budget.

Hungary has led arguments against the package. Prime Minister Viktor Orban has ploughed a pro-Russian furrow since Moscow's invasion. He is also thought to be hoping to use his threat to block the plan to try to unfreeze 22 billion euros (\$24bn) in funding for Budapest that Brussels is holding due to rule-of-law issues.

The victory of the far-right in the recent Netherlands election and fiscal challenges in Germany are also complicating negotiations over the budget, the Financial Times reported on Sunday.

The delay is endangering crucial pledges to Kyiv made months ago. A budget agreement would be "very, very difficult", a senior official said.

The 50 billion euro (\$54bn) instrument proposed is designed to keep Kyiv solvent to 2027. A failure to approve long-term funding, as well as a separate 20 billion euro (\$22bn) facility for weapons purchases, would hit Kyiv hard as the war grinds on.

Oliha Stefanishyna, Ukraine's deputy prime minister for European and Euro-Atlantic integration, last week described the EU summit as an "existential moment" for her country.

The difficulties in securing the funds in Washington and Brussels have raised concerns

in Kyiv that Western backers are experiencing "fatigue" with the drawn-out battle as fighting on the front line becomes bogged down in what some see as a "stalemate".

As Russia continues its campaign targeting civilians and infrastructure in indiscriminate bombings and drone attacks, Ukraine announced a 450 million euro (\$489m) expansion of a wind farm in its Mykolaiv region on Monday at the United Nations COP28 climate talks.

Ukrainian officials highlighted how its turbines would be spread far enough apart to survive any Russian missile attacks.

Also speaking at the climate summit, US Assistant Secretary of State for Energy Resources Geoffrey R Pyatt denounced Russia's targeting of energy infrastructure in the war, saying that Russian President Vladimir Putin "has made energy one of his weapons".

Pyatt, a former US ambassador to Ukraine, said that Putin has "done that with his drone and missile attacks on civilian energy infrastructure. He's done that by turning off the gas pipelines in order to try to weaken Europe's resolve to support the Ukrainians..."

"For Vladimir Putin, energy is just about as much a part of his war strategy as are his tanks and his missiles," he said.

Russia has spent recent weeks launching dozens of attack drones and missiles at Ukraine in overnight raids targeting energy facilities and military sites.

Ukraine's air force said on Monday that it had shot down 18 out of 23 Iranian-made Shahed drones and one missile.

Meanwhile, Russia was reported to have intensified attacks from new directions on the industrial town of Avdiivka on Monday.

"The launching of new directions proves that the enemy has been given a command to capture the city at any cost," Ukrainian officials said.



From left: Chris Christie, Nikki Haley, Ron DeSantis and Vivek Ramaswamy

## Feature

# Jungle justice and the side of law

**Jungle Justice or mob justice according to Wikipedia is "a form of public extrajudicial killings which can be found in Nigeria and Cameroon where an alleged criminal is publicly humiliated, beaten and summarily executed by vigilantes or an angry mob. Writes RAYMOND AYUBA.**

THIS form of street justice in most cases leads to severe bodily harm or death of the victim except in situations where a rescue team of Policemen or other security agencies swiftly arrive at the scene of the incident probably through credible and timely information to salvage the situation.

In Nigeria, so many innocent lives have been unjustifiably taken by these bloodlust executors of jungle Justice, leaving the families and love ones of the victims in ineradicable agony and in most cases, it is difficult to bring to book the perpetrators of the evil act due to the inability to identify them, lack of cooperation from eye witnesses to reveal their identity and massive support of the illegality by members of the public and deliberate refusal to report such despicable incidents to the police or other security agencies.

The law does not justify the killing of another person under any guise. The right to life is natural and inalienable to all human beings, whether unsuspecting or suspicious persons.

Almost all constitutions or legal systems based on common law have prohibited execution of accused persons or suspects without the decision and sentence of a competent judge, and the UN's International Covenant on Civil and Political Right (ICCPR) has declared the same: "Every human being has the inherent right to life. This life shall be protected by law. No man shall be deprived of his life arbitrarily.

Article 6.1 and 6.2 of the ICCPR provides that, the death penalty of any person can only be carried out pursuant to the final judgment rendered by a court of a competent court.

It is bothersome that the Wikipedia's definition of Jungle Justice factually captures Nigeria, a civilized country with a strong legal system and human right base as a country where Jungle justice can be found. Although, no one can ascertain how Wikipedia arrived with its fact but referring Nigeria as a country with Jungle Justice does not portray the country in the good light in the eyes of the whole world.

In Nigeria, it is a serious offence to participate in any mob action either by setting a person ablaze or inflicting physical injury on the person that could cause the death of that person but despite the existence of laws prohibiting mob action/jungle justice in the country, the spate of this street justice is still alarming.

According to SBM Intelligence, a Lagos-based think-tank, there have been 391 mobs killing in Nigeria since 2019. With reference to the SBM Intelligence finding, there is no doubt that from 2019 to date, the number may have astronomically increased.

Sometime in the month of July this year, there was a reported incident of jungle Justice in River State, Nigeria where one Martina Itagbor, a mother of four accused of witchcraft was beaten and lynched by an angry mob in the Old Ntem community of the state.

Similarly, in a report compiled by Nduka Orijinmo of BBC News, Port Harcourt, four students namely; Llody Toku, Ugonna Obuzor, Chiadika Biringa and Tekena Elkanah were accused of being thieves. The mob gave the accused persons a mock trial and found them guilty, they were stripped, marched around Aluu community of Port Harcourt, brutally beaten and set alight as thousands watched and filmed the helpless victims.



Ariwoola



Egbetoku

In 2016, a man accused of homosexuality was beaten to death in Ondo State.

On the 25th of September, 2023 some hoodlum operating as commercial motorcyclists (popularly known as Okada riders) along Tudun Wda Ring Road, Hwolshe in Jos, Plateau State, gruesomely killed one Mr. Fwinbe Thomas.

Investigation by grapevine revealed that the victim allegedly rubbed an Okada rider while driving in a Suzuki Mini Bus and drove off. The aggrieved motorcyclist alongside his colleagues aggressively trailed the victim to an interception point, pull him out of the vehicle, called him a thief and beat the victim to death using hands, stones and sticks.

In a Press Release made available to news men by the Plateau State Police Public Relations Officer, DSP Alfred Alabo in Jos, recently, the Commissioner of Police, Plateau Command, CPOkoro Julius Alawari, psc condemned the unlawful killing of Mr. Thomas and vowed to apprehend the perpetrators of the dastardly act and present them before the law court for prosecution.

The release also read: "Sequel to the report of the incident by a credible informant on 25/09/2023 at about 2230hrs, the Police patrol team attached to Anglo-Jos Division swiftly rushed to the scene of the cruel incident where they found the victim lying in the pool of his own blood beside a damaged Suzuki Mini Bus with Reg. No.: KWK 536 XA, with multiple injuries on his head." This is inhuman!

It further stated that the victim is suspected to be maliciously beaten to death by some hoodlums, suspected to be commercial motorcyclists whose commercial operation in Jos and Bukuru metropolis is prohibited.

Base on the above assertion, the Okada riders who took the life of the innocent

young man in Jos, the State Capital are contraveners of the Plateau State Commercial Motorcycle Prohibition Law 2010.

Something cheering about the killing of Mr. Fwinbe Thomas is that the Plateau State Command has arrested one of the perpetrators who is current assisting the Command in its investigation.

In a related development, distressed calls were put through by concerned Plateau residents to Rantya Police Divisional Headquarters that a tricycle thief was surrounded and attacked by angry mob at Dadin-Kowa, Jos. The DPO of the Division, SP Ayuba A. Iliya immediately mobilized his men to the scene, rescued the suspect and recovered the alleged stolen tricycle to his division. If not for the timely information by members of the public and prompt response of the Police, no one would have ascertained the fate of this suspect and the statistics of Jungle Justice in the country would have possibly been added by one.

These barbarous acts are just a few among other Jungle justices that have been carried out in different part of the country in recent times.

Effort should be intensified to tackle the menace of mob Justice in Nigeria by restoring confidence in the legal system of the country, discouraging the evil practice, providing timely information about intending mob action to the Police, and bringing perpetrator to justice.

Section 33(1) of the Nigerian Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999(as amended) provides that; "Every person has a right to life and no one shall be deprived intentionally of his life, save in execution of the sentence of a court in respect of a criminal offence of which he has been found guilty in Nigeria"

According to Section 315 of the Criminal code Act, "Any person who unlawfully kills another is guilty of an offence called

murder or manslaughter, according to the circumstances of the case."

Section 220 of the Penal Code states that, "whoever causes death:

By doing an act with the intention of causing death or bodily injury as is likely to cause death commits the offence of Culpable Homicide.

Section 8 (1) of Administration of Criminal and Justice Act (2015) also states that,

"A suspect shall:

Be accorded humane treatment, having regards to his right to dignity of his person;

Not be subjected to any form of torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment"

Section 2(1) of the Violence against Persons Act says,

"a person who willfully causes or inflicts physical injury on another person by means of any weapon, substance or object, commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a term of imprisonment not exceeding five years or a fine not exceeding N100,000.00 or both"

In 2021, a bill seeking to protect persons against mob action was introduced by Hon. Emeka Martins Chinedu, member of the House of Representatives representing Ahiazu-Ezinihitte Mbaise Federal Constituency of Imo State but the bill was criticized and misinterpreted to mean a bill seeking to jail protesters by some Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). But in the true sense of it, what has a bill seeking to criminalize Jungle Justice got to do with protesters?

However, everybody is entitled to their individual opinion but frankly speaking; Jungle Justice is evil act against morality that should be condemned by all.

**SERGEANT RAYMOND AYUBA is attached to Plateau State Police Public Relations Department and can be reached through: successclergy@gmail.com.**

# EYE'S WORLD

With PALANG KASMI

## Health

### COP28: 41 funders endorse financing climate, health solutions

By PALANG KASMI

A consortium of multilateral development banks and funders, countries and philanthropies have published the Guiding Principles for Financing Climate and Health Solutions ("Guiding Principles"), announced at the World Climate Action Summit during the 28th session of Conference of Parties to the UNFCCC (COP28) in Dubai.

Guiding Principles respond to low- and middle-income countries' calls to mobilize finance to save lives now and in the future as the climate crisis threatens global health.

The Guiding Principles establish a shared vision for financing that will rapidly reduce greenhouse gas emissions to improve health, protect people from the range of climate risks to health, and build resilient, environmentally sustainable health systems.

The Guiding Principles were developed by the COP28 Presidency in collaboration with The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria, The Green Climate Fund, The Rockefeller Foundation, The World Health Organization and the ATACH Working Group on Financing, and in consultation with over 50 financing partners and civil society organizations. The Guiding Principles have been endorsed by 41 organizations, with more expected following COP28.

#### About COP28

COP28 UAE is taking place at Expo City Dubai, November 30-December 12, 2023. The Conference is expected to convene over 70,000 participants, including heads of state, government officials, international industry leaders, private sector representatives, academics, experts, youth, and non-state actors.

As mandated by the Paris Climate Agreement, COP28 UAE will deliver the first ever Global Stocktake – a comprehensive evaluation of progress against climate goals.



World leaders at Cop 28 commit to finance health solutions

The UAE will lead a process for all parties to agree upon a clear roadmap to accelerate progress through a pragmatic global energy transition and a "leave no one behind" approach to inclusive climate action.

Funding for mitigation and adaptation at the climate-health intersection falls well short of need. While over 90% of countries include health priorities in their Nationally Determined Contributions (the self-defined national climate pledges under the Paris Agreement), only 0.5% of multilateral climate funding is allocated to projects that explicitly address human health – and likewise, global health funders have not integrated action to address climate change into their investments. The Guiding Principles build coherence and foster collaboration across funders to accelerate the allocation of finance for the countries and communities that need it most.

The Guiding Principles acknowledge critical elements of accessible and effective financing and the need to mobilize additional

funds for climate and health solutions. Key pillars of the Guiding Principles include:

Accelerating transformative climate and health solutions to save and improve lives now and in the future;

Creating equitable, inclusive, accessible, and holistic approaches to climate and health financing and solutions;

Building the core policymaking and implementation capacities of countries, communities, and financing institutions to deliver climate and health solutions.

"Climate change is increasing health risks in every region of the world, including millions more people at risk of heat-related illness, food insecurity, infectious diseases, and poverty. A significant mobilization of financing is needed to combat these impacts, which to date have been under-recognized and under-funded," said Adnan Amin, CEO of COP28. "The COP28 Guiding Principles for Financing Climate and Health Solutions is the critical first step to address this, bringing new funders to the table in recognition of the urgent need. We

are grateful for our partners stepping up to deliver finance where it is needed most."

The Guiding Principles build on existing development finance principles and mechanisms, including the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, Paris Climate Agreement, and The Bridgetown Initiative, to support a global policy agenda that will advance the aims of countries most affected by climate change. The Guiding Principles were drafted by the five initiating parties, revised following consultations with over 50 stakeholders, and ultimately endorsed by 41 agencies (as of 1 December 2023) representing the public, private, and philanthropic sectors.

The initiating parties have committed to continued collaboration to ensure implementation and accountability in partnership with leaders of countries most affected by climate change and representatives from civil society.

#### Partner Quotes

"Climate change is one the biggest threats to human health – and communities need support to survive it. Rethinking development will help countries access much-needed resources to save lives in a warming world for generations to come," said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General, World Health Organization.

"International cooperation is essential to ensuring healthy, resilient communities in vulnerable regions grappling with the effects of climate change. The Green Climate Fund is a proud partner and signatory to the Guiding Principles, which are an important framework for coalescing partners around strategies to mobilize more finance for climate-informed health investments in need of them the most," said Mafalda Duarte, Executive Director, Green Climate Fund.

"Adaptation is an imperative for today, not tomorrow, as climate change is challenging our ability to deliver sustainable impact. The Global Fund is joining other global funders in prioritizing country-driven efforts to address environmental health threats," said

Peter Sands, Executive Director, The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

"The world's health systems need to be transformed to ensure people can not only survive the climate crisis, but live, work, and prosper how and where they want. The Guiding Principles will accelerate the coordinated action needed to deliver not just more funding, but the better-quality funding necessary for health systems transformation. We are proud to endorse these Principles and are committed to leveraging our resources to protect the health of people and the planet," said Dr Rajiv J Shah, President, The Rockefeller Foundation.

"The Adaptation Fund is pleased to endorse the Guiding Principles for Financing Climate and Health Solutions. With more than 3 billion people worldwide highly vulnerable to climate change and facing increased health risks, it is imperative to accelerate adaptation measures that build healthy, resilient communities and protect people from a range of climate risks to health. We are committed to supporting the most vulnerable to adapt to climate change through country-driven and locally led action, and already fund projects that are improving access to clean water, hygiene, food security, reducing climate risks and building resilience and healthy lives at the same time. We need to scale this up to address urgent global adaptation needs, and we hope these Principles will help strengthen that ambition on the ground," said Mr Mikko Ollikainen, Head, Adaptation Fund.

"Climate change is a public health emergency that can no longer be ignored. Health has become the human face of climate change. The Guiding Principles are a pivotal and timely stride to improve financing at the intersection of climate and health, in line with netFWD's priorities," said Bathylle Missika, Head of Division, Gender, Philanthropy & Partnerships, OECD Development Centre, Network of Foundations.





# EVER'S WORLD

With PALANG KASMI

## Lifestyle

### Gonda @ 70: A celebration of God's faithfulness

By  
**EZEKIEL DONTINNA**

IT was indeed a day for a surprise birthday party for Engr Esther Gavou Gonda, former Nigeria's Federal Permanent Secretary as she turned 70.

The day for the surprise party, which took place on November 24, 2023 at Crespan Hotel also came with double blessings of a surprise rainfall in parts of Jos Plateau State.

Knowing her mother's antecedents, the chief surprise birthday plotter, daughter of Gonda, Miss Isabella Mambyen Gonda, took a sharp one on her mother who ordinarily would have preferred to just have a low-key birthday celebration.

Infact a day earlier, Gonda had spent her birthday which is on November 23 with wards of Kids With A Vision Foundation, K-WAVF orphanage at Rayfield, alongside a few family members and friends, where she dined and wined with them, distributed gifts and food items, and spoke of her fulfilled life of humble beginnings to mentor them and encourage them to aspire to be future leaders despite their situation. For Gonda, it was a day well spent and her birthday was over.

Unknown to her, Miss Isabella was also busy with other plans, to put more smiles on her mum, whom she described as selfless and more of a friend to her, rather than a mother, and saw it as a chance to call for a grand celebration to honor her mother for attaining a glorious age of seventy (70).

Engr. Gonda got up that day, thinking it was just like a normal day as expected, without suspecting any flamboyant event to celebrate her birthday, but was taken by surprise by her daughter who led her into a crew of well wishers who waited patiently to receive her with a birthday song to mark her 70th birthday, as she arrived the venue of the grand event with shock written all over her face. Her daughter, using some few of her friends and acquaintances whom she so much trusted and believed would be able to keep it away from her mother, achieved this great surprise event knowing quite well that, her mother would not buy into idea and may file a resistance if she had discovered it earlier. Interestingly, as she was putting one or two things at the venue of the celebration, God showed his miracle as He always blesses whoever has good intentions, and blessed the occasion with a heavy down pour that lasted for hours to mark His presence there in celebration of His daughter, Engr. Gonda, who through His grace, is a woman of virtue who has touched the lives of many Nigerians.

Engr. Gonda is a woman with many aliases and has impacted in the society in diverse ways. She served as Federal Permanent Secretary in Nigeria during President Goodluck Jonathan's regime



The celebrant and daughter Isabella

and her hardwork earned her the prestigious award of Order Of the Niger (OON). She is also a Patron of the Girls Brigade Nigeria, a columnist with THE NIGERIA STANDARD Newspaper's Rock Magazine and the Publisher/CEO of Inspire Magazine Nigeria. Gonda also runs a private school and is the Proprietress of Heritage of Grace Academy, which has graduated many students from primary to secondary school. As a key stakeholder in her Alma-mata, Gindiri Old Students Association (GOSA) and Nigerian Society of Engineers (NSE), Gonda has been playing roles that is unprecedented

including rendering other social and humanitarian services that touch facets of life. She is equally a recipient of many awards. No wonder, many people cued into the surprise plan to celebrate a good mother for her endless sacrifices to humanity, and were out waiting for the d-day to pour out their minds in appreciation to her kind gestures.

Although, the event was like an an ambush on her, it turned out to be a manifestation of God's faithfulness to her through the efforts of her daughter Isabella, who looked much like her younger sister even at 70, as the celebrant looked agile and active, displaying strength in her dance steps.

Speaking shortly after the occasion, Isabella the glaringly happy daughter of the celebrant who organised the party, said, "My mother is an interesting personality who usually does not like any celebration or party on her birthday, and that was why we took her by surprise".

"She just wanted to celebrate with the orphans which she did yesterday with at least, three hundred (300) children presenting gifts. So, I decided to say, 'you have been giving, giving and giving so, right now I want to give you something too. If she had known, she would have protested by saying, 'No, no, no, there is no need for that, but we decided to do it and it must be a surprise'".

"We are not just celebrating Engr. Esther Gonda, but her legacy because she has touched many lives. It was more of a celebration and also a testament to a life well spent in every ramification. It is also a testimony to tell other people that a life well lived is celebrated at this age", said an excited Isabella.

She however, prayed that because of the kind of mother she has, who happens

described Engr. Esther Gonda, as one of their favourite daughters because she has no record of naughtiness while growing up as a child.

Another speaker at the forum who is a close friend and classmate of Gonda, Madam Grace Makeri, described the celebrant as an exceptional personality who relates with all her classmates not minding the class and status she has attained in life and could as well go to the point of reaching to some who were in need.

Delivering a brief sermon at the occasion, one of her sons, Rev. Dr. Sylvester Dachollom, of the Church Of Christ In Nations (COCIN) Headquarters Jos, while reading from Psalm 90 said the Lord has been the driver of Engr. Gonda and urged the children and grandchildren to emulate the great virtue of their mother by also allowing God to be their driver.

The Celebrant who could not hide her joy for attaining the age of 70, and who was so thankful for the pleasant surprise was all over the place dancing and praising God for allowing her witness this outpour of love from her loved ones.

Gonda, who appeared still strong and agile, thanked God for seeing her to glorious age of 70 in good health saying, "I am overwhelmed about this surprised party organised by my daughter. I also thank you all for being part of this positive conspiracy". Describing Mama Susan Janfa, as being her strength all these while, she said, the story of her life was by grace all through, and expressed appreciation to the former Military Governor of the defunct Plateau State, Rear Admiral Samuel Bitrus Atikum, Dr. Nandul Durfa (her husband's friend), Chief Samaila Danko, Mrs. Anna M. Gyang, Prof. Nenfort Gomwalk and a host of others for impacting positively in her life.

The celebrant however amazed guests and danced as if she was still in her forties, with friends, classmates, acquaintances, children, grandchildren, families and all those who graced the occasion joined her.

Highlights of the events was line up for different photograph shots and displays, and special birthday dance presentations from Berom women dancers who spiced the day.

to be a turning point to many, she is going to work on how to wear the big shoes her mother has worn in life saying, "These are shoes too big to wear. It is almost 10 size bigger than me, but I am hoping that I can one day leave a legacy like hers. This is because my mother has taught me several lessons in life that have changed my perception about life and people. She has been sacrificial and caring without expecting or getting anything back in return or any reward for what she has done and it pleases her so much".

Many people who know and saw her move with this natural grace of a ballerina, were all out to grace the event to surprise and shower the celebrant with love. Among some of the special people in her life was her elder brother, Prof. Bulus Nyam Gyang, who said the welcome remarks at the dinner. He



Gonda



**Editorial**

**Japa syndrome: Whither Nigeria?**

THE Nigerian media has been awash with stories and reports of medical personnel, mostly doctors and nurses "escaping," "fleeing," or "disappearing," mostly in a hasty manner from the country in search of "greener pastures."

THIS migration of doctors and others working especially in the health sector to other countries has negatively taken a toll on hospitals and other medical facilities across the country. One consequence is that these institutions have had to reduce the number of their outpatients and surgeries due to a shortage of manpower.

IT has been reported that almost all the health institutions are battling with the shortage as they can not cope with the high number of patients who throng government hospitals, which are more affordable compared with the private ones.

IN a report, it was gathered that the Chairman of the House of Representatives Committee on Health, Dr Amos Mogaji, recently raised the alarm that not less than five wards with about 150 beds, had been closed down at the Lagos University Teaching Hospital, Idi-Araba, due to shortage of health workers. He said the five wards had to be shut because there were no workers to operate them despite the large number of patients received at the institution daily.

THE Kano branch of the Nigeria Medical Association, NMA disclosed that a total of 162 medical doctors and 789 nurses have relocated to foreign countries from the state in continuation of the "Japa syndrome" The chairman, Dr Abdullahi Sulaiman said "It is a bad situation and this is across almost all healthcare workers, not only doctors. They are leaving for Gambia, Somalia, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, and many others every week."

RECENTLY, the CMD of the Jos University Teaching Hospital, Dr Pokop Bupwatda, said every week, he loses a radiographer. There are a whole lot of other situations around the country like these.

THIS situation is indeed worrisome, to say the least, and the effects are manifesting in all ramifications with consequences too grief to bear.

VERY recently, the Federal Government approved the recruitment of 200 medical and clinical staff at the Federal Medical Centre, Idi-Aba, Abeokuta, Ogun State, as part of government's effort to replace health workers who have, in recent times migrated to foreign nations from the FMC in Abeokuta.

FACTORS like, insufficient funding of the healthcare system, inadequate infrastructure, all contribute to brain drain of skilled professionals seeking better opportunities abroad, and challenges in retaining healthcare talent.

ADDITIONALLY, issues such as inadequate training opportunities, lack of modern medical equipment, bureaucratic hurdles, and systemic challenges further contribute to the "japa" syndrome, pushing healthcare professionals to seek environments where they can practice with better resources and support.

THE declining value of the Naira is also a factor. A situation where the fluctuation in the value of our currency seems to continue unabated is also a cause for concern. Those heading out are assured of earning in hard currency. When converted to the Naira, the volume is unbelievable.

THE Federal Government needs to lift the ban on engaging doctors for residency in the hospitals.

WITH all these, one would expect that it would all be a rosy affair once you jet out for "better" opportunities. However, many times that is not the case.

THERE have been reports of many getting disenchanted at their destinations for one reason or the other. Some of these stories are not pleasant to the ears.

SOMETHING needs to be done to make Nigerians desist from this act of escaping, fleeing, or disappearing quickly from "the" situation in a hasty and urgent manner, government needs to act fast therefore by putting in place attractive policies that will make Nigerian professionals desire to stay back home.

DEPRESSION has many possible causes which affect the lives of individual, family and community at large. Most people become victims of depression because of the situation they found themselves.

Depression is a mood disorder which affects how someone feels, thinks, behaves and it can also lead to varieties of emotional and physical problems which include, sleep disturbance, tiredness, sadness, reduced appetite and weight loss.

There are possible ways by which someone can overcome depression which involves trying new things, reframing your thoughts, try to eat healthy diet and don't drink too much alcohol.

In terms of trying new things, depression often reduces someone's interest and motivation to explore new things. You might find it helpful to develop a list of things you might like to try. Then work through them one at a time. You might have to compel yourself to try them, and you might find out that you don't necessarily have the



**Best way to overcome depression**

motivation to pursue new things beyond your initial attempt.

But over times, you might find that something sparks your interest or help you feel more motivated. It's not always easy, but consider making it a goal to try at least one new thing each week, it may help you fight off a sense of boredom and give you something to look forward.

You can also reframe your thoughts when you find out

you have a negative thought. Consciously reframe it in a positive way. For example, you might replace something like "this will never work" with something more positive such as, Here are few things that I can try that will help me get started. Shifting your focus to your strengths and abilities can help you maintain a more positive mindset.

**Gwamna Beckly**  
**Nehemiah IT student**  
**Federal Polytechnic Bauchi**

**Bad roads and its effects on lives of individuals**

WE take them for granted, but bad roads are the bed rock of our society. Roads connect us from one point to another, thereby transporting goods and provides access to opportunities.

But when roads are bad or poorly maintained, it can have ripple effects on everything including production and health.

Bad roads condition can take a toll on our comfort and

energy levels. The large dumps and pot holes are uncomfortable for transportation

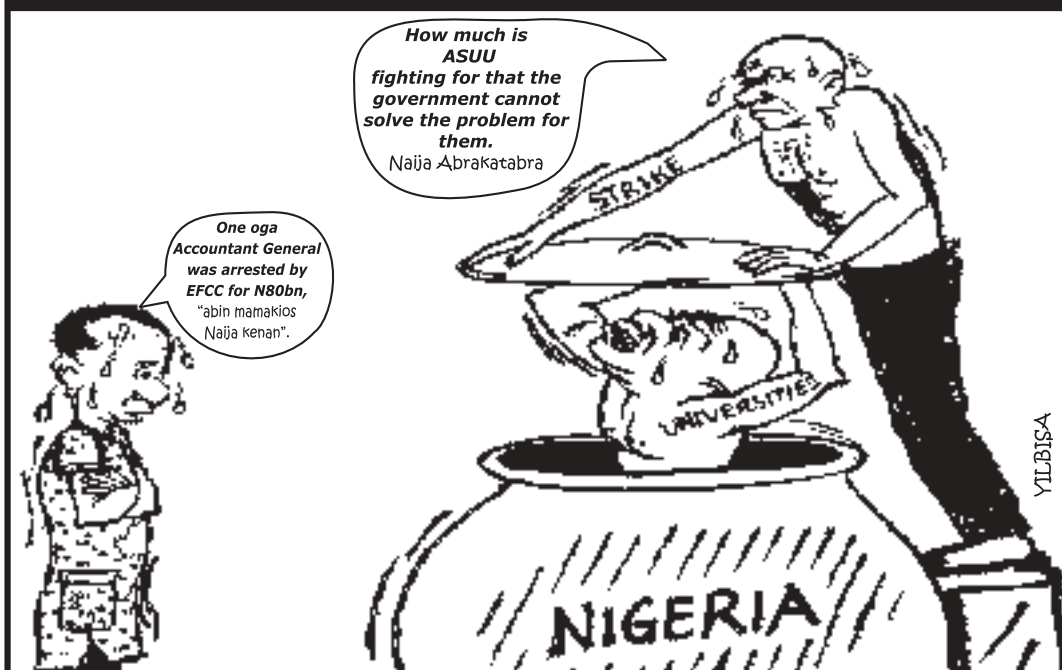
Most accidents according to research have been caused by roads with damaging effects on human lives in the society.

Poorly maintained roads lead to damage of vehicles resulting to costly repairs considering the harsh

economy and costly living in our society nowadays.

To avoid loss of lives and properties and also be free from a lot of inconveniences, I am appealing to the Government to do something about the bad roads so that life may be comfortable for road users and of course farmers who transport goods to the urban centres.

**Standard Cartoon**



## Opinion

# Let the righteousness of our people count

**AJOKE EROGBOGBO GBELEYI**

Good people, great nation, no doubt, it is time for us as Nigerians to entrench an abiding code of conduct towards checking the excesses of our ever erring elite, who, relentlessly and unrepentantly, commit damnable offences against humanity, since the arms of the law allows them immunity of some sort, to the detriment of hardworking peace-loving Nigerians.

Noteworthy is the dictum, a nation that neglects sound ethical principles and enduring values, can never achieve set standards maximally.

Neither can such a country command respect, in the comity of nations, irrespective of her enviable endowments, as a sovereign state blessed with innumerable resources, human and natural.

Unfortunately, this is the category our beloved country falls into.

Imagine the impact, consequences of our weak character as educated elite

have had on all spheres of anything outside constructive governance, over decades? Though few trees cannot make a forest, I must however, salute the courage of the highly disciplined and committed ones among us. Incontestable is the assertion that "compared to other economies, the Nigerian economy is indeed troubled, just as our predicament is not necessarily a result of influence from external forces, but a consequence of the type of leadership we have had, since independence in 1960." It is time for majority of Nigerians, particularly the elite group and all those in position of authority to ensure that President Bola Tinubu succeeds, as he steers the virtually wrecked ship called Nigeria, back to life and salvage the souls of millions of Nigerians.

Those who truly love Nigerians will put the President on his toes, on the actualisation of his party's renewed hope agenda. There is so much to be done to redeem our battered image, as we look up to his successor, a highly revered gentleman of increased outstanding brilliance and strong character, to revamp and allow of our political boss, while respecting her abhorrence of peace-loving Nigerians tips from private schools. Three-term senator of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, her vast experience in nation building through the laudable programmes she initiated, as wife of the governor of Lagos State (1999-2007), will no doubt count. She is rejuvenating and impacting related sectors under her purview positively, for the benefit of humanity with her dynamic team, starting from the wife of the Vice President, Hajia Nana Shetima, wives of state governors, many professionals and politicians of repute.

It is also our fervent prayer that righteousness will count, as those who put in their best, get rewarded and celebrated. My colleagues, who are retired directors and I, belong to such a group. I was redeployed to the Ministry of Education from the Education District VI, to head the Department of Private Education and Special Programmes, by the then Deputy Governor and Hon. Commissioner for Education, Bola Ahmed Tinubu rightly promised.

A source of pride to my alma mater, Maryland Comprehensive Secondary School, Ikeja, Lagos, where I was redeployed to the Department of Private Education and Special Programmes, by the then Deputy Governor and Hon. Commissioner for Education, Bola Ahmed Tinubu rightly promised.

Values of eternal significance were entrenched in us by Rev. Fathers and Mothers including other highly revered educationists, got himself entrapped, the rest is history, to initiate reforms and get the number of approvals

## Erosion of moral values: A threat to society

**By KAYODE OJEWALE**

THERE is no doubt that moral values form the foundation of a healthy household and, in turn, a sane society.

The erosion of family values is a pressing issue that demands urgent attention and action, as the buck does not stop at the table of government alone. The onus therefore lies on every family to be responsible for its members by preserving and enhancing good moral values. There must be a collective effort by individuals, community leaders, religious organisations and policymakers as they prioritise family values.

Without civic morality communities perish; without personal morality their survival has no value – Bertrand Russell (1872-1970), British Mathematician and Philosopher.

The spate of kidnappings and ritual killings in the country has taken a different dimension as youths, mostly teenagers, are now involved in the dastardly act. In an attempt to acquire sudden wealth, these young folks, with dead conscience, indulge in acts that are capable of destroying their lives and causing ineradicable blemish on their family image or reputation.

Sometime last year in Abeokuta, Ogun State, three teenagers were arrested for beheading and burning the head of their female friend for money ritual. The teenagers confessed, while being paraded by the police, that they saw on Facebook the guidelines on how to perform the ritual to become rich. The boys admitted that they strangled the victim and then dismembered her body parts.

The other day, a 24-year-old undergraduate of a Nigerian University was arrested for allegedly killing his 20-year old girlfriend in the same

school and harvesting her organs for ritual purposes. Could it be said that these young ones have lost their conscience or that they were never taught good morals? We need not ponder much as the reason is not farfetched – poor upbringing. The family is to be faulted as parental functions have failed woefully in many quarters today. It all started with greed and metamorphosed to theft at an early age.

Not too long ago, it was revealed that mothers of these young internet scammers and fraudsters have formed an association. Shocking! Mothers who should be moral and ethical guides have turned the other way. Maybe the association is to unashamedly enable them celebrate the unexplained wealth of their children. A new dimension of criminality, which involves making rituals and harvesting of human organs, popularly called Yahoo-Plus, has now become the order of the day, in comparison to the regular internet scam activities known as Yahoo-Yahoo. Your child is not a drycleaner, yet brings bales of cloth home and you as parents do not question that act? It brings to fore the question of parental functions.

The glitz and glamour of a good life are the main things the society looks forward to and celebrates. No matter the way or manner an individual, whether young or old, acquires or amasses wealth, the society applauds and bestows huge respect on him or her. Only the rich have a say, as they are always celebrated even if their

wealth is ill-gotten. Material possessions are glorified, while moral values are vilified and less talked about.

It is important to state that the society is a reflection of the various values portrayed by different families. Whatever obtains among young people as prevalent values speaks volumes of the families they originate from. Whoever we have become as adults is a function of who we were in childhood. Unfortunately, attention isn't usually paid to how good values could be instilled in children at early stages of their lives. 'The branches of an Iroko tree should be pruned at nursery to prevent future damage if bigger than expected' states a Yoruba adage, which explains why a family is expected to teach their children good morals early in life.

There is no doubt that moral values form the foundation of a healthy household and, in turn, a sane society. The family values are good morals which include love, respect, honour, sharing and forgiveness. When a family fails to give its children the time and attention they need, it is the society that suffers the consequence. The society then begins to breed unbridled, unlettered and uncultured products.

Some factors responsible for eroded values in a family may range from physical to psychological, and could be the fault of either the parents or the children. They include the decline of moral values, social attitudinal change, the family formation, social media addiction, job loss, divorce, economic hardship, infidelity, sexual/physical abuse, extended family situations, burdens of adoption,

peer pressure, among many others. These factors also explain why the society at large is threatened and remains where it is today due to the negative consequences they have on our collective well-being.

How then can these numerous challenges that are eroding important values and the family unit be tackled head-on? There is a guiding principle in the Holy Bible which says: 'Train up a child in the way he should grow and when he is old he won't depart from it'. Becoming parents isn't just a mere status that couples attain, it comes with huge responsibilities. Parenthood is not all about parenting a child, it encompasses taking charge of the whole life of that child from the cradle to the age of accountability.

The erosion of family values is a pressing issue that demands urgent attention and action, as the buck does not stop at the table of government alone. The onus therefore lies on every family to be responsible for its members by preserving and enhancing good moral values. There must be a collective effort by individuals, community leaders, religious organisations and policymakers as they prioritise family values. Measures to alleviate the strain on struggling families should also be put in place by concerned authorities. This way, the family can transcend adverse challenges besieging it, then by and large, we rebuild our society and restore those deteriorated values in the family system.

**Kayode Ojewale writes via [kayodeojewale@gmail.com](mailto:kayodeojewale@gmail.com).**

## Change of Name

<p><b>PAM</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>PAM BENJAMIN BOT</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>PAM BENJAMIN SARLAT</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p><b>NOKWULU</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>NOKWURU EBUKA, NOKWULU CHUKWUEBUKA OLIVERS</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>NOKWULU CHUKWUEBUKA OLIVERS</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public please take note.</p>	<p><b>NNEJI</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>NNEJI PAUL PATIENCE</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>NNEJI PATIENCE NDIDIAMAKA</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p><b>KURAH</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>ILIYA ESTHER GODIYA</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>KURAH ESTHER STEPHEN</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p><b>NGUAR</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>NGUYA ALPHA BITRUS</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>NGUAR BARNABAS SUNDAY</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p><b>CHAPTI</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>PAUL CHAPTI</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>CHAPTI PAUL SATI</b>. Correct date of birth is 4/1/1999 not 4/1/1990. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>
<p><b>TOR</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>IORAPUU MSUUSHIMA JOAN</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>TOR MSUUSHIMA JOAN</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p><b>ABDULLAHI</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>ALIYU ABDULRAZAI</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>ABDULLAHI ABDULRAZAK MUHTAR</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public please take note.</p>	<p><b>KANDE</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>KANDE BITRUS DANLADI</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>KANDE DANLADI</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p><b>HARUNA</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>HARUNA KELVIN ANDREW</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>HARUNA KELVIN</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p><b>WAYIL</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>PAUL MARTINS</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>WAYIL, PAUL MARTINS</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p><b>IDOKO</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>OCHKE ELLA BATHOLOMEW</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>IDOKO ELLA BATHOLOMEW</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>
<p><b>JOHN</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>AGNES JOHN</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>JOHN AGNES OPUTE</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p><b>AMACHAM</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>AGAI TIYAR</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>AMACHAM ATIYAR HAGGAI</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public please take note.</p>	<p><b>PEACE</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>PEACE KATLONG HARUNA</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>PEACE KATLONG MIZIM</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p><b>DAHIRONG</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>DAHIRONG ISAIAH FWANGMUN</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>DAHIRONG PATRICK ISAIAH</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p><b>JOSEPHINE</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>JOSEPHINE JIMWA JAMES, JOSEPHINE JIMWADANG JINUNG'A</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>JOSEPHINE JAMES JINUNG'A</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p><b>MARY</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>MARY WODU GEYUS</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>MARY WODU DANIEL</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>
<p><b>STEPHEN</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>STEPHEN GIG JAMES</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>STEPHEN BIG JAMES</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p><b>FOTKA</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>FORKA NENPIN ISHAYA</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>FOTKA NENPIN ISHAYA</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p><b>CHRISTOPHER</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>MIREP ROSE MICHEAL</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>CHRISTOPHER ROSE DANLAMI</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p><b>OKIDU</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>MIREP GRACE</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>OKIDU GRACE MIREP</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p><b>NANKWAT</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>SOKYES NANKWAT</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>NANKWAT ISHAYA TIMOTHY</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p><b>PAM</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>PAM MARY</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>PAM MARY FRANCIS</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>
<p><b>NANCIN</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>NANCIN PETER POFI</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>NANCIN AUGUSTINE</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p><b>MOSHOD</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>MASHOOD RUKAYAT</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>MOSHOD RUKAYAT DAMILOLA</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p><b>ISA</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>MUJAHEED ISA</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>ISA MUJAHEED IDRIS</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p><b>DUNGUM</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>DUNGUM SILAS GODFFREY</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>DUNGUM DOMNAN</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p><b>GYANG</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>DAJWAT DINATU DAUDA</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>GYANG DINATU ZAKKA</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p><b>SULAIMAN</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>DIJE FATIMA TANKO</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>SULAIMAN FATIMA</b>. Correct date of birth 01/01/1968 not 12/10/1963. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>
<p><b>WUBANG</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>KHANLAT NANBAM NANCY</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>WUBANG NANCY KOENMA</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p><b>JACOB</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>JACOB DANJUMA</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>JACOB SUGABKYA DANJUMA</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p><b>MEINDOS</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>KORE GYAYOK THOMAS</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>MEINDOS GYAYOK THOMAS</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p><b>LADAN</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>BILAL YUSUF</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>LADAN BILAL YUSUF</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p><b>SUNDAY</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>SUNDAY EUNIC</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>SUNDAY EUNICE</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p><b>ADAMU</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>ADAMU SA'ID ABDULLAHI</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>ADAMU ABDULLAHI ABDULLAHI</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>
<p><b>RIFKATU</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>RIFKATU PAM MANCHA</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>RIFKATU MANCHA PAM</b>. All former documents remain valid. NMDC, all concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p><b>GUNEN</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>DACHEN DANGRIANG HOSEA</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>GUNEN SOLOMON DANGRIANG HOSEA</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p><b>GULENG</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>GULENGS MICAH GAUIS</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>GULENG MICAH GAUIS</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p><b>ABDULMUTAIB</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>ABDULMUTALIB ABDULAZEEZ</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>ABDULMUTAIB ABDULRASHEED</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p><b>OCHUEMA</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>OCHUEMA ALFA SUNDAY</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>OCHUEMA ALPHA SUNDAY</b>. Correct date of birth 29/9/1986 not 25/9/1982. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p><b>DAMULAK</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>SAMALAI ABDULLAHI</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>DAMULAK SAMAILA ABDULLAHI</b>. Date of birth is 13/9/1998. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>
<p><b>DANIANG</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>DANIANG PRICILA DENAAN</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>DANIANG PRISCILLA DENAAN</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p><b>BAYERO</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>GAD BAYERO DAVID</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>BAYERO GAD DAVID</b>. Date of birth is 28th August, 1995 not 9th July, 1982. All former documents remain valid. BVN, NIN, all concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p><b>LONGJI</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>SARTANG NAANDAT BANGGUN</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>MRS. LONGJI SARTANG JONG</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p><b>YAU</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>SAIDU YAU</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>YAU SAIDU</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p><b>ALIYU</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>ALIYU MUHAMMAD</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>ALIYU DOGONYARO MUHAMMAD</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p><b>NOEL</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>NOEL PIRINGKWAP</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>NOEL NIANGYR PIRINGKWAP</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>
<p><b>NAGWE</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>DASHE NAGWE</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>NAGWE YILRIT POLIT</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p><b>GAMBO</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>ABDULLAHI ISA GAMBO and ISA GAMBO</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>GAMBO ISA ABDULQADIR</b>. Correct date of birth is 15/07/1973. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p><b>KUMCHI</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>KUMCHI ALEY YABURUK</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>KUMCHI ALEXANDER SUNDAY</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p><b>BASHIR</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>BASHIR RABIU NASIR</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>BASHIR NASIR</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p><b>PHOEBE</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>FIBI ADAMU RAPHAEL KYUST GIDAMANA</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>PHOEBE ADAMU PWOL</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p><b>SATI</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>SUNDAY SATI</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>SATI KANENG HASSAN</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>
<p><b>MANCHA</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>MANCHA LEITU LUKA</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>MANCHA LAITU LUKA</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p><b>ELISHA</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>DUNG LUKA ELISHA</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>ELISHA LUKA PAM</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p><b>GUKAS</b></p> <p>I, <b>GUKAS PETER DANKAT</b> wish to state that my correct date of birth is 28/8/1972. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p><b>LEKKOP</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>GOFWAN ROBERT ARBET</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>LEKKOP ARBET ROBERT</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p><b>NUHU</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>NUHU GWOTPIES BILAGWAT</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>NUHU GOWPIES SANGLONG</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p><b>KWETISHE</b></p> <p>I, formerly known as <b>KWETISHE FYAFATERIMAM HARUNA</b>, now wish to be known and addressed as <b>KWETISHE FYAFA HARUNA</b>. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>

News

Coalition task Tinubu on affirmative action.

From JIDAUNA YANUNG, Abuja

A coalition of women's organisation has urged President Bola Tinubu to match words with action in mainstreaming women into politics and also into his administration.

The coalition made the demand weekend in Abuja during the formal launching of #what naija women want, organised by the Gatefield International Nigeria, Dorothy Njemanze Foundation, and Heinrich Boll Stiftung Foundation.

They also urged President Tinubu to ensure that the government commits to greater representation of women in politics and ensure better policies that affect women and for policy makers to make gender\_inclusive policies.

Ms Joy Una of Gatefield Foundation said recognising the crucial role women played in the nation's development entails the need for policies that address women's unique needs and empower



Tinubu

them to thrive.

According to her, Nigerian women remain underrepresented in politics and policy making.

Jochen Luckscheiter of the Heinrich Boll Stiftung Foundation said women participation in politics has been in a downward spiral

since 2011.

She stated that in politics, there is 20 percent less women participation in 2023. The five gender bills which will forward the rights of women were thrown out by the National Assembly.

By Dumah Randong

THE Plateau State Government has commenced the distribution of 120,000 bags of assorted fertilizers it procured for farmers across the 17 Local Government Areas in the state for dry season farming.

Governor Caleb Mutfwang who performed the official flag-off, Monday at the Nigeria Air Force Base, Jos, said agriculture is the backbone of the economy which remains the major source of livelihood to a significant portion of the population.

Represented by his Deputy, Mrs Josephine Piyo, the governor said it was therefore crucial that his administration continue to invest in the sector to ensure food security, economic growth, and poverty alleviation in the state.

"It is with great pleasure and a sense of accomplishment that we gather here to mark a significant event in the history of agricultural development in Plateau State. We have come together to celebrate the handing over of 120,000 bags of fertilizers to the Nigeria Government Covid -19 Action Economic Stimulus (NG-CARES) programme in Plateau State.

"Since assumption of office as a government, we

PLSG flags-off distribution of fertilizer to farmers



Piyo

interacted with all the donor-funded projects in the state; and discovered that the NG-CARES programme has the potential of transforming our local economy and hence we declared a state of emergency on the implementation of the NG-CARES programme in the state.

"I stand before you, filled with immense pride as we witness the fruition of our collective efforts in supporting our farmers and bolstering our agricultural sector. Agriculture has always been the backbone of our economy, providing sustenance and livelihood for a significant portion of our population.

Mutfwang thanked NG-CARES for partnering with the

state for the important initiative, stating that their commitment to supporting Plateau State's agricultural development, transforming the lives of farmers, and improving the overall agricultural landscape was commendable.

He said that in addition to the fertiliser distribution, the construction of twenty-five (25) access roads from farms to markets across the 17 Local Government Areas of the state, renovation of educational and health facilities, water projects, social transfers to the poorest of the poor, grants to Nano, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in the state would also commence.

He stressed that the success of the programme required a holistic approach that encompasses access to quality seeds, effective extension services, mechanisation, and market linkages, calling on stakeholders to continue to work together with the government to address the critical needs of the agricultural sector.

Earlier, the Head of Technical Department, NG-CARES Dr. Haggai Gutap, appreciated the state government for investing in the agricultural sector in the state, promising to ensure that fertiliser get to the farmers and ensure that it is used for what it was intended for to reduce the impact of food insecurity and boost the agricultural production in the state which would, in turn, affect the economy positively.

The programme Manager, Plateau Agricultural Development Programme, PADP, Mr Ishaku Jallingson, urged the farmers to use the fertiliser to boost the yield of their crops and not resell them.

Jallingson lauded the state government for the remarkable gesture, describing it as the first of its kind ever recorded in the history of the state. He added that the move would revive the agricultural sector in the state which has been affected by COVID-19 and insecurity.

Benue IDPs: Camps rise to 17 - SEMA

From TERESE TUHWA, Makurdi

THE Acting Executive Secretary, Benue State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA), Sir James Iorpuu, has confirmed the rise in the Internally Displaced Persons camp to seventeen, following renewed attacks by Fulani herdsmen.

Speaking at the distribution of food and non food items to displaced persons in Makurdi on Monday, sir Iorpuu listed the new camps to include Afiagh, Ayati, Iorja and Kyado in Ukum Local Government Area where some victims are living with their relations.

According to him, catering for IDPs in the state was beyond the financial scope of the state government, noting that in spite of the development, the Alia administration was taking care of them within the available resources.

The SEMA boss further revealed that following the visit of Minister of Humanitarian and Disaster Management to the state, the agency has received bundles of zinc, cement and wood for the construction of a cluster housing scheme at Mbagwen in Makurdi Local Government Area in which work will commence soon.

The National Emergency Management Agency, according to Sir Iorpuu, has

donated 6 pieces of wrappers to the 14 camps, 300 men wears, 150 mattresses, 300 children wears and 200 blankets.

He explained that due to activities of some hoodlums, the agency decided to distribute items in Makurdi while other

camps will take their turn on Tuesday.

Items distributed were 4,200 25 kg of rice, 2,810 bags of 25 kg of beans, 2,370 25kg of gari, 4,155 cartons of indomie, liters of groundnut; 191 liters of red oil and 433 cartons of Maggi while sugar was 266

bags.

Others to benefit from the food items are the rehabilitation center, Pair, Special School for the Deaf and Dump at Vandeikya and Aliade in Gwer East Local Government Council respectively.

ATBU shutdown to avoid breakdown of law

From Abbas Gungura, Bauchi

FOLLOWING the unfortunate murder of a final year Geology Student of Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University Bauchi on Sunday 3rd-12-2023, by unknown killers, the management of the university has announced the immediate closure of its academic activities for one week to avoid continued protest embarked by the students.

The Director, Media of the university, Mallam Zailani Bappah made this known to journalists during a press briefing at ATBU Guest House Bauli Inchi, where he said the decision was taken in order to prevent violence by the students on peaceful demonstration over the death of late Joseph Agabaidu.

Zailani said all students were directed to immediately vacate the campus in Yelwa and Gubi. Adding that the Management will resume school activities when students are back to their



Abdulaziz

senses.

According to him, "Security Department of the university has been directed to ensure that the students leave the two premises immediately and close all the hostels. If any student refuses to leave the campus, measures will be taken against such."

"For the purpose of

clarity, the said student was murdered, though a student of the university, but was staying outside the campus and the university has limited knowledge of students outside the campuses," Zailani explained.

"As soon as the University Security Department got the information of the murder, it immediately

reported to the police for proper investigation. The institution has done what it is expected to do."

He assured that the university management is ready to collaborate with the security agents to unravel the circumstances surrounding the cause of the murder and those involved.

"In spite of the efforts of the management to douse the tension and allow Police to investigate and get to the bottom of the matter, the students refused to be pacified, threatening to go violent," he said.

He assured that the management will continue to take adequate care of the welfare of the students, urging them to cooperate with the management in that regard.

Our correspondent reports that the Director Media hoped that after the end of the one week closure, the Students must have calmed down, tension gone down and normalcy returned so that school activities would continue as usual.

Foreign Commentary

Radical political change in Argentina and an uncertain future

Javier Milei's victory sends a clear message - Argentines wanted change and he was the candidate most likely to deliver it.

By KATY WATSON

His rise to the top was swift. A former economist and pundit, Mr Milei was relatively unknown before winning the primaries back in August.

But his brash manner, radical campaign proposals, as well as his unruly hairstyle, got him noticed.

In a country mired in economic crisis, where annual inflation is now over 140% and two in five Argentines now live in poverty, a drastic new approach to fixing the problems was a clever move.

Many presidents before him have tried, and failed, to improve the situation so there was nothing to lose by promising something very different.

The challenge will be how he navigates a country in crisis away from campaign promises and deals with reality - trying to improve the situation for millions of Argentines, not make it worse.

So will Argentina see the Mr Milei who has promised to destroy the central bank, slash government spending and introduce the US dollar as Argentina's official currency?

Or will there be a toned-down version of Mr Milei waiting in the wings?

"Perhaps he'll moderate his agenda to build public support and win over lawmakers from other parties. Otherwise, expect political gridlock, social uproar, and revolts by unions," says Benjamin Gedan, who heads the Argentina Project at the Wilson Center global affairs think tank.

"Many of Milei's supporters voted against their economic interests. Should he dismiss a significant number of government workers, slash social welfare programs, and dramatically increase the price of



Right-winger Milei won Argentina's presidential poll

water, electricity, natural gas, and public transportation, there will be a serious case of buyer's remorse with very real implications for governability."

Mr Milei's victory is being seen as a victory for the far-right beyond Argentina.

Former Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro's team travelled to Buenos Aires to support him and Spain's Vox party has also backed him. But, say experts, his win is more than just about politics.

"Javier Milei's voters are more connected to the economic and the political discontent rather than to purely an ideological 'anarcho-capitalist' or 'anarcho-libertarian' far-right base," says Juan Cruz Díaz, managing director at the

Cefeidas Group in Buenos Aires.

"I think what explains Milei's victory is mostly connected with the economy and the economic challenges Argentina is facing right now."

And it is not just the economy that Mr Milei wants to shake up. He has also pledged to loosen gun laws and ban abortion - this in a country which in 2020 legalised abortion and helped improve sexual and reproductive health rights for women across what has traditionally been a very conservative region.

Mr Milei has also criticised China and Brazil, saying he does not do business with "communists". The two countries are Argentina's biggest trading partners.

In the wake of his victory, Brazil's President Lula da Silva stopped short of congratulating Mr Milei personally, instead offering his congratulations to the institutions which carried out the electoral process.

"Democracy is the voice of the people and that must always be respected," Lula said on

That sentence is likely both a diplomatic nod to the election results and a subtle dig at Mr Milei.

He and his vice-president, Victoria Villarruel, have repeatedly been accused of lacking respect for

democracy and calling into question the official number of victims during Argentina's military dictatorship between 1976 and 1983.

All told, Mr Milei's victory is a departure for a country with a traditional scene - a scene so often dominated by the Peronist political movement.

Instead, there is a new kind of politics forming - one led by a politician often compared to former US President Donald Trump and Brazil's ex-leader Jair Bolsonaro.

So yes, Argentines wanted change and Javier Milei said he would deliver it - but what that change will look like is anyone's guess for now.

The only thing that is clear is that it will be unlike anything that has come before.



Javier Milei holding a chainsaw during a campaign rally to symbolise his plans to slash spending

CHANGE OF NAME

REARRANGE OF NAME

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

JOHN

I, formerly known as **JOHN WILLIAMS WEZE**, now wish to be known and addressed as **JOHN WILLIAMS WEZEH**. All former documents remain valid. My date of birth is 07/11/2004. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.

YAKUBU

I, formerly known as **YAKUBU RAIZHIE**, **YAKUBU RAIZHIE DADO**, **YAKUBU** and **REZIE DADO**, now wish to be known and addressed as **RAZHIE AZURFA YAKUBU**. All former documents remain valid. My date of birth is 07/11/2004. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.

PUBLIC NOTICE

ABU UMMU ABEHA CHARITY AND EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION (AUACEF)

The general public is hereby notified that the above named organization has applied to Corporate Affairs Commission, Abuja for registration under the Companies and Allied Matters Act 1990.

TRUSTEES

Abdullahi Muhammad Liman	Chairman
Harun Sharhabilu Maikwali	Secretary
Abdullahi Zainab	Treasurer
Abubakar Rabi'atu Shu'aibI	Financial Secretary

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- To provide the teachings of the Holy Quran and Sunnah as well as the Western knowledge as the primary sources of education.
- To promote modern technology training among humanity.
- To provide opportunity to individuals etc.

Any objection to this registration should be forwarded to the Registrar-General, Corporate Affairs Commission Plot 420, Tigris Crescent, off AguiyiIrons Street, Maitama, Abuja within 28 days of this publication.

Signed: Secretary



By YVONNE ISHOLA

## Parents require wisdom in handling home front



ONE of the commonest problems in most families is siblings rivalry. It manifests in a variety of ways. In the formative years, parents often overlook or laugh off their children's expressions of jealousy. A friend once shared how her eldest son was caught in the act of giving his 1 one week old younger sibling some swipes of cane. In this case, it was 3 broomsticks. The baby's high pitched cry was what alerted the mother.

It could have been worst. When asked why he hated his brother so, the 2-year-old said since the mother brought back her baby from the hospital, she had given him little or no attention.

The above example may sound hilarious but could lead to serious issues when not addressed the best way. If not now, in the future.

Parents preference of a child over the other or others has served to bring out the worst in the rejected or unloved child. The worst-case scenario is when it breeds enmity between siblings. A good example is the biblical story of Jacob and Esau,

Isaac's famous twins. In their case, the father preferred Esau (because he was an outdoor man and often brought him the game). The mother on the other hand preferred Jacob for the simple fact that he was an indoor man. With the help of his mother, Jacob stole his brother's blessings from their father. That was the last straw on the camel's back. The battle line was drawn.

Esau began seeking revenge. That began a long feud. These twins became sworn enemies who continued fighting all through the pages of the Bible.

The above parents fuelled their children's fight then sat by and watched as they tore each other to pieces. At this point in time, there was nothing they could do to correct their interference with God's plans. It was just God's faithfulness that prevailed.

A middle-aged man was lamenting recently that his mother has labelled him the black sheep of the family. Any time anything goes wrong in the family especially with his siblings, she blames it on him. She claims he has run down the family business. This has turned his siblings against him. She warned his elder brother from associating with him if he didn't want to be a drunk. The irony is that he learnt to drink alcoholic drinks through his brother. The man is so bitter and says he misses his dad who is late.

She claims he has run down the family business. This has turned his siblings against him. She warned his elder brother from associating with him if he didn't want to be a drunk. The irony is that he learnt to drink alcoholic drinks through his brother. The man is so bitter and says he misses his dad who is late.

On a lighter note. A man visited a

house and asked for the eldest. One of the family members asked if he was looking for the most respected because of his wealth. Or the eldest in age.

The above anecdote is the reality in most families where parents will dethrone the eldest because he is financially poor and has no social standing. At meetings, his voice will not carry weight because everyone will always agree with the one who has financial backing. His decision is final. In no time, the eldest would begin to feel unloved and disrespected. This can easily breed disaffection between the eldest and the rich and favourite son.

An embittered lady once disclosed how she was made by her mother to prepare peppered meat for her married younger sister. She did it joyfully. Only for her mother to begin ordering her around to serve her younger sister while her sister was treated like royalty. All because she is married to a wealthy man. At the end of the day, she cleaned up after her younger sister and ended up eating the wings out of the whole chicken

she prepared.

In some families, it is the brilliant children that are given preferential treatment. Gifted children are disregarded or treated as dull. This has killed the passion of some gifted children. One of the major reasons why it is said the grave is the richest place on earth because of the many people that die without putting their talents to constructive uses.

Parents have become so materialistic that it is he who pays the piper that dictates the tune. They have thrown morality to the winds and carelessness whose horse is gored as they look out for their interest.

The word of God says 'wisdom is profitable to direct'. Every parent needs wisdom in handling the home front and the children or we would end up bringing up enemies instead of brothers and sisters.

**"Parents have become so materialistic that it is he who pays the piper that dictates the tune. They have thrown morality to the winds and carelessness whose horse is gored as they look out for their interest."**



By HOSEA NYAMLONG

## Protect our crude oil

CRUDE oil theft has grown into a huge monster, threatening the Nigerian economy day by day.

The illegal activities of oil bunkering assumed a new dimension with the advent of agitation for resource control by the Niger Delta militants in the region.

Primarily, the agitation was for the demand for social amenities, infrastructure and increase in derivation fund from the Federal Government.

However, when the Federal Government is not able to meet up with all demands, some youths in their communities took up

arms against the government and engaged in criminal activities, such as hostage taking, destruction of oil facilities, oil theft, sea piracy and oil bunkering.

Nigeria lost \$3.2 billion in crude oil theft between January 2021 and February 2022, according to the statistics presented at a recent meeting held in Abuja between the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC), Oil Producers, Trade Union, and the Independent Petroleum Producers Group (IPPG) to discuss crude oil theft.

Similarly, the number of illegal refineries coming up every day is worrisome, because such nefarious activities have destroyed many farmlands, aquatic life and severe pollution. The life expectancy of citizens within these region have being compromised, leading to lower life expectancy due to the criminal activities of oil

bunkers.

In April this year many lives were lost as a result of illegal oil theft in Ohaji/Egbema Local Government Area in Imo state were over 110 people died via a fire explosion in the creeks. Majority of the victims were youths

On 8th August, the Nigerian Navy was reported to have investigated the activities of a water vessel, MT Heroic Idun, owned by Hunters Tankers as domiciled in Norway, which was sighted in Akpo oil field in Rivers state suspected to have entered the field without authorisation and with the intent to illegally lift crude oil.

The captain was said to have been uncooperative and fled from the area. The vessel was eventually apprehended by the authorities in Equatorial Guinea, working with the Nigerian Navy. According to the Nigerian Navy, the vessel had not commenced lifting oil from the field

before it was apprehended.

The Federal Government in a bid to sustain receipt of oil rent had rid the Niger Delta of these criminal activities by deploying military troops to the region to arrest the criminals.

Oil theft is usually carried out by oil experts not by the common citizens. Notwithstanding, the havoc of such activity is heavily causing the national economy a fortune if not checked; the country is brought down to its knees. The situation portends danger for the country's social-economic losses development.

Today, Nigerias economy largely depends on crude oil earnings, which need to be protected from all quarters in the country.

It has been alluded that all these problems associated with oil theft in the country is as a result of lack of functional refineries in the country that would process the crude oil.

Currently, Oil bunkering

is becoming a lucrative business that the locals from the oil producing states would want to take part and get rich quick in no distant time has taken the minds of youths away from meaningful businesses.

Many stakeholders had raised the alarm on the massive losses being incurred on a daily basis and the danger of such on future investments in the industry.

As a matter of urgency government needs to commence the full implementation of the Petroleum Industry Act bill, in relation to the operational gazette between the hosts communities and oil companies in order to give them a reasonable percentage, instead of the current 3% derivatization.

Again, government should collaborate with the oil companies to provide social amenities to the communities of the Niger Delta, by giving soft

loans to small scale business owners to keep the economy viable in the region

It is reasonable for Niger Delta indigenes to own the process of protecting the oil facilities in their communities with a robust synergy, with the regulators, Ministry OF petroleum resources including and the Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC).

Despite these measures by the Federal Government, observers are not confident in the ability of the Nigerian government to effectively block these huge leakages caused by few individuals. The moribund state of refineries and the activities of illegal oil bunkering refineries and crude oil theft has plagued the oil sector for so long without much efforts to stop the menace.

It seems that the effects is biting hard now more than ever, at a time when a significant portion of the country's revenue is going into debt servicing and petrol subsidy, with no solution in sight.

By JIDAUNA DARING

It is a fact that retirement as the name implies is a period in one's life which usually comes after working for a prescribed years age in active service in public and private sectors.

It may interest one to know that some people's retirement sometimes come as a compulsory one which might be as a result of sickness that could not allow one to reach the official planned retirement time as contained in the employees' official letter of engagement.

With this background, it is important for people after receiving letters of engagement in service to start planning for their retirement by putting in place something that will sustain them till the owner of life calls one since death is inevitable to all mortals on earth.

It is true that life even after retirement comes with undesirable hardship; this is simply because such people did not take into cognizance what they need after retirement. In fact, it is better for people to retire well from active service than compulsory retirement.

What is more important for people to note while in active service is no other than for employee to make sincerity, honesty, transparency and accountability their watch word in whatever responsibility they are saddled with.

However, it was indeed a moment that was full of joy when hundreds of worshipers joined Rev and Mrs Lahkat Salchum Faman to celebrate God's faithfulness during the retirement service of the couple, held at Church of Christ in Nations (COCIN) Regional Church Council (RCC), Kabong, Jos PCC Jos recently.

Rev. Faman retired from active service in God's vineyard at the age of 65 as Vice chairman RCC Kabong Jos. Until his retirement, he was the leading pastor of COCIN Local Church Council (LCC) Landyere, Kabong. This epoch making event will for ever remain fresh because their hearts were indeed full with so much joy, considering the number of souls that they have won for Christ through the gospel.

The celebrant's exposure both within and outside Nigeria has proven that he is no doubt a man full of experience even from his loaded biography. The large number of people that graced the event were not the service he had rendered in God's vineyard particularly in places where they worked during their active service to God.

Rev. Faman (Rtd) was born into a Christian family and he deliberately took a step of faith and accepted Jesus Christ as his Lord and savior in 1970 at the age of 12. The celebrant was called into God's vineyard to serve as Pastor in 1983.

As a minister of God, Rev. Faman Rtd believes that anything that is established on the basis of truth ought to follow due process. "you shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free". The celebrant due to his hard work attended many workshops and seminars in different areas within and outside Plateau State. Rev. Faman also through his outstanding performance has received meritorious awards on Educational Leadership Excellence and dynamism in school administration by

the Institute of Industrial Administration for Exceptional commitment in moving COCIN Bible and Agricultural Training Institute.

It may interest one to know that the celebrant has by the special grace of God travelled to almost all states in Nigeria as well as outside countries such as: United States of America (USA), Israel, Kenya, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Ghana, Niger Republic and Benin Republic.

However, it is true that besides a successful man, there is always a woman, therefore, the success of this important event would not have been completed without the support and cooperation of the celebrant's wife, Mrs. Tabitha Lohkat Faman.

This, therefore, means that the importance of the pastors wives cannot be overemphasized considering the vital role they play in carrying the cross of preaching the gospel. The tempo needs to be sustained amongst the pastors wives so that more souls will be won for Christ at all times.

In his remarks, Plateau State Governor, Barr. Caleb M. Mutfwang who was represented by the secretary to the Government of the state (SGS) Arc Samuel Nanchang Jatau congratulated the celebrant who happens to be his class-mate at Boys Secondary School (BSS) Gindiri for working in God's vineyard and also attained a successful retirement age.

Barr. Mutfwang commended pastors for the good work that they are doing in the church. He advised people to be their brother's keeper at all times.

Performing book dedication that was written by the celebrant, former COCIN President, Rev. Professor Datiri Dachomo applauded the efforts of the Author of the book for working assiduously to ensure that the book was published and launched for public consumption.

Dachomo while commenting on the content of the book encouraged people to buy the book and read at all times. Adding that it would help in inspiring them to become good leaders.

He advised Christians to maintain a close relationship with God, saying that the days are evil.

Performing the retirement rite, chairman, PCC Jos, Rev. Mudimka Y. Seri brought greetings of the COCIN President Rev. Dr Amos M. Mohzo, congratulated the celebrant and his wife for attaining a successful retirement.

Seri commended Rev. and Mrs Faman for standing firm in preaching the gospel of Christ during their active service. He told the celebrant that their retirement would not stop them from winning more souls for Christ. He said that it would also give them opportunity to pray for their family, church and the entire society.

EYN/TEKAN President, Rev. Joel S. Bille showered accolade on the celebrant for the good work he has done in EYN. He said EYN had to celebrate him for his immense contributions to the church.

Rev. Billi who took his reading from first Samuel 12:1-5 said as a pastor making wealth is never a priority- if one actually received the call to do the work. He added that the celebrant has fought a good fight and has finished

the race.

Earlier in his welcome remarks, chairman, RCC Kabong, Jos Rev. Zac M. Dara thanked God for making the event a huge success, saying that in life it is good to start well and end well.

Rev. Dara maintained that the executive council of RCC Kabong is grateful to God and the church for retiring the celebrant in the RCC in his capacity as the Vice chairman. He added that the celebrants retirement would no doubt forever remain a very memorable one in the history of the RCC being the first retirement of a clergy since its inception as an RCC.

He affirmed that the RCC would live to remember the celebrant for his wonderful contributions in many ways, "as you retire, may the Lord refresh and refill you for what you have done to the church, we wish you happy



## Rev.Faman bows out of active service



retirement". Our correspondent reports that the pastors, elders, committee and the entire members of LCC Landyengre felicitate with him.

It was also reported that the executive council of LCC Landyengre described the celebrant as a leader who has a penchant for truth, dedication and selflessness pointing out that the celebrants' commitment in submitting to the church system and structure was top notch.

The council equally remarked that as the celebrant takes a bow from active service as a minister of God, the godly seed he has sown and watered would grow and flourish, and his labour shall yield fruit that would last.

Responding, the celebrant, Rev and Mrs. Faman both thanked God for his faithfulness from the beginning to the

end of their active service in God's vineyard.

Rev. Farman appreciated the COCIN President, Rev. Dr. Mohzo for approving his retirement from active service. He said that his retirement would not stop him from contributing to the progress of the entire COCIN at all times.

He explained that as a retired minister of God, he had never relented in saying what is right or act on what is right, stressing that it is biblically stated that it is the truth that shall set everybody free.

**THE NIGERIA STANDARD** reports that the event featured good will messages from former COCIN President Rev. Dr. Soja Bewarrang, special numbers by choir RCC Kabong, CWF RCC Kabong Jos with donations among others.



# IMAGES

## 2023 CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING

The annual 2023, Plateau Radio Television Corporation (PRTVC) Tree Lighting took place at the Rayfield office of the Corporation, Theme: Love Peace and Unity, flagged-off by the First Lady, Barr. Mrs. Helen Mutfwang



Mrs. Rita Kachollom Pam, Acting General Manager, PRTVC, (left) Barr. Mrs. Helen Mutfwang, First Lady being welcomed



From left, Mr. Aliyu T. Samuel, Permanent Secretary, Information, Pastor Dunka Gomwalk, PFN Chairman and Rev. Fr. Gabriel Dung



From left, Barr. Olivia Dazyam, Executive Chairman, Gender and Equal Opportunities Commission, Hon. Caroline Pangjiang, Commissioner for Women Affairs and Barr. Rauta Dakok, HoS



Bazata International Gospel Team Ministering in songs at the annual celebration



Barr. Helen Mutfwang, wife of the Governor (middle), performing the Tree Lightning, while wives of top government functionaries watches



Left, HRH Paul Tadi Jok, Gwom Rwey Heipang, representing Gbong Gwom Jos with HRH Yakubu C. Atar Aten, Ganawuri



Cross section of Directors of PRTVC at the ceremony



Cross section of dignitaries present at the occasion

PHOTOS: JOHN LAR

**Odd World**

**'Badly beaten by unlicensed drunk nanny'**

A mum has shared harrowing pictures of her 2-year-old son in a hospital bed after he was allegedly beaten by an unlicensed care worker who had been drinking.

Stefanie Reichert left her child Giovanni with McKinley Slone Hernandez, 25, at her house on September 1. However, just hours later, her son was left with horrific injuries to his skull and body.

The mum claims she was told by the suspect to rush to the nearby hospital after Giovanni had gone lifeless in the bath. "I received a text message from the suspect saying I needed to rush to St. Anthony's Hospital because my son had gone lifeless after a bath," Stefanie said.

"Once I saw him and all the 50 doctors standing around him, I had to leave the room because it was the worst thing I've ever seen in my life."

The two-year-old had been airlifted to hospital after medics revealed he needed an emergency operation for a bleed on the brain that required part of his skin to be removed. Giovanni was intubated and placed into an induced coma and needed more life-saving operations since. His eventual prognosis is still unclear, according to doctors.

"We had a rough Thanksgiving this year to say the least!" his mother wrote on the child's GoFundMe page. "He had more surgery on Thursday and is still suffering from a fever, pain and discomfort", she added.

"He's pretty swollen and his right eye is swollen shut," she wrote. "He slept most of the day and I'm hoping for a better day tomorrow." The distraught mum, who considered the care worker a "friend" still

has no idea how her son came within an inch of his life.

'She won't admit to anything,' Stefaine, from Lakewood Colorado, Us, told kdvr.com. "All she's said is she was drinking, and he got hurt in her care. I make up scenarios in my head all the time for the injuries he sustained, so I wish I knew."

After spending months in hospital with her son, the mum revealed he doesn't let anybody touch him. "He doesn't like strangers. Now he doesn't like the nurses and the doctors. He doesn't let anybody touch him. We have to do everything for them in there."

Giovanna was described by Stefaine as a previously "happy, healthy, energetic two-year-old". The GoFundMe page, which has raised over \$23,000, added: "As you can imagine, his parents Anthony and Stefanie are completely distraught. We don't want this sweet family to have to worry about anything other than getting their baby boy healthy again."

"Giovanna you are so resilient and so strong, keep fighting baby boy. We love you so much!"

On Thursday, police confirmed a warrant was issued for Hernandez's arrest on felony child abuse charges. She handed herself into Lakewood Police on Thursday evening.

The mum added: "I feel so relieved, but I also feel like she should be charged with more."

"I feel like it's attempted murder, she almost killed my child. You never would think it would happen to you, especially by someone who you consider a friend."

*Culled from The Mirror*



**Covid 19 funds mismanagement probe on track**

THE Public Accounts Committee of the House of Representatives recently commenced a full-scale probe into the alleged mismanagement of the Covid 19 intervention funds provided them by former President Mohammad Buhari. Before commencement of the probe, the committee so concerned about this sad and unbelievable development had during a plenary session also "warned that it would not tolerate delay tactics from ministries, departments and agencies" the usual tradition in Nigeria during scheduled probe proceedings.

As it is; the committee would be probing over 60 MDAs on allegations of mismanaging several billions of naira allocated as intervention funds and eventually provided them during the said pandemic. Amongst the organisations expected to appear before the committee includes Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University Teaching Hospital, Bauchi, Federal Ministry of Digital Economy, Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, Federal Ministry of Water Resources and the Federal Road Maintenance Agency among others. During President Muhammad Buhari's tenure, several allegations also emerged of mismanagement and misappropriation of funds allocated for anticipated visible development of strategic projects in the nooks and crannies of the nation. Though the then leadership was said to have fought corruption, many high ranking government officials were able to beat hurdles established to refrain them from indulging themselves in this huge economic sabotage.

In between 2019 and 2020, the Covid 19 pandemic roared its ugly head in most developing nations of the world adding to the woes and calamity of these nation states. Though this pandemic overran several developing nations, vulnerable African countries had a hit by which led to the crippling of the economy of affected states in this continent.

Concerned about the proliferation of the pandemic, the Federal Government was persuaded to take tangible proactive measures towards mitigating the surge in the country. Aside unprecedented sensitization campaigns, the government also expended billions of naira aimed at ensuring that Nigerians do not come down with this disease.

In like manner, many governmental and concerned organizations were mobilised to help the Federal Government in curbing the spread of the pandemic to vulnerable

communities across the nation. While the Federal Government meant well for it's citizens, some unpatriotic elements saw this as an opportunity to enrich themselves through massive acts of personal aggrandizement.

Consequently, while many healthcare and medical personnel put their lives in danger to save Nigerians from this calamity, these individuals' aim was to milk the country and enrich themselves to the detriment of several innocent citizens of the nation. Thus, yours sincerely is not surprised today that such humongous amount of resources went into private pockets.

This has further confirmed credible submissions by stakeholders that it would take the nation great efforts to overcome allegations of massive corruption which has overwhelmingly affected this country and dented it's image in global comity of nations. As it is today, statistics indicates that there has been no change in the country scoring between 2021 and 2022. In the country comparison for the 2022 CPI, Nigeria ranks 150 out of 180 countries compared to 154 on the 2021 CPI results," CISLAC's Executive Director, Auwal Musa, said in a statement announcing the new ranking in January 2023.

Basically, it specifically confirms the fact that inspite the dangers of corruption and it's negative impact in crippling our nation, many unscrupulous elements are unperturbed about the dangerous grounds Nigeria has found itself in.

This equally connotes the reality of the fact that, top government officials in the nation have not learnt any bitter lessons following the convictions successfully recorded by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission,(EFCC) in the past few years.

Now that the Public Accounts Committee is smelling rat in the capboard, it must be encouraged to do the needful by sanitizing all these government agencies for the good of the land. If wishes were horses, many of us will not mind a situation where a public investigation and trial is held for all these public officers involved to serve as a detterant to many others who are thinking of venturing into such unpatriotic acts in the future.

Let it be known to all citizens of this nation that Nigeria our beloved nation cannot advance in it's quest for holistic development and national integration if such nefarious acts of crippling our entire system is tolerated. A word people usually say is enough for the wise.

## View Point

## Karl Kumm maiden matriculation, worthy of celebration

*Though the Karl Kumm University's maiden matriculation ceremony has come and gone, the memories of such an epoch making event will linger on the minds of many for decades to come. This is because, despite the insurmountable hurdles encountered by the institution, it was able to wither the storm to achieve this historical feat. Writes BULUS GAMBO.*

THE vision of establishing this great faith based university started years back when it became necessary that it was high time the Church of Christ in Nations, (COCIN) put in place such a magnificent institution which will aim at producing credible and God fearing leaders to help transform this country for the betterment of all its citizenry in the nearest future. More precisely, it is anticipated that upon graduation, students of this institution would make positive impact wherever they find themselves around the world.

That was the more reason why before the establishment of the university, many measures were taken in consistence with the laudable dreams of founding fathers of the mission. Therefore, the matriculation ceremony opened up another chapter in the quest by the university towards consolidating on the great achievements so far recorded.

Right from the start, the vision of this faith-based university was and still is to be a center of excellence in scholarly learning and training producing graduates who are thoroughly knowledgeable in the workings and forces of nature, the course and development of mankind and his environment and can apply scientific thoughts to design and implement solutions to societal problems. The mission of the university is to produce highly skilled graduates in their areas of specialisation with impeccable character who would contribute positively to the development of the nation and mankind.

In his goodwill message during the matriculation ceremony, the President of the Church of Christ in Nations, (COCIN), Dr. Rev Amos Mohzo noted that "it is with immense pride and profound gratitude that I stand before you on behalf of the Church of Christ in Nations(COCIN) to witness the historic and maiden matriculation ceremony of Karl Kumm University. This momentous occasion marks the culmination of a long and challenging journey, one that began with a vision for a Christ-cantered university and has now transformed into a beacon of academic excellence, our collective success."

According to him, "the genesis of Karl Kumm University can be traced back to the visionary minds of Rev. Dr Alexander Lar and his management team, who recognised the need for COCIN to establish its own university. This vision was further championed by Prof. Ezekiel Gaya Best who presented a compelling proposal that convinced the leadership of COCIN to embark on this ambitious endeavour."

The COCIN President disclosed that "the establishment of Karl Kumm University was driven by COCIN's firm commitment to Christ-centered education. The church envisioned a tertiary institution that would provide quality education, instil Christian



Prof. Gambo



Prof. Bogoro and Dr. Mohzo



Prof. Onazi



Karl Kumm University students

values and foster spiritual growth in its students."

Dr Mohzo emphasized that "I am confident that Karl Kumm University will continue to flourish as a beacon of academic excellence nurturing future leaders who will continue to make a positive impact on society and embody the values of Christ-centered education."

Also contributing, the Chairman Board of Trustees, Karl Kumm University, Prof Suleiman Bogoro expressed gratitude to God for such a wonderful day in the history of the institution adding that though the institution went through a lot of problems, to the glory of God, it was able to survive.

Prof Bogoro then acknowledged the resilient disposition of all those who contributed towards the establishment of the university declaring that it has great years ahead in terms of ensuring the production of quality students who will favourably contest who their contemporaries the world over.

In his speech, the Pro-Chancellor of Karl Kumm University, Prof Ochapa Onazi attributed the success so far recorded in the institution to hard-work, sacrifice and dedication by all those shouldered with the responsibility of doing the needful amidst circumstances which they found themselves in.

While praising the COCIN President, Vice Chancellor of the university including other critical stakeholders, the Pro Chancellor also acknowledged the entire staff for their significant commitment to their various obligations in the institution.

Speaking during the ceremony, the Vice Chancellor, Karl Kumm University, Prof Nanven Audu Gambo disclosed that "Today is indeed a watershed in the Karl Kumm University project carefully and strategically conceived and implemented by the Church of Christ in Nations (COCIN). Today marks a celebration of God's faithfulness as the university is by the grace of God matriculating its pioneer set of students thereby marking the end of admission for the 2023/2024 academic session. May I thank generously the Registrar of the Joint Admission and Matriculations Board (JAMB), who is ably represented here for the robust support and cooperation we enjoyed while the admission exercise lasted. Let me also appreciate the immense support the university has enjoyed and is still enjoying from the National Universities Commission, (NUC). The immediate past Executive Secretary of NUC, Prof Rasheed Abubakar MFR deserves special recognition and appreciation for his incredible support to the

university and will be honoured in due course. The current Acting Executive Secretary of the Commission, Chief Ambassador Chris Maiyaki also deserves special recognition for the passionate commitment towards the solid establishment of Karl Kumm University."

According to the Vice Chancellor, "We are witnessing today, the former enrolment of 61 young, enthusiastic and promising set of pioneer students into the Karl Kumm University to pursue their various academic goals and aspirations. Permit me to heartily congratulate these pioneer students on their mission to study in Karl Kumm University. All of you were critically and carefully screened and found suitable for admission into your preferred academic programmes. It may interest the audience to note that the university is taking off with 14 cutting edge programmes structured into eight Departments and domiciled in two Faculties (Arts, Management and Social Sciences and Science and Computing)."

"May I use this opportunity to acknowledge the abiding commitment of the Proprietor to supporting the building of a world class Karl Kumm University that is the pride of the membership of the church worldwide. May I also acknowledge the critical roles that the BOT and the Governing

Council are playing in shaping the future of the university. I must count myself as the pioneer Vice Chancellor of this great, progressive and evolving world class university exceptionally lucky to be guided by very experienced and world class leaders in the knowledge industry. The Chairman of the BOT, Prof Suleiman Bogoro, OON, is globally acknowledged as the apostle of research and development when he meritoriously held sway at the Tertiary Education Trust Fund, (TETFund) as the Executive Secretary. The university is privileged to have you as the Chairman of the BOT. Prof Ochapa Onazi OON, the pioneer Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of the 1<sup>st</sup> Governing Council of the university is yet another giant in Nigerian university system whose record in the successful establishment and nurturing of universities is legendary. It is great privilege to be mentored by such a giant. Prof Hayward Mafuyai was my Vice Chancellor at the University of Jos and I had the rare privilege of working closely under him."

Despite these feats so far recorded, many scholars are of the opinion that in the next coming years, Karl Kumm University will stand tall rubbing shoulders with other contemporary universities which have created a niche for themselves.

## News

### Ropshak launches world class creative hub

By DORCAS PANKYES

By EZEKIEL DONTINNA

A business tycoon and a creative minds explorer of young people, who is the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Kefiano Autos, Chief Kefas Mungak Ropshak, has launched a world class creative hub where over one thousand, seven hundred youths would groom in different modern time's skills.

This took place at the newly commissioned Kefiano Creative Hub Head Office, opposite Secretariat Junction in Jos, the Plateau State capital recently, where people trooped in from all fields of endeavours to witness what could best be described as the first of its kind in the state.

The Founder of the creative hub, said, "This is to take advantage of potentials in the creative industry. This, I will say and continue to say that the ecosystem in the creative industry is such a big one that can accommodate a lot because it is a money making industry and that is the truth."

"I am of this school of thought that Plateau people need to key into the next generation of technology because that is the way forward and that is the truth. We will not be left behind because we have all the potentials and human capital to key into the recent economic drive.

"I have always said that the way the economy is changing is moving gradually from oil to IT, agriculture and human capital development. These are the major drivers of world economy today and the earlier we Plateau people key into it, the better for us", he encouraged.

Ropshak, however, called on the Plateau youth to stop wasting their precious time using the social media for ventures that are not beneficial to their lives but concentrate on what could turn around in a shortest possible time because the economy of this world is going towards industrialization.

He disclosed that KCH would admit over one thousand, seven hundred (1700) youths across the state with hundred (100) each from the seventeen (17) Local Government Areas. He warned that he would not tolerate bias based on political, religious and ethnic bias or discrimination in recruiting these youths.

Earlier, the Manager of the Kefiano Creative Hub (KCH), Sunday Hash-Tag, stated that the vision of the organisation is to position KCH as an innovative centre seeking to develop skills and proffer technological solutions to present day challenges through collaboration to help youth to catch up with the current realities.

Meanwhile, Senator Atai Aidoko, while cutting the tape, described Kefas as an exceptional personality, full of ideas and was not surprised because he has been someone who knows how to teach people how to fish than just eating fish trusting that, this would not generate revenue to



Kafiano

Plateau State alone, but the country at large.

There were outpour of commendations from dignitaries who came all the way from Lagos and Abuja as

well as clergymen who graced the occasion. There were some mind blowing and thrilling dances display from young talented stars respectively.

### Senates lacks powers to legislate on LG matters

From TERESE TUHWA, Makurdi

FOLLOWING a motion by Senator Aba Moro representing Benue South Senatorial District (PDP), calling on the federal government to stop the release of allocation to caretaker chairmen in Benue State, Benue State Government says the Senate has no constitutional powers to legislate on local government matters.

Chief Press Secretary to the Governor, Sir Tersoo Kula who was reacting to the senator's motion recently in a joint press conference with Special Adviser to the Governor on Bureau for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, Dr Dennis Akura, he said members of the red chambers were misled by Senator Moro.

According to the Chief Press Secretary, Governor Hyacinth Alia on assumption of office, discovered gross financial impropriety perpetuated by the former council chairmen which resulted in their suspension to pave the way for investigation.

He explained that upon investigation, the former council chairmen were found culpable of misappropriating local government funds that were entrusted in their care and were subsequently sacked.

The Chief Press Secretary wondered why as former council chairman in the state, Senator Moro has forgotten so soon the workings of the third tier of government.

The governor's spokesman who lambasted Senator Aba Moro for feeding the senate with "bare face lies and unfounded insinuations that Governor Hyacinth Alia has dissolved the democratically elected local government council chairmen in the state", said the Benue State House of Assembly whose constitutional responsibility it is to legislate over local government councils acted as enshrined in sections 7 and 8 of the country's 1999 constitution as amended.

He said the appointment of

caretaker chairmen to run the third tier of government in the state was to avoid a lacuna that the sacking of the former council chairmen has created.

He explained that the sacking of the former council chairmen was a recommendation by the Benue State House of Assembly who investigated and indicted the 23 local government council chairmen for monumental fraud in connivance with their councillors.

The Chief Press Secretary who expressed surprise that having served as caretaker chairman as well as sole administrator of Okpokwu Local Government Council has suddenly seen caretaker chairmen as eroding of democratic structures. He urged him to tender an unreserved apology to the people of the state as well as Benue State House of Assembly.

He called on the Nigerian Senate to always properly scrutinise its motion papers to avoid a repeat of Senator Aba Moro's mischief to avoid being made a laughing stock.

In his comments, the Special

THE Benue State University Alumni Association (BSUAA), FCT Branch has unanimously nominated Bar. Paul Edeh, as their national presidential candidate ahead of the upcoming national elections of the association on Dec. 29.

The association at its general meeting in Abuja, unanimously nominated Barrister Paul Edeh by no fewer than 150 members.

Sunday Kputhur, the Secretary, BSUAA FCT Branch who spoke to newsmen on the sidelines of the congress, said the decision to nominate Edeh signified a unity of purpose by the association.

"What you have seen at the level of the FCT Branch of our alma mater is unity of purpose.

"We are progressives in all our issues. There is harmony and love, which reflects the true picture of what an alumni should be like.

"We have overwhelmingly nominated and endorsed Paul Edeh to run for the office of the national president, which will, in turn, see him bring the lost glory of our alma mater," he said.

Kputhur noted that the alumni had been embroiled in skirmishes and crisis, hence the need for a change of leadership.

He stressed that the members have been yearning for unity to make them stand as one, adding that they finally had in Edeh, the kind of leadership that they have been yearning for.

Adviser to the Governor on Bureau for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, Dr Dennis Akura said Senator Aba Moro lacked moral standing to accuse Governor Alia of eroding democratic structures in the state having "watched democracy stripped naked in the state at several instances".

He argued that Governor Hyacinth Iormem Alia who knows the rule of law did not sack democratically elected local government council chairmen but rather it was the recommendation of the state House of Assembly which is vested with the constitutional responsibility of investigating and legislating over local government councils.

It will be recalled that Senator Aba Moro few days ago during plenary, presented a motion on the floor of the Senate, calling on the Senate to intervene in the eroding of democratic structures in Benue State, following the sacking of 23 local government council chairmen by the Benue State House of Assembly for misappropriating local government funds.



Moro

### BSUAA FCT branch nominate national presidential candidate



Edeh

"He has come to repair our image, build the alumni, and unify us together in order to achieve a higher purpose.

"An alumni is not a student union government but a place made up of the capacity of people who are graduates of the school.

"We believe that Paul Edeh has that capacity to be able to do things right, to unite everybody and bring an effective and efficient leadership that is needed for all of us.

"So, we are standing solidly behind him to see that we bring the victory back home," he said.

Also, Aaron Kase, an Assistant Director with the Police Service Commission and the Director-General of Paul Edeh Presidential Campaign, said the association adopted and agreed to present Barr. Edeh as their presidential candidate because of his pedigree.

"It is a resolution of all our members in Abuja that we all work with him, close ranks, and work with other chapters so that he can emerge victorious at our forthcoming convention.

"The reason for this decision is very simple. The issue of alumni has to do with networking, and so we want to bring in someone who has the capacity irrespective of tribe or religion.

"We need someone that has contacts and can harmonise the various alumni members who are doing very well so that we can be able to give back to the university," he said.

Kase, who is also a graduate of English and one of the pioneer students of the university, said Edeh's candidacy was not based on selfish interest.

He therefore appealed to all members of the association both within and outside the country to throw weight behind Edeh in order to ensure positive changes in the association.

"His candidacy is not based on what he wants to get from the association's dues, which has always been the case, but more about making a positive impact.

"So, we are appealing to all our members across the country and abroad that the time for a better and united alumni association has come and we must rally round the candidate that is going to impact the lives of graduates of the university and undergraduates alike," he said.

CSP Vantefan James, a retired police officer and also a member of the association, said Edeh was a

unifier and would ensure everyone is carried along.

"We sat down here today as a family to continue from where we started; bringing back all the factions together so that we can have a greater cohesion within the Abuja Chapter of the BSU Alumni.

"We are glad that this is our first general meeting. We had a congress, adopted a lot of deliberations, and also had one of us who declared his intention to contest for the office of the National President.

"We all voted unanimously to support his candidature, and he accepted.

"So, we are glad, and that was the hallmark of our meeting today," he said.

Earlier, Paul Edeh, while accepting his nomination, said he had accepted to run for the position of National president of the association with all sense of humility and purpose.

"This is not because I am Idoma, Tiv or a lawyer, or whatever acronym you want to ascribe to me.

"This is because I genuinely feel the pain of most members and veterans of our great association.

"This is an association that has produced well over 100,000 graduates, but we have nothing to show for it or account for, and I believe I can get the job done.

"Let me borrow the words of Mr Peter Obi, the presidential candidate of the Labour Party, even though I am not a politician; when he gives facts, he would usually ask Nigerians to go and verify.

"I want to tell you all why I think we can get the job done when I am returned elected as president.

"I have embarked on a lot of projects and donated millions of naira to the university as well as some schools in the state, amongst many other achievements, all of which are verifiable.

So, I believe someone with this kind of track record can get the job done," he said.

The National Convention, which will also serve as the association's Elective Congress, has been scheduled to hold on Dec. 29 in Makurdi, bearing any unforeseen circumstances.

## Sports

# Can Southgate end England trophy drought?

**The draw for next summer's Euro 2024 in Germany will take place at Hamburg's Elbphilharmonie concert hall on Saturday evening as England find out who they must overcome in the group phase of their quest to finally land a major men's trophy. England breezed through qualifying unbeaten with six wins and two draws - however, this has become standard procedure followed by the silverware proving elusive at the showpiece itself. PHIL MCNULTY writes.**

MANAGER Gareth Southgate will be finalising his selection plans for the tournament, with still plenty of matters for debate.

This will be Southgate's fourth major tournament as England manager and it is an indication of his record in major tournaments and the team he has assembled that there will be genuine disappointment if they do not win Euro 2024.

There is a growing sense this will be Southgate's final tilt at a major trophy as England manager.

Logic dictates that if England do not win, this will be regarded as coming up short again when it mattered, meaning the time has come for a fresh outlook. If England do win it, this may just be the perfect time for Southgate to bow out with his contract expiring in December 2024.

Southgate may, of course, fancy a tilt at the 2026 World Cup if England are successful - but four major tournaments and a tenure stretching back to his permanent appointment in November 2016 can almost be regarded as a marathon stint.

As with all England managers, results shape futures, so Southgate has absolutely no requirement to make any commitment until Euro 2024 is over. However, his eminent common sense will tell him questions will be asked should a team of this current quality fail to end the wait for a major men's trophy that stretches back to the 1966 World Cup.

Southgate will never win over detractors who point to missed opportunities in the 2018 World Cup semi-final against Croatia, the Euro 2020 final against Italy at Wembley and a World Cup quarter-final loss to France in Qatar a year ago.

What should not be forgotten, however, is that Southgate inherited a chaotic shambles following Sam Allardyce's one-match reign and has the best big tournament record of any England manager since Sir Alf Ramsey.

It's an old argument and one that has consistently swirled around Southgate, perhaps understandably to his irritation.

England have a thrilling set of attacking players, but the complaint goes that Southgate becomes cloaked in conservatism when the heat is on, with fingers pointed at how there seemed to be an icy grip of inertia when they took early leads in those key games against Croatia and Italy.

Now the clamour for flair has never been greater, given the



**Gareth Southgate's decision to continue to select Harry Maguire and Jordan Henderson has drawn criticism**

riches at Southgate's disposal, from captain Harry Kane to the Manchester City pair of Phil Foden and Jack Grealish, along with Arsenal's Bukayo Saka. And this is before we even mention the brilliant Jude Bellingham, regarded as the best young player in world football by many sound judges.

All eyes will be on Southgate's formation and how he uses those resources.

Declan Rice will be vital in Germany, but will Southgate go for a holding midfield player alongside him in Manchester City's Calvin Phillips or Jordan Henderson, or perhaps find room for the lavishly gifted Liverpool player Trent Alexander-Arnold in his more advanced role?

Southgate will be working on that delicate balancing act before Germany. Simply saying he should fill England's team with all-out attack is easier said than done when facing quality opposition.

There is no doubt, though, that England will never have a better opportunity or collection of talent to take the attack to any opposition in Germany next summer.

Southgate has been unfailingly loyal to the England players who have served him well in recent years, even if the conventional wisdom suggests a number of their places should have been in serious jeopardy.

The prime cases have been Manchester United defender Harry Maguire, Manchester City's Calvin Phillips and former Liverpool captain Jordan

Henderson.

Southgate stood firmly by Maguire even when he was marginalised by Manchester United manager Erik ten Hag and suffering the mockery of his own fans for club and country, while Phillips has been selected despite the fact that describing him as a bit-part player under Pep Guardiola would actually exaggerate his contribution on the field.

Henderson has also figured for England despite now being a 33-year-old playing in the less intense surrounding of the Saudi Pro League. He has also felt the wrath of England's fans after his move from Liverpool.

Southgate has fiercely defended Maguire and Henderson as they have come under increasing scrutiny from fans, demonstrating his inner steel by sticking firmly with those who have delivered in the past.

The Maguire problem has recently been resolved, at least for now, after he won his place back in the United side but Phillips, who has understandably looked off the pace in an England shirt in recent times, will surely need to make some sort of move from Manchester City in January.

Even Southgate's loyalty would surely be tested if Phillips barely played any football between now and next summer, while a close eye will be kept on how Henderson fares away from the Premier League hothouse in Saudi Arabia.

He was one of the mainstays of Southgate's squad but has been

very much on the outside looking in since withdrawing by mutual consent from Euro 2024 qualifiers against Malta and North Macedonia at the end of last season to concentrate on rebuilding his fitness.

Sterling has shown improved form for Chelsea but has fallen down the pecking order behind Foden, Grealish, Saka, Manchester United's Marcus Rashford and Jarrod Bowen of West Ham. Cole Palmer, Sterling's new team-mate at Stamford Bridge, has now also emerged.

Southgate rightly asks who he should drop to accommodate Sterling's return. He insists the door is still open but it looks like Sterling faces an uphill task to win a place in England's Euro 2024 party.

The early months of 2024 will be crucial for many key figures in the England's squad.

The time-honoured 'bolter' is the player who makes the late charge for the line and comes up on the rails to win a place in the squad.

And there are already contenders emerging for Southgate's consideration, even if most of the places for the trip to Germany are taken.

Chelsea's Palmer made substitute appearances against Malta and North Macedonia as merited reward for the 21-year-old's eye-catching form since his £40m move from Manchester City.

Newcastle United's Anthony Gordon is another who will surely be coming under Southgate's scrutiny given his

outstanding form this season. His talent is well known to England's coaches as he was named player of the tournament by Uefa's technical observer panel as he helped England win the 2023 European Under-21 Championship in Georgia.

Crystal Palace's Eberechi Eze has also won senior England caps and could Ivan Toney make a late play to challenge as an understudy to Kane when the Brentford striker returns from an eight-month suspension for breaching FA betting rules in January?

The ability is there, the squad strength is there, but can they put all the pieces together to finally get the job done when they have fallen short in the past?

In captain Kane and Bellingham, Southgate has two players who will be the envy of every other team at Euro 2024. They are world-class talents who not only deliver for England but have also made stunning impacts since joining Bayern Munich and Real Madrid respectively.

England have huge variety in attack, a solid midfield base through Arsenal's Rice and a top-class goalkeeper in Jordan Pickford.

Questions remain about England's central defence against opponents of the highest calibre, but whatever comes out of Saturday's draw, Southgate and his players should fear no-one - and there will be no disguising the feeling of failure should this class of 2023-24 not finally deliver in Germany.

## Sports

### Nigeria govt on Peseiro future

NIGERIA'S Minister of Sports Development, John Enoh has disclosed that Jose Peseiro's future will be determined after the 2023 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) finals.

The Portuguese tactician has come under heavy criticism after the Super Eagles failed to win their first two matches in the 2023 FIFA World Cup qualifiers against Zimbabwe and Rwanda.

Enoh indicated that the Ministry of Sports Development has a say in the status of Peseiro as coach of the Super Eagles as they are involved in the payment of his salaries and agreed on a new contract with him earlier this year.

"I'll tell you what I met and what I have also done so far. I was given a brief when I became Minister of Sports Development about the fact that employment of the present Super Eagles coach, the signing of the contract that took place in my predecessor's office as Minister of Youth and Sports," Enoh said on All Nigeria Soccer. "That means that the Ministry played a role in that employment. I also met a situation in which the president of the NFF and his team including the Secretary-General had come to see me and talked about the fact that my predecessor had assured me that the payment of the Super Eagles coach was going to be the responsibility of the Government, and after about 12 months into the contract of the present coach that there were outstanding salaries that had not been paid.

"I also got involved when the contract had ended with the outstanding monies not paid to the coach and the fact that there were some discussions as to what was going to happen going forward," he continued.

"The meeting took place in my office with the NFF that agreed to an extension of the



Enoh

contract to allow the present Super Eagles coach to be able to sit as coach and take the national team to the next AFCON that is coming up middle of January and then see how well we do in that tournament before determining what then happens to his contract.

"We also got involved in renegotiating the terms of the contract because the present NFF were not at the leadership

of the NFF by the time the present coach was hired and therefore were not part of the contract. "One of the things we achieved was renegotiating the contract in terms of his salary and getting the coach to accept a pay cut."

Nigeria will face hosts Ivory Coast, Equatorial Guinea and Guinea-Bissau in Group A at the 2023 AFCON in January 2024.

### Premier League agrees £6.7bn domestic TV rights deal

THE Premier League has agreed a new record £6.7bn domestic television deal for Sky and TNT to show up to 270 live games a season.

BBC SPORT said that, the deal includes the BBC continuing to show highlights on Match of the Day.

The top flight said the deal, which covers the four years from the 2025-26 season, is the "largest sports media rights deal ever concluded in the UK".

The BBC's deal includes MOTD2 and Football Focus plus additional digital rights for its online platforms.

Sky has been awarded four of the five packages and will

show a minimum of 215 matches a season including Saturday 5.30pm kick-offs, Sunday 2pm and 4.30pm kick-offs, plus evening games on Mondays and Fridays and three midweek rounds.

Sky Sports will also broadcast all 10 matches on the final day of each season.

This is the first time the Premier League has been through a tender process for its rights since 2018.

The current £5bn domestic TV rights deal, which was for three seasons and expires at the end of 2024-25, was allowed to be extended because of the Covid-19 pandemic.



Haaland

The Premier League says the new agreement, which is a year longer, is a 4% rise in live rights value compared to the previous deal and will "provide financial certainty for clubs throughout professional football until at least 2029".

"The outcome of this process underlines the strength of the Premier League and is testament to our clubs, players and managers who continue to deliver the world's most competitive football in full stadiums, and to supporters, who create an unrivalled atmosphere every week," said Premier League chief executive Richard Masters.

Barbara Slater, Director, BBC Sport, said: "Match of the Day remains enduringly popular with audiences and this new agreement with the Premier League is brilliant news for football fans all over the UK."

"For almost 60 years it has been the UK's most discussed football programme, delivering a complete digest of

### Adepoju evaluates Eagles ahead of tournament



Adepoju

want to enter into the issue of whether he should go or not. But notwithstanding, I still don't know. The AFCON is here, and with this coach now, we might not be productive, so that's my take. It has been done earlier (sacking the Gernot Rohr before the AFCON tournament) and I don't think it might be the solution for now" he commented.

The squad boasts players excelling in European leagues, including Victor Osimhen, ranked eighth in the 2023 Ballon d'Or, and Victor Boniface, establishing himself as a prominent striker in the

German Bundesliga.

Adepoju, known as the 'headmaster,' acknowledged the talents within the Super Eagles squad. However, he highlighted a lack of togetherness and leadership within the team that could make a significant difference.

"The current Super Eagles squad, I mean, they are good players, we can see them every time, every week in their clubs, the only thing is how to put their skill and everything together to do well at the AFCON, that's just the issue. But definitely they are doing well in their clubs

"I think togetherness, teamwork, and I won't want to say leadership on the field and all that, but we have a set of players that are good, but there is no leadership, things are not working well. There should be some players that will lead and say 'Oh this is what is happening, we have to change this and all', you know sometimes it works. I don't know because I am not close to them. I have not been in their camp before, and I don't know what is happening. But they need to put themselves together and get cooperation from everyone," he remarked.

### Zouma: West Ham offers £25,000 reward

WEST Ham have offered a £25,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and successful prosecution of burglars who broke into Kurt Zouma's home.

Thieves broke in before Sunday's game with Crystal Palace while the defender and his family were in the house.

No-one was harmed but "items of significant value and of huge personal and sentimental importance" were

taken. "To have someone break into your home is a terrifying experience," said West Ham joint-chair David Sullivan.

"I hope this reward will help bring the individuals to justice and prevent others from going through a similar ordeal."

Zouma, 29, did not play in the match against Palace, which finished 1-1 at London Stadium



Zouma

PAUL Heckingbottom is set to be sacked as Sheffield United manager after two years in charge.

BBC SPORT said that, the Blades, who lost 5-0 at Burnley on Saturday, are bottom of the Premier League with five points after losing 11 of their opening 14 games.

Appointed permanent manager in November 2021, Heckingbottom guided United to the top flight with a second-place Championship finish last season.

Former manager Chris Wilder is among the leading contenders to take over.

After the Burnley game Heckingbottom criticised the club for making "financial rather than football decisions" by selling key players in the summer.

The 46-year-old said United were "let down" by some players at Burnley, who had never won a Premier League game by five goals. Victory

lifted them off the bottom of the table at United's expense.

United are four points from safety, have won only once this season and have a goal difference of minus 28.

They host second-placed Liverpool at Bramall Lane on today.

Heckingbottom's scheduled news conference was cancelled on Monday, with the club set to hold one at 13:30 GMT on Tuesday.

United lost their opening three games on their return to the Premier League and rounded off August with a home defeat by League One Lincoln City in the Carabao Cup second round.

After earning their first league point in a 2-2 draw with Everton in early September, United lost their next six league games, which included a humiliating 8-0 home defeat by Newcastle and a 5-0 loss at Arsenal.

The defeat by Arsenal meant

Sheffield United, with nine losses in their opening 10 matches and a goal difference of minus 22, recorded the worst start by any side to a Premier League season.

They hinted at an improvement in form before November's international break, with Oliver Norwood's stoppage-time penalty earning a first win of the season against Wolves, which was followed by a 1-1 draw at Brighton.

But a 3-1 defeat at Bournemouth, after which Heckingbottom said his players fell below the standard required, added greater importance to the meeting with Burnley.

On Saturday, United conceded in the opening minute against last season's Championship winners Burnley.

Oli McBurnie was sent off at 2-0 down in first-half stoppage time and United conceded three times in the final 17 minutes of the match.

Sports

## Swansea sack coach less than six months

SWANSEA City has sacked Head Coach Michael Duff less than six months in charge of the Championship club.

BBC SPORT said that, Duff departs after a run of one win in eight matches and with Swansea sitting 18th in the table.

The 45-year-old had endured a difficult spell as Swansea boss, with the club struggling to find consistency this season.

Martin Paterson has also left, with his fellow assistant head coach Alan Sheehan becoming caretaker boss.

Sheehan will start his temporary tenure on Saturday, as Swansea go in search of a first win in five league games at second-bottom Rotherham United.

Duff's brief reign began with a seven-game winless streak in the league - including a miserable derby defeat at Cardiff City - before a run of four straight wins lifted his side into the top half of the table.

But they have since taken six points from a possible 24, a worrying run which has cost Duff his job.

The former Cheltenham Town and Barnsley boss was booed by sections of Swansea's support after last Saturday's draw with Huddersfield.

Swansea City said "the process to appoint a new head coach is already under way".

Duff left League One Barnsley to take over at Swansea in June following former boss Russell Martin's move to Southampton, signing a deal with the Swans until 2026.

The Welsh club made a host of changes behind the scenes and there was a major overhaul of the playing squad, with chairman Andy Coleman - who took up his role in May - suggesting Duff's side should be capable of challenging for promotion.

However, Swansea are only five points clear above the relegation zone having won just five of their 19 league games this season.

Swansea's style of play under Duff has been criticised, with the club moving away from the possession game which has been key to their successes in recent memory.

The former Cheltenham boss has also had an uneasy relationship with Swansea's fans.

Club chairman Coleman said: "This was a very difficult decision and one that was given considerable thought and attention.

"I acknowledge that there has been a significant amount of change at the club, both on and off the pitch, during Michael's tenure. I consistently asked for patience as we gave him time to implement his plans and bring the squad together.

"Unfortunately, we have seen neither the results that we expect nor the progress from the squad that we need. I believe it is now in the best interests of Swansea City to make a change of head coach.

"I have the greatest respect



Duff

for Michael as a person and as a leader. I know how hard he and his staff have worked throughout this season for Swansea City.

"I want to personally thank Michael, Martin, and their families for the sacrifices they have made on behalf of this club and this city.

"I know that Michael will be successful in his next opportunity and on behalf of the board and the entire club, I wish him and Martin only the best in their future endeavours.

"I will learn from the experience of these last several months. My appreciation for how critical the Swansea identity is to this club has grown since the summer and it will be high in my mind as I make the decision on our new head coach."

The often mentioned 'Swansea Way' is not just a catchy phrase. There have been variations on the theme over the years since the days of Roberto Martinez and Brendan Rodgers.

But there is now something

in the DNA at Swansea City where style matters, and Duff never appeared to be the correct fit.

His words before the south Wales derby, coupled with the abject performance against Cardiff City in the 2-0 away defeat in September, did him no favours. After the derby dominance in the Russell Martin era, that was always going to be a huge reverse to counter even for one so experienced as Duff.

A four-game winning run late in September and running into October appeared to suggest Duff could turn the tide.

But even through that time, he struggled to give the side any identity. It was as if he was trying to impose a more direct style on the team - with players who just did not suit that system.

He was also less than inspiring in the media - a facet not as important as results, but a key element these days.

Chairman Andy Coleman seems to have admitted the style factor was as much to blame as one win in the last eight league games.

## McIlroy plans to 'roll back' golf ball technology

Rory McIlroy is backing plans to "roll back" golf ball technology to reduce the distances that they can travel.

The world number two posted on social media that he couldn't understand the "anger" towards proposals.

Rule makers want to help protect courses that are not long enough to cope with today's 340-yard drives.

"It will make no difference whatsoever to the average

golfer and puts golf back on a path of sustainability," wrote McIlroy on X.

The R&A and United States Golf Association are understood to be on the verge of announcing a full roll back of golf ball technology after opposition to previous proposals for rules that would only impact golf balls used in the professional game.

This idea of different rules for the amateur and

SERBIA'S Hamad Medjedovic became the sixth winner of the Next Gen ATP Finals after five-set win over France's Arthur Fils.

The 20-year-old world number 111 recovered from letting two match points slip in the fourth set before winning 3-4(6-8) 4-1 4-2 3-4(9-11) 4-1.

The tournament is the season-ending event for the top-ranked male players aged 21 and under.

The event has a best-of-five format with four games winning a set.

Former champions include current top 10 players Carlos Alcaraz, Jannik Sinner and Stefanos Tsitsipas.

This season, Medjedovic reached tour-level semi-finals in Gstaad and Astana and won three ATP Challenger Tour events.

He is the lowest-ranked champion in tournament history but converted his third match point to get past his 19-year-old opponent, ranked 36 in the world.

"I can't believe I have won this title but it's going to give me a lot of confidence for 2024," he said.

## Medjedovic wins title in five-set thriller



Medjedovic

"Arthur is an amazing player - he's top 40 for a reason - so I'm really happy.

"It was tough after the first set. I changed my clothes and recovered and started to play good again. I didn't play good when I had match points in the fourth set. I wasn't relaxed, I was very stiff.

"Thank God I recovered and I was just trying to stay relaxed as much as I could and I managed to do it in the end."

Medjedovic received messages of support during the week from compatriot Novak Djokovic, who clinched a record seventh ATP Finals title in Turin last month.

"Two of us from Serbia. He won the big Masters, the real one, and I won the Next Gen. Obviously, it's a huge thing and I'm happy to follow in his footsteps in some way," he added.

## Scheffler wins Hero World Challenge as Woods finishes 18th

WORLD number one Scottie Scheffler won the Hero World Challenge in the Bahamas as Tiger Woods finished 18th in the 20-man field on his return from injury.

American Scheffler's bogey-free four-under round of 68 meant he finished on 20 under and sealed a three-shot win from Austrian Sepp Straka.

Woods, competing for the first time since withdrawing from the Masters in April, ended level after a round of 72.

The 15-time major champion expects to play "once a month" in 2024.

Former world number one Woods, 47, had ankle surgery earlier this year to address post-traumatic arthritis following the 2021 car crash that kept him out of action for nearly 14 months.

"Once a month seems reasonable," Woods told Golf Channel of his plans for next year.

"It gives me a couple of

weeks to recover and a week to tune up. Maybe I can get into the rhythm."

Woods, who will next play the PNC Championship - formerly the Father/Son Challenge - from 14 December with his son Charlie, said he was "ecstatic" with his return.

"I feel like my game's not that far off but I need to get in better shape," Woods said.

"I don't have the bone pain that I did, but I still have to go through with the same protocols. It takes a long time, that's the unfortunate thing about ageing."

Woods recovered from a double bogey on the third with three birdies in the next four holes and also birdied the 14th and 15th after dropping shots on the eighth and 11th.

He finished 20 shots behind compatriot Scheffler, runner-up to Viktor Hovland in each of the past two years.

Straka returned a superb 64 to finish 17 under, with Justin Thomas a shot further back in third. Hovland surged through the field with a 63 to finish 10th.

"I think this is great for momentum," Scheffler told NBC.

"I talked a little bit about it at the beginning of the week; this was kind of a warm-up for the [next] season."



McIlroy

leading equipment manufacturers and some tour professionals.

As a result, Northern Ireland's four-time major winner McIlroy, who also supported the MLR proposal, is now backing the more universal rule change.

He added: "I don't understand the anger about the golf ball roll back.

"The people who are upset about this decision shouldn't be mad at the governing bodies, they should be mad at elite pros and club/ball manufacturers because they didn't want bifurcation.

"Elite pros and ball manufacturers think bifurcation would negatively affect their bottom lines, when, in reality, the game is already bifurcated.

"You think we play the same stuff you do?

"They put pressure on the governing bodies to roll it back to a lesser degree for everyone. Bifurcation was the logical answer for everyone, but, yet again in this game, money talks."



Scheffler



**Quest**



**writer**

**N. S. OKOROMA**

**FRAGMENT**

**"The British system of education was found inadequate for Nigeria's developmental purposes. It is also true that the American system has failed in Nigeria because of our sociological circumstances. We need not continue to deceive ourselves with a national educational policy that has been found unworkable else in the future there will be no policy to lay hold on".**

**N. S. OKOROMA**

**Educational policies and problems of implementation in Nigeria**

*Continued from last week*

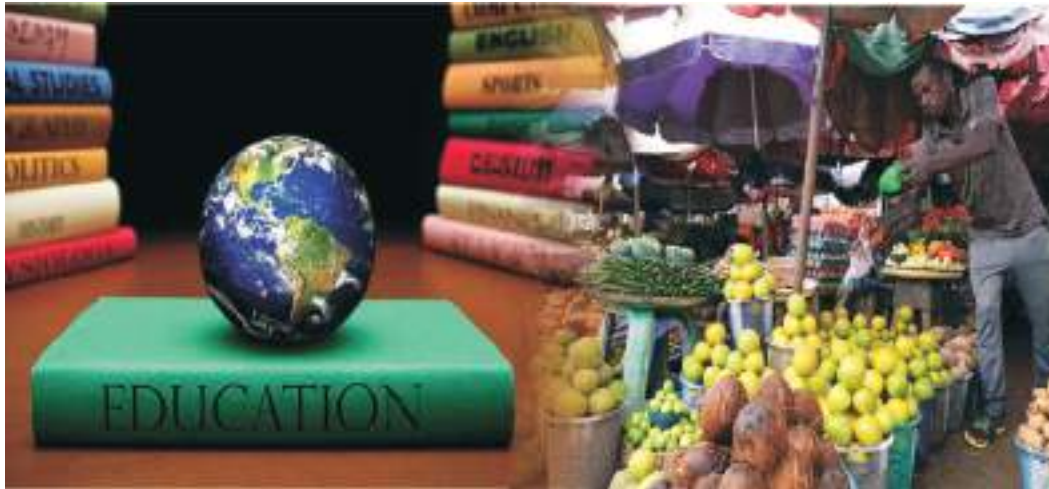
**M**any corruptly divert much of the available education resources to serve personal interests. Aghenta (1984) supports these observations with the following assertion:

The money available is never carefully used. The money the government votes for running the schools ... does not get to the schools and the little that gets there is normally wasted by those whose responsibility it is to manage the schools.

Since the re-establishment of democracy in Nigeria in 1999, the state of education has further deteriorated. The UNESCO standard for education for all nations of the world is 26% of the national budget. During the era of dictatorship (military government) in Nigeria, education received as much as 13%. But the present democratic government in Nigeria has fallen short of this. For example, in 2001, it allocated 8% to education. In 2004, the Federal Government's provision for education was a dismal 5.6% of the budget.

The issue of corruption in education became more prominent in 2005 when President Olusegun Obasanjo made a broadcast to the nation alleging that some members of the National Assembly demanded and collected N55 million from Professor Fabian Osuji (the former Minister of Education). The Senate President and five other senators were involved in the deal. According to President Obasanjo the purpose of the bribe was to enable the National Assembly to approve an enhanced budget for the Ministry of Education (Obasanjo 2005:11). All the facts available show that the refusal to accede to such a bribery demand meant doom for the education sector for the year. It is rather unfortunate that senators who are senior citizens expectedly demanded an inducement before they would approve that Nigerian children should go to school. Adighije (2005:5) confirmed that bribes to the National Assembly is a normal practice and that every Minister does it. Osuji (2005:1), who was involved in the corruption scandal, admitted having given N55 million to the Senate Committee on Education but said it was a public relations gift and not a bribe. According to him, other Ministers do the same to have their budgets passed in line with their proposals. This implied that such practice must have been going on over the past six years of democracy in Nigeria to the detriment of educational development. No doubt these unfortunate and corrupt practices affect implementation as they occur at the various stages of program execution. Ejiogu (2005:11) concurs:

The cankerworms of corruption and gross mismanagement of resources have been blamed for the deplorable state of the country's educational system. As a result of these two factors, the sector has consistently witnessed scarcity of resources, to the extent that less than 20 percent of



eligible children of secondary school age get enrolled into schools. At the tertiary level, only 0.3 percent of Nigerian youths who are due for enrolment at that level get the opportunity to go into higher institutions.

**Implications for national development**

Education is an instrument for excellence. It liberates people from poverty and ignorance. Ukeje (1966:155) believes that "education is for life and for living. It is an investment in people which pays untold dividends to the society. When that investment is not made or is made inadequately, the society suffers a loss". Presumably it is in recognition of this importance of education that the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria provided at Section 18 as follows:

- (1) Government shall direct its policy towards ensuring that there are equal and adequate educational opportunities at all levels.
- (2) Government shall promote science and technology.
- (3) Government shall strive to eradicate illiteracy; and to this end, Government shall as and when practicable provide:
  - (a) free, compulsory and universal primary education
  - (b) free secondary education
  - (c) free university education, and
  - (d) free adult literacy programs (FRN, 1999:18).

It is in pursuance of this constitutional provision that the National Policy on Education was developed and accepted. Nigeria's educational philosophy is also anchored on this constitutional mandate.

The importance of education to national development is no longer in doubt. The issue that agitates the mind is the effect of poor implementation of educational policies on the development of Nigeria. It was Ake (1988:2) who said that "education is the process of becoming the best we can be". With the numerous crises in the educational system engendered by poor policy implementation, it is doubtful whether its recipients are really becoming the best as expected. If not, what is the fate of

Nigeria?

The euphoria with which Nigerians welcomed the National Policy on Education has died down and been replaced with despondency due to non-performance. The National Educational Research Council Report of the Baguada Seminar of September 1980 captured this euphoria as expressed in that seminar thus:

The introduction of the new system of education is deemed crucial to the implementation of the philosophy of "developmentalism". It is hoped that when fully operational, it will help transform the society and launch the nation along the developmental trajectory that will lead us to a state of parity with the advanced world (Baguada Report 1980:7).

In the same state of mind, Ukeje (1986:8) noted that "the 6-3-3-4 system is more than a structure. It is a new process, a new orientation and a new activity, which hopefully will lead to new individuals and a new and bright future". The ineffective implementation of the various programs canvassed by the National Policy on Education has relegated these hopes and optimism to back-stage. Nigeria is caught between one 'evil' (the rejected British educational system which is still unofficially practised) and one 'saint' (the accepted American educational system which we can neither officially nor unofficially practise). Consequently, the conservatism of the British educational system which helped us to maintain our traditional values and a healthy society has been lost. On the other hand, the American system with its potential for technological development and growth has failed to make any difference in our society because we have not learned anything.

In the present circumstance, the dream of Nigeria to move to a state of parity with the advanced world appears to be a mirage. Ukeje (1986) was full of hope that the new system would lead to new individuals and a new and bright future. Eighteen years later, the system has not produced new individuals and the future appears more hopeless than in 1982 when the policy commenced.

If Nigeria continues to hide under

the umbrella of the National Policy on Education conscious of the implementation problems, our national aspirations will suffer greater impediments. Our national development will only rely on miracles, if any. The British system of education was found inadequate for Nigeria's developmental purposes. It is also true that the American system has failed in Nigeria because of our sociological circumstances. We need not continue to deceive ourselves with a national educational policy that has been found unworkable else in the future there will be no policy to lay hold on.

**Recommendations**

There is an urgent need for a workable educational policy for Nigeria.

It is for this reason that the following recommendations are advanced.

- The present national educational policy should be disbanded on account of its non-workability.
- An indigenous system of education fashioned after the models operated by Asian countries should be adopted. Ideas that are alien to the cultures of Nigeria should be avoided because they are bound to fail.
- Education should be removed from the sphere of politics. It should be made purely a constitutional matter, but not as provided by the 1999 constitution which allows escape routes for political leaders. When the constitution states that "Government shall as and when practicable provide free education at different levels", the right to education has been denied the citizens and political leaders may be non-committal as the provision of education becomes a discretionary matter.
- The entrenchment of education as a non-negotiable right of every citizen in the constitution would help check corruption in that sector. Corruption is largely responsible for the failure of the National Policy on Education and other policies in Nigeria.
- Mismanagement of educational resources at any level should be made a serious offence attracting a minimum of five years' imprisonment. This should be

included in the next constitution of Nigeria. It is believed that in the presence of corruption no new system of education can succeed.

- Nigerian governments and leaders should develop the necessary political will for education to grow.

- Every effort should be made to eradicate corruption from all spheres of Nigeria's various programs so that available resources can be utilised for public interest.

From the literature reviewed, we can conclude that the implementation of educational policies in Nigeria are constrained by the following factors.

- Most educational policies are well focused but the planning is often defective, making implementation difficult.

- Resources available for the implementation of a given educational policy are often over-estimated and thereby elicit unrealistic expectations that fail to materialise.

- Since educational policies are usually translated into plans before implementation, studies have shown that the costs of implementing such plans have often been underestimated. Most educational policies have become stalled at the planning stage.

- Reliable data have not been a popular feature in planning education in Nigeria. This situation has not facilitated the effective implementation of educational plans.

- The implementation of educational policies is also often hindered by the interplay of politics, which may sometimes relegate reality to obscurity.

- Qualified teachers are not in sufficient numbers in the entire educational system in Nigeria. Studies have already confirmed this to be true of the U.B.E. Scheme, as well as the secondary education program. The tertiary level of education, where hundreds of students receive lectures hanging out of windows and doors and taught by one lecturer, is also confirmation.

- Facilities such as classrooms, offices, laboratories, workshops, libraries, power, water *et cetera* are basic requirements in every school system. These have been found to be grossly inadequate in most Nigerian educational institutions. The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) has confirmed this in its numerous publications.

- Insufficiency of funds for implementing educational policies in Nigeria is a problem that has recurred in almost every implementation study that has been carried out. The importance of funds for carrying out any activity need not be over-emphasised.

- Government lacks the political will for effective implementation.

- Corruption at all levels hinders the implementation of educational policies and programs.

**Concluded**