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High debt, inflation threatens Nigeria's economic growth -UN

The United Nations has disclosed that rising public debt, persistent inflation, high cost of living, and a weak business environment, will continue to pose a downward risk to Nigeria's growth prospects.

In its 'World Economic

Situation and Prospects 2024' report, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the UN revealed that recent reforms by the government will boost GDP in 2024 to 3.1 per cent. It stated that policy reforms by the government in 2023, especially in the

hydrocarbon sector, have contributed moderately to the country's growth prospects for 2024.

Commenting on the issues that might negatively impact the country, the UN said, "However, ballooning public debt, persistent inflation, and a rising cost of living, together with a

weak business environment, will pose a downward risk to growth prospects."

It noted that efforts to increase "in-country oil refining capacity would likely reduce domestic fuel costs in 2024 and beyond."

The New York City headquartered agency highlighted that generally

African economies faced significant inflationary pressures in 2023, resulting in an inflation rate higher than the recent average. It decried the impact of exchange rate on inflationary pressures and stated that high fuel prices resulted in higher local prices for essential items such as food.

It stated, "Food inflation remained elevated (above 30 per cent) for some of the larger economies, including Nigeria, Egypt, and Ghana."

The United Nations pointed out that many African countries continued to experience deteriorating fiscal positions against the backdrop of high public

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Nigeria's President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, represented by Vice President, Kashim Shettima with one of the Children at the IDP in Bokkos LGA on the 27th December, 2023

PHOTO: DANLADI DUK

Supreme Court reserves judgement on Plateau governorship election

The Supreme Court yesterday reserved judgement on an appeal filed by Governor Caleb Mutfwang of Plateau State seeking to affirm his election, which was nullified by the lower court, the Court of Appeal in November last year.

Mr Mutfwang of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) scored 525,299 votes to beat the All Progressives Congress candidate, Nentawe Yilwatda, who garnered 481,370 votes during the 18 March governorship poll in Plateau State.

The governor's election was upheld by the Plateau State Governorship Election Petitions Tribunal in Jos, the state capital.

However, the Court of Appeal in Abuja, in its judgement delivered on 19 November 2023, overturned Mr Mutfwang's victory, prompting him to file an appeal at the Supreme Court to challenge the lower court's decision.

The Supreme Court's decision on the case will be final.

At the hearing of the appeal on Tuesday, a five-member panel of the Supreme Court led by John Okoro, took arguments from lawyers to parties in the case.

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Ariwoola

Nigeria airlines record high threatening incidents

The possibility that the Boeing 737 aircraft would fly in Nigeria anytime soon continues to reduce as airlines again record life threatening incidences from usage of the airplane type.

The latest blow for Boeing's top-selling 737 MAX aircraft came on Friday when a cabin panel blowout forced an Alaska

Airlines flight to make an emergency landing.

The Boeing 737 MAX passenger airliner was grounded worldwide between March 2019 and December 2020 - longer in many jurisdictions after

346 people died in two similar crashes: Lion Air Flight 610 on October 29, 2018 and Ethiopian Airlines Flight 302 on

March 10, 2019.

The U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) resisted grounding the aircraft until March 13, 2019, when it received evidence of accident similarities.

Following Alaska Airlines' incident, US regulators have ordered a temporary grounding of certain planes for safety checks. That is

not as severe a move as the grounding of all MAX-family jets worldwide nearly five years ago after two fatal crashes.

About 215 737 MAX 9 jets are in service worldwide, according to aviation analytics firm Cirium. Only about 171 feature the plug door that was blown out during the flight. Other models

include an additional emergency evacuation door.

United Airlines found loose bolts on a number of 737 MAX 9 aircraft, it said on Monday.

United found issues related to the installation on several panels that were being inspected after the incident, it said in a

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News

High debt, inflation threatens Nigeria's economic growth - UN

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debt and a low domestic revenue base in 2023. It stated that structural vulnerabilities such as weak taxation frameworks, narrow tax bases, and inadequate institutional capacity limit the effectiveness of fiscal policy reforms on the continent.

Commenting on tax revenues, it said, "Tax revenue currently accounts for approximately 16.6 per cent of GDP, which compares poorly with the corresponding shares for regions such as Asia and the Pacific (21 per cent) and Latin America and the Caribbean (22.9 per cent)."

It noted that energy subsidy reforms in Nigeria, Angola, and Gambia, as well as tax hikes in Kenya, Ghana and South Africa, aim to provide the governments of these countries with some relief from tight fiscal spaces.

The humanitarian agency stated that the volatility of commodity prices and susceptibility to external shocks also contributed to fiscal policy uncertainty in the region. Borrowing has gotten more expensive, the agency noted, with many African countries cut off from the international market due to low credit

ratings.

It said, "Development financing access and costs remain a daunting challenge, with debt overhangs hindering most African countries from accessing capital at affordable rates from international markets. Borrowing costs for Governments in Africa remain elevated, largely due to low credit ratings."

"Estimates show that borrowing costs for the African countries are approximately four times higher than those for developed countries. In 2023, the three major international credit rating agencies downgraded some of the major economies in Africa, including Nigeria, Ghana, Egypt, Kenya, and Morocco.

According to it, the African Union is working on establishing an independent credit rating modality that will provide a balanced and comprehensive risk evaluations for African countries to lower their borrowing costs in international financial markets.

It concluded by stating that the economic outlook for Africa remains clouded by debt, lingering inflation, and climate risks,

compounded by uncertainties on the political front. It added that the continent remains the most food insecure region in the world, with approximately 60 per cent of the population experiencing moderate or severe food insecurity against a global average of 29.6 per cent.

Nigeria's total public debt rose to N87.91trn in the third quarter of 2023 according to data from the Debt Management Office. Recently, the Attorney General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Lateef Fagbemi, decried the dangers of the rising debt profiles of governments across all levels in the country.

He said, "I also need to comment on the increasingly rising debt profiles of Government at all levels, which pose serious danger and challenge to our national economy and existence as an independent nation."

Recently, the International Monetary Fund stated that inflation will slow Nigeria's economic growth. It said, "Growth in Nigeria is projected to decline from 3.3 per cent in 2022 to 2.9 per cent in 2023 and 3.1 per cent in 2024, with negative effects of high inflation on consumption taking hold."



Christmas Eve attacks: Christians stage peaceful demonstration

By PETER TITLE

A large crowd of Christians in Jos, the Plateau State capital, on Monday, turned out in their numbers to register their displeasure for the attacks carried out simultaneously in Bokkos, Mangu and Barkin-Ladi LGAs on Christmas eve.

Security personnel had a hectic time controlling the mammoth crowd who were clad in black. They embarked on a peaceful walk to the state Government House, Little Rayfield Jos. In one accord they marched to the seat of government to cry out against the tragic loss of hundreds of lives during the Christmas Eve

mayhem unleashed by terrorists which left hundreds dead and thousands injured.

Led by Rev. Dr. Stephen Baba Panya, President of Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA), and in collaboration with Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), presented their "10-point demand for peace" to Governor Barr. Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang.

Rev. Panya expressed gratitude for proactive measures taken by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu and Governor Mutfwang. However, he emphasized the need for more concerted efforts to address persistent attacks on Christians in Plateau State.

Highlighting the over 20 years of unchecked violence, resulting in thousands of deaths without proper prosecution, Rev. Panya called for urgent intervention, including the provision of emergency relief to the victims.

He acknowledged President Tinubu's directive to relevant federal agencies for assistance and commended Governor Mutfwang's efforts in condemning the attacks and providing aid to displaced survivors. He unequivocally demanded an end to the ongoing attacks and killings, seeking immediate justice for the affected communities.

Rev. Panya urged the Attorney General of the Federation and Minister of Justice to officially designate the armed terrorist militias behind the killings as terrorists. He called for enhanced security measures for the over 15,000 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Bokkos and the reconstruction of destroyed communities.

Governor Mutfwang, while receiving the Christian community's position, expressed gratitude for the support and assured of prompt delivery of the petition to President Tinubu. He acknowledged Tinubu's commitment to ending the cycle of violence and emphasized the determination to secure the land, promising that the bloodshed would not be in vain.

Prominent church leaders, including CAN Chairman, Plateau State, Rev. Fr. Polycarp Lubo, Catholic Archbishop of Jos, His Grace Mathew Ishaya Adu, Methodist Bishop, Her Lordship, Nkechi Nwosu, COCIN President represented by Rev. Prof. Pokol, PFN Chairman, Rev. Dunka Gomwalk, OAIC-Apostle M. Ewurum, Rev. Stephen Dangana and Rev. Gideon Para-Mallam joined the peace walk, demonstrating unity and collective concern for the plight of the affected communities.

Supreme Court reserves judgement on Plateau governorship election

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After a frenetic session of arguments between Mr Mutfwang's lawyer, Kanu Agabi, and Mr Yilwatda's counsel, J.O Olatoke, the Supreme Court said a date for judgement would be communicated to parties in the suit.

The Supreme Court is expected to deliver a verdict on the matter before 16 January, when the appeal will expire.

Nigeria airlines record high threatening incidents

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statement. The disclosure raises concerns about the production process of 171 Boeing MAX jets, mostly operated by US carriers Alaska and United Airlines, that have been grounded while safety checks are made.

Already, the Boeing Max aircraft are missing from recent orders made by Nigerian airlines, despite its attractive modern functions and wide usage worldwide.

Five years ago, Air Peace Airline made orders for 10 Boeing 737 MAX aircraft worth about \$1.13billion.

The management of Air Peace signed the agreement with Boeing Corporation of the USA for the acquisition of the planes but up till date, none of the planes have been delivered to Nigeria.

A source close to the airline said the delivery of the airplanes to Air Peace has since been stalled because of the issues with

the aircraft type.

However, Stanley Olisa, spokesperson for Air Peace told BusinessDay that the orders for Max 8 and Max 10 of the Boeing aircraft are still active but there is no date for delivery yet.

Olisa however said he can't comment on why there is no date for the delivery yet.

In 2021, Air Peace took delivery of five brand new 124-seater Embraer 195-E2 aircraft- the first of its kind in Africa. The airline

became Embraer's launch customer for this aircraft model in the whole of Africa.

These deliveries were part of the 2018 firm order for 13 E195s with purchase rights for seventeen of the same aircraft.

Air Peace recently signed another milestone deal- a firm order for 5 brand new Embraer 175 aircraft and a planned maintenance facility with support from Embraer to service the aircraft locally.

Plateau mourns: Demands 21 days safety ultimatum

CITIZENS of Plateau State last Saturday, came out en masse, calling on President Ahmed Bola Tinubu, to urgently assure them of proactive military actions that would repeal the terrorists that have been attacking their communities and secure their villages within 21 days or expect their collective and forceful move to reclaim their ancestral land.

This position came up when citizens converged at the Secretariat Junction, Jos, the state capital, expressing their sadness and bitterness at a world press conference tagged: "Plateau Prayer and Mourning Rally" led by the Convener of the Initiative for Better and Brighter Nigeria (IBBN), Prophet (Dr) Isa El-Buba.

Addressing journalists

shortly after a heartrending prayer session, the prophet said, "Today, we are mourning, but we will not continue to mourn any longer. This thing is not about Muslims or Christians, but an intentional plan by the enemy and let us call it as it is."

"Some Fulani militias and other militias have joined hands to wipe away our people from their ancestral land and take over. It is a simple act of terrorism and genocide. We want to state it clear today that we are here peacefully, demanding that the government must do what is right."

"All these years, they have been giving us political statements and political positions. This time, we are not taking any political press statements, but we want

political actions. We want to take back the 100 communities that are right now occupied by these terrorists."

"We are asking the security forces and the Nigerian government led by President Tinubu, to make sure that those people are uprooted from these communities and restored back to their real owners. We are demanding and are giving you 21 days ultimatum, starting from today, to do what we are asking for."

"If they fail to do that, we, the city people, will gather here and demand that the right thing must be done. We, the citizens of Nigeria will not wait but take action. Enough is enough! We stand with the government of our state, Plateau State, to say together

that we will fight this fight."

"Let it be clear that we demand of the President of Nigeria, that within 21 days, we want to see the military in action. Secondly, all of us the citizens, should stop behaving as if nothing is going on. What affects the villagers, affects us too, because food prices will go up. Farmers cannot farm again because some of them are being murdered and slaughtered."

"This time, we will join the villagers to secure them. So, I am asking all of you here that after 21 days, we are going to villages and rebuild our villages. To all of us that are here today, I want to tell you that, when you hear the next announcement, we are coming out as citizens. We will not stop until wickedness

stops!", he emphasized.

"On his part, a Muslim Cleric, Sheikh Umar Farouk, who also prayed for the soul of Plateau, called on President Tinubu and the Federal Government to urgently stop this injustice done to Plateau by ensuring that these terrorists were brought to book. "God, punish those killers squad who are enemy of the state".

There were series of worship song ministrations as citizens appeared in black and black to demonstrate how bitter they have been since the ugly incident that occurred on Christmas Eve. The representatives of youths groups, women groups, the CSOs and religious leaders spoke their minds in condemnation of the killings, respectively.



Business & Economy

As mining takes centre-stage in 2024

For the umpteenth time, the federal government has given the assurance Nigerians that with the measures being put in place to revive the mining sub-sector, a lot should be expected in 2024; SUNNY IDACHABA writes.

BEGINNING from this new year and according to government's projection, the mining sector, which was separated from the erstwhile Ministry of Mines and Steels Development in the current dispensation, would begin to contribute meaningfully to the economic growth of the country. This is according to the new year message by the minister of solid minerals development, Dele Alake, who said the sector would experience a major leap in the new year.

He noted in a statement that the leap would be towards contributing substantially to the nation's gross domestic product (GDP).

In the statement through his media aide, Segun Tomori, the minister reiterated that President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's vision of diversifying the economy through renewed focus on solid minerals is on course, asserting that reforms in the sector will yield tremendous results in the new year.

"I felicitate Nigerians for making it through 2023 into the year 2024. It is pertinent that we collectively look forward to the horizon of the New Year, with renewed hope, especially because it signposts the first fiscal year of the Tinubu administration.

"On our part in the solid minerals development ministry, we will be consolidating on reforms that commenced with our ambitious 7-point agenda, on assumption of office, four months ago. Nigerians are rest assured that an efficient governance structure that will transform the opaque nature of the mining sector will crystallise in the new year.

"It will be recalled that we had revoked 1,633 mining licenses of those that defaulted in the payment of annual service fees last year. More revocation is in the offing for other categories of defaulters in 2024," he said.

According to a recent Nigeria Mining Cadastral data, there were 6376 active mineral titles in the country as of the first quarter of 2022, comprising 2502 exploration licences, 2097 quarry leases, 1522 small-scale mining leases and 255 mining leases.

Under the National Development Plan 2021-25, the federal government aims to increase the GDP contribution of non-oil mining activity from 0.4% in 2020 to 3% by 2025. While this is an ambitious target, Nigeria has vast mineral resources distributed throughout the country, many of which are still untapped.

Abundant mineral deposits
Key deposits include an estimated 40m tonnes of talc in Niger, Osun, Kogi and Ogun states; more than three billion



Adegbite

tonnes of iron ore in Kogi, Enugu, Niger and the Federal Capital Territory; around one billion tonnes of gypsum across many states; some 10 million tonnes of lead and zinc in the east and central areas; 700 million tonnes of bentonite around the country; 42bn tonnes of bitumen; some 3bn tonnes of indicated coal reserves in 17 identified coal fields; roughly 1.5m tonnes of rock salt in Plateau, Ebonyi and Benue states; gemstones such as rubies, sapphires, aquamarine, topaz, fluor spar, emeralds, zircon and amethyst in Plateau, Kaduna and Bauchi states; and around 3bn tonnes of good kaolinitic clay.

Additionally, Nigeria has 600,000 tonnes of combined estimated reserves of alluvial and primary gold deposits. These deposits are generally among the highest quality in sub-Saharan Africa. There are large proven reserves of gold in the South-west schist belt, as well as in the north and centre of the country. However, some 80% of gold mining is conducted by ASMs at present.

As of 2020, Thor Explorations was the only large-scale gold mining operator in the field, with an annual capacity of around 85,000 oz.

There have also been a number of major lithium discoveries in recent years, concentrated in the northern states of Kogi, Nasarawa, Kwara and Plateau, as well as in the south in Oyo, Ekiti

and Cross River. The deposits are high grade and hard rock, making these findings potentially attractive to investors.

The solid minerals sector is adjudged as one of the viable areas for diversification of the country's economy following the decline in oil fortunes. The economy, which has been overly dependent on petroleum, has continued on the downward slide following decline in oil fortunes world over. This development has brought to the fore the need to further diversify the nation's economy.

Past attempts

While the attention of former President Muhammadu Buhari-led administration was majorly on the agriculture sector, the solid mineral industry is believed to hold a lot of fortunes for the country.

For industry watchers, the time has come for Nigeria to tap fully into its solid mineral sector, especially as fortunes from the oil sector, continue to dwindle.

Almost all the states of the federation have solid minerals, especially in the northern states, and are believed to be in large quantities that the proceeds can replace revenues from oil.

During the administration of Bello Matawalle as governor of Zamfara state, he was said to have taken bold steps among which was the establishment of a gold reserve in the state, the first of its kind in Nigeria, starting with 31 kg of processed gold that

would be deposited in a bank.

The decision to undertake and fully establish the project, according to Matawalle, was borne out of economic and social considerations as he said the novel idea would have massive impacts on the indigenes and country at large, but whether that move has any economic positive impact on the state and country is like a puzzle.

"My administration would subsequently continue to buy gold from our local miners so as to gradually improve the reserve.

"Even though our state, like other states of the federation, is grappling with competing demands from the public, the resources at our disposal are meagre. We feel it is of utmost significance to invest in the future of our people.

"The establishment of the gold reserve, therefore, is part of the relentless efforts by my administration to diversify the state's economy by exploring all potentials of the state and maximally utilise them for the benefit of both the present and future generations," he said.

The reserve, he said, has relatively better returns on investment (ROI) when compared to financial equities such as stocks.

Given the federal government's drive to diversify the economy, it would be correct to assert that the bold step by

Zamfara state government was a welcome development as it would have great potential for increased employment generation, higher IGR, savings of hard-earned FOREX and other spill-over effects on the economy.

More insights

Speaking in the same vein, a former minister of mines and steels development, Olamilekan Adegbite, had said Nigeria was aware of the exponential growth opportunities inherent in the mining sector and was making plans to take up such advantage.

"As a matter of fact, the government is targeting that the mining industry will start contributing as little as 3 per cent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) over the next five years. At the moment, the sector accounts for a mere 0.3 per cent," he said.

According to the former minister, some of the minerals that have been identified by the government in its strategic solid mineral investment effort are gold, lead, zinc, limestone, coal, amongst others.

Other acclaimed reports

A report in a business journal, on monthly basis, about 500kg of gold was reportedly smuggled into neighbouring countries like Niger and Togo and from where the raw materials find their way to the Middle-east.

"Perhaps, a day will come when Nigeria will fully take advantage of the mining opportunities available to it. After all, other successful African economies such as South Africa and Botswana depend almost entirely on mining," the journal indicated.

The annual statistics by Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI) on solid minerals audit report puts total revenue from the sector in 2013 at N33.86 billion and in 2014 at N55.82 billion thereby accounting for just 0.11 percent of GDP.

The report indicated that in 2015, a marginal growth was recorded with accrued revenue hitting N69.2 billion and amounting to 0.33 percent contribution to GDP.

Also, figures by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) have shown that minerals and mining sector contributed only 0.55 percent to Nigeria's GDP in 2016.

The minerals and mining sector could rake in more than US\$25 billion by 2025 and contribute up to three per cent of GDP.

Expectations are therefore high as it seems all other sectors seem to have failed to bail the economy out of the woods.



Business & Economy

Tinubu sacks BPE, Consumer Protection Commission bosses

PRESIDENT Bola Tinubu has sacked Mr Alexander Ayoola Okoh as the the Director-General of the Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE) with immediate effect.

The President also Mr Babatunde Irukera of his appointment as the Executive Vice Chairman of the Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (FCCPC).

Special Adviser to the President on Media and Publicity Chief Ajuri Ngelale, who disclosed this in a statement in Abuja said the two dismissed officials have been directed to hand over to the most senior officer in their respective agencies, pending the appointment of new Chief Executive Officers.

He said the two officials were sacked in conformity with plans to restructure and



Tinubu

reposition critical agencies of the federal government towards protecting the rights of Nigerian consumers and

providing a strong basis for enhanced contributions to the nation's economy by key growth-enabling institutions.

Soaring prices raise questions about Buhari's rice pyramids

THE rising price of rice, a staple food for many Nigerian households, has left many with questions about the Anchor Borrowers' Programme (ABP) that led to the unveiling of rice pyramids during the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari.

BusinessDay findings showed that the price of locally produced rice has doubled to at least N60,000 per 50kg bag from an average price of about N30,000 in 2022.

During the unveiling of 13 rice pyramids made up of 1.2 million bags, Buhari had assured that the rice revolution being championed by his administration under the ABP of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) would deliver food sufficiency across the country.

Farmers blame paddy scarcity, high transport cost

Abraham Ogebe, chief operations officer at Abadini Group, producers of Abadini rice, said the government needs to invest more in rice farms rather than rice mills in order to tackle the challenge of availability and affordability.

He attributed the increase in price of rice to scarcity of rice paddy, which he said was a major challenge to rice production in Nigeria, followed by high cost of transportation and diesel prices.

"The major problem affecting rice production in Nigeria is the scarcity and high price of paddy. Of course the unveiling of the rice pyramids pushed a lot of people into rice production but many were disappointed because it didn't go as expected," he told BusinessDay.

"The paddies are produced locally by farmers. The government should focus investments in rice farms; we have heard of their investments in rice mills but what we really need is investments in rice farms so as to improve the availability of paddy for millers. If there are

no paddies, the rice mills that are being established will not be in use," he said.

In 2015, Buhari's administration identified and launched the ABP as an essential policy instrument for achieving economic diversification through agriculture.

The ABP was designed to encourage investments in agriculture and empower smallholder farmers as drivers of transformation in the agricultural sector and as critical enablers of economic growth.

Chiderra Nnabuife, an agricultural expert, blamed the high cost of rice on the exchange rate and the impact of fuel subsidy removal.

He said: "We all know that the rice pyramid was a jamboree and would not be able to achieve as much as the government said it would, especially reducing the cost of rice, because it was not properly administered. Many of the beneficiaries of that programme are not farmers, and that is the reason it has not been fully recovered."

"However, we must recognise that the high cost of petrol due to the removal of fuel subsidy and the forex has impacted the prices of commodities in the market. For example, prices of fertiliser, seedlings, labour and other factors of production are on the high side."

Nnabuife highlighted the high cost of processing machines and the need for the government to consider import waivers on machines for food production.

He said the cost of transporting agricultural produce from a place to another has greatly increased, impacting the market price.

"Before a trailer of rice moves from the North to the East, they must have paid a huge amount of money to settle security personnel on the road, the cost of transporting those

items is also high and insecurity is also a factor," he said.

Meanwhile, Nigeria is projected to become the world's largest importer of rice in 2024.

A United States Development Agriculture report showed that the value of rice imports for 2023/2024 into Nigeria is expected to surpass the entire N1.08 trillion spent under the ABP.

According to the report, Nigeria is expected to import at least 2.1 million metric tonnes (MT) of rice in 2024, as stronger demand for imported rice is expected due to both high prices for local rice and quality concerns.

The consumption of rice has been on a steady rise, reaching over 7 million MT and exceeding the production capacity of indigenous producers at 5.4 million metric tonnes.

This, according to the AFEX 2023 Wet Season Crop Production Report, has led to a supply gap of 2 million MT as well as over 37 per cent increase in the price of the commodity in 2023.

As of 2022, at least 4.8 million farmers had benefitted from the programme, according to the CBN.

According to the central bank, the ABP had supported about 4.57 million smallholder farmers who cultivated over 6.02 million hectares of 21 commodities across the country as of February 2023.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF), in a March 2023 report, noted that 76 per cent of the loans collected by beneficiaries were yet to be repaid.

It said agricultural credit in the country had not significantly succeeded in increasing production due to the difficulty in reaching the targeted farmers.

It said that although the CBN allowed farmers to pay in cash

THE Debt Management Office (DMO) has rolled out the first initial bond offering for 2024, comprising two Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) savings bonds, available for subscription.

Two-year FGN savings bond due on January 17, 2026, at the interest rate of 11.033 per cent per annum.

Three-year FGN savings bond due on January 17, 2027, at the interest rate of 12.033 per cent per annum.

According to the DMO, the opening date is scheduled for January 8, concluding on January 12, with settlement slated for January 17. Additionally, coupon payments are expected on April 17, July 17, October 17, and January 17.

FGN Savings Bonds are offered at N1,000 per unit subject to a minimum subscription of N5,000 and in multiples of N1,000 thereafter, subject to a maximum subscription of N50 million.

Interest is payable quarterly while bullet repayment (principal sum) is on maturity.

DMO rolls out first initial bond offering



Oniha

FGN savings bonds are considered investment options for trustees under the Trustee Investment Act. They also count as government

securities, making them eligible for tax exemption for pension funds according to the Company Income Tax Act (CITA) and Personal Income Tax Act (PITA).

These bonds are listed on the Nigerian Exchange, and they are seen as liquid assets when banks calculate their liquidity ratio.

In 2023, the Federal Government raised about N16.76 billion through FGN Savings Bonds, with the interest rates ranging between 9.6 per cent and 13.287 per cent.

or give produce of the same value under the ABP, repayments had been very low.

"For the Anchor Borrowing Program, repayment is also low at 24 percent, especially since repayment can be made in kind, thereby limiting the tenor of the loans to one year,"

the IMF said. "Part of the problem is that the incentive structure for repayment is weak, the recipients of the loans are not always well targeted and occasionally the funding is diverted for other things different from the original purpose."

Foreign investors' exit from Nigerian stocks

FOREIGN investment outflows from Nigerian stocks rose in November to the highest level in nearly three years despite reforms that spurred a rally in the market last year.

The total amount of stocks offloaded by foreign investors rose to N36.6 billion from N19.7 billion in October, according to data from the Nigerian Exchange Limited (NGX). Foreign inflows increased to N34.8 billion from N13.62 billion.

The outflow in November is the highest since February 2021, when stocks worth N39.1 billion were sold by foreign investors.

"This is not devoid of the fear of a sudden depreciation of the naira before the end of the fourth quarter of last year, which could have reversed the impressive share price appreciation so far in the year, especially for investors who were still grappling with how to net off the losses already recorded on FX exposure," Temitope Omosuyi, investment strategy manager at Afrinvest Limited, said.

He added that foreign investors may have anticipated that after the bullish run that started in May and firmed up in October, market participants would be tempted to aggressively take some profits, thereby reversing some of the gains.

Analysis of the NGX All-Share Index that tracks the

general market movement of all listed equities showed that the main index rose to 71,365.3 basis points on November 30 from 69,231.2 bps in October 31.

Ayorinde Akinloye, a Lagos-based investor relations analyst, said looking at the trend last year, a lot of foreign investors have been pulling their funds from the stock market.

"The large amount in November was slightly because of the share prices which were very high. So, there was a strong rally in the market. Most of them use that opportunity to largely reduce their exposure in the market since prices were high," he added.

He said the outflow might have reduced in December but it does not mean that investors will not continue to pull back their funds.

"If you look at the trend throughout the whole year, out of the 11 months of the year, about nine or 10 were a net outflow."

The NGX data also revealed that as at November, total transactions at the nation's bourse increased by 34.1 percent from N220.9 billion (about \$243.9 million) in October to N300.7 billion (about \$319.2 million) in November.

It said the performance in November last year when compared to the same period a year earlier revealed that total

transactions increased by 188.3 percent.

"In November, the total value of transactions executed by domestic investors outperformed transactions executed by foreign investors by circa 52 percent," the NGX said.

A further analysis showed that total domestic transactions increased by 22.2 percent from N187.6 billion in October to N229.3 billion in November.

Total foreign transactions increased by 113.9 percent from N33.4 billion (about \$36.8 million) to N71.4 billion (about \$75.8 million).

Foreign investment in Africa's biggest economy dropped to \$654.7 million in the third quarter of last year, the lowest level since the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) started collating the data in 2013. It declined for the second straight quarter by 36.5 percent from \$1.03 billion in the previous quarter.

The instability in the exchange rate and lack of liquidity in the foreign exchange market are scaring away investors, said Johnson Chukwu, managing director of Cowry Asset Management Limited

Analysts at KPMG Nigeria said in a recent report that capital importation figures show continuous quarterly decline, suggesting persistent challenges of investor confidence in the economy.

Politics

Mutfwang: Riding the tide, daunting the odds

Even before the peoples' Governor Barr. Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang formally assumed office in May 2023, some parts of Plateau State were already under siege from suspected armed men unleashing terror in several hinterlands. BOK JOHN DANIEL writes.

Communities in Mangu, Barkin Ladi, Riyom, Bassa, parts of Jos South and Bokkos were summarily targeted for annihilation by the terrorists. Their reasons for carrying out such heinous acts, as always, were hinged on cattle rustling, kidnappings and other acts of criminality. Not daunted by these odds, the incumbent governor hit the ground running.

Following series of stakeholder meetings to find enduring solutions to the security challenge, Mutfwang made an attempt to revive the hitherto moribund local security outfit-Operation Rainbow.

Within his few months on the saddle, the government identified and trained Six Hundred (600) youths at the Citizenship and Leadership Training Center, Shere Hills as part of efforts to revamp the Operation Rainbow.

The training and deployment of these young men and women was aimed at complementing the conventional security apparatus, more so that operatives of the local security outfit were mainly locals who may have a better understanding of the terrain especially at flash points of attacks or insecurity across the 17 Local Government Councils.

This may not be unconnected with the drive to have a community security architecture that would be swift in identifying early warning signs and responding to them in record time.

Suffice it to say, this move has restored some level of sanity, law and order to the affected areas.

Additionally, Mutfwang's strategic step to engage critical stakeholders on the political scene both at home and in the diaspora leaves no one in doubt as to the governor's level of preparedness to face the daunting challenge of navigating Plateau State to its desired position in the scheme of things.

His personal interface with President Bola Ahmed Tinubu who gave him a listening ear to narrate the true picture of insecurity in Plateau State despite being from different political parties is a testament of Mutfwang's charisma and mien.

Aside his several visits to the service chiefs in Abuja which paved way for them to conduct on-the-spot assessment of the security situation in the state.

The revitalization of the moribund State-owned security outfit "Operation Rainbow" and the training of 600 personnel to inject life into Operation Rainbow for security intelligence/early warning signs for swift response is highly commendable.



Mutfwang

With the appointment of a seasoned security expert as his Special Adviser, the current situation and the spate of unprovoked attacks on communities in Plateau State would soon be a thing of the past.

In the same vein, the setting up of the State Security and Information Center for citizens to report concerns on insecurity in local communities will also give impetus to the operations of both conventional and non-conventional security outfits operating within the state.

Furthermore, following the unfortunate Christmas Eve attacks in communities in Bokkos, Barkin Ladi and Mangu LGAs and the outcry that trailed the massacre from all quarters shows that the present administration in the state is indeed enjoying the sympathy of all and sundry.

On the aspect of roads rehabilitation within Jos-Bukuru metropolis and other major roads linking major towns across Plateau State, the Mutfwang government has given the state a new lease of life as major roads are now wearing a new look.

Some of the roads that have attracted attention of the government are Gada Biyu, Farin-Gada, Polo Roundabout to Police Headquarters, Gold and Base Roundabout, Liberty Boulevard, Rayfield,

Dadin Kowa, Dogon Dutse, Bauchi Ring Road, Heipang through Barkin Ladi to Mangu town, D B Zang Junction, Bukuru Express way, Plateau Specialist Hospital and, Hill Station roundabout.

Others are Ola Hospital Roundabout, Masallacin Juma'a street, Zololo Junction, Angwan Rukuba, Tafawa Balewa Street Jos and Plateau Riders road to Terminus Market, among several others.

One of the milestones achieved under the present administration is the revitalization of Railway lines in Jos-Bukuru metropolis. The civil service is not left behind as the government has offset the backlog of over five months' unpaid salaries and pensions it inherited from the immediate past administration amounting to over N11 billion.

As it stands now, the state government is up to date in the payment of salaries and other entitlements of workers.

The government has also directed the payment of gratuities to retired civil servants who disengaged from service since the late 80s. The present government has approved the disbursement of the 90% Consolidated Medical Salary Structure (CONMESS) for workers; approved the disbursement of 75% Hazard allowance to other health workers, including the Joint Health Workers Union (JOHESU) and the National Association of

Nigerian Nurses and Midwives, as well as, approved relevant trainings of workers for efficient service delivery in the public service.

The education sub-sector in Plateau State has had its own fair share of "The Time is Now" Agenda of the Mutfwang administration. Within the last few months that the People's Governor assumed office, he has approved the payment and release of N200 million to bail out Plateau State Polytechnic from total collapse as all its courses were long overdue for accreditation.

The government has also released and paid N300 million to rescue Plateau State University Bokkos from losing some of its courses as a result of non-accreditation in the last eight years.

Mutfwang secured full scholarship for Five Plateau State indigenes to study Engineering in reputable universities outside the shores of Nigeria.

To foster closer strategic ties with critical stakeholders in the education sector, the governor paid a visit to the Executive Secretary of the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), Abuja and requested the commission's attention to the urgent need to fund schools that have been adversely affected by the conflicts in the State.

Concerned by the rising cost of living in the country as a result of the inflation, the government took the bull by its horn to cushion the effects of the high tuition fees for students studying in state-owned tertiary institutions. Thus, the government subsidized tuition fee for students of Plateau State University Bokkos to encourage more prospective students to enroll.

The government also facilitated the payment of bursary scholarships for the students to complement their educational pursuits.

Similarly, in the agricultural sector, the "Time is Now" government is poised to keep faith with its promise of making the land of Plateau State green. It has taken decisive steps to revive the Agricultural Services Training Company (ASTC) which was left to rot by the immediate past administration.

To this end, Mutfwang has already mobilized ASTC to farming communities in Mangu, Barkin-Ladi, Riyom and Bassa LGA to assist farmers continue

their farming season which was abruptly interrupted by attacks that took place in April and May 2023.

Suffice it to say that the revamped ASTC has ploughed over 900 hectares of farmland for farmers across the state by deploying about 29 tractors to farming communities.

Of interest is the procurement of 200 trucks of fertilizer for distribution to farmers for use in both rain-fed agriculture and irrigation farming across the state.

The hitherto moribund Plateau Agricultural Development Project (PADP) has also been given a new lease of life and given the marching order to join other government MDAs in the crusade for all year round farming activities that would improve the fortunes of the majority of the population of people plateau who are mostly subsistence farmers.

On the environment, the incumbent governor, upon assumption of office in May 2023, immediately declared a state of emergency on environmental sanitation.

This laudable move has restored appreciable level of sanity, cleanliness and orderliness by galvanizing the moribund environmental sanitation machinery of government into action.

The reintroduction of the monthly sanitation exercise is a clear testament to the Mutfwang administration to make Plateau State indeed the "Home of Peace and Tourism" that it is!

What is most captivating about this green cap crooner and advocate of a better Plateau where inclusivity, equity, justice, peace and security of lives and property remains sacrosanct is that he seems not to be daunted by the many distractions that his government traducers and opposition have continued to haul his way.

His focus on delivering good governance to the people despite these myriad of challenges says a lot about the mental stability and level of preparedness of Barr. Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang to handle the exigencies of the Office of the Executive Governor of Plateau State at this material time.

Plateau citizens could not have asked for a better governor to pilot the affairs of the state at such a crucial time, period.

Politics

Bring perpetrators of violence to justice - Dogara

By PETER TITLE

FORMER Speaker of the House of Representatives, Rt. Hon. Yakubu Dogara, has urged President Bola Tinubu to stop the perpetrators of violence in all parts of the country.

Hon. Dogara stated this in Jos, when he led some serving and former members of the House of Representatives on a condolence visit to the Plateau State Governor, Barrister Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang, following the recent massacre of over 200 people in Bokkos, Mangu and Barkin Ladi Local Government Areas of the state by terrorists.

The Speaker of the 8th Assembly urged Tinubu not to tow the path of his predecessors who only mourned victims of killings in press statements, thereby reducing themselves to mourners-in-chief instead of taking responsibility as commanders-in-chief. He urged the president to rise to the occasion and use every available means to locate the perpetrators and sponsors of violence across the country and bring them to justice.

Dogara maintained that those responsible for the genocide and orgy of violence are all out to end the ways of life of Nigerians and must be stopped at all costs.

He said, "The perpetrators of this violence are not just crazy but are very dangerous, and the truth is that they won't just stop until we stop them. We must stop them. Who has the responsibility to stop them? It is the Commander-in-Chief, but previously, they reduced themselves to mourners-in-chief instead."

"It means using whatever coercive security apparatus we have as a nation to locate these perpetrators and their sponsors wherever they are littered in the ungoverned spaces that we have in Nigeria, whether in Plateau, Nasarawa, Benue, Katsina, Zamfara, Sokoto or in southern Kaduna or the South. We must locate them and after locating them, the Commander-in-Chief must take justice to them or bring them to justice."

The former Speaker added that the "failure to either take justice to them or bring them to justice has always been the bane of the fight against terrorism and violence in Nigeria because it emboldens them. If they will kill on the Plateau and go scot-free, why won't they kill in any other state in the North and the South?" Failure to act at that level is more or less an incentive for them to continue to deploy this unbridled violence on the people.

"So, my call, therefore, is to the president to rise up and for him to know that condolences at this moment, whether on the Plateau or elsewhere in the country, are better given in the form of



Dogara

decisive action against the perpetrators of this violence and not by mere words."

Governor Mutfwang on his part, thanked Rt. Hon. Dogara and his team for identifying with Plateau at these trying moments.

According to him, the unprovoked attacks on the innocent people of the state were uncalled for and promised to do his best so that the perpetrators of the heinous acts would be fished out and punished accordingly.

He commended President Tinubu for the swift response, saying that by the grace of God, the commander-in-chief would live up to his responsibility in ensuring that the perpetrators were brought to justice.

Governor Mutfwang used the visit to commiserate with Rt. Hon. Dogara's demise of his mother who died on the 22nd December, 2023 and was yet to be buried. He urged him to accept it as an act of God.

Governor Bello dissolves State Executive Council

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

KOGI State Governor, Yahaya Bello, CON, took a decisive and strategic action on Monday, January 8, by dissolving the State Executive Council.

A statement from Onogwu Muhammed, Chief Press Secretary to the Governor, said this significant move serves as a recalibration of the governance trajectory and signifies the initiation of the comprehensive transition process as the 'New Direction Administration' gracefully concludes its tenure.

Heads of agencies, parastatals and other appointees are also affected by the announcement.

While making the announcement at the end of the State Executive Council meeting on Monday at the EXCO Hall of the Governor's Office, Governor Bello commended affected officials for exemplifying unparalleled commitment, diligence, and unwavering patriotism throughout their tenure.

The commendation bestowed upon the outgoing Executive Council members during the session on Monday, echoed the governor's appreciation for their years of dedicated service to the state.

Acknowledging their contributions, Governor Bello wished them success in their future endeavors, a sentiment extended to all heads of agencies and other

appointees whose roles were now concluded.

Government officials affected by this announcement were instructed to ensure a thorough and proper handover process, transferring all pertinent government documents, properties, and materials to the permanent secretary of their ministries or senior government officials stationed in their respective offices.

However, the governor retained the following members of the council and aides; the Secretary to the Government of Kogi State, Mrs Ayoade Folashade Arike, PhD, Rtd Navy Commodore Jerry Omodara, State Security Adviser, Hon Sunday Faleke, Deputy Chief of Staff, Alh Oricha Umaru Shaibu, Director-General, Government House Administration, Barr Mohammed Sanni Ibrahim, SAN, Attorney General and Commissioner for Justice, Abubakar Bashir Mohammed, Commissioner for Solid Mineral and Natural Resources, Kingsley Olorunfemi Fanwo, Commissioner for Information and Communication.

Others are Mohammed Ihiezue Abdulmutalib, Commissioner for Rural and Energy Development, Asiru Idris Asiwaju, Commissioner for Finance, Budget and Economic Planning, Abdulsalam Ozigi Momodu,

SADIQ Abbas Tafida, an engineer and son to Emir of Jalingo, Abbas Tafida Njidda, has won the PDP primary election for Jalingo/Yorro/Zing Federal Constituency.

The election which took place in Jalingo on Monday, ended up in seven out of the nine co-contestants stepping down for him. They are: Leah Solomon, Umar Abdullahi Bala, Ibrahim A. Imam, Hassan Bappa, Dahiru Usman, Tukur Sale Yerima and Hassan Bakari. Bello Yero and Sale Saad were not at the venue of the election.

Chairman of the PDP National Assembly By-election Primaries Committee, Mohammed Bello Aliyu, announced that 96 delegates were accredited and that 95 voted. He

Taraba by-election: Prince emerges PDP reps candidate

From VICTOR GAI, Jalingo

declared Sadiq Abbas Tafida as the winner of the election having scored the highest number of votes.

Meanwhile, the Taraba State Deputy Governor, Aminu Alkali, who was to lead the government delegation to the occasion, could not witness the election as there were protests by youths against an alleged government support for an aspirant.

But the election went on successfully and was witnessed by some PDP big wigs including the Political Adviser to the Governor, Abubakar Bawa.



Tafida

Alia congratulates masses on victory at Supreme Court

From TERESE TUHWA, Makurdi

GOVERNOR Hyacinth Alia of Benue State has congratulated the masses of Benue on their grand victory at the Supreme Court earlier on Monday.

Reacting to the judgment which quashed the case of the PDP and her candidate, Engr. Titus Uba, the governor said the Supreme Court's decision only reaffirmed the time-honored mantra that power belongs to the people.

He stated that the mandate of the masses which was overwhelmingly given to him, would only be used for the good and welfare of the people.

The Supreme Court, while affirming the victory of the governor berated the counsel for the PDP and described the matter brought against the governor as frivolous, of no effect and a downright abuse of court process.

The apex court further asked the PDP's lead

Counsel, S. T. Hon SAN to withdraw the matter or risk the wrath of the court by the award of substantial cost, an order to which he immediately complied with.

Governor Alia, who hailed the judiciary saying it has proven once more that it was truly the last hope of the common man, dedicated his victory to the ordinary Benue person on the street, farmers, teachers, market women, pensioners, IDPs, youths and civil servants previously depressed and unmotivated.

He maintained that he will continue to prioritize their needs and interests over those of people who do not mean well for the state.

He called on the people to continue to support the government of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu to provide dividends of democracy to Nigerian people.

Governor Alia reiterated his resolve to remain focused until the fortunes of the state were turned around for good to ensure that Benue realizes its potential and takes its pride of place in the comity of developed states in Nigeria.

... Appoints Caretaker Chairmen for LGS

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

GOVERNOR Yahaya Bello of Kogi State has appointed caretaker chairmen for all the 21 local government councils in the state.

The appointment of the caretaker chairmen follows the expiration of the tenure of the elected council chairmen in December, 2023.

The Kogi State House of Assembly on Monday approved the appointment of the caretaker chairmen as sent to them by the governor without any amendment.

The newly appointed caretaker chairmen are: Hon Rasheed Bashiru Okatengwu - Adavi LGA, Hon. Haruna Aliyu Ogido - Ajaokuta LGA, Adamu Yahaya Mohammed - Ankpa LGA, Theophilus Adama - Bassa LGA, John Urah - Dekina LGA, Hon.

Emmanuel Uge - Ibaji LGA, Amade Egwuda Ochuenu - Idah LGA and

Hon. Cosmas Attabor Ilemona - Igalamela-Odolu LGA.

Others are; Ibrahim Haruna - Ijumu LGA, Barr. Zaccaeus Dare Michael - Kabba-Bunu LGA, Hon Musa Abdulmalik - Kogi LGA, Hon. Abdullahi Adamu - Lokoja LGA, Hon. Ademola Bello - Mopa-Muro LGA, Hassan Atawodi - Ofu LGA, Hon. Rosemary Ohiezu - Ogori-Magongo LGA, Hon. Monday Amoke Odu - Okehi LGA, Hon. Enesi Ahmed Nuhu - Okene LGA, Ameh Williams O - Olamaboro LGA, Edibo Ameh Mark - Omala LGA, Dare Joshua VENZA - Yagba West LGA and Hon. Tosin Olokun - Yagba EAST LGA.

Politics

2024 Budget: Between politics and governance

Beyond the conventional conversations about budgets, there are clear-cut messages that the 2024 budget holds for Nigerians writes MON-CHARLES Egbo.

FIRSTLY, the stage is now set for an honest assessment of President Tinubu vis-à-vis his electoral promises as well as the relative competencies of his appointees. If he delivers on the revenue and expenditure projections, then there is capacity and expertise.

Secondly, the 10th National Assembly is corporately seeking to earn public confidence through a deliberate commitment to citizens' well-being and transparency in legislative business.

Thirdly, collaboration in democratic governance is profoundly a viable option, especially in developing nations where the legislature and the executive take joint ownership of budgets for credibility.

Fourthly, a budget is productive only when it is robustly implemented through adequate funding, monitoring and evaluation. Again, a meaningful development is achieved only when the capital expenditure is higher than the recurrent as well as when revenue leakages are substantially plugged and or, budget padding is eliminated.

Then fifthly, the performance of a budget can be predicted only when the budget is consistent with a manifesto or rooted in a functional strategic framework, and above all, under a president who is purposeful about the budget and also firmly in charge of his government.

But please, the veracity of these assertions is established as we read on.

Whether for politics or governance, President Bola Tinubu, while signing the budget into law did not leave anyone in doubt as to his determination to pursue a diligent performance of the budget. And thankfully, the national assembly is on hand to play complementary roles within the ambit of the law. It has since activated relevant internal mechanisms for relative thoroughness and efficiency. For example, as against the old order, it adopted a joint-committee approach to the sectoral reviews of the budget proposal. There was ample time for the respective committees on Appropriation to take common stands on every allocation, unlike in the past when there had to be a special committee to harmonize the reports of both chambers thereby expending extra time and resources, including sundry distractions.

Again, the executive, through the ministries and agencies, was exceptionally open-minded and enthusiastic in addition to displaying an uncommon commitment to a shared vision. In the end, there was an unprecedented demonstration of interdependence and mutual respect among the two arms culminating in a hitch-free and timely passage of the budget.

Hence, Tinubu, with a sense of fulfilment, acknowledged that "I presented N27.5tn and left the room and I called for expeditious treatment of the budget, the review, the passing, the debate and all that. Today we have a budget of N28.7tn with an increase of N1.2tn over the proposal that I submitted. I thank the National Assembly for this prompt review, adjustment and auditing necessary. This is evidence and a great testament to the excellent relationship between the executive and the legislature. We should keep it up".

Equally, he was emphatic that the budget was "anchored on reducing the deficit and increasing capital expenditure, particularly in our priority areas. The approved 2024 Budget that we just approved, achieves both objectives. It contains a very good increase in the capital side,



a reduction in recurrent expenditure and it brought down the deficit from 6.11% to 3.88%. That, to me, is an achievement". So, the 3rd and 4th messages above have been underscored.

Instructively, this is not the first time that the legislature is altering presidential budget estimates. It has always been largely motivated by political expediency and primordial sentiments. But today, there are logical justifications for the jerking up of the figures.

According to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Tajudeen Abbas, "We expect the budget to deliver because there's no sector that we did not cross-check, scrutinize and make enquiries as to what is required to make the desired impact to the economy and the people". He further declared that "this is a budget that is going to define the Tinubu administration's commitment to the people of this country". Again, this echoes the first message.

Then by way of elaborate insight, the chairman of the Senate Committee on Appropriation, Solomon Adeola, hinted that, "the government has just removed the fuel subsidy, the government has also just intensified effort to unify the exchange rate differences that we usually have and that comes with a lot of price and Nigerians are paying dearly for it in terms of price of fuel and dollar rate. When we got the budget document, the president implored us to interrogate and investigate it and make sure we came up with a document that was all-encompassing and could suit the needs and yearning of Nigerians. Again, we did some external consultations, most especially in the area of oil benchmark and petroleum resources, if we had gone in that line, we'd have pegged it at N850/N900 to a dollar but we agreed that we wanted to be conservative in our approach so that nobody will think that we want to increase the budget for any ulterior motive, that was why we left it at N490bn

out of which N44bn is for statutory transfer, so effectively, the increment is about N446bn that is going into the Federal Government pocket as consolidated revenue".

Corroborating Senator Adeola, the chairman of the House Committee on Appropriation, Abubakar Bichi, stressed that "we have inflation and exchange rate for the dollar, the executive proposed N750 to the dollar, but after we studied carefully, we look at it and we know it is unrealistic. So we increased it to N800". Adding that "we had a meeting with Government-Owned Enterprises and we believe that their submissions are not enough. They have agreed to increase their revenue to N700bn. That was how we were able to get that N1.2 trillion, which we applied to capital. This is the first time the capital is bigger than recurrent. I believe this budget is brilliant and Nigerians will see a lot of impacts".

Meanwhile, the Minister of Budget Planning, Abubakar Bagudu, lamented that "revenue generation remains the major fiscal constraint to Nigeria's fiscal viability. However, the government is reviewing current tax and fiscal policies with a view to improving revenue generation."

Elsewhere, he also emphasized that "this is a budget that has been developed, that came out of recognition of all the planning tools that are available and are our priorities, the Renewed Hope Agenda, the eight priority areas of Mr President, and the clarity by Mr President, that budgeting should reflect our priorities and should be implemented and Mr. President captured it today in his speech, this budget is not only what it is, in terms of ambition, and in terms of reducing deficit, increasing capital expenditure and reducing recurrent deficit, it's going to be implemented". Certainly from all these, there is no better way to rephrase the 4th message!

Still speaking, convinced that the buck stops with him, Tinubu remarked that, "a budget is only as good as its implementation. We will implement this. I want to assure Nigerians that all the MDAs and our teams have been warned, that's why we even took our time to separate Economic Planning from Finance. MDAs must have regular reports of the budgetary performance

in the areas that we put in place to help ordinary Nigerians. The goal is to promote efficiency, dedication, and accountability. If you cannot do that, you may have to leave us to do the job on your behalf. All MDAs have been directed to take responsibility and provide monthly Budget Performance Reports to the Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning, which in turn shall ensure the veracity of such. The Minister of Finance and Co-ordinating Minister of the Economy shall hold regular reviews with the Economic Management Team and, in addition, I shall Chair periodic Economic Coordination Council meetings".

Politics aside, this is a true mark of leadership. It is not about rhetoric or grandstanding. It is about leading from the front with eyes on the projected results. So once again, the 5th message is echoed!

Then on the strategies for full implementation, the Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Mr Wale Edun, confidently disclosed that because "the budget deficit is down from 6.1% to 3.8%" among other variables, "we're relying less on borrowing and more on revenue and I think you have to take the two together. I think we're very optimistic about the improvements in revenue that will take place. We are all ready, even from tomorrow, to apply technology and digitalization to ensure that the revenue that should come to the government from all sources, including from government-owned enterprises, comes into the consolidated revenue fund and on the other side, we are bringing order to government borrowing, so Ways and Means is being eliminated by taking the funding that is required from the market, as opposed to from printing of money by Central Bank. That, in a nutshell, is what is happening on the financing side. We are very optimistic that not only will this budget be funded adequately, but it will be funded on a timely basis as well".

Walking the talk, President Tinubu has since ordered the closure of the Treasury Single Account, TSA, with a directive for all revenues to be

remitted into the newly-created Sub-Recurrent Account, which is an organ of the Consolidated Revenue Fund. Objectively, this is a direct and pragmatic measure to curb economic wastage.

Then, of course, it requires a responsive parliament for these set goals to be realized. As such, the President of the Senate, Godswill Akpabio, has consistently acknowledged that the National assembly under his leadership already has its jobs cut out for them. Hear him: "Ours is to monitor what goes on to ensure that, indeed, it is one thing to do a budget; it is another thing for the budget to be fully implemented. We will make sure that if there is a need we also undertake joint monitoring of the implementation of the budget to ensure that yes, nobody can tell us one thing in the green chambers or nothing in the red chambers. We will make sure that we monitor very well".

Meanwhile, Akpabio's legislative agenda has scaled through the major integrity test as Nigerians at last have a comprehensive breakdown of the national assembly's budget.

The details are in this order: National Assembly Office (N36.73bn), Senate (N49.15bn), House of Representatives (N78.63bn), National Assembly Service Commission (N12.33bn), Legislatives Aides (N20.39bn), Public Account Committee (PAC) - Senate (N130m), (PAC) - House of Representatives (N150m), General Services (N30.81bn), National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (N9.01bn), Service-Wide-Vote (N15.19bn), Office of Retired Clerks and Permanent Secretaries (N1.23bn), Appropriation Committee Department - Senate (N200m), Appropriation Committee Department - House (N200m), NASS Library Complex (Take-Off Grant) (N12.12bn), Procurement of Books for the NASS Library (N3bn), NASS Liabilities (N9.90bn), Constitution Review (N1bn), Completion of NILDs HQ (N4.5bn), Construction of NASS building (Ongoing) (N10bn), Alternative Power Supply (Solar Power System) (N4bn), NASS Zonal Liaison Offices (N3bn), NASS Pension Board (Take-Off Grant) (N2.5bn), NASS Car Park Project - Senate (N3bn), NASS Car Park Project - House of Representatives (N3bn), NASS Hospital Project (N15bn), NASS Recreation Centre (N4bn), Furnishing of Committee Meeting Rooms & other Offices within the Senate Building (N2.7bn), Furnishing of Committee Meeting Rooms for House of Representatives Building Part I & II (N3bn), Upgrade of NASS Key Infrastructures (N3bn) Design, Construction, Furnishing and Equipping of NASS Ultramodern Printing Press (N3bn), Design, Construction, Furnishing and Equipping of the National Assembly Budget and Research Office (NABRO) (N4bn). This settles the 2nd message!

Therefore, if good governance is the motivation, Nigerians should be vigilant and dutifully carry out citizens' oversight functions on the government.

Empirically, Tinubu and his teams have a common direction. The 10th National Assembly is driven by unity of purpose and ambitiously empathetic with the people. Thus at the fullness of time, Nigerians are the ultimate beneficiaries.

IMAGES

MUTFWANG PRESENTS STAFF OF OFFICE TO THE 6TH NGOLONG NGAS

Plateau State Governor, Barr. Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang last week Friday presented First Class Staff of Office to the 6th Ngolong Ngas, His Royal Highness, Nde Jika Golit at the Pankshin Mini Stadium



Governor Mutfwang (left) with the TIC Chairman of Pankshin LGC, Hon. Samuel Go'ar



His Majesty, Da Jacob Gyang Buba, CFR, Gbong Gwom Jos and President, State Traditional Council (left) putting heads together with the Emir of Kanam, HRH Alhaji Muhammad Babangida Mu'azu



Commissioner for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, Hon. Ephraim Usman (left) dressing the First Class Chief, Nde Jika Golit, the 6th Ngolong Ngas



Front row, HRH Engr. Safiyanu Suleman Allahnana, Long Jan of Namu Chieftom (left) with HRH Charles Mato Dakat Sum Pyem with other royal fathers at the coronation of Ngolong Ngas



Cross section of Royal Fathers of Pankshin/Kanke LGAs



Cross section of Traditional Rulers from different Chieftoms in Plateau



Secretary to the State Government (SGS) Arc. Samuel Nanchang Jatau (right) Chief of Staff Government House, Engr. Jerry Satmak and HoS, Barr. Rauta Dakok at the ceremony



Invited Guests and well wishers watching the proceedings



PASSING UNTO
Glory

With total submission to the will of God, we announce the passing unto glory of our matriarch **Kaka Hannatu Adama Wakili (Abagyer Doh)** who died in her sleep on the 31st day of December 2023.

Her body will be laid to rest on Friday 12th January, 2024 in Zandi Village, Jos East LGA.

Please pray for God to comfort us and all affected by her demise.

**Hon. Musa Ibrahim Ashoms,
Plateau State Commissioner
of Information and
Communication,
Grandson.**

Late
**Kaka Hannatu
Adama Wakili**
(Abagyer Doh)

NEWS

Mutfwang coronates new Ngolong Ngas

From PETER TITLE, Pankshin

THE Executive Governor of Plateau State, Barrister Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang has performed the coronation of the new Ngolong Ngas, Nde Jika Golit, amidst pomp and peagendry.

The ceremony which came nine years after the demise of the late Ngolong Ngas, Nde Joshua Dimlong was performed at Pankshin mini stadium on Friday by the Governor of the state.

According to Governor Mutfwang, the Ngas nation should be praised for a rancour-free selection process of the new Ngolong Ngas, Nde Jika Golit. He urged them to accord all the necessary support in order to succeed in the task ahead of him.

He warned mischief makers against needless court actions that are capable of delaying or frustrating the selection and installation of traditional rulers in the state and also implored citizens to always accept the will of God in all circumstances.

"I congratulate the Ngolong Ngas, Nde Jika Golit, on his ascension to the throne of his ancestors. His selection by the kingmakers, through a peaceful and rancour-free atmosphere, is worthy of emulation by other ethnic groups in the state," Mutfwang stated.

"Let me say at this point that it has become very expedient for us to hold this remarkable occasion at this crucial period of our collective existence. As you are aware, a week of mourning was declared in honor of our beloved people who were gruesomely murdered during the cruel Christmas Eve attacks and the days that followed, in Bokkos, Mangu, and Barkin-Ladi Local Government Areas," he added.

According to him, the coronation of the Ngolong Ngas was dear to his administration, in view of the pivotal role of the traditional institutions in deepening peace in their localities and by extension, the entire state.

"We are determined to give the traditional institution their pride of place. Our solemn commitment as a government is to continually strive towards filling all vacant traditional stools in the state in line with my promise and respect for the traditional institution."

"I am pleased to inform this respected gathering that the royalty of the Ngas Chieftdom and the Pankshin - Kanke Traditional Council has made us proud by showing a high level of decorum and good conduct during the period of transition and up to this moment that God Almighty has blessed the land with another leader to fill in the vacuum created by the demise of the late Ngolong Ngas."

He added, "As a government, we are



Mutfwang

determined to resolve all lingering litigations that have brought setbacks to some communities. This will enable us to fill the vacant stools that are left in some parts of the state. Our desire is to move along with all communities in providing tangible development that will improve the living conditions of our people, especially in the rural areas."

The Gbong Gwom Jos, Da Jacob Gyang Buba congratulated the new Ngolong Ngas, and announced that the Joint Traditional Council will meet next week to officially welcome him into the council. He urged politicians to stop meddling into issues that concern traditional institutions and said once the ruling house is confirmed as gazetted as well as the kingmakers, the process of the selection of the traditional ruler should be allowed without interference..

The Transition Implementation Committee Chairman of Pankshin Local Government Area, Hon. Samuel Go'ar, praised the boldness of Governor Mutfwang for allowing the process of the selection without interference.

He said, "As Ngas nation, we are very proud that today our foundation as a people is being fortified against the erosion of our value system

which has suffered neglect, owing to the absence of a paramount leader. We are now confident that our bidding as a people shall henceforth be with recourse to our collective interest."

On his part, the Commissioner for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, Honourable Ephraim Usman, praised the kingmakers for peacefully selecting Nde Golit as new Ngolong Ngas without interference from any quarter.

The Commissioner therefore commended Governor Mutfwang for ensuring that all vacant traditional stools were filled as well as giving them free hands to operate.

Hon. Usman further called for cooperation from all and sundry to be accorded the new Ngolong Ngas so that there would be a new lease of life for the people in his domain irrespective of their tribe or religious affiliations.

The new Ngolong Ngas, Nde Jika Golit thanked Governor Caleb Mutfwang for giving the Ngas nation a leader, and pledged to carry everybody along during his reign to promote peaceful coexistence in the area.

The occasion witnessed cultural dances from different ethnic groups from within the state and outside.

From DORCAS PANKYES, Abuja

THE recruitment of Nigerians into the Constable cadre of the Nigeria Police Force began January 8th, 2024, throughout the federation with physical and credentials screening of successful applicants after a six week period for receiving of applications in line with the requirements of the Federal Character Commission.

Arase stated this in a statement signed by Ikehukwu Ani, Head, Press and Public Relations which was issued to journalists in Abuja.

The statement said Chairman of the Commission, Dr. Solomon Arase, CFR, retired Inspector General of Police, told PSC staff at a pre-deployment briefing at the Commission's Parry Osayande Auditorium, over the weekend that "this is not merely a recruitment exercise; rather, it is a saga - an epic tale where your actions will reverberate through time.

"Each decision, each interaction becomes a paragraph in this narrative, shaping the perception of our Commission and the legacy we leave behind".

He added that the commencement of the exercise marks the turn of a transformative chapter in the life of the Commission.

The chairman further charged the staff to uphold the torch of professionalism and integrity and embrace this responsibility "with the knowledge that your actions will resonate beyond the confines of the present".

Emphasizing that "as staff of the Commission, you are entrusted with a job that carries the weight of our nation's aspirations for a just and secure future".

This recruitment exercise, he noted, assumes paramount significance as the first conducted by the Commission since the landmark Supreme Court Judgment of 20th July 2023 that reaffirmed the primacy and exclusivity of the Commission in recruiting for the Nigeria Police Force.

Dr. Arase told the gathering "we stand at the precipice of a new era, and it is our solemn duty to ensure that this exercise establishes the gold standard for future recruitments".

He reminded the

Police recruitment commences across the federation



Arase

Commission's staff that the nation's watchful eyes will scrutinise "our every move, demanding our unwavering dedication and commitment to the principles of fairness and justice".

"Therefore, I implore each of you to exhibit your best behaviour, upholding the highest standards of discipline, integrity and honesty," he charged the Commission's staff.

Arase declared that this is not just a recruitment exercise; "it is a defense of the sanctity of our mandate and a demonstration of the Commission's competence in this vital function.

"I admonish you to anticipate unprecedented challenges during this exercise. With over 400,000 applicants passing through your stations, each presenting argument to join the Nigeria Police Force, the pressure will be immense. Remember, you are the guardians of a process that not only holds inherent significance but also paves the way for the forthcoming 30,000-man recruitment approved by the current administration".

Dr. Arase announced that to enhance the efficiency and transparency of the recruitment exercise, the Commission is establishing a Situation Room at the PSC Corporate Headquarters, Jabi Abuja.

"This dedicated space will serve as a Complaint Response Centre, a help desk and an information repository, providing essential technical and operational support to personnel in the field.

"The Commission will in a shortwhile communicate the dedicated telephone lines to the public to access the Situation Room throughout the exercise".

This initiative, he noted underscores the Commission's commitment to ensuring a robust, accountable and smooth exercise.

He warned that any staff found complicit in questionable activities will face severe consequences, "especially soliciting or collecting money from applicants or their families. Such actions are contrary to the principles of integrity and fairness which are sacrosanct to our Commission, and individuals involved will be subject to austere disciplinary measures including possible termination of employment".

The PSC Chairman said the staff should adhere strictly to the highest standards of professionalism and ethical conduct throughout the entire duration of the exercise.

The Chairman of the Police Recruitment Board, Chief Onyemuche Nnamani and Permanent Secretary and Secretary to the Commission, Dr. Ifeoma Adaora Anyanwutaku, presented goodwill messages at the pre-deployment briefing.

While the Director of the Department of Police Recruitment, Mr. Ferdinand Ekpe, administered a code of conduct on all the staff that would be involved in the exercise to further emphasize the seriousness by the Commission's management to adhere to standards.

We won't rest until you get justice -Shettima

BY PETER TITLE

THE present administration under the leadership of Ahmed Bola Tinubu said it would not rest on its oars until victims of the gruesome attacks on communities in Barkin Ladi, Mangu and Bokkos Local Government Areas of Plateau State get justice and their residents safe.

The Vice President, Senator Kashim Shettima, gave the assurance when he visited the crisis-ravaged communities in Plateau State to condole with the people and government of the state over the recent killings in Barkin Ladi and Bokkos Local Government Areas of the state.

Vowing vehemently that the killings on the Plateau and other parts of the country must stop, the Vice - President said, "Now

Please accept our heartfelt condolences. Please accept our deepest apologies. Because we won't rest until you access justice and until you are safe."

Senator Shettima informed the people about how heartbroken his principal, President Tinubu, had been since he received news of the gory incident. He said the president "is deeply shaken by this tragedy and shares in this unspeakable sorrow that has shattered the joy of Christmas across the country.

"When one community bleeds, the entire nation feels the pain. The pain we feel now transcends ethnicity or religion, geography or politics. The grief that binds us is a testament to our shared humanity, not differences," he added.

Identifying with the grieving families who lost loved ones in the attack, the Vice President acknowledged the fact that it is an indescribable nightmare to bury families, describing it as a rare experience that is much more unbearable than the pain of losing one or two loved ones.

"We cannot fathom the depth of this grief beyond the experience of the bereaved. We can only offer to assuage your pain. What has happened to you is a funeral for the entire nation. Our hearts bleed alongside yours, our dear brothers and sisters in Bokkos, Barkin-Ladi, and all over Plateau State," he stated.

He assured the people that the Tinubu administration is out to protect them at all times and to ensure justice prevailed even

though it may appear as if the government has failed them in their time of serious need but said it was not so.

Senator Shettima noted that justice is the path to collective safety, unity, and healing of the nation. He stressed, "We came to power promising to uphold the sanctity of every citizen's life, and now is the time to reassure you that this inter-community violence, which has hijacked the humanity and serenity of this beautiful state over the past decades, will never persist under our watch. We will harness all our resources to bring those responsible to justice. We will not rest until we are able to prevent the recurrence of these heinous acts.

"Your blood, your tears, and your cries stain our collective

conscience. We are here for you, we are here, resolute in our commitment to ensuring that the perpetrators of these mindless killings face the full force of the law."

He however appealed to the people of Plateau State to resist what he described as "the temptation to succumb to sectional divisions or the poisonous rhetoric of hatred towards" their fellow citizens while assuring that the government is set out to ensure justice and security for them.

"This violence persists due to this dangerous practice of treating criminals as ambassadors of their group, where the law is taken into our hands, and where protection fails. But this is not the case now. This is a promise," Shettima assured.

News

First Lady identifies with New Year babies

By JIDAUNA DARING

WIFE of the Plateau State Governor, Barr. Helen Mutfwang, has identified herself with the families of the New Year babies.

The first lady made this known when she visited the New Year babies at the Plateau Specialist Hospital Jos, on New Year day.

Barr Mrs Mutfwang congratulated all the families of the New Year babies. She described the babies as gift from God on this special day.

She prayed that God would give parents of the babies, the grace or wisdom to nurture them in his way.

The First Lady also used the visit to extend a hand of love to the parents of the New Year babies by presenting some gifts and cash to them.

She called on Plateau citizens to seek for more of God's blessings in the new year. She said that by God's grace 2024 would put an end to most of the challenges faced in the state.

The Commissioner for Women Affairs and Social Development, Plateau State, Hon. Caroline Dafur who accompanied the First Lady to the Specialist Hospital also



Mutfwang

represented the First Lady as she proceeded to deliver gifts and cash to New Year babies at JUTH, OLA Hospital, Jos, PHC Dadin-Kowa and OLA Hospital Zawan in Jos South LGA.

Chief Medical Director (CMD) Plateau Specialist Hospital, Jos, Prof. Christopher Yilgwan appreciated the First Lady for her motherly love and described the visit to the hospital as a very significant one, urging her to

sustain such a gesture.

Also speaking, parents of the New Year babies all expressed happiness and thanked the First Lady for her show of love to them, particularly for taking her time to come and see for herself the new year babies in the hospital.

Our correspondent reports that the first new baby at the Specialist Hospital was delivered at about 3:20am of the 2024 New Year day.

Swift justice awaits perpetrators of brutal attacks - Gov Sani

From JOHN FWAH Kaduna

THE Governor of Kaduna State, Uba Sani has committed to pursuing swift justice against the perpetrators behind the brutal bandit attacks in response to the recent wave of ruthless assaults across various areas.

Governor Sani vehemently condemned the savagery, emphasizing that such barbarism has no place in a civilized society, amidst the

grim aftermath of casualties, abductions, and injuries in the Dokan Karji general area of Kauru LGA and other locations in Gefe general area of Kajuru LGA.

Highlighting the destructive intentions behind the attacks, the government underscored the bandits' aim to disrupt the hard-earned progress in rebuilding trust, fostering unity, and revitalizing conflict-affected communities within the state.

Undeterred by these malevolent schemes, Senator

Uba Sani affirmed Kaduna State's resolute commitment to achieving sustainable peace and development.

The Ministry of Internal Security and Home Affairs, in collaboration with security forces, has actively engaged in efforts to contain these nefarious forces.

State government agencies have been mobilized to assess damages and provide immediate relief to affected families.

Extending heartfelt condolences to bereaved families and wishing a speedy recovery to the injured, the governor stands in solidarity with the affected communities during this distressing period.

Further action plans and anti-banditry measures are underway, with critical stakeholders engaged in dialogue to address security concerns.

The recent meeting with representatives from Bishini general area of Kachia LGA, signifies a proactive approach in the ongoing anti-banditry campaign.

"The Overseeing Commissioner, Ministry of Internal Security and Home Affairs, has met with critical stakeholders from the Bishini general area of Kachia LGA following bandit attacks along the Kaduna-Niger interstate boundary.

Issues highlighted will be integral to the ongoing action in the anti-banditry campaign," the governor stated.



Sani

JWSC set to attain 3,500,000 litres water supply soon

BY EZEKIEL DONTINNA

THE pioneer Managing Director of Jos Water Services Corporation (JWSC), Engr. Apollon Samson Samchi, has disclosed part of his management's action plan to attain at least 3,500,000 litres or 875,000 gallons of water per day using the four (4) existing treatment plants the state was blessed with.

He disclosed this recently, while addressing the staff of Jos Water Services Corporation (JWSC), at the corporation's headquarters conference hall in Jos, the Plateau State capital as he assumed office as the new Managing Director.

The Managing Director said,

"Jos town is fast becoming a mega city after cities like Lagos, Ibadan, Kano, Port Harcourt and Kaduna with a projected population of over 4,000,000 people by 2030. With the overstretched facilities, there is the need to look into the Urban Water Supply System with a view to planning sustenance, effective and efficient water management.

"Similarly, many communities in the Greater Jos Master Plan have not benefited from this needed basic amenity due to many avoidable factors. The corporation is the single government water utility that supplies portable water to Jos-Bukuru urban areas and to a large extent, the Greater Jos Master Plan.

Meanwhile, the Managing Director gave room for contributions and presentations by

his respective management team. The Executive Director, Business Development Directorate, Mr. Pam Saje Gyang spoke on vision/mission and current state of affairs, while Mr. Emmanuel Agwoh, the Executive Director, Finance and Supply, emphasized on team work respectively.

However, the Union Chairman of AUPTR, Comrade Yengurum Shakum, appealed for more manpower to enable them to give their best in discharging their respective duties and also the promotion of their staff to help motivate them. He was immediately informed by the Executive Director, Administration, Mr. Dat Wan Mbang, that 88 staff would write their promotion examination tomorrow Friday.



Managing our fragile space

Plateau State has been faced with a myriad of challenges all fronts. From outright hostility from our neighbours to deliberate manipulations and unfortunate connivance from even within the State. Indeed, selfishness has become the hallmark of some individuals who should have been the leading light in most of our communities. From the onset the Plateau personality was known for his respect for constituted authority and the willingness to do that which is right and honourable. Our politics was never a do or die neither was it pursued in the manner the present crop of people play the game now. The Plateau man was known for his decency and steadfastness and was never found on the wrong sides of the divide.

Sadly, these virtues have all been jettisoned and are replaced by alien and unknown characteristics which do not serve our purpose. Hard work has been supplanted by laziness. Our youth find more pleasures in pursuing matters that do not pay rather than engaging in tasking activities which dividend are rewarding and fulfilling. It is now common to see young and energetic people waste away in the name of politics. They would rather serve as thugs to political gladiators than engage in profitable and productive ventures which would pay in the long run.

Our heritage is abundant and left to strangers who take advantage of our lack of interests to milk our resources and create holdings which are disadvantageous to our people. We claim to be adroit at politics yet we are scarcely able to win some positions that would naturally have been achievable without much stress. The toxic nature of our discourse on our various platforms lends credence to the fact that we are a divided people. We seem not to have any common ground when it comes to politics. We

throw all caution to the wind just to satisfy our paymasters. We take ourselves to the cleaners and we become the laughing stock of the society.

Reading through our platforms on the social media has not only become nightmarish but it is indeed, frightening. The divide is so sharp that one wonders what has happened to the Plateau spirit of respect for elders. Yes, we know that we owe our elders respect and therefore have our ways of passing message that would correct but that is no more the case. We now shave the heads of our elders in public. We need to do a rethink. We cannot wish away the fact that we are a people grounded and steeped in culture and have our ways of resolving our issues. That too is not to say that all the elders are doing is right. They too need to change their approach to issue that have to do with the young ones.

As it is often said, respect begets respect. Our leaders must show understanding and strive to correct in love. They must realize that it is their failure to provide leadership that has brought us to this pass. They must, therefore, take measures to bring us back from the brink of the precipice and ensure we are back to the path of growth and development.

That should not be the case. We must engage them and bring modernity to bear on our traditional method which hitherto yielded little. Our people of means must also start building small cottage industries so as to add value to some of these resources before they are sold off.

Government on its path must stand in the gap and ensure our people are protected and provided with the enablement to carry out their activities. It must remain neutral and see everyone as its own so that it can have the moral compass to call to order whosoever veers of the mark.

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News

WOCCI calls for collaborative support to PLASCHEMA

By EZEKIEL DONTINNA

A leading civil society organisation in Nigeria, Women and Children in Support of Community Development Initiative (WOCCI NIGERIA), has made an urgent call to the Plateau State Government, communities and stakeholders to collaborate with PLASCHEMA in reaching the informal sector in achieving the Universal Health Coverage (UHC).

The Executive Director of WOCCI Nigeria, Edwina Jyi Mang, made the call recently, at a media round table and press briefing organised by the organisation in collaboration with PLASCHEMA, supported by Development Governance International Foundation (DGIF) and funded by Christian Aid (CA), held at PPFN Conference Hall, Jos, the Plateau State capital.

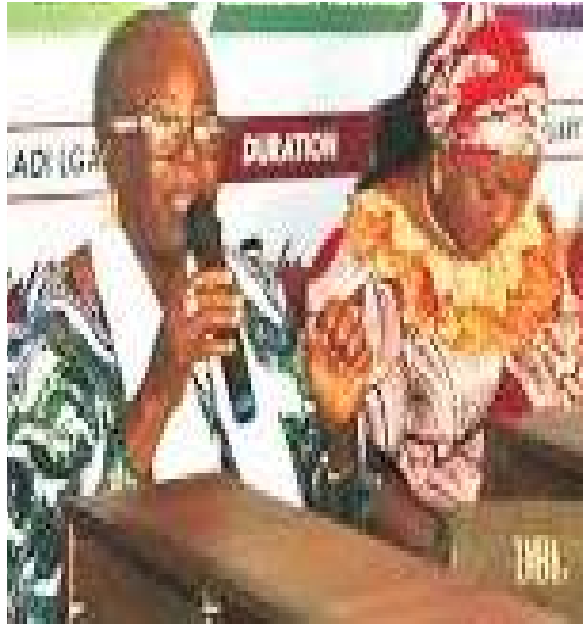
The Executive Director said, "The world celebrated Universal Health Coverage Day about three weeks ago. Today, a stark reality echoes in Plateau State. Millions remain excluded from essential healthcare, trapped in a cycle of illness and financial burden.

"The Plateau State Contributory Healthcare Management Agency (PLASCHEMA) strives to provide a safety net, but critical gaps remain especially for the lifeblood of our communities-the informal sector. Farmers, commodity vendors, artisans and countless others who drive our economy, often go without vital healthcare, unable to afford the annual premium. This is unacceptable!

"On this day, Women and Children in Support of Community Development Initiative (WOCCI), a leading Civil Society Organisation, calls for urgent and united action from the Plateau State Government, communities and all stakeholders to bridge this healthcare gap", she advocated.

Established in June 2019, Mang said PLASCHEMA has demonstrated a commitment to providing citizens with quality health services, reducing the burden of out-of-pocket spending. She pointed out that, despite their efforts, challenges persist, particularly in reaching the informal sector, including local farmers, vendors, riders and artisans who rely on daily income.

"PLASCHEMA requires urgent support to ensure these individuals are included in the health insurance scheme, fostering easy access to affordable health services. The agency has initiated efforts to sensitize Civil Society Organisation (CSOs) and engage with communities to promote awareness and understanding of the health insurance scheme. However, the implementation process has faced numerous challenges, impeding progress towards improved coverage.



Mang

"PLASCHEMA's officials have identified the informal sector as a primary challenge and in response, they have created flexible payment plans to accommodate the financial constraints of this informal sector demographic.

"Let's bridge the healthcare gap, not just today, but for generations to come. Let's make Plateau State a beacon of Universal Health Coverage, a place where everyone thrives healthy and empowered", Mang enthused.

THE NIGERIA STANDARD reports that WOCCI is a non profit organisation, dedicated to empowering communities through strategic interventions in health, education, humanitarian and socio-economic development, respectively.

On his part, the PLASCHEMA's Director General, Manasseh Agabus, represented by the agency's Director, Marketing and Investment, Mrs. Theresa

Gofwen, commended WOCCI for the intervention and promised to embark on an aggressive campaign using their 2024 Slogan: "Get one, Tell one and Bring one".

The DG said, "we have gone to the remotest communities in the state and we discovered that the best way is to encourage them to key into the programme. Very soon, apart from the fact that our agency had taken a step in helping people to key into this Health Insurance Scheme, if don't have the #12,000 to pay for the premium, you can pay at least #250 weekly or #1000 monthly.

He also disclosed that, PLASCHEMA has, in order to have a huge Universal Health Coverage in the state, adopted a system that could tolerate the payment of this premium especially by farmers in the rural areas with grains quantifying the amount to enable them to enroll since they were major drivers of the state economy.

Sustain investment in education development

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

- Bello

GOVERNOR Yahaya Bello of Kogi State has urged his incoming successor, Alhaji Ahmed Usman Ododo to sustain his legacy investment in education development.

Bello, who gave the advice while speaking at the 4th combined convocation ceremony for 2013/2014-2022/2023 sets of the Kogi State Polytechnic on Saturday, expressed delight that he came, saw and would be leaving the state better than he met it.

Governor Bello disclosed that part of his achievements is evidenced in the repositioning of the State Polytechnic, Lokoja, assuring that the feat would be sustained by his successor.

"My achievements can be attested where the State Polytechnic was before my assumption of office, where it is now and what we have repositioned it for the future".

He applauded the management, staff and the Governing Council of the polytechnic for their maximum contributions towards the repositioning of the institution. "I am proud of the Rector, Dr Usman Salisu Ogbo. Will continue to be proud of him and will ever be proud of him", he said.

The Rector of Kogi State Polytechnic, Dr Usman Salisu Ogbo, in his conviction speech, acknowledged the fact that he has been able to return the lost glory of the institution.

"The polytechnic now prides itself as an institution committed to graduating students with academic excellence and good character".

He commended Governor Yahaya Bello for his enabling support for him to achieve the feat. And said that he will continue to be loyal to Bello

BY EZEKIEL DONTINNA

THE Senate of Plateau State University (PLASU) Bokkos, has announced the upholding and commencement for the continuation of 2022/2023 academic activities with registration and lectures commencing Friday January 12, 2024.

This came in a press statement signed by the university's Public Relations Officer (PRO), Mr. John K. Agam, and made available to THE NIGERIA STANDARD in Jos, the Plateau State capital Tuesday.

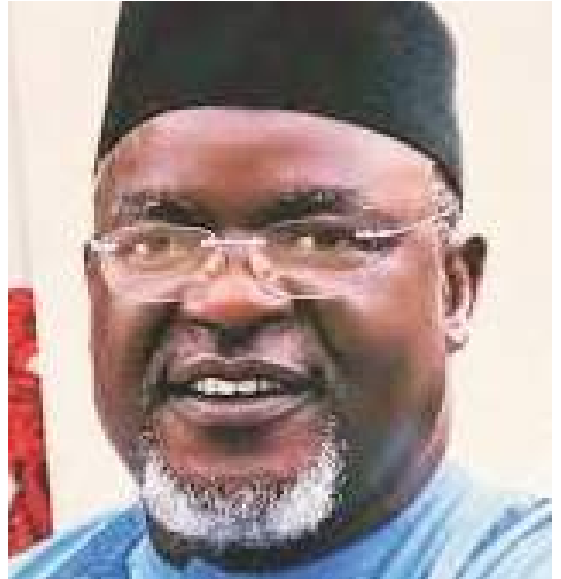
The statement stated that, "the Senate of Plateau State University, Bokkos met on Monday, January, 8 2024, upholding the resumption and the continuation of 2022/2023 academic activities.

In this regard, normal academic work in the university commenced on Monday, 8th January 2024.

Professor Matur, however, reiterated his commitment to enhance academic culture and enduring legacy through the training of undergraduates and postgraduate students that would take over from the present crop of lecturers. He urged members of the staff unions not to diminish this vision.

While assuring members of the university community, the VC disclosed that far reaching measures have been taken to address the security situation in and around the university. He stated, "the Management has deployed a detachment of the Special Task Force of

PLASU announces resumption for 2022/2023 academic activities



Malau

Operation Safe Haven, Bokkos Area Command.

Professor Matur said since his assumption into office in June last year, he has approved training programmes for 67 academic staff to further their education in various universities within and outside the country. He revealed that plans were on the way for more to be considered soon.

He added that the university under his leadership has also improved on the learning condition of

the university by the installation of solar farms, refurbishing of lecture halls, staff offices and furniture, disclosing that, "during our meeting, Senate approved the admission list of the first batch of postgraduate students of the university. Registration and lectures will commence this week, the 12th of January 2024.

The Senate, however, observed a minute's silence in honour of a member of staff Damaris David Yakubu and three students of the university who died during the Christmas break.

JWSC set to attain 3,500,000 litres water supply soon- Samchi

By EZEKIEL DONTINNA

THE pioneer Managing Director of Jos Water Services Corporation (JWSC), Engr. Apollos Samson Samchi, has disclosed part of his management's action plan to attain at least 3,500,000 litres or 875,000 gallons of water per day using the four (4) existing treatment plants the state was blessed with.

He disclosed this recently, while addressing the staff of Jos Water Services Corporation (JWSC), at the corporation's headquarters conference hall in Jos, the Plateau State capital as he

assumed office as the new Managing Director.

The Managing Director said, "Jos town is fast becoming a mega city after cities like Lagos, Ibadan, Kano, Port Harcourt and Kaduna with a projected population of over 4,000,000 people by 2030. With the overstretched facilities, there is the need to look into the Urban Water Supply System with a view to planning sustenance, effective and efficient water management.

"Similarly, many communities in the Greater Jos Master Plan have not benefited from this needed basic amenity due to many avoidable factors. The corporation is the single government water utility that supplies portable water to Jos-Bukuru urban areas and to a large extent, the Greater Jos Master Plan.

"We shall reorganise and rejig the workforce by deliberately allocating the right staff in the right departments with an evaluation schedule of duties (Strategic Staff Placements). We shall work to attain at least 3,500,000 litres or 875,000 gallons of water from the 4 treatment plants daily and it is very critical to supply adequate water supply in Jos and environs", he disclosed.

While appreciating the leader of "The Time is Now", the Executive Governor of Plateau State, His Excellency, Barr. Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang, Engr. Samchi, promised to build a sustainable business relationship with the Jos Electricity Distribution Company (JED) to achieve an uninterrupted power supply that enhances water supply to consumers.

"We must set revenue generation targets from water supply quarterly if all other factors of production are adequately explored and leakages blocked. This will be against the current very low

amounts realized and also ensure adequate technical reporting to generate useful data and mobilization of resources through partnership and collaboration with development agencies.

"We shall establish new departments and reorganise some important units of the corporation for improved service delivery and revenue mobilization: Customer Relations/Advocacy Department; Research and Data Collection Department; Staff Training and Mobilization Department and Partnership and Resource Mobilization (Projects) respectively", the MD highlighted.

He, however, assured consumers of operating a business friendly relationship that would give room for advice, information, communication and reporting where necessary, any act of vandalism or pipe burst for JWSC to serve them well while they pay their dues promptly to help generate more revenue to the state for optimal production.

Meanwhile, the Managing Director gave room for contributions and presentations by his respective management team. The Executive Director, Business Development Directorate, Mr. Pam Saje Gyang, spoke on vision/mission and current state of affairs, while Mr. Emmanuel Agwoh, the Executive Director, Finance and Supply, emphasized on team work respectively.

However, the Union Chairman of AUPTR, Comrade Yengurum Shakum, appealed for more manpower to enable them to give their best in discharging their respective duties and also the promotion of their staff to help motivate them. He was immediately informed by the Executive Director, Administration, Mr. Dat Wan Mbang, that 88 staff would write their promotion examination tomorrow Friday.

THE NIGERIA STANDARD'S WORLD

With PALANG KASMI

Living

10 great ways to start the New Year

By VICKI DAVIES

Here are our top ten tips to get the new year off to a flying start:

1. Review your successes

It's easy to forget the good stuff. Before you start looking ahead, take some time to review the past year and think about what went well. Celebrate your successes. Write a list of what worked for you in 2023 and what didn't, then start planning what you'd like to do differently in 2024.

2. Set some goals

Make a point of identifying where you are now and where you'd like to be this time next year. If you don't know where you're going it'll be hard to get there. If you want to be in a different position next year, plan how you're going to make the change.

3. Manage your reputation

You need to make sure your reputation speaks for itself. Influence what other people know about you by making the most of your social media profiles and networks. Update that information to keep it fresh and ensure that they contain the information you want people to know about you when they Google your name.

4. Make new connections

Expand your circle of contacts by networking. The more people who know you, like and trust you and think you're good at what you do, the better your chances of finding and securing new opportunities in the new year.

5. Get more involved

Join a professional association or take a more active role in one where you're already a member. Professional organisations



provide plenty of opportunities to volunteer and gain experience. Take a small role to start with and aim to ramp up your responsibilities over time, especially if your career plan involves taking a leadership role.

6. Acquire new skills

To make further progress in the new year you're probably going to need some new skills. Make a plan to get these under your belt. Speak to your manager or

HR team to check if there are any ways to augment your current skills by getting involved in new projects or undertaking some training or coaching.

7. Clarify your priorities

Make sure you're clear about what you really want to achieve in your current job and where you intend to focus your efforts in the new year. That will help you with decision making when conflicting demands are made of your time and energies.

8. Audit your job

Think about what you love about your job, and the things you would change if you could. What are your main challenges and frustrations? How could you eliminate these? What are your goals for 2024?

9. Track your progress

Create an email folder to capture your achievements. Take the time to create a way of recording your successes so that you don't forget them in the hustle and bustle of daily work. Collate examples of positive feedback and encouragements from customers and colleagues.

This will help you prepare for performance reviews during the year and it's a great way of reflecting on your progress.

10. Look after yourself

Make sure you have the energy, focus and motivation to achieve your work goals for 2024 by making the most of your free time. Take regular exercise to recharge your batteries, unwind your mind and stay healthy. Do things that you really enjoy. Carve out time for friends, family and fun. You need this recreational time to maintain a good work/life balance so you can perform at your best.



Foreign News

Tribunal grants deposed president's son provisional release

SALEM Bazoum, the son of Niger President Mohamed Bazoum who was toppled in a coup last year, was provisionally released on Monday, according to a statement by the Niamey military tribunal.

The 22-year-old had been in detention at the presidential residence with his parents since the coup in July. The tribunal did not provide details on the fate of Salem's parents.

The coup, one of eight in West and Central Africa since 2020, was widely condemned, led to sanctions from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and prompted widespread calls for Bazoum's release and a return to democratic rule.

Niger has been ruled by military leaders since the overthrow of elected president Bazoum, which prompted international condemnation. Military ruler General Abdourahamane Tchiani has said his regime wants up to three years for a transition back to a civilian government. A source close to the removed president told the AFP news agency that Salem Bazoum had left Niamey for Lome, the capital of Togo, where he arrived on Monday evening.

A statement by the Togolese government confirmed a deal for the younger Bazoum's release after mediation from Togo and Sierra Leone, but gave no details about his whereabouts.

Niger is currently suspended from the ECOWAS, which has said the release of Bazoum and his return to power are



General Abdourahamane Tchiani has said his government wants up to three years for a transition back to a civilian rule.

among the conditions for easing sanctions. But Togo is among several West African states that have been involved in mediation with the Nigerian military regime after the bloc softened its stance on a possible forceful intervention.

On Monday, Togo's Foreign Minister Robert Dussey was in Niamey, where he met with Niger's military-appointed prime minister, according to Nigerian public television.

This followed a trip by Dussey in mid-December when he said he had reached an agreement "on the content and timing of the transition" with the prime minister.

The new military government has distanced itself from Niger's hitherto close European partners - notably France - and has drawn closer to two of its neighbours, Mali and Burkina Faso, which after recent coups are also run by militaries. The last French troops withdrew from Niger in December.

CANADA, Sweden, the United Kingdom and Ukraine have filed a complaint with the United Nations civil aviation agency against Iran for shooting down a passenger plane in 2020, killing 176 people.

The four countries, which all had citizens on board the Ukraine International Airlines flight, accused Tehran of "using weapons against a civil aircraft in flight in breach of its international legal obligations".

The Boeing 737-800 was shot down shortly after takeoff from Tehran on January 8, 2020, amid rising tensions with the United States following the assassination of Iranian General Qassem Soleimani.

Three days later, Iran admitted that its Revolutionary Guard had fired two missiles at the

Countries file complaint over Boeing shot by Iran

plane, which was heading to Kyiv, by mistake.

The four countries said they opened "dispute settlement proceedings" with the UN's International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) in Montreal.

The move was "an important step in our commitment to ensuring that the families of the victims impacted by this tragedy get the justice they deserve", said Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, who attended a memorial service in Ontario to mark the fourth anniversary of the disaster. Video Duration 02 minutes 57 seconds 02:57

The countries have already filed a case with the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague, seeking reparations from Iran for the

families of the victims.

They said Iran had "failed to conduct an impartial, transparent and fair criminal investigation and prosecution consistent with international law".

In April last year, an Iranian court issued initial sentences for 10 unnamed people accused of involvement in the incident, including the operator of an air defence system.

Iran has also set compensation of \$150,000 for each of the families of the victims and said in 2022 it had begun making the payments.

Tehran has rejected claims that it is not cooperating or being transparent and has accused the four governments of trying to "politicise" the issue.

Macron picks Attal as France's youngest PM

AT 34, he is the youngest PM in modern French history, outranking even Socialist Laurent Fabius who was 37 when he was appointed by François Mitterrand in 1984.

Mr Attal replaces Élisabeth Borne, who resigned after 20 months in office.

Throughout that time she struggled with a lack of a majority in parliament.

Gabriel Attal, who is currently education minister, certainly makes an eye-catching appointment.

He will now have the task of leading the French government into important European Parliament elections in June.

His rise has been rapid. Ten years ago he was an obscure adviser in the health ministry, and a card-carrying member of the Socialists.

He will also be the first openly gay occupant of Hôtel Matignon. He has a civil partnership with another Macron whizz-kid, the MEP Stéphane



Attal Sejourmé. In 2018, Gabriel Attal was given the role of deputy

minister in the education department

But given the difficulties of the president's second term - and the growing challenge from the nationalist right - is "eye-catching" alone going to cut it?

Handsome, youthful, charming, popular, cogent, Mr Attal certainly comes to office trailing clouds of glory - much, let it be said, like his mentor and role-model the president himself.

But like many go-getters of his generation, he was inspired by Emmanuel Macron's idea of breaking apart the old left-right divide and re-writing the codes of French politics.

In the wake of Macron's 2017 election, Mr Attal became a member of parliament, and it was there that his brilliance as a debater - easily the best of the neophyte Macronite intake - brought him to the president's attention.

It was in this post that Mr Attal confirmed to the president that he has what it takes, acting with no-nonsense determination to end September's row over Muslim abaya robes by simply banning them in schools. He led a campaign against bullying - he himself was a victim, he says - at the elite École alsacienne in Paris, and took on the education establishment with his proposal to experiment with school uniform.

President Macron's party faces a strong challenge from National Rally and its young leader Jordan Bardella - as well as Marine Le Pen And, all the while, he managed to buck the normal trends by actually becoming popular among the public.

Polis show that he is by far the most admired member of the Macron government - competing at the same level as the

president's main enemy, the nationalist Marine Le Pen and her youthful colleague Jordan Bardella. And there, of course, is the heart of it. By drawing Gabriel Attal from his pack of ministers, Mr Macron is using an ace to outplay the queen and her jack. But will it work? The drawn-out process of naming him - everyone knew a reshuffle was coming but it took forever - shows that if President Macron is well aware of the weakness of his current position, he has also been in deep uncertainty over how to address it. the National Assembly. More than one commentator has made the obvious point that what the public wants above all now is not so much a rearrangement of faces at the top, but a new sense of purpose to the Macron presidency. But as things stand, Mr Attal will face exactly the same problems as did his long-suffering predecessor Élisabeth Borne. These are: a hard-right opposition that is surging in popularity and looks set to win easily in June's European elections; a National Assembly with no in-built majority for the government, making every new law a struggle; and a president who seems unable to define what he wants his second term to achieve.

On top of which, the new prime minister will have a problem all of his own - which is establishing his authority over such heavyweights as Gérald Darmanin and Bruno Le Maire. And what is the plan, some are also asking, if as seems likely Mr Macron's party loses heavily in the European elections? Normally that would be the occasion for a prime ministerial replacement, to give a new élan for the second half of the mandate. But, as things stand, that card has already been played, and in the event of a defeat in June Gabriel Attal risks drifting on as a discredited loser. Even opposition figures recognise that he is a class act. He is respected and liked in the National Assembly. But there are also questions about what he actually stands for. The suspicion for many is that he is all smiles and verbiage, much like the man to whom he owes his career. As the president's nominee, he is the wunderkind's wunderkind. But if he is only Macron's mini-me, the marvel could prove a mirage.

Court hears whether Trump should be shielded

THE Republican former president's lawyers will argue that the office of the White House shields him from his 2020 election fraud charges.

Mr Trump, who says he will attend, is accused by a special counsel of trying to overturn Joe Biden's victory.

The outcome of this hearing could have a huge impact on Mr Trump's future.

His lawyers are using the same defence in another set of election charges he faces in Georgia.

The issue is likely to end up in the US Supreme Court in the heat of a 2024 election campaign in which Mr Trump is favourite to win the

Republican nomination.

Prolonged legal wrangles over immunity could delay his criminal trials beyond November's election where he is expected to face Democratic president Joe Biden.

The former president has for years cited presidential immunity in his efforts to thwart civil and criminal cases brought against him.

The US Constitution makes no mention of presidential immunity, although courts have generally supported the notion that government officials be protected from lawsuits.

There is no legal precedent, however, about the criminal

prosecution of sitting or former presidents.

In legal filings ahead of this hearing, the special counsel prosecuting him, Jack Smith, warned the court that a failure to allow Mr Trump to be prosecuted "threatens to license presidents to commit crimes to remain in office".

The immunity defence was rejected by US District Court Judge Tanya Chutkan in December, who ruled that having served as president does not entitle him to a "lifelong 'get-out-of-jail-free' pass".

In a social media post on Monday Mr Trump argued that he "wasn't campaigning" when he challenged his election loss by Mr Biden and was acting in his capacity as president in identifying voter fraud.

The three-judge panel in Washington DC will hear the oral arguments at the US Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit but then rule at a later date.

The courtroom is just blocks away from the US Capitol, where his supporters rioted to stop Joe Biden from being certified as president in January 2021.

To bolster their case, Mr Trump's lawyers will point to his acquittal by the Senate at his impeachment for his actions leading up to that violence.

"Nor may a president face criminal prosecution based on conduct for which he was

acquitted by the US Senate," says his appellate brief. "The indictment against President Trump is unlawful and unconstitutional. It must be dismissed."

A poll by CBS News suggests most Americans believe Mr Trump should not be protected from prosecution for actions he took while president.

The criminal trial in this election fraud case is scheduled for 4 March, but is on hold pending the ruling by the appeals court, which has two judges appointed by Democratic presidents and one by a Republican.

Whichever way the judges rule, the case is widely expected to end up in the US Supreme Court, where conservatives hold a 6-3 majority.

Last month, the top court dismissed a request by Mr Smith to expedite a ruling on Mr Trump's immunity claim.

The Supreme Court also ruled last month that it would hear an appeal by Mr Trump against the state of Colorado for barring him from the ballot due to a rarely cited insurrectionist clause of the US constitution.



A landmark legal case about whether Donald Trump should be immune from criminal prosecution will be heard in Washington on Tuesday.

Feature

Gochom: Community to be heard in era of learning

Throughout history, the factors that drive human progress have continue to vary with time (era, age, epoch or generation). In the feudal age, land owners were respected as the richest; then, came the era where farmers were richest. This was followed by the industrial revolution where those who have or work in industries became richer. Those who were into merchandise and trade later took the lead. Today, attention is shifted towards knowledge economy as source of wealth and greatness. In other words, it takes knowledge asset or capital to be great in today's world. Therefore, this presentation is simply an attempt to appreciate how an individual, community or nation can be heard in the era knowledge economy. AYUBA YILGAK'HA writes.

LEARNING is as old as the history of man. However, the deepening of the process of learning (that is, education) through breakthroughs in Information Communication Technology (ICT) has become the defining features of the current era code named the 21st century. This era is knowledge based or knowledge driven. Therefore, education is regarded as the new currency of the 21st century. By implication, every individual, community or nation required to tap into boundless opportunities offered by the new information age to make progress or, at least, minimising social inequality!

In a complex and dynamic world that is full of cacaphony of noise, it takes a someone's or nation's or community's capacity to curve a niche for itself to be heard or make a visible difference. To be heard means to distinguish or make a clear difference in an ecosystem (community). It is about creating great impact. There are two binary ways through which a community or people or a person can be heard. One can be heard through positive action(s) or negative action(s).

Positive actions manifest in the creation of or addition of value. It is about being, practically, useful to a community, nation or world). When someone becomes useful, his or her presence is positively felt and celebrated and, when absent, the absence immediately felt or noticed. On the other hand, negative actions are those actions that bring a system to disrepute or disadvantage. It is one that amounts to being a liability. The absence of a negative actionist brings relief but the presence of him or her raises concern or even worry.

Generating positive actions that makes our community members famous is the focus of our discussion today. The process of being positively famous, in any given circumstance, begins by curving a big dream (idea), nurturing the dream (developing it); pursuing the dream (executing it) as using feedback mechanisms to gauge progress or failure (monitoring and evaluation). These are the processes!

A dream is a mental picture of something great someone wants to achieve. It is a statement of hope or vision of things to be accomplished in ones life or community or nation. This implies that dreams can be personal or corporate. They are motivations for human action(s) which may be economic, political, social, etc. In other words, human passion in anything is generated by the value they attached to their dreams and the possibility of bringing them to reality.

A typical example of political dream is the 'not too young to run' movement which was initiated in 2016 for Nigeria and Gambia, and came into fruition in 2019 through the sustained effort Youth Advocacy Initiative for Growth and Advancement (YAIGA) Africa. An example of economic dream was the historic "Chor manbi" initiative of our parents whose sole aim was to improve the economic base of its members to reduce poverty. It is unfortunate that the lofty initiative was not fully incubated and executed). The "Pusdung", festival of art and culture is an example of a socio-cultural dream which was initiated in 1989 and have grown into one of the biggest events in Plateau state. The lesson lesson that can be learned is that a dream is just mere dream until it is fine-tuned and, consciously, executed. This is because while the "Not too young to run" and the "Pusdung" initiatives are subsisting; the Chormanbi of our not literate parents has gone meribund!

Gochom community is located in Kabwir District of Kanke Local



government. The community which loves God greatly is neither rich human resources (population) nor abundant material resources. It has limited land mass featured by rocky terrain which makes commercial agriculture difficult. Plus or minus, our population is estimated to be a thousand people. In addition, the generational growth curve of the community, in terms of educational enrolment or attainment, has continued to rise and fall, that is, following an undulating pattern. This is a situation where one generation has more people enrolling in school beyond primary school while others have more of their peers going beyond secondary school. However, from the lesson of history, the community has unique potential and opportunity for rapid and growth.

Currently, the community has produced one academic professor, doctors, an dean, heads of department in schools and government establishments. It has, also, produced two counselors, secretary of local government; a director and a deputy director in federal establishments, certified chattered accountants, barristers. In short, we have tried having representation in all fields of human endeavour, be it academic, health, sports, business security, engineering, etc (Science, technology and art)!

This is where we are but big is our dream for the community, going forwards? Where do we see GOCHOM in the next 10, 20 or 25 years? The community is one community that is targetted at hitting "the bull". The focus is on the big picture: How to optimise - geometrically increase our current gains and, drastically, reduce any disadvantage that constitutes 'clear and present danger' for us!

Communities are endowed differently. The potentials of every community or nation are three fold - it material resources, it's human capital and contacts. While some communities or nations are highly endowed with material resources (non-human factors of production) like land (forest, rivers, rocks and their associated blessing); capital equipments like machines, they are lacking in population (human resources) - labour and entrepreneurs and public administrators). Some are rich in population but lacking in material resources. Nations or communities hardly have both!

Nations that are rich in both human and material resources like Nigeria are

rare - very few. It is important to note that human resources is the most important resources of every nation. However, having plenty human beings alone is not enough but improving the quality of the human being to produce using the material resources that are available is even more important.

Countries like Isreal and Taiwan are good examples of countries that are lacking in material resources but becomes great. Isreal with an estimatedly population of 7 million (far less populated than Lagos State) and surrounded by seven (7) nations that are hostile to it but, yet, has the gut and temerity (chutzpah) to break-through. The nation possibly has more companies than industrialised countries like Japan, India, Korea and Canada. And country that can be referenced is Taiwan. Taiwan is so poor in natural resources that they have to be importing sand from neighbouring countries if they want to use it. However, these two countries managed to excel in all ramifications.

William Shakespeare, one of the world's renowned literary icons, once said, "Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them." This profound statement talks about three ways of becoming great: The first is individuals, communities and nations can be great by birth; the second is to be great by personal achievements and, the third, through accident or imposition. Which of these ways is the surest and sustainable way of becoming great for you?

The main thesis of this presentation is that it will take educationally empowered human resource to drive the process of holistic, sustainable and inclusive development in any community or nation. In my estimation, the most reliable way of attaining greatness is to climb the ladder of greatness through personal achievement sustained learning through the art and virtues of hardwork, smart work (skill work) and networking (consultancy, partnership and/or teamwork). To make this submission explicit, the following are critical enablers for great development in the world, generally, and Gochom community in particular:

Education: Maximising the limited human resource through education and training towards the acquisition of requisite cognitive (not general) knowledge or technical skills in relevant areas of human endeavour which can be bought a good price. Education is the

process of learning which means to acquiring new knowledge and understanding in important ventures (things) in life. It is one of the most effective Channels through which the gap between the rich and the poor can be bridged. In other words, education is a universal leveller. Even democracy numbers (population) rules, education matters even more. With education, least populated communities like ours could measure up with bigger ones; without it, they are completely finished!

Personal discipline: Discipline is the quality of being lawful, ethical, moral and self-controlled. The disciple to wait when the returns on investments are not immediate matters. Lasting success in great processes does not come immediately. In other words, attaining great success is a relay not a hundred metres race. If your dream is big enough, the maturity period might delay.

It is important to not that in the journey of life, delay is not necessarily a denial. It could just be an incubation period. Hence, the submission that: "Everything comes in time to those who can wait" (Francois Rabelais). To wait doesn't mean doing nothing but, instead, doing something worthwhile with your time.

3. Cultivating positive mindset: Nothing good, they say, comes easy. A person who lives with a defeatist mindset will hardly achieve anything. It takes a positive mindset to dare great things. In other words, a positive mindset is one that dares to try great things. The account of Caleb & Joshua who brought encouraging report to isreal in Numbers 13:26; 14:1-12, especially, 6-12, is a classical example of positive mindset.

There is no winning way than having the courage to try something great even when the atmosphere looks gloomy. No wonder, stoic philosophers held that 'courage is the virtue that can champion the cause of right'!

Persistence: Persistence is another enabler. It is a virtue or frequency that enables a person or persons to pursue a dream to a logical conclusion. A persistent person or community goes the extra. He leverages the power of 'extra' to make a huge difference in the world of the living.

Networking: Networking means to relate or build productive relationship with others, especially, those who share your vision or could add value to it. To achieve greatness requires functional network with destiny

helpers. Nobody has it all and nobody does it all alone. You are better off when you tap from the expertise and contact of others. "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together?"!

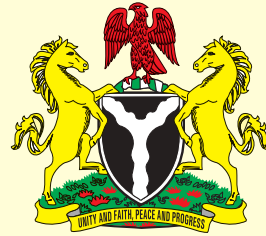
Think global and acting local. You cannot live with local mentality and expect to make global impact. In order to make global impact as a community and, as individuals, we must think and behave like global citizens not local champions.

As I conclude, let me share the story of a dog and an elephant which I got on a social media platform. The dog and elephant became pregnant at the same. However, the dog gave birth to puppies; took in again, the second time, and deliver while the elephant was still carrying its old pregnancy. Concerned by the condition of the elephant, the dog approached it with a question. You and I got pregnant together at the same time, I gave birth to my puppies and, I have given birth to the second set but you are still pregnant, are you sure you are, actually, pregnancy? The elephant responded: You gave birth to puppies but the pregnancy I am carrying is of an elephants. I give birth once in two years and, when the baby elephant is born, people will rally round to watch with great admiration!

The moral of this story is that achieving a great feat might take time but not impossible. In other words, achieving greatness is nota 100 meters race but a relay which requires persistency and endurance. For a community to be great, also, all hands must be on deck because every micro-action has macro-implication. It takes consistent, collective and cumulative actions of past, present and future generations make great things happen. In the words of Frank Fanon, 'every generation must out of relative obscurity discover its mission and fulfill it or betray it.' The effort and contributions of succeeding generation is expected to add value to the one handed to her by preceding ones. This means that the failure of any generation in the value chain will spell doom for the growth progression of the whole. This implies that, for a community to grow into global reckoning, it must be consciously transgenerational and inclusive in it strategic development planning.

We can make our popular 'Nhicny' (the elephant rock) a symbolic hall of fame where the names of past, present and future legends who have achieved or will be achieving great things for the community could be written as a mark of honour or encouragement for present and future generations to strive to do more for us. From this initiative, we can even make that rock a tourist site visitors who might want to know how far we have gone in time.

The challenged is for us to learn to be part of something bigger than us. Nick Vujicic, author of the book, "Life without limit" puts it this wasy: "The greatest rewards come when you give of yourself. It is about bettering the lives of others, being part of something bigger than yourself, and making a positive difference." With education and learning, no one is too small to contribute to the vision of making the world and, particularly, Gochom community great. Let us have a dream as big as the elephant, nurture and, diligently, pursue it. There could be difficulties on the way but, if we courageously persist, we shall succeed in making great things happen and the world will have no option but to hear us. Gochom ching!



Plateau State Civil Service Commission

VACANCY

Applications are invited from suitably qualified candidates to fill the vacant position of the Auditor-General, Plateau State.

A. QUALIFICATION AND EXPERIENCE

APPLICANTS FOR THE POST MUST:

- i. Possess at least a B.Sc or HND in Accounting from a reputable institution of higher learning;
- ii. Not be older than fifty six (56) years of age at the time of appointment;
- iii. Be a professional Accountant with a minimum of 10 years post qualification with cognate experience in accounting or auditing;
- iv. Be a member of a professional accounting body recognized by an act of the National Assembly;
- v. A person of reputable character who must not have been found guilty or convicted of any offence involving dishonesty or professional misconduct.

B. REMUNERATION:

The salary, superannuation and benefits of the Auditor-General is consolidated as prescribed by the House of Assembly and determined by the Revenue Mobilization, Allocation and Fiscal Commission.

C. METHOD OF APPLICATION:

- i. Interested applicants are to send in their applications in ten (10) copies which should include detailed curriculum Vitae along with photo-copies of all their credentials;
- ii. The names of three (3) referees who can attest about the applicant.
- iii. Applications should be submitted not later than six (6) weeks from the date of this advertisement
- iv. All applications should be addressed to;

**Chairman Civil Service Commission,
J.D Gomwalk Secretariat,
Jos**

**Chief Luka C. Fwangyil
Chairman
Civil Service Commission**

Congratulatory Message from Pankshin Local Government Council



The transition committee chairman of Pankshin Local Government Council, **Hon Samuel Shangka Goar** on behalf of the Management team, Traditional Council Staff and hospitable people of Pankshin Local Government Council heartily congratulates the Paramount Ruler on his emergence to the throne as the **Ngolong Ngas** of Ngas Nation, chairman Pankshin/Kanke joint Traditional Council, His Royal Highness **Nde Jika Golit**.

Also commending the Executive Governor the captain of our time is now Governor **Mutfwang Caleb** for creating enabling environment for the peaceful conduct of the selection of the **Ngolong Ngas**.

As a council we are joyful of your emergence as the **Ngolong Ngas** considering the peaceful selection process and approval by the Government His Royal highness is indeed a man of pragmatic, purposeful leadership qualities reputable impact for national integration and socio economic transformation of the joint Traditional Council and plateau state as a whole

Our joy knows no bounds for his Majesty tireless efforts in uniting and preserving the Ngas People and their culture as a true reflection of Ngas Nation and well cultured.

We join millions of across board to celebrate with your highness, prayed for grace, sound health and divine wisdom to discharge his royal duties diligently as a Royal father to all and may his reign continue to unite bring peace and progress for upward development to Ngas Nation.

God bless Pankshin/Kanke joint Traditional Council.
God bless Plateau State!!!
Once more congratulations!!!



Congratulations!!!

On your coronation as the *Ngolong Ngas, Nde Jika Golit*



On behalf of myself, **Nde James Y. Yakzum**, Ngolong Edo / Delta States, my family and the good Peace loving and hardworking Ngas Nation in Edo and Delta States warmly extend our heartfelt congratulations on your Coronation and Presentation of First Class Staff of Office by the Executive Governor of Plateau State,

BARR CALEB MANASSEH MUTFWANG.

As you ascend the throne of our forefathers, it is the beginning of a new era that comes with much hope and dreams for Yil Ngas.

Your Royal Highness, may your reign be a time of prosperity and tranquillity, marked by wisdom, courage, and compassion. Your legacy shall endure for generations to come.

Congratulations

Signed:
Nde James Y. Yakzum
Ngolong Edo / Delta States.



News

Tinubu slashes travel expenditure of Govt officials

PRESIDENT Bola Tinubu has slashed by 60 percent, the travel expenditure of government officials in his administration.

Special Adviser to the President on Media and



Tinubu

Publicity, Ajuri Ngelale, who disclosed this to State House Correspondents on Tuesday, in Abuja, said the decision was part of cost-cutting measures of the Presidency.

He said the decision will affect the office of the President, Vice President, First Lady, Ministers and heads of agencies.

"Tinubu has directed that all state entourages be drastically reduced. This is not a request. It is a directive. The office of the president and staff will be affected. VP, appointees are affected.

"By this directive, there will be a slashing of expenditure on official travel by 60 percent", he said,

adding that by the directive, the President is limited to 20 number of staff outside the country.

Ngalele also said ministers are limited to just four members of staff on any foreign trip, while heads of agencies are limited to just two.

The Presidential Spokesman further disclosed that President Tinubu will no longer travel with huge security delegations to any state in the country.

"If the president travels to any state, the security in the state will take care of his security and the same applies to the vice president and other top government officials", he added.

Nigerian journalist shot dead

The Nasarawa State Council of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), on Tuesday, condemned the attack and brutal killing of its former treasurer, Benjamin Ekom, by unknown gunmen at his residence in Washo village, Nassarawa-Eggon Local Government Area (LGA), of the state.

The NUJ made its position known in a statement jointly signed by its Chairman and Secretary,

Salihu Alkali and Sunday John, on Tuesday in Lafia, the state capital.

The Union described the attack on innocent residents of the state by criminal elements as one too many, and called for drastic and proactive measures to be taken to protect lives and properties of residents in all parts of Nasarawa State.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), reports that

late Ekom, of the Federated Chapel of journalists, was gunned down on Monday night.

The leadership of the union further urged security agencies to fish out the killers of the former treasurer, to face the law; and also called for the support of members of the public in helping to unravel the mystery behind the incident, to expose criminal elem. (NAN)

Editorial

Christmas Eve genocide condemnable

LAST Christmas Eve, the unthinkable happened after marauders suspected to be Fulani killer herdsmen invaded about 39 villages in Mangu, Bokkos and Barkin Ladi Local Government Areas of Plateau State killing over two hundred natives. Though this incident was not the first recorded in most recent times, the sophisticated way and manner the terror was unleashed on these communities subsequently raised an outcry amongst security experts and major stakeholders both within and outside the country.

Most disturbing was the barbaric way and manner many vulnerable women and children were callously murdered, others burnt in their houses, including massive destruction of farms and their produce across the affected communities with impunity.

WHILE condoling the government and people of Plateau State in the aftermath of this incident, President Ahmed Bola Tinubu described the attack as callous, wicked and unprovoked, also expressed sympathy with the relations of the deceased.

REPRESENTED by his Vice, Shettima Kashim, Tinubu subsequently tasked security chiefs in the country to ensure that there is conclusive victory against the myriad of security threats facing the nation. In a statement signed by his spokesman, the President acknowledged that while good progress is being recorded in the quest towards the elimination of some security threats across multiple theatres, success will ultimately be defined by a final conclusion to this multi-dimensional menace.

SINCE this dastardly act was committed by these evildoers, the Plateau State government has not rested in restoring normalcy to all the areas affected. Aside the various relief materials distributed in displaced camps, the government has synergized with security personnel brought into the state to help restore normalcy. This development has brought succour to many vulnerable rural residents devastated by this unspeakable calamity.

BEYOND these efforts however, it is unequivocally imperative to comprehend the fact that without coming to terms with the complexities which have entangled this unabated crises, any measure taken to curb this menace would only end up in futility. The truth be told, the consistent attacks on the Plateau is aimed at chasing away the natives and grabbing their land. In the process of executing their brutality, many innocent citizens have been killed and properties worth millions destroyed.

THOUGH the issue of insecurity bedevilling this country has over the years become a threat to almost all the regions, the devilish unabated attacks which has continued since 2001 on the Plateau, is not only senseless but genocidal and should be condemned in all its ramifications.

WE therefore urge Federal Government to re-strategize towards overhauling the security architecture of the military and other security agencies which in most recent years, have left much to be desired.

THE problem of illegal proliferation of small arms and formation of militant groups must be checked and all those found to have been indicted in any such acts in the past be brought to book to serve as deterrent. The continuous perpetration of these heinous acts have indicated the simple fact that security personnel in the country have been either overwhelmed by these marauders or there are traitors in the system.

IN the hidden corners of our interconnected country, a dark and insidious crime thrives, preying on the vulnerable and leaving shattered lives in its wake, human trafficking. This feature delves into the grim reality of human trafficking, unravelling its intricate secret, examining the profound consequences on victims, and shedding light on the global efforts to eradicate this modern-day slavery.

Human trafficking, a crime that exploits people through force, fraud, or coercion for various purposes, operates in the shadows of our societies. This feature opens back the layers of this silent trade, exposing the various forms it takes, from forced labour and sexual exploitation to child soldiers and organ harvesting.

Understanding the pervasive nature of human trafficking requires a closer look at the root causes. Poverty, inequality, political instability, and lack of education create fertile ground for exploitation. This feature explores the complex interplay of these factors, shedding light on the environments that give rise to trafficking and exploitation.

Human trafficking isn't just a statistic; it involves the lives of countless individuals.

Through interviews, survivor stories, and personal narratives, this feature humanizes the victims, offering a glimpse into the harrowing experiences of those who have endured the brutality of trafficking. Their voices serve as a stark reminder of the urgent need for action.

Human trafficking is a transnational crime that spans borders, making

"The unseen faces of human trafficking"

international cooperation crucial for its eradication. This feature explores the global dimensions of human trafficking, highlighting the interconnectedness of trafficking routes and the challenges faced by law enforcement in combating this pervasive issue.

Many victims find themselves trapped in a seemingly endless cycle of exploitation. The efforts of law enforcement agencies, NGOs, and activists to rescue and rehabilitate victims. It also delves into the challenges of reintegrating survivors into society and providing the necessary support for their physical and emotional recovery.

Technology has both facilitated and combated



human trafficking. This examines how traffickers exploit digital platforms for recruitment and coercion, but also how technology is harnessed to raise awareness, track traffickers, and provide resources for prevention and support.

Addressing human trafficking requires a robust legal framework. This feature explores the legal aspects of combating human trafficking, from international conventions and treaties to the enforcement of laws at the national level. It also delves into the challenges of prosecuting traffickers and ensuring justice for survivors.

By raising awareness, supporting anti-trafficking organizations, and

advocating for policies that address the root causes of human trafficking, individuals can contribute to a world where the chains of exploitation are shattered, and every person is afforded the dignity and freedom they deserve.

"Shattered Chains" is a feature that seeks to unveil the harsh realities of human trafficking, humanizing the victims while emphasizing the collective responsibility to address this global crisis. Through understanding, awareness, and action, society can strive towards a world where exploitation is replaced with empowerment, and the chains of human trafficking are finally broken.

DASHE NUNGNA'AN VICTORIA.

Brave child organization empowers girl child community in Plateau

PLATEAU State, Nigeria in a remarkable effort to champion the rights of the girl child, the Brave Child organization has been making waves in Plateau State. Through their various initiatives, this non-governmental organization is positively influencing the lives of young girls and empowering them to thrive.

One of the organization's key strategies is visiting secondary and primary schools across the state. Through these visits, they impart invaluable knowledge to young girls, teaching them self-defense techniques and encouraging them to speak out against any form of molestation. By equipping these girls with essential skills and empowering them to use their

voices, the Brave Child organization is fostering a safer and more secure environment for the girl child.

However, the journey is not without its challenges. As a non-governmental organization, the Brave Child group faces obstacles in their mission to protect and uplift the girl child community. Limited resources and funding often hinder their ability to reach a wider audience and provide comprehensive support. Despite these challenges, the organization remains resilient and committed to their cause, continuously seeking innovative solutions to overcome these hurdles.

The impact of the Brave

Child organization's efforts is evident in the lives of the girls they have reached. By instilling confidence, self-defense skills, and a sense of empowerment, these young girls are better equipped to navigate the world with resilience and determination.

"We believe that every girl deserves to be heard, protected, and empowered," says the founder of the Brave Child organization. "Through our collective efforts, we can create a society where the girl child thrives and realizes her full potential."

The Brave Child organization's dedication to the girl child community in Plateau State serves as an inspiration to all. Their

tireless advocacy and commitment to education and empowerment are transforming lives and creating a brighter future for the girl child.

In conclusion, the Brave Child organization's impact on the girl child community in Plateau State is immeasurable. With their visits to schools, teaching self-defense, and encouraging girls to speak out, they are making a real difference. Despite the challenges they face as a non-governmental organization, their determination remains unwavering. The Brave Child organization is a beacon of hope, empowering young girls and paving the way for a brighter future.

Richard Dauda Madaki

Standard Cartoon



Opinion

The impact of inflation and subsidy removal

By DORCAS SUNDAY

INFLATION in a simple term, can be described as rise in prices of goods and services, which can result in the decline of purchasing power over time. The recent removal of fuel subsidies in Nigeria has led to immediate and alarming increase in fuel prices which triggered a chain reaction, causing higher transportation costs and ultimately contributing to inflation. A recent check on the CBN website (December 2023) posted inflation rate at 28.2% as at November, 2023.

Virtually the cost of all goods and services have geometrically risen. The cost of transportation, foodstuffs, clothing, school fees, healthcare etc. have caused most people to forcefully adjust and some totally abstain from consuming some basic items and services.

Petrol which hitherto was selling for less than N200/liter is now sold for about N617/liter on official price and almost N700 at unofficial price. Also a bag of Rice which was sold for less than 20,000 is now above 50,000.00, Milk and Milo tin that were sold for 1000 is now about 5000. Indeed almost all consumables have increased their prices at more than 60%.

Meanwhile, there has been no

corresponding changes or increase in the income and wages of our parents who work in public places and in the private sectors. Majority of them are low income earners. These challenges have impacted immensely on the psychology of most people and translating into various forms of frustrations, depression, sickness and sometimes death due to lack of resources to pay medical bills.

For us that are students who rely on our parent's income for school fees, feeding and general upkeep, the experience has also not been easy. This gives me serious concern considering the stress our parent's go through to make ends meet with nearly constant income and skyrocketed cost of consumables and services. Not forgetting some parents who are confronted with house rent increment in this trying moment.

It is in public domain that government is making concerted efforts toward alleviating this challenges with particular emphasis on the high cost of goods and services. However, the need to draw the attention of government to act fast as the poverty rate is reaching rooftop as a result of low purchasing power of the people.

Much as the policy of the subsidy removal is for the good of the nation as claimed by government

and as a measure to eliminate corruption in the oil industry, the government should hastily make adequate provision and put in place strategy for cushioning effects of the untold hardship the measure has caused.

The impact of the current rise in the cost of basic goods and services, the government is enjoined to do more on the area of palliatives, job creation opportunities at lower level and fight corruption in all sphere of the economy.

In my candid opinion that the rich and philanthropists in the society should also support

government by rolling out palliative to the less privilege. This will help in curbing the high rate of crime in the society. The religions should not be left out in this clarion call. All citizens are also invited to be their brother's keeper.

In my conclusion, I wish to call on the government at all levels, all corporate organizations and all well-meaning Nigerians to take responsibility, come up with policies and measures to alleviate the sufferings in the land. Specifically, to reduce the pains of the masses.

Government is enjoined to urgently increase the palliative

measures and reach out to more people in the lower class by declaring free medical treatment for low income earners, reduction in school fees, tax relief for small businesses. Keep investing in critical infrastructure that will lead to mass job creation, provide agricultural support to the rural areas and ensure the students' loans scheme is implemented properly.

Sunday is a 200 Level Mass Communication

Student of Veritas University Bwari, Abuja. (Dorcaskizito2004@gmail.com)

"For us that are students who rely on our parent's income for school fees, feeding and general upkeep, the experience has also not been easy. This gives me serious concern considering the stress our parents go through to make ends meet with nearly constant income and skyrocketed cost of consumables and services. Not forgetting some parents who are confronted with house rent increment in this trying moment. It is in public domain that government is making concerted efforts toward alleviating this challenges with particular emphasis on the high cost of goods and services. However, the need to draw the attention of government to act fast as the poverty rate is reaching rooftop as a result of low purchasing power of the mass people."

X-raying President Tinubu's humanitarian efforts

NIGERIA, a vibrant nation brimming with immense potential, is no stranger to humanitarian crises. From the devastating floods that engulfed swathes of land to the lingering insurgencies that displaced communities, the country's resilience is constantly tested.

All around the world, natural disasters unleash their fury, leaving communities drowning in floodwaters or gasping for air under searing droughts. The specter of war haunts regions, displacing families and shattering normalcy. Diseases outbreak, like silent assassins, stalk vulnerable populations, testing the resilience of healthcare systems. In the face of such adversity, finding solutions becomes a matter of life and death, a desperate search for pathways out of suffering becomes the only option.

The onus falls upon individuals and organizations to step up and provide succor to those in dire need. This is where President Bola Tinubu, with his unwavering passion for humanity and innovative approach, emerges as a beacon of hope.

With the appointment of Betta Edu as Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Alleviation, President Tinubu is answering the humanitarian needs of the nation. A woman with a god-like solution, Edu is an interpreter of humanitarian puzzles and a pacifier of crisis and violence.

Before delving into Edu's contributions, it's crucial to understand the complexities of humanitarian crises in Nigeria. These crises often stem from a confluence of factors, including:

Natural disasters like floods rampage through cities, that transform streets into murky canals. Droughts parch the land, turning fertile fields into desolate plains. Earthquakes crumble structures and live in a single tremor. These unpredictable outbursts of nature leave communities reeling, their livelihoods washed away or parched beyond redemption. These remain a challenge to any nation.

The major predominant occurrence is the conflict and insurgency that creates gnawing wounds of internal strife fester in various regions, displacing millions and leaving behind

scars of shattered infrastructure and impeded access to necessities. The relentless echo of gunfire and the haunting wails of displaced families paint a grim picture of lives uprooted and dreams shattered. This used to be very prevalent in the Northeastern part of Nigeria before the intervention of Betta Edu.

Another is a disease outbreak that lurks in the shadows. Epidemics like cholera and Lassa fever unleash their virulence upon unsuspecting populations. Healthcare systems, already strained by limited resources, buckle under the pressure, leaving communities vulnerable and at the mercy of invisible foes.

The question in every heart remains, who is that worthy person who will bring a lasting end to all these throes? In no time, the answer sprung up in a human form, in the person of Betta Edu.

Amidst these challenges, effective humanitarian interventions hinge upon several key indicators like promptness, coordination, community engagement, and sustainability. These and many more have the Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Alleviation, Betta Edu, harnessed into transforming Nigeria in a short time.

In a landscape often marred by bureaucratic hurdles and inefficiencies, Betta Edu stands out for her dedication to grassroots-driven, people-centered solutions. Her organization, the "NaijaBetta Initiative", embodies this philosophy, prioritizing direct engagement with affected communities and tailoring interventions to their specific needs.

Unlike her predecessors, Edu's approach hinges on several key factors that have successfully helped in implementing the progressive changes being experienced all around the nation. Few among many are outlined below.

Her passion and empathy have been the strong driving force for her great cause of humanity. She connects with people on a human level, sharing their joys and tears, her empathy acting as a balm on their wounded spirits. This emotional connection ensures her commitment remains genuine and unwavering.

Her openness and accessibility are other key

factors that have contributed to this success. Edu breaks down the walls of bureaucratic isolation, venturing into the "trenches" – the most devastated areas – with an open heart and open ears. She listens to the stories of hardship, witnessing firsthand the depth of suffering, ensuring aid reaches those who need it most, not just those who can navigate complex application processes.

Her level of transparency and accountability has been unmatched, and outstanding in comparison with how her predecessors tackle situations. Due to her belief that trust is the bedrock of any successful intervention, Betta Edu's financial transparency and robust accountability mechanisms guided her to prevent misuse of funds and foster trust between aid providers and recipients.

Edu recognizes the importance of financial integrity, and maintaining open and transparent financial records. Regular reports and updates published on the organization's website and social media platforms ensure complete visibility into resource allocation and expenditure, with the understanding that every naira must be accounted for, ensuring ethical and effective resource allocation. This commitment to accountability builds trust and encourages further support.

Realizing the limitations of immediate aid, Edu champions initiatives that empower communities to stand on their own two feet. Skills training programs equip locals with marketable skills, while livelihood creation initiatives provide families with sustainable income sources. This shift towards self-reliance fosters long-term resilience and reduces dependence on external aid.

As the official humanitarian aide to President Asiwaju Ahmed Bola Tinubu, Edu serves as a bridge between the highest office and the grassroots. She carries the President's message of hope and support to those affected by crises, demonstrating his commitment to alleviating suffering across the nation. She engages with individuals in the trenches, understanding their needs, and delivering messages of hope. As a mother would care for her children without

any disparity, she gives a listening ear to everyone, irrespective of their social status.

Through her unwavering dedication and innovative approach, Edu has demonstrably improved the lives of countless Nigerians caught in the throes of humanitarian crises. Her efforts have provided immediate relief to thousands of displaced persons through food, shelter, and medical supplies, and empowered communities through skills training and livelihood creation programs, fostering self-reliance and reducing dependence on aid.

She has advocated for policy changes and increased government investment in disaster preparedness and conflict resolution, addressing the root causes of crises. Her simplicity and tactful decisions have restored hope and dignity to countless individuals, reminding them that they are not forgotten amidst the chaos.

Betta Edu's extraordinary efforts in addressing Nigeria's humanitarian crises provide a fresh perspective on resolving such challenges. Her passion for humanity, accountability and transparency, and openness in dealings with affected individuals serve as a beacon of hope and inspiration. By analyzing key indicators for success and contrasting Edu's approach with past methods, it becomes evident that her initiatives have the potential to transform the lives of those affected by natural disasters, war, and disease outbreaks.

Betta Edu's story is not just about one woman's extraordinary efforts; it's a testament to the power of passion, empathy, and innovative thinking in tackling seemingly insurmountable challenges.

Edu continues to deliver the message of hope on behalf of President Asiwaju Ahmed Bola Tinubu anywhere she finds herself, creating a renewed birth of optimism for a brighter future in Nigeria's pursuit of resolving humanitarian crises. She is a nation-builder and the epitome of humanity.

Ibrahim is a humanitarian researcher based in Kaduna.

Change of Name

<p>SAGIR</p> <p>I, formerly known as SAGIRU IBRAHIM SHATA, now wish to be known and addressed as SAGIR IBRAHIM SHATA. Correct date of birth is 1st January, 2003 not 1st January, 2000. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>NENNANG</p> <p>I, formerly known as NENNANG GIFT JOHN (MISS), now wish to be known and addressed as NENNANG GIFT JOSHUA (MRS). All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>MUHAMMAD</p> <p>I, formerly known as MISBAHU MUHD IGUDA, now wish to be known and addressed as MUHAMMAD, MUSBAHU IGUDA. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>GOMAM</p> <p>I, formerly known as TABITHA INUSA, now wish to be known and addressed as GOMAM TABITHA INUSA. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>MERCY</p> <p>I, formerly known as DARAN BANWAR DAKUM, now wish to be known and addressed as MERCY BANWAR A'ARON. Correct date of birth is 8/9/1997. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>ANAS</p> <p>I, formerly known as ERNEST NIMMAK DANDAM, now wish to be known and addressed as ANAS NIMMAK DANDAM. All former documents remain valid. Date of birth 21/11/1997 not 21/11/1992. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>
<p>NANSEL</p> <p>I, formerly known as JOY DISSY, now wish to be known and addressed as NANSEL NANBYET JOHN. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>PONNAN</p> <p>I, formerly known as DESTINY GAMBO P., now wish to be known and addressed as PONNAN MUSA GAMBO. Date of birth is 16/1/1999. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public please take note.</p>	<p>ZINGFA</p> <p>I, formerly known as ZINGFA SUNDAY, now wish to be known and addressed as ZINGFA ALFA SUNDAY. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>TANGANI</p> <p>I, formerly known as PRINCESS CHATONG BOT, now wish to be known and addressed as TANGANI NANDI SIMON. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>ABUBAKAR</p> <p>I, formerly known as ABDULLAH MUJAHDEEN, now wish to be known and addressed as ABUBAKAR MUJAHIDEEN ABDULLAHI. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>WAPJIN</p> <p>I, formerly known as DANTATA DIRNAN, now wish to be known and addressed as WAPJIN DIRNAN PRAISE. Date of birth 20/6/2006 not 20/6/2004, not 20/6/2005. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>
<p>ABDULLAHI</p> <p>I, formerly known as ABDULLAHI MUHAMMAD, now wish to be known and addressed as ABDULLAHI, MUHAMMAD TAFEEDA. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>BUKOLA</p> <p>I, formerly known as MISTURA BUKOLA ISMAIL and BUKOLA MISTURA SHITTU, now wish to be known and addressed as BUKOLA MISTURA SHITTU. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>MAISAMARI</p> <p>I, formerly known as ATEH PEACE JOSHUA, now wish to be known and addressed as MAISAMARI PEACE JOSHUA. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>ADEBOYE</p> <p>I, formerly known as OKIKIOLA SHINA-AYOMI, now wish to be known and addressed as OLUWASHINA-AYOMI EMMANUEL ADEBOYE. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>AJANG</p> <p>I, formerly known as DORIS ANYA HANANIYA, now wish to be known and addressed as AJANG DORIS ANYA. Date of birth is 12/10/1996 not 12/10/1992. All former documents remain valid. NIN, all concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>DAUDA</p> <p>I, formerly known as JENNIFER SUNDAY DAUDA, now wish to be known and addressed as DAUDA JENNIFER. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>
<p>AKARE</p> <p>I, formerly known as LERE AKARE LYDIA, now wish to be known and addressed as AKARE IZANG. All former documents remain valid. NIN, all concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>ELIZABETH</p> <p>I, formerly known as JERRY ELIZABETH AWAK, now wish to be known and addressed as ELIZABETH EPHRAIM AWAK. Date of birth is 12/5/1991 not 12/06/1991. All former documents remain valid. NIN, all concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>GIFT</p> <p>I, formerly known as GIFT DANLADI, GIFT MAYAM DANLADI & GIFT GWOMNA MAYAM, now wish to be known and addressed as GIFT MAYAM ISREAL. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>DAWUM</p> <p>I, formerly known as WILLIAM RINRET JUNE, now wish to be known and addressed as DAWUM RINRET JUNE. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>DULE</p> <p>I, formerly known as ABOKI MAFENG SAMUEL, now wish to be known and addressed as DULE MAFENG SAMUEL. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>AWOU</p> <p>I, formerly known as NATHAN ZION AWOU, now wish to be known and addressed as AWOU ZION PROMISE. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>
<p>MUHAMMED</p> <p>I, formerly known as MUHAMMAD FATIMA ABDULLAHI, now wish to be known and addressed as MUHAMMED FATIMA ABDULLAH. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>YAKUBU</p> <p>I, formerly known as ZAYYAT YAKUBU MOHAMMAD, now wish to be known and addressed as YAKUBU ZAYYAD. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>ELIZABETH</p> <p>I, formerly known as BALI ELIZABETH JOEL, now wish to be known and addressed as ELIZABETH PONFA. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>DAWAM</p> <p>I, formerly known as DAWAM TANKO BIAKAN, now wish to be known and addressed as DAWAM BIAKAN ALPHONSUS. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>ADEBAYO</p> <p>I, formerly known as ADEBAYO HANNAH BEL AYOMIDE, now wish to be known and addressed as ADEBAYO AYOMIDE HANNAH. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>ADAMU</p> <p>I, formerly known as SAMBO LURWANU SAMBO, now wish to be known and addressed as ADAMU RIDWAN SAMBO. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>
<p>NUHU</p> <p>I, formerly known as REJOICE ILIYASU, now wish to be known and addressed as NUHU REJOICE ILIYASU. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>RAINOS</p> <p>I, formerly known as RAINOS ILIYASU, now wish to be known and addressed as RAINOS ILIYASU NUHU. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>NANFA</p> <p>I, formerly known as GWAKTIM KARZING, now wish to be known and addressed as NANFA KARZING. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>FOM</p> <p>I, formerly known as PATRICK DANIELLA, now wish to be known and addressed as FOM DANIELLA PATRICK. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>DAPUN</p> <p>I, formerly known as GUTIP DAPUN FWANG'AN, now wish to be known and addressed as DAPUN FWANG'AN GUTIP. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>WASSAK</p> <p>I, formerly known as TAMAI CHRISTY SIMON, now wish to be known and addressed as WASSAK CHRISTY DAKUP. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>
<p>MUHAMMED</p> <p>I, formerly known as MUHAMMED ALHAJI ABUBAKAR, now wish to be known and addressed as MUHAMMED ABUBAKAR. Date of birth is 1/01/1963 not 1/01/1996. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>IDRIS</p> <p>I, formerly known as ABDULKARIM ILIYASU ADAMU, now wish to be known and addressed as IDRIS ABDULKARIM ZUBAIRU. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>SIMON</p> <p>I, formerly known as MARKUS DATONG, now wish to be known and addressed as SIMON IGNATIUS NAANDUK. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>GARBA</p> <p>I, formerly known as GARBA SARAH BITRUS, now wish to be known and addressed as GARBA SARAH LAMA. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>ISTIFANUS</p> <p>I, formerly known as ISTIFANUS DABOK now wish to be known and addressed as ISTIFANUS MAKSHWAR DABOK. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>BLESSING</p> <p>I, formerly known as HABILA BLESSING CHOJI, now wish to be known and addressed as BLESSING MONDAY CHA. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>
<p>MASHAT</p> <p>I, formerly known as MANASSEH JACOB, now wish to be known and addressed as MASHAT JUSTICE GABRIEL. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>BULUS</p> <p>I, formerly known as YAKUBU SIMI MUSA and SIMI BULUS, now wish to be known and addressed as BULUS SIMI DUNG. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>ADDITION OF NAME</p> <p>I, formerly known as NANKUS WILFRED, now wish to be known and addressed as NGUBER NANKUS WILFRED. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>GEORGE</p> <p>I, formerly known as OLADUNTOYE GEORGE OLANIPEKUN, now wish to be known and addressed as GEORGE OLADUNTOYE OLANIPEKUN. Correct date of birth is 19/03/1960 not 19/3/1963. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>AFOLABI</p> <p>I, formerly known as OKUNLOLA FELICIA FOLASHADE, now wish to be known and addressed as AFOLABI FELICIA FOLASHADE. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>DANIEL</p> <p>I, formerly known as LILIAN MONDAY GWAMZHI, now wish to be known and addressed as DANIEL LILIAN LAR. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>
<p>YUSUF</p> <p>I, formerly known as ABDULRASHEED MUIBAT MOHAMMED, now wish to be known and addressed as YUSUF MUIBAT MOHAMMED. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>JAMES</p> <p>I, formerly known as KASSAI BEATRICE, now wish to be known and addressed as JAMES BEATRICE. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>TAPJI</p> <p>I, formerly known as TAPJI GABRIEL, now wish to be known and addressed as TAPJI GABRIEL DAKAHAP. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>PAUL</p> <p>I, formerly known as DAPAK REGINA BELLO, now wish to be known and addressed as PAUL NAANMAN REGINA. My correct date of birth is 1st July, 1998. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>DAMULAK</p> <p>I, formerly known as DAMULAK JOSEPH MANLAT, now wish to be known and addressed as DAMULAK DADOK MANLAT. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>MICHAEL</p> <p>I, formerly known as MICHEAL MONDAY, now wish to be known and addressed as MICHAEL MONDAY DAMOUS. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>
<p>MAKERI</p> <p>I, formerly known as MAKERI JUMMAI, now wish to be known and addressed as MAKERI JUMMAI SULEIMAN. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>DOEDEL</p> <p>I, formerly known as DOEDEL SANDRA SAMUEL, now wish to be known and addressed as DOEDEL SANDRA NA'ANGOME. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>DANLADI</p> <p>I, formerly known as DANLADI MERCY DENMUK, now wish to be known and addressed as DANLADI MERCY. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>DANLADI</p> <p>I, formerly known as DANLADI MUANLE, now wish to be known and addressed as DANLADI MOSES YOONPAN. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>DAVID</p> <p>I, formerly known as DANLADI VIVIAN MAJU, now wish to be known and addressed as DAVID VIVIAN MAJU. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>EMMANUEL</p> <p>I, formerly known as VANDAT BENEDICTA BELEPNAANDONG, now wish to be known and addressed as EMMANUEL BENEDICTA BELEPNAANDONG. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>

News

MWCG presents relief materials to IDPs in Mangu

From JIDAUNA DARING Mangu

AS part of efforts to reduce the hardship being faced by the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), Mwaghavul Women Collaboration Group (MWCG) Namujiwul Balka Outreach has presented food and clothing relief materials to IDPs in Mangu Local Government Area (LGA) of Plateau State.

Our correspondent reports that the presentation of the relief materials was made at the IDPs Camp, Pilot Science Primary School, Bungla Mangu town, last Saturday.

Speaking shortly before presenting the items, the convener of the group, Mrs. Nakris Gayus, who was represented by Dr. Mrs. Nalong Henry Yale, told the IDPs that the reason for their visit was to empathize with them over the unfortunate attacks on their communities.

Mrs. Dakwal commiserated with the IDPs over the death of their loved ones through the hands of evil men. She added that IDPs who are victims of gruesome attacks, were displaced from their ancestral homes as a result of the brutal attacks meted on them for no justifiable reasons by people whom she described as terrorists with sole objectives to steal, kill and destroy.

The convener said that they were a group of few Mwaghavul daughters initiated in October last year with the aim of uniting themselves as women to help displaced people, with emphasis on women's well being, children's education and also to collaborate, network, encourage/ support one another in community development.

Mrs. Dakwal called on government to as a matter of urgency, rise to the occasion and live up to its statutory obligation of protecting lives and property of citizens by tasking the security apparatus to rapidly respond to avert the carnage these enemies of growth and development perpetrate.

The group appealed to the government to accelerate processes for the speedy return of all IDPs to their ancestral homes, so as to enable them to prepare their farms ahead of the coming rainy season as a means of ensuring food security.

Mrs. Dakwal appreciated Governor Caleb M. Mutfwang of Plateau State for the proactive measures taken to ensure that peace and unity are sustained in the state.

She also called on other spirited individual to contribute towards alleviating the plight of the residents of these LGCs who are suffering for no crime of theirs.

Dakwal pointed out the group presented the items as a token of their love to salvage the unfortunate situation in this harsh economic period.

The group equally commended the Mishkaham Mwaghavul, Da. John Putmang



Dakwal

Hirse for his unwavering fatherly role in ensuring peace building efforts in his domain.

THE NIGERIA STANDARD reports that the items presented include 12 bags of maize, 65 tubers of yam, food seasonings, clothings, soaps, moisturizers, toilet papers, torch lights and hair combs, among others.

Responding, shortly after receiving the items, the representatives' of the national body of Mwaghavul Development Association (MDA) and women wing of the association both applauded

the group for coming to the aid of the IDPs with food and clothing, relief materials. They also assured the group that the items presented were going to be shared in a transparent way to the IDPs in the four different camps.

Also speaking with our correspondent, some of the IDPs expressed delight and thanked the group for the show of concern to their plight at their various camps. They said that life has not been easy as far as the situation currently being faced at their various camps is concerned.

Boat mishap: NIWA condoles families, friends of deceased

NATIONAL Inland Waterways Authority (NIWA) commiserates with families and friends of those who lost loved ones in a boat mishap that occurred at Umumu Anam, Anambra West LGA, Anambra State between Thursday the 4th and Friday the 5th of January, 2024 at about 7am.

The General Manager, Corporate Affairs of NIWA, Jibril Darda'u, in a statement made available to journalists in Lokoja recently, said that the incident involved a passenger boat traveling from Idah in Kogi State to Onitsha in Anambra State.

According to the General Manager, "Upon receipt of the sad report, relevant personnel from the Marine Department were deployed for rescue, recovery and proper investigation.

"Preliminary reports indicated that the wooden engine boat rammed into a snag on the water channel and capsized with about 50 passengers on board. From the record, 8 persons were confirmed dead at the scene, while 38 others were rescued immediately.

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

"The recovery efforts are ongoing and the authority will provide detailed information to the public as soon as the field officers report back to the headquarters. "The authority sincerely



Oyebamiji

Kogi Govt. appoints new Ohinoyi of Ebiraland

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

to avoid vacuum.

Governor Bello further said "Going by the High Court judgment of 1998, which gives full recognition to ODODO as bonafide child of ITA'AZI, the father of

Ebira land and UHUODO as a distinct district in Ebira land with equal rights as others, therefore, the stool of OHI OF UHUODO is hereby created and processes for the occupation of the stool to commence with immediate effect".



Bello

Security operatives record successes against Northeast terrorists

Efforts by the air and ground components of Operation Hadin Kai to clear the Northeast of remnants of terrorists within the Northeast region of Nigeria have continued to record a series of successes.

In a statement by the Nigerian Air Force, through Air Vice Marshal Edward Gagkwet, Director of Public Relations and Information, Nigerian Air Force, he stated that one of such successful operations occurred on 5 January 2024 at Parisu after terrorists were, for days, observed moving items suspected to be weapons and ammunitions to the area.

Parisu, a location near Sambisa Forest, was once a terrorist enclave, deserted after troops had cleared the area of terrorists' activities. However, the convergence of terrorists within the location raised suspicion of their intent and plan, hence the directive to strike the location.

The aftermath of the strikes led to a huge ball of flames from 2 adjacent spots within the vicinity, while some surviving terrorists were observed scampering for safety. Feedback also revealed that 12 terrorists were neutralized in the strike, Tumbun Buwari and Sabon and their logistics structures within the Lake degrading their ability to

attack soft targets and troops.

Similar strikes were also carried out at a location about 1.5 km Southwest of Tumbun Agiri within the Tumbuns in the Lake Chad region on 6 January 2024. Intelligence gathered over time had revealed the continuous gathering of armed terrorists in pick-up vehicles and motorcycles, hence the go-ahead to attack the location.

The precision strikes on the location led to the destruction of the vehicles, motorcycles as well as elimination of several terrorists. Prior to the aforementioned strikes, the Operation Hadin Kai, on an air reconnaissance mission on 2 January 2024, had struck some opportunity targets at Tumbun Alura. The targets, which consisted of 3 canoes, were observed loaded with suspected Premium Motor Spirit (PMS). They were subsequently engaged with a huge explosion observed afterward.

Similar successful strikes were also conducted at Tumbun Buwari and Sabon and their logistics structures within the Lake degrading their ability to

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Change of Name

<p>GOEWAM</p> <p>I, formerly known as GOEWAM KAMGAK CLEMENT, now wish to be known and addressed as GOFWAN CLEMENT KAMGAK. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>DINATU</p> <p>I, formerly known as DINATU JOSEPH GOSHWE, now wish to be known and addressed as DINATU PONFA GOSHWE. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>JESSICA</p> <p>I, formerly known as OKANLAWON JESSICA OIADOYIN, now wish to be known and addressed as JESSICA OLADOYIN AIMIUWU. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>DABOELOEP</p> <p>I, formerly known as FIDEELIS NOEL DABOELOEP, now wish to be known and addressed as DABOELOEP NOEL. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>UZOKWE</p> <p>I, formerly known as UZOKWE GODWIN CHUKWUECHEZONA, now wish to be known and addressed as UZOKWE GODWIN ECHEZONACHUKWU. Correct date of birth is 31/7/1994 not 7/3/1994. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>ODEH</p> <p>I, formerly known as SUNDAY BLESSED OJELLA, now wish to be known and addressed as ODEH BLESSED OJELLA. All former documents remain valid. Date of birth 21/11/1997 not 21/11/1992. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>
<p>UMAR</p> <p>I, formerly known as UMAR MUHAMMAD IBRAHIM, UMAR MOH'D IBRAHIM, now wish to be known and addressed as UMAR MOHAMMED IBRAHIM. Correct date of birth is 5/8/2001 not 5/8/1996. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>GOTOM</p> <p>I, formerly known as VWAMSE UFUNGIL AARON, now wish to be known and addressed as GOTOM UFUNGIL KITWUNA. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public please take note.</p>	<p>DUNG</p> <p>I, formerly known as MWANTA GLORIA DACHUNG, now wish to be known and addressed as DUNG GLORIA PAM. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>SUSAN</p> <p>I, formerly known as ANDI CHENTU GUTUL, now wish to be known and addressed as SUSAN ANDI CHENTU. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>PETER</p> <p>I, formerly known as PETER JONATHAN AKPELANGA, now wish to be known and addressed as PETER JONATHAN AGBEDE. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>ISHAYA</p> <p>I, formerly known as ISHAYA JOHN, now wish to be known and addressed as ISHAYA JOHN KADON. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>
<p>KEYYONG</p> <p>I, formerly known as SENAAN PATIENCE YOHANA, now wish to be known and addressed as KEYYONG PATIENCE. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>MARTHA</p> <p>I, formerly known as ALIYU MARTHA ZAKAIYA, now wish to be known and addressed as MARTHA ZAKARIYA. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>EKOJA</p> <p>I, formerly known as EKOJA EVELYN ONYECHE, now wish to be known and addressed as EKOJA EVELYN RAPHAEL. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>DONGS</p> <p>I, formerly known as COMFORT CHARLES, now wish to be known and addressed as DONGS COMFORT DAVOU. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>NAPHTALI</p> <p>I, formerly known as NAPHTALI ROSE, now wish to be known and addressed as NAPHTALI ROSE TUTUN. Correct date of birth is 31/12/2005 not 31/12/1992. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>DASHAK</p> <p>I, formerly known as DANLAMI FELICITY NAANCHIN, now wish to be known and addressed as DASHAK FELICITY NAANCHIN. Date of birth is 5/5/1998 not 5/5/1999. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>
<p>DOMSHAK</p> <p>I, formerly known as DEKAT DOMSHAK NUHU, now wish to be known and addressed as DOMSHAK AYUBA NUHU. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>PAM</p> <p>I, formerly known as PAM PAUL, now wish to be known and addressed as PAM PAUL DAVID. My correct date of birth is 27/9/1994 not 27/09/1995. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>GRACE</p> <p>I, formerly known as GRACE SUND DANLADI, now wish to be known and addressed as GRACE ISHAKU DALYOP. Correct date of birth is 12th June, 1998. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>DAMILOLA</p> <p>I, formerly known as DAMILOLA KATHRYN ADEBOWALE, now wish to be known and addressed as DAMILOLA ADEBOWALE NWUNE. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>CHARLIE</p> <p>I, formerly known as THOMPSON CHARLIE PATRICIA, now wish to be known and addressed as CHARLIE PATRICIA THOMPSON. All former documents remain valid. Stanbic IBTC, all concerned authorities and the general public</p>	<p>BULUS</p> <p>I, formerly known as BULUS ISHAKU, now wish to be known and addressed as BULUS ISHAYA. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>
<p>EMMANUEL</p> <p>I, formerly known as AUGUSTINE EMMANUEL DUNG, now wish to be known and addressed as EMMANUEL AUGUSTINE. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>DANIEL</p> <p>I, formerly known as EMMANUEL GUBAM KUSLE, now wish to be known and addressed as DANIEL GUBAM SOLOMON. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>GAWAIN</p> <p>I, formerly known as SUNDAY SAMSON GAWAIN, now wish to be known and addressed as GAWAIN SUNDAY. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>ROSE</p> <p>I, formerly known as WALBE ROSE RIT, now wish to be known and addressed as ROSE JAMES JWANBOT. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>Public Notices</p> <p>DISCLAIMER</p> <p>This is to notify the general public that I Mrs. Hope David Ayabina has not filed a petition for divorce nor participated in any divorce or legal marital proceedings against Mr. David Ayakpor Ayabina. Members of the public are hereby warned to desist from dealing in any manner with anyone else parading herself as Mrs. Hope David Ayabina.</p>	
<p>PAUL</p> <p>I, formerly known as DAPAK REGINA BELLO, now wish to be known and addressed as PAUL NAANMAN REGINA. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Space for sale</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Space for sale</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Space for sale</i></p>		

News

From **TERESE TUHWA, Makurdi**

Insecurity: Governor Alia cancels delegates election

FOLLOWING the resurgence of activities of Fulani marauders in Guma Local Government Area, the state Governor, Rev. Fr. Hyacinth Alia has ordered the suspension of delegates primary election for the Guma 1 State Constituency which was slated for Saturday, 6th January 2024 citing security concerns in the area.

The governor who addressed a press conference at the Old Banquet Hall of Government House, Makurdi which had all the state security chiefs in attendance on Saturday said, the security of the state was more important.

"For a local government area that is already volatile, continuation of the exercise could trigger more violence

in the local government area and across the state. The security of the state remains paramount to all of us".

The Governor pointed out, "This is why it has become very important that I suspend the delegate election for the Guma 1 constituency primaries that are expected to take place in Guma Local Government today".

He regretted that the party faithful who came out to make their choice were stopped at the gate of the local government area.

Avine Agbum Hotel in Daudu Governor Alia said, "In the last six months, the state experienced relative peace and efforts are being intensified to draft security agencies to maintain the peace. "I wouldn't want all the efforts we have put in place to be in vain. I wouldn't want anything that

youth of the area emotional with tensions rising in the area. And as such, it has become important as the chief security of the state, to order the suspension of the exercise".

He said Guma Local Government, where the election was supposed to take place, was the most vulnerable area in terms of insecurity. And as such, if the government does not step in immediately, the rising tensions will metamorphose into a serious security challenge.

He reiterated the desire of his administration to maintain absolute peace in the state with the return of the IDPs to their ancestral homes still a matter of necessity.

Governor Alia charged the



stating that he trusts the National Working Committee of the party to ensure that the right thing was done as the LGC was too fragile for anything less than peace.

Alma Maters matter



By Fwenji Goar

RECENTLY, the cream of society gathered in Fwangroi, Ganawuri in Riyom Local Government of Plateau State gathered to pay their last respects, and to bid farewell to the late Engr. Sunday Chong Hyat, mni, FNSC, FNICE who died on Friday, the 8th day of December, 2023, in Abuja.

Placed on his casket were items easily identified as the regalia and flag of the Boys Brigade, but some were wondering what another piece of material was doing on the casket. Those who asked got to realize that it was the national uniform of GOSA, an old students association which has carved a niche for itself as the flagship old students association in Nigeria. The honour of burying a GOSA member with the uniform is an exclusive reserve of GOSA Presidents, past and present.

Hyat was the President of Gindiri Old Students Association (GOSA). GOSA members turned out in their numbers to say goodbye to their dear President, who had served GOSA over the years in very many different capacities.

A lot has been said about GOSA, and how it is that it has succeeded in everything it sets out to accomplish. What is it that they are doing right, which other associations aren't? Was the

school given certain advantages others didn't get? Many more of such questions are going the rounds, to the point where GOSA has been tagged a "cult" in certain quarters.

One thing that stands out for GOSA is the fact that it has an unwavering commitment to development of the two institutions which make up GOSA.

It is worth noting that Gindiri Old Students Association (GOSA) is the umbrella body of old students of Boys' Secondary School and Girls' High School, Gindiri. These educational institutions, among others, were by-products of the Sudan United Mission (SUM) evangelical missionary enterprise in colonial North Central Nigeria at the beginning of the 20th Century.

Boys' Secondary School, Gindiri was founded in August 1950. It is an off-shoot of Boys' Middle School which was established in 1944. On the other hand, Girls' High School was established in 1958 and is similarly an off-shoot of the Girls' Boarding School which started in 1949.

As of that time in the early 1950s, there were only 5 fully fledged secondary schools in Northern Nigeria, which are, Barewa College (founded in 1921), Government College Keffi (established in 1949) and three other mission schools, St John's Kaduna (Roman Catholic, established in 1949), BSS Gindiri (SUM- established in 1950) and Titcombe Egbe, in present Kogi State (SIM - established in 1951).

The threshold of the Gindiri Old Students Association (GOSA) was laid when old boys of BSS Gindiri started the association, Gindiri Old Boys Association (GOBA) between 1955/56, when the first set of boys passed out of the Boys' Secondary School (BSS) Gindiri. The move to form GOBA was championed by old boys of BSS who found themselves studying

at the Nigeria College of Arts, Science and Technology, now Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and School of Agriculture Samaru, Zaria. GOBA was formally inaugurated in 1958 at the Cultural Center in Jos and among those who were present at the launch were: Ochapa Onazi, Ayuba Tense, James Lot, David Abifarini, Joseph D. Gomwalk, Benjamin Dusu Lodam, Ezekiel Bot and Edward Aleyideino.

In a similar vein, Girls' High School, Gindiri started graduating girls with the first set of girls completing the fifth form in 1962. This stimulated the need to restructure the alma mater association to accommodate the girls who were products of the same historical process.

J. D. Gomwalk impressed on GOBA to form an association that would include the girls. Following the call for revision of the GOBA structure to accommodate old girls of GHS, representatives of four existing chapters of GOBA; Makurdi (Ezekiel Akiga, A. Kenti etc), Kaduna (A. Mshelbwala, I. Odomah etc), Lagos (Capt. P. Thahal, J. Y. Lot etc) and Jos, met to discuss and approve the membership of GOSA to include products of BSS and GHS. Consequently, they revised the structure and composition of the association to include the girls from Girls' High School Gindiri. Thus, in 1965, activities of the boys and girls were harmonized. Despite this feat, the harmonization of activities of the boys and girls remained largely to an extent, just in principle. The boys, who were the most active, maintained the organization and operational frame of GOBA. Arising from this, the old boys from all over the country strengthened their bond and activities. Jos branch appointed a committee of seven (O. Ikwuegbu, V. K. Dangin, S. Janfa, S. S. Gofwen, S. D. Makama, J.



Arin and L. F. Chundusu) to plan the inauguration of GOSA.

GOSA was officially launched in Jos (Cultural Center) on the 25th November, 1972 amidst pomp and pageantry. The two day event was pioneered by the then Governor of Benue Plateau State, Police Commissioner Joseph Dechi Gomwalk, a first set member and first head boy of the Boys Secondary School Gindiri. The occasion had as special guest and chairman, Brigadier Abba Kyari, then Governor of North Central State.

This background is given so you can appreciate why this write up is centred around GOSA, an association which has given so much to the society.

But what are the reasons why old students associations still matter at this time and age? To answer that we need to look at pivotal roles they play in the advancement of educational institutions.

Educational institutions need support for their growth, and most times the proprietors fall short of these nurturing needs. This is where the alma mater can come in and play the role of a backbone for the school.

It is commonly said that old students associations are the lifelines that breathe vitality into educational institutions. They contribute a lot to the sustenance of education as a whole. Current students, benefit a lot from activities of the alumni. On many occasions they get mentorship, scholarships, and career guidance, among other benefits.

Old students in most instances serve as ambassadors of the

institution, and provide support systems, while fostering togetherness and offering expertise.

There are areas where alumni associations can support the Alma Mater, like in the aspects of infrastructural development, provision of essential tools and equipment, support for staff, and embarking on funding initiatives.

GOSA holds an annual convention/reunion in the first weekend of November, and has made sure that these gatherings are not just mere occasions that bring nostalgia, but serve as avenue to project the Alma Mater and revitalise it for greater heights.

Old students associations calls for the engagement and assistance of one another for mutual growth. Even though some may not like the sound of it, but, some benefits for alumni members include financial support avenues, inspiration, and opportunities for personal growth and networking, shaping educational excellence and fostering a robust network of support for present and future generations.

In conclusion, allow me to go down the GOSA route to end today's write up by summing up some key roles GOSA plays that ensures success. GOSA fosters a sense of community among its members. It preserves and promotes traditions and customs learnt from the Founding Fathers. It has a penchant for providing educational support, and serving as a source of pride and connection for current and former students.



By Hosea Nyamlong

Avoiding accidental teachers

without passion, motivation, or interest in the teaching profession.

Recently, the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN), conducted a to ascertain the professional knowledge of teachers in the teaching profession in the country.

The Registrar of the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN), Prof. Josiah Ajiboye stated the fact that a total of 15,753 teachers sat for the examination in 38 Centres across the country, out of which 3,963 failed.

Daily Trust Newspaper dated December 19, 2023, added that Prof. Ajiboye during an interaction with journalists in Abuja said that the result of the last set was very impressive considering the total number of teachers that sat for the professional exams.

He said that some candidates were absent while others had their results canceled due to examination malpractices and that all cases documented were treated accordingly at the management level of the council.

He maintained that it is on record that the council had 2.3

million registered teachers, out of which over 400,000 had been licensed.

The crux of the matter is that, what about teachers in the private schools that are not qualified, but just found themselves doing the job of teaching?

However, the presence of accidental personnel in schools across the country has increased day by day, with a negative impact on educational development in Nigeria.

Nigeria as a country that is blessed with both human and mineral resources is yet to attain its full capacity and potential as a nation.

Education is the bedrock of every nation needs at all levels for good governance and strict attention should be paid to it. This is because the growth of any society is dependent on the level of education of its citizens. Perhaps this is one of the biggest challenges Nigeria has as a country, due to a staggering number of 60 million illiterates in the country with a population of over 170 million people, this puts the illiteracy rate at over 35%.

In a fast-developing technological world, Nigeria has its problems cut out with its high illiteracy rate, low computer literacy rate and the education system continually producing half-baked graduates that are unable to compete in a technologically inclined world.

In the process to better education federal, state, and private should endeavor to always recruit competent persons who are also passionate about teaching, and the government should provide the enabling environment for learning to its citizenry

Employing qualified teachers is the key to the future of our nation, without their input there would not be national development through human development.

An investment in knowledge pays the best interest. The importance of education to a nation cannot be over-emphasized, in most parts of the world education is regarded as a fundamental human right. Education is one of the basic criteria to measure the growth and development of any nation."

If you want to destroy a nation kill their Education".

We need to invest more in teachers' education, reward teachers, and retain them through special offers such as special housing loans, good salary packages, and welfare among other incentives.

The education sector cannot go far with the accidental teachers that have taken the place of qualified teachers in most schools in the country.

Stakeholders and professionals need to ensure that the best practices of education should be maintained in other to reward teachers properly.

The Federal Ministry of Education and National Teachers Institute through State Universal Basic Education Board and Local Education Authorities need retrain primary school teachers annually.

This would equip the teachers with new and innovative ways in the teaching profession and make them masters in their fields in other to impact meaningfully for a greater nation.

BY PETER TITLE

- - I did not come to preside over burial ceremonies - Mutfwang CHRISTIANS all over anticipated a hitch free 2023 Christmas festivities. They had finished slaughtering and had also cooked, anticipating the D-day, Monday 25 December, 2023. They were full of lives, both the young and the aged. Parents had sew new attires for their wards ready for the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ.

Unfortunately, it was the day the harmless people never saw. The enemies of Plateau State struck. They operated in a commando style and simultaneously attacked over 16 villages and snubbed out lives of the young and old including people with disabilities thereby sending them to their early graves.

The people of Bokkos, Barkin - Ladi and Mangu would never forget Sunday 24th December , 2023 in a hurry because it was the day this heinous and unprovoked attack was meted on the people of these local government areas. The worst hit was Bokkos Local Government Area. After the attack by these faceless assailants, over 200 lives were said to have been wasted according to a source.

No human being was spared in as much as you breath. The aged, physically challenged, nursing mothers and children who have not offended even a fly were not spared.They were not only killed but gruesomely murdered.

The nation was shaken by this callous and dastardly act. The President of Nigeria and Commander - In - Chief, Senator Bola Ahmed Tinubu

swiftly swung into action and quickly dispatched the Vice - President, Senator Kashim Shettima to Plateau State to commiserate with the government and people of the state over the unfortunate incident that befell the state as well as to see the level of the carnage himself.

The Vice - President on

Manasseh Mutfwang along his cabinet members and all local government council chairmen enroute Bokkos, the centre of the theatre.

Governor Mutfwang was not left to welcome, the visitor alone .They set aside their political differences to fight their common enemy. He was joined by the former



Shettima commiserates with Plateau over carnage



Wednesday 27th December, 2023 arrived the Yakubu Gowon Airport, Heipang where he was received by the Executive Governor of Plateau State, Barrister Caleb

Governors of the state like, Jonah David Jang, Admiral Bitrus Atukum (rtd), Chief Joshua Dariye, Rt. Hon.Simon Bako Lalong, former and serving Senators as well as

people from all spheres of human endeavours.

Senator Kashim Shettima who was accompanied by the National Security Adviser (NSA), Nuhu Ribadu, Chief of Defence Staff, General Christopher Musa, said he was saddened with the callous killings of innocent people on Christmas Eve in the state saying that it was unacceptable.

According to him, President Bola Tinubu was shaken by the dastardly act stressing that when a community bleeds, the whole nation weeps and assured the Government and people of the state that the perpetrators would be fished out and dealt with according to the law.

He said they came to power to maintained the sanctity of people's lives saying they would not fold their arms to see bandits carrying out their nefarious acts assuring that government would deliver justice to all.

Governor Caleb Mutfwang who was visibly touched by the killings told them that he did not come to bury the deads but has come to lead the living describing the Christmas Eve attack as an act of callousness and cowardice.

He posited the attacks were sadistic and barbaric and thanked the federal government delegation for the visit and called on the people to remain calm while investigations continue in order to fished out the perpetrators.

The Transition Implementation Committee (TIC), Chairman of Bokkos, Honourable Monday Kassa said the attacked was well coordinated as it was simultaneous.

He thanked both the Vice - President and Governor Mutfwang for standing with the people of Bokkos at this trying times.



IMAGES

MUTFWANG PRESENTS STAFF OF OFFICE TO THE 6TH NGOLONG NGAS

Plateau State Governor, Barr. Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang last week Friday presented First Class Staff of Office to the 6th Ngolong Ngas, His Royal Highness, Nde Jika Golit at the Pankshin Mini Stadium



Commissioner for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, Chief Ephraim Usman (left), Governor Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang and the new Ngolong Ngas, Nde Jika Golit



Plateau State Governor, Barr. Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang, new Ngolong Ngas, His Majesty, Da Jacob Gyang Buba, CFR and the Emir of Kanam, HRH, Muhammad Babangida Mu'azu observing a minute silent in honour of HRH late Koprit Emmanuel Jatau, District Head of Amper Kanke LGA and mourning the departed souls of Bokkos, Mangu and Barkin Ladi LGAs victims



Governor Mutfwang (left) presenting the certificate to the 6th Ngolong Ngas, HRH Nde Jika Golit



HRH Nde Jika Golit, 6th Ngolong Ngas displaying his First Class Staff of Office to the invited dignitaries



Bishop Michael Gobal Gokum, Catholic Bishop of Pankshin (left) praying for the Governor, Celebrant and wife and all victims of Bokkos Mangu and Barkin Ladi attacks



Warriors of Ngasland during the coronation and presentation of Staff of Office to the new Monarch



Representative of the Chief Judge, Justice David Mann in the person of Justice Njar



Chief Usman (left) Commissioner, LG and CA receiving the new Ngolong Ngas from the Kingmakers led by Mishkom Mupun, HRH Da Yusuf Wall

Odd World

Husband admits cheating on wife with mother-in-law

A woman has shared a series of shocking videos on social media, claiming that her husband cheated on her with her mother. Posting the saga to TikTok, Laci Jane chronicled the astonishing story and revealed how she had discovered their betrayal.

During the period after Laci had just given birth to her daughter, she explained that her mum had been living in the basement of their house while she looked for her own home. She told viewers: "Whenever we would get into an argument my mum would come up from downstairs in the basement and she would always defend him."

"I always thought it was really weird. I just knew something was off." Laci's mum and husband would often drive to work together and this continued when her mother moved into a house a few streets away.

"She would visit us frequently, I had the same suspicion I always had," she went on. "My husband and I were always arguing and it got to the point where we needed to separate."

To make things easier and give everyone space, the family decided it would be best if the husband moved into the mum's house, who was renting nearby, and the mum would move in with Laci to help with the baby.

It was during this time that Laci says she and her mum got very close. Laci claims her mother started spilling secrets. She went on: "She started telling me about all of these times he's cheated on me with all these different women. She made me promise not to tell him."

Agreeing in the moment, it wasn't long before Laci hopped in her car and screeched around to her husband's house to confront him.

"I said 'Hey, my mum has said you've been cheating on me this entire time'. He looked me square in the eyes and he said 'Well why doesn't she tell you what you and I have been doing'."

Floored, Laci raced back home. She continued: "I got out of the car and she knew, the look on her face, she was just

white." After telling her mother to, "pack your bags and get the f*** out of my house," she says that her mum replied by acting like she didn't know what was going on.

Another strange twist, and yet one more gut punch for Laci, her mum then insisted they call the grandmother to corroborate her story or lack thereof, and insisted that only hand-holding took place.

Replaying the conversation that went down, Laci claims her mum said to her grandmother: "You know how Laci's husband was hitting on me, holding my hand... now he's telling her that we had an affair. Tell her it's not true."

However, Laci says she hadn't even mentioned an affair at that point so for her to jump to that scenario instantly confirmed her suspicions. She continued: "To this day, my mum will never admit it. She's never apologised. In her mind, it never happened." However, Laci says that her now ex-husband's story hasn't ever changed, leading her to believe that it did truly happen.

People watching rushed to offer supportive words to Laci. "The way the phone is shaking... I know this still hurts. I'm so sorry this happened to you," said one viewer. While others shared their own sordid experiences.

"My ex-husband accuses me of sleeping with his stepdad, I never did but it broke my heart because his stepdad lied to him and kept hitting on me," said one person.

Someone else revealed: "My wife and my dad had an affair and ended up living together, they didn't last and they are super miserable."

Thankfully, in the 14 years since that happened, Laci appears to have successfully moved on with her life and is thriving. She also revealed it is because of that situation that she was able to set up her non-profit organization building houses for single mothers - Tiny Homes For Moms. She finished: "Amazing things can come out of horrible things."

Source: Mirror



SMS Only: 08111186564. E-mail: wolfcatcher2004@yahoo.co.uk

This gory Plateau Christmas Eve genocide

If there was any disturbing phenomenon which happened in 2023 that would linger on the minds of many Plateauinans for decades to come, it was the cruel and gruesome killings of more than 200 innocent souls by Fulani murders in Mangu, Bokkos and Barkin Ladi Local Government Areas of the state during last year's Christmas Eve. As the rural residents were preparing for the Christmas celebrations, one of them had any premonition that they would not be alive to commemorate the birth of Christ the following morning. Sad enough, news started filtering in the early hours of Christmas morning that killer Fulani herders had invaded about 39 villages killing anything they saw including hapless women and children.

What made matters worse was the inability of security personnel to properly coordinate themselves and ensure that these vulnerable communities were given adequate protection against infiltration by these wicked and evil men took time to plan and coordinate on how to unleash terror on defenceless rural areas of the state. Again, Nigeria's security architecture was caught napping which led to many question being asked by shareholders in this country today

In the aftermath of the Christmas Eve attacks, President Ahmed Tinubu perhaps devastated by the number of casualties directed the serving chiefs to ensure that there is conclusive victory against the myriad of security threats assailing the country. In a statement signed by his Spokesman, Ajuri Ngelale, the president notes that while good progress was being recorded with the elimination of some security threats across multiple theatres, success will ultimately lead to the final conclusion to this multi-dimensional menace. From the look of things, this menace will be amongst the several problems inherited by this incumbent administration, and Nigerians are anxiously waiting to see how this problem would be dealt with once and for all.

Though this most recent attack which led to the gruesome killing of these 200 people was not the first experienced here on the Plateau, the way and manner it was carried out indicates a sophisticate operation carried out be militia to ensure that acts of genocide are vehemently perpetrated with impunity. This unfortunate incident reminded yours sincerely of the well-coordinated attacked on Dogon Nahauwa decades back where nearly 300 natives of the land were brutally killed.

In the aftermath of the attack on Dogo Nahauwa, government which set up an investigation team to inquire about the remote causes and perpetrators of the heinous acts and bring them to book never succeed in doing so. Consequently, everything was swept under the carpet and no one was held to account over this terrible and inhuman conduct which has continued to beat my imagination. Since the unabated attacks started on the Plateau, many communities have been forcefully ejected from their ancestral homes. In many of such places, names of areas have been changed, homes uprooted and treasures looted.

Interestingly, many of such areas affected are agrarian communities with lush places where the natives have banked their lives on. These are areas which are the heartbeat of the state considering the kind of agricultural produce cultivated. Sad enough, these same places have been the targets of these marauders who are always fond of destroying anything that they find or comes their way.

Though, prior to and in the aftermath of the Dogon Hauwa massacre, the state had remained a killing field, the way and manner the perpetrators of the most recent maunders conducted themselves during the operations have left many to wonder whether these evil men do not get sponsored by highly placed individuals who have vowed to plunge the state into dramatic chaos and anarchy. Therefore, the most recent attack on these villages have continued to raise more questions than answers. Some of these questions are challenging the efficiency and efficacy of our security agencies to as enshrined in our constitution protect us in such a contemporary time.

Mind you, in the aftermath of the attacks on Mangu, Barkin Ladi and Bokkos the military hierarchy subsequently disclosed that their inability to minimize the destruction which followed the invasion was as a result of its complex terrain.

For a long time now, states in the Middle Belt region of Nigeria have come under ferocious attacks from these killer herders who intensions are either for land grabbing and or Islamization ideology which has continued to create fear and anxiety in the entire nation. Regrettably, such evil men are those who have been dogmatized and or radicalized into accepting the notion that the days of occupation and expansion of territory through Usman Danfodio Jihad are still valid. These evildoers are but pockets of criminals and retrogressive elements who for centuries have been left behind in idiotically dark ages and have refused to absolve contemporary societal changes and or the true meaning of the religion they practice to honour God and for the betterment of humanity.

All those who find pleasure in killing innocent souls in vulnerable communities as such are barbaric element that have lost touch with reality and thrown the fear of God into trash.

It has therefore become obvious that this unprovoked and unjustified attack on the rural residents of Mangu, Barkin Ladi and Bokkos should be strongly condemned with assurances that such a dastard act would not happen again. This is because, in the few decades, law abiding citizens of the state have constantly been assured that the government is on top of the situation and the circle of violence will end only for us to witness several others perpetrated here with impunity.

In some cases, identification cards of security personnel have been retrieved from attacked scenes and arrests made only for the culprits to be released and or appear without facing the full wrath of the law. Amidst conflicting media propaganda and campaign of calumny, citizens of the state have continued to suffer unimaginable trauma and psychological torture which has refused to abate.

This certainly is the pitiful situation we have found ourselves on the Plateau where many are demoralised concerning the best possible strategic that will halt this complete madness and inhumanity to man.

View Point

Fainting or collapse in public: What not to do

By Prof. Josiah Muthir

I grew up in the village. As a young man, the village had few people and inhabitants of the communities knew each other. The young ones were the responsibilities of the community to bring up in the norms of the village. Marriages were within the community except in few cases where the girls we knew got married to husbands in other neighbouring communities. Before any marriages were contracted, there were subtle investigations into whether the families concerned had any disease conditions that run in the family. If there was any form of disease, particularly leprosy, seizure/fitting disorders like epilepsy, mental illness; marriages into these homes were not acceptable.

Fitting/seizure conditions were therefore known in the community and was related to evil spirits. No prospective girl or young man would marry a young man or girl known to possess any seizure disorders or epilepsy. In the community I grew up, I knew no one with epilepsy.

As I started to get out of the house in exploration of the surroundings, one of the places one was attracted to was the market square where there was buying and selling of various types of wares, clothing, animals, chickens and so on. What attracted my attention was however none of the above. We wanted the things that looked oily or bright coloured like Kosai, awara, belko, and such things sold by hawkers in the market square. As a matter of fact, if there was any stealing of money from the purse of our parents, it was to buy some of these delicacies of that time. It was a bad as that!

At one of the market days, as we walked about the market with no wares to sell or buy, I came across a horrific scene I had never seen before. It was a young man, fairly well dressed but lying alone in the gutter. He was not drunk. He was fitting and was all by himself in the gutter. No one attempted to help him. He had foamy discharge in his mouth, and was breathing with difficulty. This foaming in the mouth was what prevented his being helped by older onlookers. The disease they said was contagious and whoever attempted to give a helping hand and got in contact with the foam from his mouth would contract the



disease. We were also told he would get over the seizure and even get up and walk back to where he came from. He was therefore left alone to go through the ordeal of a series of fits. Fortunately, he was lying on his side even in the gutter.

We walked away from the scene, aimlessly around the market looking at the things that had been brought to be sold, and those buying them. Monies exchanged hands and the sellers and buyers were happy as far as I could tell. We came back over an hour later to check on the sick man, but he was nowhere to be seen. He had woken up after a deep sleep in the lying position, and had gone probably to change his clothes. I was later to know that the man had epilepsy. The man though left alone was lying down flat, the head a bit on the side, was able to breathe again after each fitting episode, survived.

Years later, as I became older and wiser, I witnessed many situations where men or women who were otherwise well, collapse in a public gathering or even in church. Probably because

people had no foam in the mouth, bystanders rushed to help them. This they do enthusiastically with all conviction they are helping the person who collapsed. They rush to the person, grab him in the chest and make all effort to sit him up as quickly as possible so that 'he does not die'. They assume death is synonymous with a person lying down and unconscious. Leaving the person in the lying position would hasten the 'transition to death. This transition should be stopped immediately by sitting the person up even when unconscious.

May I pause to say with modest humility that this practice is wrong and very wrong indeed.

The phenomenon happens in crowded places where air circulation is compromised; in humid and warm places which cause dilation of peripheral blood vessels, thus trapping blood in the skin and other places, and thus unavailable to the brain. particularly in hypovolaemia (reduced blood in the circulatory system), hypoglycaemia (reduced blood glucose in the circulatory system), crowded

and poorly ventilated environments. Pregnant women are also prone to these occurrences.

Invariably what happens that makes a person to faint and collapse to the ground is an effort by the body to adjust to the condition to recover. The fainting or collapse is the body's inherent recovery mechanism. The basic happening is that blood flow to the brain is reduced by one of the reasons mentioned, or the environment around the person. The brain therefore shuts down, the person falls down in an effort to lie down flat. Blood flow is thus restored to the brain and the person recovers. Getting the person to sit up is actually counteracting or delaying the recovery process. In fact, if this 'assistance' or 'help' is prolonged and blood flow is not adequately and promptly restored to the brain, the person may suffer brain damage or even die. In some instances, cold water is poured over the person. This is not wrong when the cause is related to heat stroke.

So, what do you do to help the person? First, if the person did not get to properly lie down flat, help him to get to the position of lying down flat, or on a flat surface. Secondly, make sure he does not get to choke himself by assisting him to lie on the side to ensure he is breathing. If possible, grab the two legs of the person and raise them above the level of his head. This will hasten the return of blood to the head and brain and assisting in quick recovery. The writer has had the experience of fainting in the operating theatre twice and all

that was needed was to be helped to lie down flat, both legs raised above the level of the head and some fanning done.

Pouring cold water on the person helps by rapidly cooling the skin where blood veins abound. Vaso-constriction takes place and thus pushing blood from the exterior (periphery of the body) to the interior, and more blood therefore gets to the brain.

These are 'First Aid' measures that lead to prompt restoration of adequate blood supply to the brain, and quick recovery. This treats most cases of fainting. Where the person is still unconscious or not responding; mobilize for assistance to get the person to a nearby clinic or hospital. Here, they will evaluate the person, determine the cause of collapse and institute appropriate treatment.

So whenever any person collapses to the floor around you, don't sit him up. This will do more harm than good. Position him properly in the flat position if there is any impediment to the side to allow for unrestrained breathing. If you can raise the legs just above the head, that will be fine.

For pregnant women, get them to lie on the left side and not on their back, and ensure she is breathing.

The right resuscitative measures will save a life. The wrong procedure will send a person to the grave. Be determined to do the right thing from now on. Whenever you see the wrong thing being done, correct them promptly to save a life.

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News

Tinubu suspends Humanitarian Minister

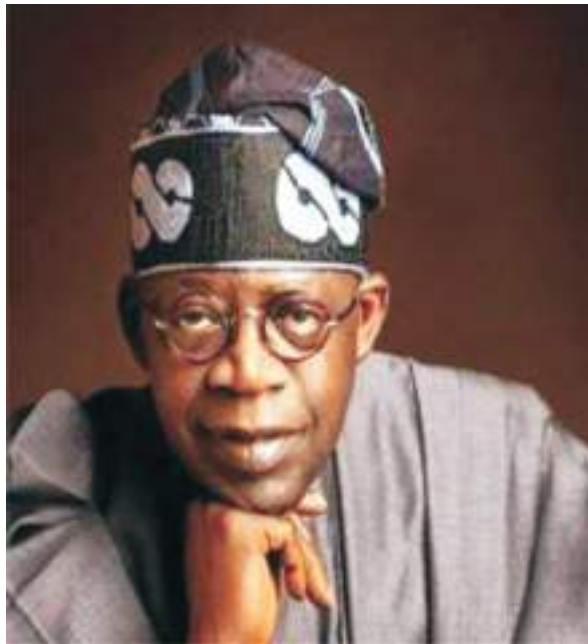
From DORCAS PANKYES, Abuja

In line with his avowed commitment to uphold the highest standards of integrity, transparency, and accountability in the management of the commonwealth of Nigerians, President Bola Tinubu suspends the Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Alleviation, Dr. Betta Edu, from office with immediate effect.

This was contained in a press statement issued to newsmen in Abuja by Chief Ajuri Ngelale, Special Adviser to the President Media & Publicity.

The president further directed the Executive Chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) to conduct a thorough investigation into all aspects of the financial transactions involving the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Alleviation, as well as one or more agencies thereunder.

The suspended minister is hereby directed to hand over to the Permanent Secretary of the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Alleviation. She is further directed by the president to fully cooperate



Tinubu

with the investigating authorities as they conduct their investigation.

Furthermore, the president has tasked a panel that is headed by the Coordinating Minister of the Economy and Minister of Finance to, among other functions, conduct a comprehensive diagnostic on the financial architecture and framework of the Social Investment Programmes with

a view to conclusively reforming the relevant institutions and programmes in a determined bid to eliminate all institutional frailties for the exclusive benefit of disadvantaged households and win back lost public confidence in the initiative.

These directives of the President take immediate effect.

From JIDAUNA YANUNG Abuja.

The Nigeria Data Protection Commission has issued a code of conduct to firms aimed at enforcing data protection across the country.

The code of conduct is said to be a guide for the enforcement that would begin this year. The National Commissioner, Dr Vincent Olatunji, who addressed the Data Protection companies recently in Abuja, said the issuance of the code of conduct was to ensure professionalism among the enforcement team.

Olatunji urged DPCOs to see their role in the implementation of the Nigeria Data Protection Act (NDPA) 2023 as a public trust which must be guarded with utmost sense of responsibility.

According to him, it is a unique public private

NDPC issues code of conduct to firms



OLATUJI

partnership model which is designed to promote trust and confidence in Nigeria's digital economy like other economies around the world.

Ngo Lomak celebrated at 80

By FWENJI GO'AR

Friends, well wishers and family, gathered in Jos during the Yuletide to celebrate the life and times of Ngo Mary Choji Lomak who turned 80 some

months ago.

A grand reception was held in her honour at the Tamarald Event Center, Jos, which drew a huge crowd, made up of people from diverse walks of life. It was a gathering of the

cream of the society.

His Majesty, Da Jacob Gyang Buba (CON), Gbong Gwom Jos, was the royal father of the day. He was represented by Da Edward Gyang, the Gwom Rwei of Barkin Ladi.

Guests were treated to sumptuous meals, dance and pageantry.

There were goodwill messages from some of the guests.

The Leading Pastor of her local congregation in COCIN Laranto, Rev Ezekiel Nyam gave the exhortation, and offered special prayers for the celebrant.

Ngo Mary Choji Lomak was born on the 10th July 1943 to the family of late Da Chuwang Bot Fang Wang-Song, and Ngo Galyop Chungwong Gashas (aka Gu'nu) of Foron and Ropp Districts respectively of Barkin Ladi LGA Plateau State.

Her children described her as a God fearing, committed, loving, caring and a wonderful person.

Joel, one of her sons, said that she is decent, fashionable and sociable in her personality.

Her elder son, Joseph described her as very accommodating, and says her home is indeed a rallying point and always full of excitement because of the numerous people in the house. "All her resources always go back into the kitchen just to ensure everyone is well fed. Ngo treats everyone as her own, therefore, it is difficult to notice any discrimination among the children or even adults in the house" he said.

Kaduna-Abuja highway under attack again

From JOHN FWAH, Kaduna

BANDITS, last Sunday, attacked travelers on the Abuja-Kaduna highway and abducted over 30 people, witnesses and community leaders in the affected areas said.

The abduction took place at Dogon-Fili near Katari, along the Kaduna- Abuja highway in Kachia Local Government Area of Kaduna State.

This is the first time in more than ten months when the security along the Abuja-Kaduna road artery was breached.

Findings revealed that the last reported incident

on the road was on March 1, 2023 when 23 people were abducted.

A former lawmaker, Senator Shehu Sani confirmed the attack on his X page, where he disclosed that two of his friends narrowly escaped being kidnapped by the bandits.

He also said that the bandits blocked the road and operated for some time even though there were more security operatives on the road than there used to be in the past.

Sani said two of his friends from both opposition and ruling

parties who were returning to Abuja from Kaduna narrowly escaped during the bandits' attack.

Sani said: "Just when we felt safer, last night (Sunday) kidnappers returned to the Kaduna-Abuja Road. They blocked the road and abducted scores of persons around 9pm near Katari village. Two of my honourable friends from both the ruling and opposition parties, had to run through the bush like Usain Bolt. But despite this incident, there is a stronger security presence along the route than it used to be in the past."

A resident of Katari, Suleiman Dan Baba, said the incident happened around 9:33pm when the bandits, wielding AK-47 rifles, emerged from the bush and blocked the two lanes, adding that they operated for close to 45 minutes.

He also narrated that the bandits opened fire and deflated the tyres of some vehicles, which he said, forced drivers, including commercial vehicles to stop.

"The bandits forced travelers to alight from their vehicles at gunpoint, before moving them into

the bush," the source said.

Another resident of Jere, Samaila Shehu, said the incident happened at a distance of about one kilometre away from Jere, and over 30 travelers were abducted at the scene.

It was learnt that the bandits, who divided themselves into two groups, also invaded Bishini and Kokore communities located along Abuja-Kaduna highway and also whisked away an unspecified number of villagers.

Shuaibu Adamu Jere, a community leader, also confirmed the incidents, stating that his relative escaped the attack near Dogon Fili, close to Katari town on Sunday. He said that a driver was injured, and two vehicles, a Sharon and another small car, were found empty by the roadside after the incident.

"Yes, the incident happened around 9:30 pm, and the operation lasted about 45 minutes around Dogon Fili near Katari on Sunday. The driver of one of the vehicles was shot and left at the scene. One of my relatives escaped the attack," he said.

He could not however specify the number of

people abducted as the attack took place at night, but said the injured driver was rushed to an undisclosed hospital for treatment.

Another resident of Katari, a lawyer, who prefers not to be named, also confirmed that the highway was blocked on Sunday night as he was preparing to return to Kaduna.

According to him, the soldiers stationed around 500 meters from Katari repelled the bandits.

"I was told the bandits blocked the road that night before the soldiers at Katari repelled them. But I don't know if people were abducted," he said.

When contacted, the Kaduna State Overseeing Commissioner for Internal Security and Home Affairs, Samuel Aruwan said he could not confirm the development, but promised to get back to our reporter after a meeting he was attending. He had not said anything at press time last night.

The state Police Command's Public Relations Officer, ASP Mansir Hassan, when contacted, said he will investigate and find out what happened.



Sani

Feature

Educational, cultural values of Kalorgu to the Tangale youth

Kalorgu festival Amb Kangubo is one event to write about for its educational, cultural and historical inspiration especially on children and youth of the various clans (kormana) of the Tangale East (Tanglem mo ra) of Tangale speaking people of Kaltungo chiefdom. Kalorgu is among the nine major clans of the Tangale region. Others are Aya, Baganje, Kaleh, Kalirang, Popandi, Poshereng, and Okra. Kalorgu has about 18 clans including the aya, kalaku, kalbandi, kalgungi, kalaugen, kanguli, kwei, kalgomo, okra, okyange, piyangai, tullungaka.

AMB Kangubo of Kalorgu appears as festival in an era where cultural festivals multiply especially among the Tangale people of Kaltungo.

The writers were among thousand and hundreds of people that participated in the journey to the pokaji hill on foot in company of many people who are in their cultural regalia amid musicals from drums and flutes marching across. Similarly we were taken through guided tour of all the nine clans with each having their heads and group of elders.

The festival took place at the foot of the hill (pokaji) and was marked as a colorful event featured by cultural meetings by each clan, cultural dances and other forms of interactions. The epic of the event was when the whole clans came together as one and converge for the grand event especially the cultural dance (kol-tangra).

The festival is a hallmark for unity, respect for culture, educational gathering and entertainments, promoting cultural exchange, understanding and a platform for the communities to celebrate their shared heritage while showcasing their talents and creativity. The special features of the event are display of various cuisines, exhibition of cultural objects. Both children and youth were engaged to encourage them to have a feel of history and respect for their heritage. To add to the effect, the event was thrilled with music before commencements and an array of fun games such as the local ludo was made available among others to ensure the people and especially the young ones are engaged while having taste of the traditional cuisines.

The cultural food exhibition offered an interaction platform for the people especially for the young people to see, touch, feel and taste the authentic Tangale varieties of cuisines including visitors. It showcased the different foods such as *edmamu*, *shinga*, *kwagshak* and lots more,



Some cultural food on exhibition and some artifacts

the techniques involved in making each dish, the ingredients needed and the expertise needed to finish each dish. The event presented a show of food lovers, food vendors and the different delicious meals from the various clans coming together having fun in each other's company.

The weather played an important role in attracting people from all walks of life as it was during the end of year festivities and beginning of a new year where most people travelled down to their home town and holiday is everywhere.

The Kalorgu community and especially the KADA association (Kalorgu Development Association) were especially interested in promoting their cultural heritage while creating a meeting point and a site for showcasing cultural diversity.

The festival offered several benefits as educational tool by providing networking and educational opportunities, allowing the youth to develop

skills, ideas, and networks that can lead to individual and community change. It became the site for inquiry and learning that allowed the exploration of the identity negotiation of Kalorgu people by highlighting the aesthetic elements often

missed by traditional social science method. It has impacted on the potentials of most of the participants especially in the cooking and dancing activities by enhancing their creative practice, connecting them with other creative producers.

names for the twelve calendar months as SUM TERE thus: January (Kuub Kudop), February (Piton), March (Wilip), April (Kalkumo), May (Silili), June (Tiktau), July (Wutou), August (Njuble), September (Amdanla), October (Bore), November (Ter



The cultural dance (kol-tangra)



The writers having taste of one of the cuisines

Like other Tanale people, Kalorgu people are organized into lineages or "Tubmana." Each lineage traces its origin to the same ancestor. The lineages are organized into two major sections "Potara" and "Pidmoki." Kalorgu has very rich history of people who are hard-working. In the pre-colonial period the people were brave and skillful hunters and the women are industrious supporting their husbands. Modern education has transformed Kalrgu society into modern entity. Her sons and daughters are found in different sectors of the national and global economy and society today as lawyers, engineers, academicians, politicians, surveyors, architects, technocrats, military and Paramilitary and even IT professionals.

Kalorgu people specifically, have

As a result of its place in history, Kalorgu has emerged as the last hope for the revival and sustainability of Tangale culture today. The practice of Am Kangubo is therefore very significant not only for promoting the history and culture of the people. It is an opportunity to teach and remind the children and youths of their history and culture especially the language, cuisines, songs and dance, and above all values of respect for elders.

Hassan Kasim, Shuaibu Haruna National Museum Gombe and Aliyu Musa Yerima National Museum Yola

Sports

'Osimhen has qualities to 'thrive' in Premier League'

FORMER Arsenal and Manchester City striker Emmanuel Adebayor believes African Footballer of the Year Victor Osimhen possesses all the attributes required to "thrive" in the Premier League.

BBC SPORT said that, Nigeria front man Osimhen, who won the prestigious continental award in December, has become one of the hottest properties on the transfer market.

This is ostensibly on the strength of his stellar 2022-23 season, when his 26 goals saw him finish as top scorer in Italy's Serie A and helped end a 33-year league title drought for Napoli.

Last month the 25-year-old extended his contract with the club until 2026, but that is unlikely to ward off suitors such as Arsenal and Chelsea who retain significant interest in his services.

"He has the right attitude, mentality and determination to excel there (in England)," former Togo captain Adebayor told BBC Sport Africa.

"I'm praying for him to move to the Premier League and show what he's capable of."

The Premier League was dominated by African strikers in the mid to late 2000s, with the likes of Adebayor, Didier Drogba and Yakubu headlining for some of the biggest clubs in the division.

The continent's representation up front has thinned out significantly since then, and although both Mohamed Salah and former Liverpool team-mate Sadio Mane sit atop the list of Africa's highest scorers in the Premier League, neither is an out-and-out centre-forward in the traditional sense.

Osimhen idolised Ivory Coast striker Drogba growing up and has also made no secret of his desire to play in the Premier League in the future.

While Osimhen's contract extension - along with his involvement at the 2023 Africa Cup of Nations in Ivory Coast - is expected to keep interested parties at bay this month, the end of this season will no doubt see a number of clubs come in for the Napoli marksman.

Adebayor thinks the time is right for the Nigerian, who he affectionately referred to as his "younger brother", to move to England and take up the mantle of the great African strikers from years gone by.

"The Premier League is the toughest and best (league) in the world," Adebayor said.

"Osimhen has shown and done it already in Italy, I think it is the right time for him to move to England and replace his idol Drogba and do beautiful things.

"He has all it takes to make a name and write a great chapter in England like Drogba."

When Osimhen received his African Footballer of the Year award in Morocco, Adebayor was among the people he name-checked in his acceptance speech.

Adebayor, who himself won



Osimhen

the Confederation Of African Football (Caf) accolade in 2008, has shed some light on his mentor relationship with Osimhen and said he was touched by his words.

"I started talking to him one or two years (ago)," the 39-year-old.

"Every time I talk to him, it's about encouragement, and I tell him what to do and what not to do. I didn't even know that he was listening.

"To come on a bigger stage like the Caf awards, the Ballon d'Or of Africa, and mention my name, and thank me for the encouragement... to be honest with you, I got emotional.

"And I'm a guy that doesn't get emotional at all. But there I didn't have a choice.

"It was even more beautiful than when I won it myself. To be honest with you, this is how big it was.

"This will stay with me for life. If he continues in this stride he will win more Caf awards in the future."

Adebayor scored 97 goals in 241 appearances over the

course of a decade in the Premier League, which began with the Gunners in 2006 and also included stints at Tottenham Hotspur and Crystal Palace.

Having retired in March last year, he said his era in the English top flight was a "beautiful" time for African players - and some English footballers too.

"I remember very well when I was there we had Didier Drogba in Chelsea, myself in Tottenham or Arsenal, Yakubu was also there before, we then had Samuel Eto'o join us at some point with Chelsea and Everton," he said.

"But you know football has its own time - people come and go.

"Obviously today you will not find Steven Gerrard or Frank Lampard anymore, because those were the golden generation for England.

"Today the English national team doesn't have a striker like Wayne Rooney who could do everything - kick and insult people and score goals at the same time."

confirm his appointment.

"It's a personal dream come true," said the 61-year-old.

Brazil parted company with interim coach Fernando Diniz on Friday.

The CBF was keen to appoint a coach on a permanent basis with Brazil in South America's sixth and final automatic

qualifying place for the 2026 World Cup.

Brazil followed a draw against Venezuela on October 13 by losing their next three qualifiers against Argentina, Colombia and Uruguay.

Dorival's first matches in charge of Brazil will be prestigious friendlies in March against England and Spain in Europe.

He led Flamengo to the Copa Libertadores title and the Brazilian Cup in 2022 before joining Sao Paulo, whom he guided to their first Brazilian Cup last year.

The much-travelled coach has also taken charge of Atletico Mineiro, Athletico Paranaense, Internacional, Vasco da Gama, Fluminense and Palmeiras.

Dorival, a defensive midfielder in his playing days, added that the move "was only possible because I received recognition for the work carried out in Sao Paulo".

Diniz - who had a one-year contract combining the role with his post as coach of Copa

Libertadores champions Fluminense - oversaw three defeats, a draw and two wins in his qualifiers in charge.

Brazil has been without a permanent head coach since the 2022 World Cup, when Tite resigned following their quarter-final defeat by Croatia. Under-20s coach Ramon Menezes took charge before Diniz was appointed.

CBF president Ednaldo Rodrigues claimed last July that Carlo Ancelotti would take over from Diniz this summer, but the 64-year-old Italian signed a new deal with Real Madrid late last month to keep him at the club until June 2026.

Sao Paulo president Julio Casares said their coach being chosen to lead the Brazil national team showed the club is being run impressively.

"The invitation to Dorival is further proof that we are on the right track," he said. "All that remains is to wish him good luck in his new challenge."

still keen to urge caution as he stressed after the win over Huddersfield that De Bruyne would need many more training sessions to be able to play a full 90 minutes again.

"I said before that he needs to accumulate training sessions more than games," Guardiola added.

"At Newcastle we have another chance and then two weeks to have some good training in Abu Dhabi."

De Bruyne agrees he will need to ease himself back into action, adding that he tried to turn his long absence from a negative to a positive after a busy few seasons for club and country.

"To be honest I enjoyed it in a way," he said. "At the beginning it was a big blow but I knew I was going to be out for four or five months, so after the first reaction I thought to myself I needed to work hard when I'm working, but then I could enjoy the things that I've not been able to do with my family and friends.

"Maybe it was good to refresh a little bit. It's not like I needed a break but I took it, to turn a disadvantage into an advantage.

"I felt good so I'm pleased about that but I'm still nowhere near where I need to be.

"There will be moments I want to play every game but I know in the back of my mind I need to take care of myself."

Former Manchester City midfielder Michael Brown also believes it will take time for De Bruyne to get back to his best.

"When you are out for such a long time, you do more gym work so Kevin de Bruyne does look a bit bulkier," he said.

"When the game was won it was a good time to get him on, he could just feel his way into it. He got on the ball under pressure at times and made some good passes too.

"You have to tread with caution here, it is going to take a number of weeks for him to get back going."

Manchester City won five trophies in 2023 and in 2024 they could make more history by becoming the first side to win the Premier League four seasons in a row.

With De Bruyne making his return, their chances of doing just that have certainly improved.

Guardiola says 'the people love him'



Kevin de Bruyne made his first appearance since 11 August when he came on in the 57th minute against Huddersfield

welcome return from injury - unmarked inside the box and cutting the ball back for him to score.

"We're all talking about De Bruyne being back and this is why," said former Everton midfielder Leon Osman, who was commentating on the game for BBC Sport.

"He has the ability to pick out the one spare team-mate in the area. He can always see the whole picture."

Of course, Manchester City have a squad packed with talent and De Bruyne's advancing years means he is perhaps not quite so integral to their chances of success as he once was, but he can still be a significant influence.

In the Premier League, Guardiola's side are third, five points behind leaders Liverpool but with a game in hand, and Reds boss Jurgen Klopp said recently that the whole country was "starting to shake" at the prospect of De Bruyne's impending return.

The comment was said in jest, although there will have been an element of seriousness about it because any team would become stronger with a player like De Bruyne back to full fitness.

Guardiola, however, was

Dorival leaves Sao Paulo to lead national team

DORIVAL Jr has left his role as coach of Brazilian side Sao Paulo and is set to take charge of the country's national team.

BBC SPORT said that, his departure from Sao Paulo was announced by the club on X, formerly known as Twitter, but the Brazilian Football Confederation (CBF) is yet to



Dorival Jr only joined Sao Paulo in April 2023

Sports

Is Osaka ready to conquer again?

At a family dinner to celebrate her 22nd birthday, Naomi Osaka turned to her mother to ask whether she thought her daughter would have achieved more by this point in her life. RUSSELL FULLER writes.

"OR do you think this is acceptable?" the birthday girl followed up.

"More than acceptable," was the reply.

When that exchange was captured by a **Netflix mini-series**, Osaka was already a two-time Grand Slam champion and world number one.

What we did not know then was that Osaka had been suffering "long bouts of depression" since winning her first Grand Slam title at the US Open in 2018.

There have been two more Grand Slam titles to enjoy since that birthday celebration, but also some painful months to endure.

Osaka was questioning her direction in the sport in the autumn of 2022 when she fell pregnant.

Shai was born in July and, in an interview to mark her return to the tour after a 15-month absence, Osaka told BBC Sport the arrival of her daughter has "completed" her as a person.

"I almost kind of needed her in my life," she explained in Brisbane.

"I'm the type of person that can't really think about myself. I make rash decisions and she's helped me mature so much already. I'm a lot more comfortable with who I am and I'm just very thankful for every day.

"To know there's a tiny human who loves me no matter what, and my days just light up because of her, that kind of completes me as a person as well."

Shai's birth was not straightforward, as the umbilical cord became wrapped around her daughter's neck during the delivery.

While pregnant, Osaka suffered with morning sickness - her first real experience of "throwing up". The nausea was only relieved by eating plain crackers, but that came at the cost of weight gain which was already preying on her mind.

And despite Osaka's history of depression - which she detailed for the first time after **pulling out of the 2021 French Open** - she was caught off-guard by the stealthy onset of post-natal depression.

"I did get affected by it. I don't think I knew at the time - I just thought it was a big transition," she said.

"But I was lucky. My mum was there, so she helped me out a lot, but it's a very dramatic change.

"There was a period of time when everything felt very hectic.

"I'm fine now and actually I'm much better than I was before - I feel really calm and relaxed."

Those around Osaka appreciate



Osaka's most recent Grand Slam title was the 2021 Australian Open, where she beat American Jennifer Brady in the final

the importance of keeping things that way.

Belgian coach Wim Fissette worked with Osaka when she won the 2020 US Open and the Australian Open the following January. They parted in July 2022, only to reunite in October this year.

"It's always a tough topic, but I need to be careful in the past months where she has been training non-stop," Fissette said shortly after Osaka won her first-round match against Tamara Korpatsch at the Brisbane International.

"Starting tournaments, it's going to be important for us to give her, at the right moments, time off - to switch really off.

"On the other hand, the communication from her to the team has become better - she's much more open than before. She's better now at communicating how she feels."

Becoming a mother during an on-court career is refreshingly normal on the WTA Tour these days.

Angelique Kerber returned from maternity leave at this week's United Cup and Petra Kvitova used the first few minutes of 2024 to announce she and her husband Jiri are expecting a baby in the summer.

"Becoming a mum made me realise how strong I am, and how strong all mums are," Osaka said.

"I also want mums to feel like they are capable of anything, because I think they are."

But Osaka, one of sport's most powerful voices on social issues, is also anxious to point out that new mothers should not for a moment compare themselves to her, only six months after childbirth.

Not many mothers have either the physical training she has endured or the logistical help that she enjoys.

"It was very difficult - honestly almost impossible if I didn't have the people around me," Osaka said with a laugh.

"I don't think new mums should look at me and think that this is realistic.

"I have had to plan my day by the second, so after I train I just sprint to my car and go and see Shai.

"Every person's body is different. For example, 30 minutes after I gave birth they wanted me to be wheeled around, but I told them I felt completely fine to walk. It was a bit weird because I had to demonstrate that I could walk.

"I learned a lot about the human

body but the core was fascinating because I couldn't even sit up out of the bed - I had to roll out of my bed."

The man responsible for that physical strengthening is Florian Zitzelsberger. The German has previously worked with Kvitova and Kevin Anderson, and briefly with Osaka in 2022.

As well as a strength and conditioning coach, Zitzelsberger is also an osteopath with a keen interest in nutrition.

"When you have an ACL (anterior cruciate ligament) rupture or an ankle strain, you have healing weeks; you have a clear protocol," he explained.

"With giving birth it's totally different. The core has to be destroyed because the core, the pelvis, is just made for creating a baby.

"The first question I wanted to know was how she feels as a mother. I just saw the sparkling in her eyes that she's just super happy.

"When we came to the question of ambitions, and how much motivation she has, she just said she wants to use every minute she has now to get back there and make her daughter proud.

"Just these few sentences showed me that she's really ready to do the hard work again and conquer the tour again."

Osaka says she did not watch the Australian Open or the French Open in 2023 as it would have made her realise what she was missing.

She confirmed her intention to return to the professional game during September's US Open and pledged to design a busier schedule than has been typical for her in the past. When the really hard work began the next month, Fissette duly detected a significant change in her.

"The last time I saw her was around July 2022, when we stopped working together, and I honestly really didn't know where her career was going to," he said.

"When I spoke to her again this year in September, she already sounded like a new person. And a person with a lot of strong ambitions.

"I've never seen her this way before

where she was so hungry to learn. She was such a happy person on the court and the last weeks she has worked so hard and with so much discipline.

"I would say she was definitely the ideal player."

Fissette says Osaka has always been good at scheduling, so a typical training day runs from 8am until 3pm, with the late afternoons reserved for time with her daughter.

The familiar sight of her slapping her left thigh before a crucial point was in evidence once again as she beat Korpatsch in her first match back, but the long-term goal is to create an even better version of Osaka - a better athlete and more powerful player with greater variety.

She has stated her desire to compete more strongly on clay and grass, and greater exposure to these surfaces can only help in that development.

Osaka says winning future Grand Slam titles and representing Japan in the Olympics would be wonderful, but that it is more important to "cherish" every tournament she plays.

She wants to be able to travel the world with her daughter and make her appreciate there should be no barriers to her own ambitions.

How quickly could success come for Osaka? She has travelled to Australia without Shai, and she would surely not be here if she did not believe she can cut it with the best players in the world.

"That would be a disservice to myself and also the people who want to see me play," was her reply.

"I can't really say whether I'm going to do amazing or not, but I feel pretty good with where I'm at right now and I'm pretty competitive."

Asked about Osaka's chances at the Australian Open, Fissette said: "I will always see her as a possible winner, but I am also realistic.

"She is always a candidate. I cannot predict results, but I will promise you that she will be a better

"I would say she was definitely the ideal player. Fissette says Osaka has always been good at scheduling, so a typical training day runs from 8am until 3pm, with the late afternoons reserved for time with her daughter. The familiar sight of her slapping her left thigh before a crucial point was in evidence once again as she beat Korpatsch in her first match back, but the long-term goal is to create an even better version of Osaka - a better athlete and more powerful player with greater variety. She has stated her desire to compete more strongly on clay and grass, and greater exposure to these surfaces can only help in that development."



"Traditionally, the visually challenged are described as visually impaired. It is said that "while 20% of the visually challenged are born blind, 60% became visually challenged due to diseases like intra-corneal tumor, glaucoma, retinal detachment and hydrocephalus. According to Gabriel J.B et al "the rest become visually impaired as a result of malnutrition or wrong medical treatment, measles, accident and the like". The school of the blind in Billiri was built by SIM to cater for the needs of the blind people in the Kaltingo mission area. Its main purpose was to teach the blind how to read and write and to be able to communicate the gospel to others".

BULLAMA SAMUEL BULUS, PhD

Quest



writer

BULLAMA SAMUEL BULUS, PhD

School apostolate as mission strategy in Gombe division

Continued from last edition

THE literacy class was started by Edith Hall the first wife of John Hall, who died on 4th March, 1925. This was the beginning of western education for the people of Tangale- Waja District. It was this place that served as a nursery for all the educational programme of the SIM in Gombe. These locally trained converts later became missionaries, teachers, and community health workers in their various communities. As a result of this literacy class, some of the children were able to read and write and later further their education, with many of them serving as SIM teachers outside their provinces.

The Billiri Teachers Training School 1938

This was the first institution in Tangale-Waja. Maiture gave the reason for the establishment of the school that there was a need to have a Teachers Training College at Billiri, "For some time there had been felt the need for more effective trained natives to carry on the work of teaching" (13). To address this need, the school was opened in May with twenty (20) students. These students "were selected from various places where SIM had a station or had established a church" (Rice 20). According to him, these men speaking different tongues represented six tribes {sic}and about one hundred thousand people. The breakdown is as follows:

- Tangale - Ten (10) Students
- Kaltingo - Four (4) Students
- Waja - Two (2) Students
- Tula - One (1) Student
- Zambuk - Two (2) Students
- Dadiya - One (1) Student

She concluded that "these students were selected based on their Christian characters rather than for their outstanding ability" (22). All these places are located in what is today known as Tangale -Waja area except Zambuk. The curriculum was design to address different learning needs. "The curriculum covered Arithmetic, Writing, Composition, History, Geography, Nature Study, Religious Knowledge, Hygiene etc. While these subjects were treated as practical: - blacksmithing, carpentry, weaving and farming". The duration of the training of the course was four years which was meant to cover the work of standard four. During the last year of the course, the students were taught the theory and practice of teaching. This equipped them for teaching and preaching after they



Literacy Class at Kalorgu Kaltungo in 1923 Set A. This Picture was sent to the Researcher by Tim Geysbeek SIM Archive USA

might have completed their course.

"Another sets of twenty-three (23) children were also selected which were referred to as practicing school where these future teachers had their practicing teaching" (Crawford 16). This school brought out the hidden potentials in the students, these potentials were discovered and developed. Many of the people trained in this school became voluntary teachers to the non-literate just teaching them how to read and write without bringing in religious issues until later when they had established good rapport with them. The school was financed by SIM. The letter written on the 7th March, 1949 by deputy director education of the Northern provinces revealed that, "Teachers Training Center Billiri was receiving the sum of 100 pounds sterling from Colonial office of the Northern province as a support to build up the school. The report shows that the students were taking lessons in "English and Hausa which include Arithmetic, Composition, Essay, School Method, World Geography, Physical and Health Education, Bible, and Reading". Similarly, the school also enjoyed a quarterly financial grant from the SIM to facilitate the activities in the school and for the structural building of the school. Apart from the training obtained by the teachers in the school, a regular teachers re-training was being done to those that have graduated from the school and are working with SIM in other schools to update them on more

teaching techniques.

Establishment of the First Primary School at Ture by SIM in Kaltungo in 1943

In continuation with the SIM desire to reach out to more people with the gospel through western education, Mallam Danhausa on his graduation from Teachers Training Center Billiri was deployed by SIM missionaries to Ture to open the first primary school in the area. He successfully established the school in 1943.

As earlier mentioned, the Rest House built for the missionaries was converted into a school. When Mallam Haruna Kurya graduated from the Teachers Training Center in Billiri, he was posted to Ture in Kaltungo where he worked with Mallam Danhausa. According to R.B. Oliver in the Sudan Witness field news issued by Sudan Interior Mission, the first set of student at the first primary school at Ture in Kaltungo are: "Silas Mamman, Epeso Lang, Musa Dogo Yola, Alfayo Kallu, Epeso Ngale, Firiskila Yola, Bala Pawu, Daniel Yerima, Solomo Lapura".

The essence of this primary school was to catch them young. To achieve this, more teachers were deployed to the primary school at Ture after graduation at Teachers Training School Billiri.

School of the Blind Billiri

Traditionally, the visually challenged are described as visually impaired. It is said that "while 20% of the visually challenged are born blind, 60% became visually challenged due to diseases like intra-corneal

tumor, glaucoma, retinal detachment and hydrocephalus. According to Gabriel J.B et al "the rest become visually impaired as a result of malnutrition or wrong medical treatment, measles, accident and the like". The school of the blind in Billiri was built by SIM to cater for the needs of the blind people in the Kaltingo mission area. Its main purpose was to teach the blind how to read and write and to be able to communicate the gospel to others.

Challenges Encountered by SIM Missionaries in Tangale Waja Health and Climatic Challenges

One of the major challenge encountered by SIM was the ill health of the SIM missionaries. It was a well-known fact that African climate was not conducive to the SIM missionaries. Besides this, malaria had made Africa a white man's grave before the introduction of quinine in the 19th century which drastically reduced the white men mortality. As a result of these challenges, the wife of John Hall and his daughter who happens to be the pioneer missionary of Kaltingo had health challenges and died at Kaltingo and were buried there with their graves still existing within the premises of Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA) Kalorgu Kaltungo.

Language Barrier and Illiteracy

All the SIM missionaries from the initial stage of their ministry and services could not speak and communicate with the natives'

language. To begin their work, they had to rely on an interpreter. Since they did not know how to speak the native languages, they were left at the mercy of the interpreters until they were able to learn the native languages. Buttressing this, B.H. Kato pointed out that "language barrier and illiteracy were one of the challenges" that affected the SIM missionary work. According to him, "the missionaries grappled with the problem of language or mode of communication". Though the missionaries employed the services of the interpreters, before they could learn the native language, Kato went further to say that "interpreters were inadequate to meet the need of ever expanding Christian mission. Moreover, "speaking through an interpreter is a defective means of communicating one's thought to one audiences". Moreover, it took the SIM missionaries much time to be able to communicate with the native people in their local language. That affected the work of SIM

IMPACTS OF SIM EDUCATION STRATEGY IN TANGALE-WAJA DISTRICT

Provision of Social Infrastructure

The first impact of the SIM activities in Tangale- Waja is the provision of social infrastructures. Buttressing this, Bala Audu pointed out that "the various schools established in Billiri, Kaltungo and other places in Gombe were very impactful and the buildings of these schools were used by the natives even after SIM left".

Provision of Job Opportunities

SIM missionaries through education as a mission strategy provided employment in Tangale-Waja District. They employed interpreters, teachers, preachers, stewards, cooks, carpenters among others.

Buttressing this, Maiture opined that "virtually all the teachers that graduated from Billiri teachers' schools became teachers in SIM schools or missionaries in mission field in Northern Nigeria".

He went further to say that, the first set of teachers that graduated from teachers training center Billiri went straight to open schools and minister through teaching. This groups of teachers were able to nurture school from scratch and Tangale Waja became a centre of

To be continued