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**P**RESIDENT Bola Tinubu has declared that his administration will not relent in fighting corruption and other social vices because it is a sacred duty to ensure that the country is set right for the prosperity of all Nigerians.

A statement by Ajuri Ngelale, his Special Adviser on Media and Publicity, said President Tinubu made the declaration on Monday, in Abuja, when he received a delegation of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), led by its President, Archbishop Daniel Okoh. While emphasising the

## We will fix Nigeria, fight corruption

role of faith leaders in fostering unity and peace in the country, President Tinubu called on Christian leaders to support the administration's ongoing fight against corruption by encouraging Nigerians to have a change of mindset on money-related matters. We have no other country

but Nigeria. If you do not preach the sermon of understanding, tolerance, perseverance, and hope for Nigerians, you are doing damage to the country, and nobody will help us repair it.

"Let us dialogue because public condemnation of a nation is not what makes

any citizen a good one. We must admonish Nigerians to have a change of mindset and not to make money our god or master. I believe we will get to the Promised Land, and Nigeria will flourish.

"We are here to listen, and if you observe any inadequacies in my

### Tinubu tells CAN

government, let us know. I am here today because of your prayers and the will of God Almighty. What I have challenged myself to do each day is to be fair to all Nigerians. I have had a number of criticisms, including the rationale behind the size of my cabinet. If you want efficient, mobile, and

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President Bola Tinubu received a delegation of Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) led by its President, Archbishop Daniel Okoh

### Mutfwang declares 24 hour curfew in Mangu

By PETER TITLE

**T**HE Executive Governor of Plateau State, Barrister Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang has declared a 24 hour curfew on Mangu Local Government Area of the state with immediate effect. This followed the deteriorating security situation in the area.

Governor Mutfwang took the decision after consultations with the relevant security agencies. He stated that only persons on essential duties are allowed to move within the local government area until further notice.

He urged all citizens, especially residents of

Mangu Local Government Area, to comply with the directive and assist the security personnel by providing reliable information to restore peace and order in the area.

He lamented that some people are still determined to create an atmosphere of insecurity in the state,

despite the government's efforts to end the activities of terrorist elements.

Governor Mutfwang in a statement, expressed his sympathy to the families of the victims and the injured, and assured them that the government would not relent in ensuring lasting peace in the state.

He equally promised that the curfew would be reviewed as soon as the security situation improves.

He expressed his sympathy to the families of the victims and the injured, and assured them that the government will relent in ensuring lasting peace in the state.



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resourceful people, we have to give people a load they can carry. If you combine too many ministries because you want to save money, you will have a future of non-performance and no results.

"Nigeria needs to turn the corner to grow, and we must give people challenges they can manage, and that is what we are doing," the President firmly stated.

In his remarks, Archbishop Okoh urged President Tinubu not to relent in his efforts to provide good governance by ensuring security, inclusivity, and peaceful co-existence in the country.

"You have extended a hand of fellowship to us, and we embrace you and your family with the love of

## We will fix Nigeria, fight corruption

Christ and promise to partner with you in nation-building for the task is quite daunting. You will not stumble, and you will not fall. We believe that you have the sagacity to give leadership in battling our challenges and in turning around the fortunes of our nation, Nigeria, within a short time. You have

shown that you are a listening leader, and we appreciate this.

"CAN has maintained an active presence at all levels from the national to the grassroots, and we have remained non-partisan. You will always find our association as a ready and willing partner in nation-building," Okoh said.



President Bola Tinubu with Christian Association of Nigeria [Photo: Presidency]

## Plateau Assembly resumes amidst fracas

By PAULINE DALLONG

A little fracas occurred Tuesday, as the Plateau State House of Assembly was set to resume for plenary after about two months of recess.

Recall that following the resignation of the former speaker Rt. Hon. Moses Thomas Sule, and the emergence of Rt. Hon. Gabriel Kudengbena Dewan as speaker, the House proceeded on a recess from 22nd November, 2023 to reconvene on January 23rd, 2024.

The fracas which took place at the Old Government House, Rayfield started when the sixteen (16) sacked PDP members stormed the premises and attempted to gain entrance to attend plenary but were stopped by security personnel.

This happened

immediately after the eight (8) elected APC members, led by the speaker Rt. Hon. Dewan of the YPP had already gained entrance and commenced an executive session, in preparatory for the day's activities.

The speaker who spoke to correspondents after the executive session noted that as an institution saddled with the responsibility of making laws, it is not in its place to break the same law neither does it have the powers to interpret the law.

He disclosed that the House was in receipt of a court process and as law abiding lawmakers, will obey the law and allow those responsible for interpreting the law that is the Judiciary to do their job.

According to him, the general public will be kept

abreast with happenings, including the next line of action, adding that for now, there are only eight authentic members of the state assembly.

Responding, the former House Majority Leader and member representing Bokkos constituency, Hon. Ishaku Maren said as law abiding citizens, they were in agreement with what the

ABOUT 58 Senators under the aegis of the Northern Senators Forum have resolved to intervene in the planned relocation of key units of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) to Lagos by the Federal Government, and the alleged lop-sidedness in the distribution and allocation of resources in the 2024 budget.

This comes after its constituents, notably, the Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF), raised concerns over the plan, stating that it was not in the interest of the north.

The Forum, in a statement, decried that the move had sparked a wave of anxiety and outcry from northerners who would be most adversely affected by the spontaneous exercise.

In response, the speaker said and are willing to wait for the court's interpretation of the law.

The former Speaker, Rt. Hon. Moses Thomas Sule who also spoke on the issue, described the 16 PDP members as lawmakers and not lawbreakers, agreeing to wait for the law to take its course on the matter.

## Nigerians further squeeze as food prices rise

THE constant rise in inflationary pressures has plunged many Nigerians into a financial crisis, increasing their costs of living and worsening their livelihoods.

This surge in the costs of food items and other consumables not only affects the buying power of households, but it has also reduced the sales of foodstuffs in the market.

A trader who sells foodstuffs at wholesale

prices in the Ikotun market told our source that since the beginning of June last year, sales of rice, groundnut oil, beans, and yams have dropped significantly while demand for spaghetti and noodles has increased.

"Many of our customers who would buy a bag of rice and five or 10 litres of groundnut oil can't afford that much again, instead they go for half bag, which was sold for N26,000 as at December or a bottle of vegetable oil sold between N1000 - N1,200," she said.

"What people buy majorly now is noodles and spaghetti, and the price has equally been increasing. One spaghetti is sold at between N600 and N700, while a carton of noodles, depending on the manufacturer, sells for between N3,500 and N5,500 now," she added.

The latest report by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) showed that Nigeria's inflation rose for the 12th straight month to a 20-year high of 28.92 percent in November, causing Nigerians to prioritise their spending as well as their lifestyles.

An analysis by BusinessDay showed that Nigeria's inflation rate is at its highest since January

## N/Senators mull legal action over relocation of FAAN, CBN

northern senators called for patience among its constituents and resolved to explore avenues for dialogue, engage in peaceful negotiations with the executive arm of government, and deploy legal measures where necessary.

In a statement on Monday signed by its spokesperson, Suleiman Kawu Sumaila, a senator representing Kano-South Senatorial District, the senators assured constituents of its commitment to resolving the issues and engaging with the executive, the leadership of the Senate and the relevant stakeholders to actively listen to the concerns of Nigerians.

As representatives of the people at the national level (Senate), we are committed to addressing the concerns and feelings of our constituents regarding certain decisions and policies put forth by the Federal Government - lop-sidedness in the distribution and allocation of resources in the 2024 budget, relocation of some federal agencies from Abuja to Lagos.

"First and foremost, let us assure our constituents

that we have taken their concerns seriously and are actively engaging with our colleagues to address these matters effectively. We firmly believe in the power of open dialogue and collaboration to bring about positive change for our nation.

"We understand the importance of fostering a harmonious relationship between the government and its citizens, and it is in this spirit that we are announcing our collective efforts to seek an amicable resolution to these pressing issues, within the confines of our constitution and existing laws.

"We urge our constituents to remain patient as we diligently explore avenues for dialogues, engage in peaceful negotiations, and deploy legal measures where necessary. Rest assured, our actions align with the constitutional framework and the laws of the land, as we endeavour to uphold justice and fairness" the statement added.

The senators believed that through effective communication, mutual respect, and a shared vision, they would forge a path that leads to positive change.

## 335 deaths, injuries recorded in road crashes

THE Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), says a total of 335 deaths from traffic crashes were recorded nationwide between 15 December 2023 and 16 January.

Dauda Ali-Biu, Corps Marshal, FRSC, said this during a media briefing on Monday in Abuja while appraising the corps' Zero Tolerance to Road Traffic Crashes special operation.

He said that the figure was slightly lower than the 350 deaths recorded within the same period in 2022.

Mr Ali-Biu said that 634 Road Traffic Crashes (RTCs) occurred within the period as against 535 in 2022, representing 19 per cent increase. He also said that the crashes involved 4,709 people, as against 4,162 recorded in 2022 signifying 13 per cent increase.

The corps marshal added that the number of people

injured increased by 17 per cent as the corps recorded 2,055 people injured in 2023 as against 1,762 in the same period in 2022.

The corps also rescued 2,319 people in 2023 signifying 13 per cent increase when compared to the 2,050 recorded in 2022.

According to him, during the exercise, five landmark crashes defined the outcome of the number of road traffic crashes fatalities.

"These crashes which were primarily caused by overloading of trailers with a combination of passengers, goods and animals; speed violations, and night trips.

"On Dec. 23, 2023, at 12:08 am in Kwanar Malamawa, Jigawa, a collision between a Toyota Camry and Volkswagen Golf 3 led to the death of 10 people.

"On Dec. 25, 2023 at 06:35am in Inisa, Osun, a lone crash that involved a

Mitsubishi Canter resulted in the death of nine victims.

"On Jan. 1, 2024 at 01:35 a.m., in Kankia, Katsina State, also in the dark hours of the day, a lone crash involving Peugeot J5 Bus led to the death of nine people," he stated.

In the same vein, the corps marshal said that on 2 January at 04:50 a.m. in Aiyere, Kwara, another DAF Trailer collided with a Hiace Bus leading to the death of 11 people.

He added that on 3 January, at about 19:50 p.m., in Sabon Wuse, Niger State, a crash involving a DAF Trailer and a Hiace Bus led to the death of 19 people.

"From these five crashes alone, 58 victims were killed and all deaths were recorded as a result of night trips.

"This alone represents 17 per cent of the total deaths recorded within the 2023 outing period," he said.



Nanono

2003.

Food inflation has also continued to soar, making thousands of households wallow in unprecedented hunger. As of December 2022, Nigeria's food inflation was 23.75 percent. It rose from 32.84 percent in November last year to 33.93 percent in December.

The rise in food inflation on a year-on-year basis was caused by increases in prices of oil and fat, bread and cereals, potatoes, yam and other tubers, fish, fruit, meat, vegetables, milk, cheese, and eggs, according to the NBS.

For Anjola, a recently married woman who stays around the Iba area of

Lagos, the cost of food items has made her repeat the same meals for her husband, leaving the couple to eat only what they can afford.

During the first five months after my wedding, my husband will always provide adequate finance to stock the house with foodstuffs. Having every necessary item in the kitchen gives me joy and makes me want to try new recipes," he said. "But you see now, we repeat meals over and over because food items are extra expensive. So we eat only what we can afford. It's disheartening."

Tejuosho Ayobami, a civil servant with the Ogun State government, says that with the prices of food items on the rise, he usually buys the most important ones and gets others later.

While rising inflation in Africa's biggest economy persists, its peers in the continent have witnessed a decline.

Ghana's inflation slowed to 23.2 percent in December from 26.4 percent in November.

The World Bank, in its report on Nigeria's development, projected that inflation will gradually decline in 2024 and beyond, reducing poverty, albeit only marginally and slowly.





## Corporate governance imperative for Nigerian startups

*Nigeria stands as a frontrunner in Africa's startup ecosystem, attracting the highest number of funded startups in 2021-2022, thanks to its dynamic pool of talented, innovative youth. However, 2023 witnessed a worrying trend, with a record number of Nigerian startups failing casting a shadow over the previously thriving ecosystem. There are many reasons why a startup may fail. This may include a range of issues such as insufficient funds/ inability to raise capital, unfavourable government policies, and ease of doing business, amongst many other factors. Beyond economic woes, startup failures in Nigeria can be attributed to a key issue, poor corporate governance. HAUTE and PEERS LAV PRACTICE writes.*

It has been observed that many Nigerian startups don't have an effective corporate governance system as it often takes a backseat in the early stages of a startup. This is so because founders are focused on gaining market traction, and meeting their targets amid limited funding or an unfavourable economy. Also, the line between ownership and management is not well established.

Interactions with founders reveal that many of them are wary of losing their managerial autonomy with the appointment of new board members. They are concerned that adding another layer of decision-making could slow down the process and they fear that board involvement could lead to decisions not aligned with their vision for the company.

Poor corporate governance has led to mismanagement and closures in some startups. Payday's CEO, Favour Oni, faces allegations of self-payment amidst reducing staff salaries after a \$3 million raise. The company is also scrutinised for customer fraud claims. 54gene, a genomics startup, witnessed turmoil with three CEOs departing in 2023, leading to lawsuits and internal friction. Pivo's downfall resulted from CEO-COO conflicts, eroding trust and hindering growth. Payday's internal governance practices raise concerns over financial decisions and transparency.

'Out of control founders' are a chilling reality for many VC firms who have shared their experience with founders who went rogue and engaged in legally shady and ethically dubious activities. The problem has been pinpointed to be that many founders lack basic financial training, projection skills and even burnout management strategies.

Weak governance in startups, marked by undefined processes, invites financial mismanagement, fraud, and internal conflicts. This lack of transparency raises concerns for investors, hindering funding and damaging the company's public image. Unprofessionalism and unethical conduct fueled by weak governance erode public trust. Without diverse board perspectives, decision-making becomes impulsive, risking inefficiency and harm to the



company's success.

Given the prevalence of corporate governance challenges in Nigerian startups, it's worth revisiting the effectiveness of the legal and regulatory framework in mandating and enforcing good governance practices.

Legal Framework for Corporate Governance for Startups in Nigeria.

There are two main Acts that govern the administration of Startups are the Nigeria Startup Act, 2022 (the "Startup Act" or "NSA 2022") and the Companies and Allied Matters Act, 2020 ("CAMA 2020").

### 1. THE NIGERIA startup act, 2022

The Startup Act does not directly make specific provisions for corporate governance. However, it contains several elements that indirectly encourage and support good governance practices in startups:

The Startup Act fills a crucial gap by indirectly promoting good governance. It establishes a dedicated body to champion ethical practices and provides a safe space for startups to experiment with governance structures through the Regulatory Sandbox. Transparency and accountability

are emphasised, encouraging startups to embrace good governance through highlighted benefits like increased investment and trust. While the full impact of the Nigeria Startup Act is still to come as its implementation unfolds in phases, early signs suggest that more attention should be drawn to Nigerian startups taking these recommendations very seriously.

### 2. THE companies and allied matters act, 2020

While not designed solely for startups, the CAMA 2020 promotes good governance with provisions like transparent financial reporting (annual audits and accounting records) and responsible directors' duties. Section 374 also provides that every company shall keep accounting records. Section 402 provides that all companies in Nigeria are to file audits of their accounts with the CAC for the relevant financial year and within the time frame prescribed by law except for small companies and companies yet to commence business since incorporation. While the Act exempts startups qualifying as small companies under the Act, from this specific requirement, it subtly nudges them towards embracing this practice anyway.

These practices build trust with investors and lay a solid foundation for future success. Notably, CAMA also encourages internal controls and risk management systems which are crucial for startups navigating growth and navigating potential challenges.

### THE way forward

Strong corporate governance isn't just for established companies; it's the lifeblood of successful startups at every stage, from the initial spark of an idea to the exhilarating journey of scaling up.

Founders must align visions, finances, and contributions, fostering trust. Transparent equity structures and performance tracking ensure fair recognition. Defined roles in founder agreements prevent misunderstandings. A seasoned board aids in navigating growth challenges. Clear ethical guidelines cultivate a culture of integrity and trust as the company expands.

Transparency and accountability form the bedrock of good governance. Timely financial reporting under board oversight instils confidence in investors. Establishing robust

communication channels with shareholders keeps everyone engaged. Adherence to legal and regulatory requirements, including taxes and data protection, is pivotal. Embracing good corporate governance at every stage ensures long-term success, attracting investors and retaining talent for sustained growth.

While investor focus on financial performance and rapid growth is understandable, neglecting good corporate governance can undermine a startup's success. Investors are not just passive recipients of returns; they are active partners in nurturing responsible practices.

They shouldn't just tick governance boxes and leave it to founders. It should be more of a collaboration. They should educate founders about its importance, work together to establish strong systems, and actively monitor their effectiveness. They should facilitate regular board meetings with diverse perspectives but resist micromanagement. That is, founders should be trusted while encouraging informed decision-making.





# Business & Economy

## FG to generate two million digital jobs – Shettima

NIGERIA'S Vice President, Sen. Kashim Shettima has stated that the federal government plans to create two million digital jobs yearly as part of efforts to ensure young Nigerians partake fully in the fourth industrial revolution.

The Vice President stated this during an interview on Arise TV on the sidelines of the ongoing World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos, Switzerland.

According to him, Africa's young population presents a unique advantage to the continent in the ongoing technological revolution with respect to AI and the Internet.

He noted that in the future, Africa led by Nigeria will become the global outsourcing capital as shortage of workers becomes prevalent all over

Europe, America and even Asia.

He stated, "We are in a unique position. 230 million people 75% are below the age of 30 and are very much at home with digital technology. We can really take advantage of the digital revolution and rightfully take our place in the comity of nations"

"The present administration is poised to take advantage of this. There is the \$618 million I-DICE program whereby we want to create two million digital jobs every year" The Vice President further highlighted the potential of digital technology and the global outsourcing industry in attracting foreign capital using India as a reference point.

He noted that the highest Nigeria has ever derived

from crude oil was \$35 billion in 2011 during the administration of President Jonathan while India is poised to receive around \$100 billion in 2024 from outsourcing alone.

Sen. Shettima has emphasized that Nigeria's presence in Davos is to interact and collaborate with other countries on a mutually beneficial position and not to beg for alms.

He stated that contrary to popular opinion, the African continent is not poor but rather a rich resource capital for the world.

In allaying the fears of investors coming into the country, the Vice President promised that in the coming months, there will be novel solutions to different macroeconomic problems, especially in the foreign exchange market.

THE Federal Capital Territory Administration (FCTA) has earmarked N1.7 billion from the 2024 budget to kickstart a groundbreaking Smart Secondary School initiative in Karshi.

FCT Minister, Nyesom Wike highlighted the necessity of embracing digital education trends, aiming to eliminate traditional tools like papers and pens in favor of a tech-centric approach. The proposed smart school, part of a broader N13.1 billion allocation for school infrastructure, is set to revolutionize education in the region.

Equipped with cutting-edge facilities and a focus on e-learning, it marks the beginning of a shift towards digital teaching methods within the Federal Capital Territory.

Mr Wike, speaking through Dr. Danlami Hayyo, the Mandate Secretary of the Education Secretariat, emphasized the importance of staying in sync with global educational advancements. The Smart Secondary School is positioned to be a trailblazer, featuring not only modern classrooms but also boarding facilities to enhance the overall learning experience.

Earlier recognition of public school students' outstanding achievements in academics and

## FCTA allocates N1.7 billion for smart secondary school



Wike

sports took place in Abuja, where the Director of the Secondary School Management Board, Dr. Mohammed Ladan, commended both students and teachers.

While celebrating success, Ladan also raised concerns about teachers being under the Parents Teachers Association payroll, urging the FCT Minister to

consider providing them with full employment.

The establishment of the Smart Secondary School reflects a commitment to embracing digital education and sets the stage for future developments in educational technology within the Federal Capital Territory.



Shettima

## FG assures intervention funds for agricultural sector

THE Minister of Finance, Mr. Wale Edun, has assured Nigerians that there would be substantial intervention for the agricultural sector that would enhance increased production of rice, maize, wheat and cassava to stem the rising food inflation in the country.

Edun stated this when he met with critical stakeholders to strategise on the implementation of the second phase of 2023/2024 dry season farming in Abuja.

He said that the importance of the agriculture sector could not be overemphasised under the leadership of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu.

"It will help to bring down the rate of inflation. Successful dry season farming will bring down the cost of food production and will bring down inflation," he said.

Earlier, the Minister of Agriculture and Food Security, Mr. Abubakar Kyari, stated that the objective of the forum was to review the implementation of the 2023/2024 dry season wheat

production implemented in the 15 wheat producing states of the federation based on their respective comparative advantage and preparatory meeting to chart a new course for the implementation of the second phase for rice, maize and cassava.

Kyari stated that the project would support farmers with critical farm inputs for the production of the priority crops, and also provide institutional support for better performances and sustainability particularly in the areas of wheat seeds local production.

In his goodwill message, the Minister of Budget and Economic Planning, Mr. Atiku Bagudu, said that "Nigeria agricultural space is one of the most elastic in the world, every cropping season can produce a miracle, if there is more investment in the sector."

Bagudu added that the present administration under the President Tinubu is committed to the agriculture sector in terms of improved budgetary allocation and other intervention funds to

## Dangote refinery to sell Petroleum products in naira

OIL marketers says refined petroleum products from the \$20bn Dangote Petroleum Refinery are to be sold in naira and not in the United States dollar as speculated in some quarters.

Dealers in the downstream oil sector also stated that the registration process for marketers at the refinery was still ongoing, as many operators had continued to register with the plant.

It was further gathered that officials of the Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority were meeting with the management of the refinery to perfect the pricing template for products produced by the facility.

On January 12, 2023, the Dangote Petroleum Refinery announced the commencement

of production of Automotive Gas Oil, also known as diesel, and JetA1 or aviation fuel.

The President, Dangote Group, Aliko Dangote, had in a statement issued by the firm, said, "We have started the production of diesel and aviation fuel, and the products will be in the market within this month once we receive regulatory approvals. This is a big day for Nigeria. We are delighted to have reached this significant milestone."

Economic Confidential had reported that the seven major oil marketers in Nigeria had registered with the refinery for the lifting and distribution of refined petroleum products produced by the plant.

The seven major marketers include 11 Plc, Conoil Plc, Ardeva Plc, MRS Oil Nigeria Plc,

OVH Energy Marketing Limited, Total Nigeria Plc and NNPC Retail.

The refinery would supply fuel to about 150,000 retail outlets operated by the Independent Petroleum Marketers Association of Nigeria following a meeting between the management of the refinery and executives of IPMAN.

But some Nigerians have expressed concern over the supply of crude to the plant in dollars, and whether this could make the managers of the refinery to sell refined products in dollars, since the plant is located in the free trade zone.

The Dangote Petroleum Refinery and Petrochemical Project, a subsidiary of Dangote Industries Limited, is a 650,000 barrels per day crude oil refinery, located in Dangote Industries Free Zone, Ibeju-Lekki, Lagos, Nigeria.

Responding to the an enquiry on whether the plant would dispense its products in dollars, the National Public Relations Officer, IPMAN, Chief Ukadike Chinedu, admitted that it was true that crude oil, being an international commodity, was sold to the plant in dollars.

He, however, told our correspondent that this would not make the plant to sell refined petroleum products to the Nigerian market in dollars, stressing that other businesses operated in Nigeria by Africa's richest man were carrying out their transactions in naira.

"The legal tender in Nigeria is the naira. The cement being sold by Dangote Cement is done in naira, not in dollar. The spaghetti and other essential commodities that he is involved in are all sold in naira. He, however, noted that another important thing was for the Nigerian government to be able to close up the widening gap in the foreign exchange rate.

Asked if marketers had been briefed on whether products would be sold in naira or dollars, considering the fact that crude was supplied to the plant in dollars, Ukadike replied, "No, the pricing template has not come out. What is going on now is legislation. The template is not yet out." They will also look at the feasibility of the market and other factors, before announcing their prices for diesel and aviation fuel, which are the products they are producing now. So the price is not out, for once it is out, you'll be informed."

Ukadike also stated that more oil marketers were registering with the refinery, adding that IPMAN had been at the forefront of the registration process.

"More applications for registration are being sent to the refinery by marketers and I think the process has been ongoing for some time now. It is a good thing for the country to have a refinery that refines its crude domestically," the IPMAN official stated.

Another major marketer confirmed that the pricing template for refined products from the facility has not been released yet, but noted that there had been a series of meetings with the regulators on this.

Asked whether the pricing template for refined products had been released, the dealer, who pleaded not to be named due to lack of authorisation, replied, "No, not yet. We have not received any template yet, not to my knowledge."

"But it is possible that the template should be out soon because various meetings by officials of the refinery with dealers and regulators have been ongoing lately. The meetings are to give insights about activities at the plant. And I believe the template is going to be in naira."

The Dangote Petroleum Refinery is an industrial plant that transforms crude oil into various usable petroleum products such as diesel, gasoline, jet fuel and kerosene.

Dangote Petroleum Refinery with a capacity to refine 650,000 barrels of crude oil per day covers an area of approximately 2,635 hectares in the Lekki Free Trade Zone in Lagos.

The refinery has so far received six million barrels of crude oil at its two SPMs located 25km from the shore. The first crude delivery was done on December 12, 2023, and the 6th cargo was delivered on January 8, 2024.

The refinery can load 2,900 trucks a day at its truck-loading gantries. The products from the refinery will conform to Euro V specifications, according to the firm.

"The refinery design complies with the World Bank, US EPA, European emission norms, and Department of Petroleum Resources emission/effluent norms, employing state-of-the-art technology," the company had stated in statement.



Wale

achieve food and nutrition security.

Also speaking at the event, the Minister of State, Dr. Aliyu Abdullahi, pledged that all members of the agricultural ecosystem would work assiduously to drive the change in the agriculture sector in line with "Renewed Hope Agenda" of President Tinubu.

In her welcome address, the Director, Office of the

Permanent Secretary, Mrs. Olwatoyin Alade, who was represented by the Director Planning and Policy Coordination, Ms. Tanimu Ibrahim revealed that the goal of the National Agricultural Growth Scheme (NAGS) is to increase total food production to crash the continued rise in the prices of agricultural commodities and make them affordable to the average Nigerians.





## CBN's power play: What lies beneath banking drama

**As Nigerians eagerly await answers from the CBN, the apex bank must step out of the shadows and engage with shareholders, as mandated by law. This collaborative approach is essential to collectively address regulatory concerns and mitigate collateral damage. There is still an opportunity for the CBN to uphold fairness, transparency, and due process in the banking sector. Doing so would not only restore confidence in the apex bank but also avert potential long-term consequences for all parties involved. Awaal Gata writes.**

THE recent decision by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) to dissolve the boards and management of Union Bank, Keystone Bank, and Polaris Bank has ignited widespread discussions across the nation. This move has not only attracted attention but has also divided public opinion, with the public interpreting the decision in different ways and speculating about the political and clandestine manoeuvres that may have influenced it. In various circles, there is growing unease regarding the integrity and transparency of this regulatory intervention, as it faces allegations of being a witch-hunt or serving the interests of specific parties. This situation raises legitimate concerns about the accountability and openness of such actions, prompting a closer examination of the motives behind the CBN's decision.

The CBN justified its intervention by citing corporate governance lapses and regulatory non-compliance as reasons. However, these allegations stand largely unsubstantiated due to the hurried nature and absence of a fair hearing underlying their actions to penalise the



banks. This swift and seemingly arbitrary approach creates a vacuum of uncertainty, fostering doubt and speculation. The inadequacy of proper

justification prompts questioning of the fairness and adherence to due process by the CBN in reaching this consequential decision.

The doubt surrounding the noble intentions of the board's removal is further amplified by the communication method. The lack of a written notice from the CBN to the boards before this unilateral action is a clear violation of the principles of fair hearing and natural justice. The absence of proper communication raises questions about the transparency and adherence to established legal procedures. It's worth noting that whatever legal basis the apex bank relied on to execute these actions should not supersede Section 36 of the Nigerian Constitution, which unequivocally guarantees fair hearing for all. This discrepancy

underscores the need for scrutiny and clarification regarding the legal grounds supporting the CBN's decisions.

The affected banks contend that, in accordance with legal requirements, any examination report should have been shared with them, outlining regulatory concerns and proposing necessary actions. Regrettably, the CBN deviated from this protocol, thereby violating its own laws, regulations, and established practices. This departure raises concerns about procedural fairness and transparency, as the banks were deprived of essential information crucial for addressing and rectifying regulatory issues. The failure to adhere to standard procedures underscores the need for a comprehensive examination of the CBN's actions and their alignment with legal frameworks.

***'The doubt surrounding the noble intentions of the board's removal is further amplified by the communication method. The lack of a written notice from the CBN to the boards before this unilateral action is a clear violation of the principles of fair hearing and natural justice. The absence of proper communication raises questions about the transparency and adherence to established legal procedures. It's worth noting that whatever legal basis the apex bank relied on to execute these actions should not supersede Section 36 of the Nigerian Constitution, which unequivocally guarantees fair hearing for all. This discrepancy underscores the need for scrutiny and clarification regarding the legal grounds supporting the CBN's decisions''.***

**Politics**

**Lawmaker assures constituents of synergy with council chairman**

**From TERESE TUHWA, Makurdi**

A member of the Benue State House of Assembly for Tarka state Constituency, Mr. Manger Manger has promised to intensify collaboration with local government council and other stakeholders to fight insecurity in Tarka state constituency.

The state lawmaker who spoke recently during a reception in his honour, disclosed that the measure became necessary due to unprovoked attacks and pockets of killings in the area.

The lawmaker further revealed that herders usually come through the river to attack the people, lamenting that those from the riverbank have not experienced attacks by the herders and urged all his constituents not to sleep with both eyes closed.

Manger who sued for unity appealed to the people to remain vigilant and report

suspicious movements to law enforcement agents or the traditional rulers for immediate action.

The Tarka representative appealed to his constituents to support Secretary to Government of the Federation, Senator George Akume and the Tinubu led government to succeed. He noted that the federal government has started initiating projects that would have direct bearing on the lives of the people of the state.

According to him, the roads, water and electricity challenges in the area were to be executed by the federal government, adding that he was also working in consultation with the local government council for the benefit of the state.

Manger, who assured that he would continue to do his best for the general good of

the people, called on the people to intensify prayers for him and other people in authority to enable them record successes for the people.

Another member of the state House of Assembly representing Gwer East Constituency, Mr. Elias Audu, who accompanied Manger to the reception, appreciated the Mbanagber community for the honour and promised to support their representative in the House of Assembly to attract dividends of democracy to them.

Other speakers, including the traditional rulers and community leaders of Mbanagber community that organised the reception, all appreciated God for the choice of Manger and expressed the hope that he will not disappoint his

**Governor's inauguration: APC chieftain demands Inclusive governance**

**From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja**

AHEAD of the IAhead of the inauguration of the new Governor of Kogi State, Alhaji Ahmed Usman Ododo, a United Kingdom based Chartered Accountant and chieftain of the All Progressives Congress, APC, Chief Momoh Yusuf Obaro, has pleaded for all inclusive governance to sustain the prevailing peaceful coexistence in the state.

Chief Obaro in a congratulatory message made available to journalists in Lokoja over the weekend, expressed confidence in the leadership ability of the Governor-elect.

He urged him to remain focused on unity, peace, progress and running an inclusive government.

Obaro also rejoiced with Governor Yahaya Bello for successfully ending his tenure, noting that his contributions will remain indelible in the minds of

The community leader and Software Engineer in the message he made available to journalists, described Ododo's election as a resounding victory well deserved. He expressed the hope that in view of his outstanding qualities, his assumption of office will mark the beginning of a new and promising chapter in the state's history.

He noted that Ododo had distinguished himself during the campaigns, emphasising that his vision for a better, more prosperous future for the state is truly inspiring. He expressed confidence that the incoming

governor will build upon the achievements of his predecessor, paving the way for even greater progress and development.

The message reads: "It is with great pleasure and excitement that I extend my heartfelt congratulations to you on your resounding victory as the Governor-elect of Kogi State.

The upcoming swearing-in ceremony on the 27th of January 2024, marks the beginning of a new and promising chapter in the history of our state, and I am confident that you possess the exceptional capacity to meet the high expectations of the people and build upon the achievements of your esteemed predecessor.

"The road ahead may present its share of challenges, but I am confident that your passion for service and your steadfast commitment to the well-being of our citizens, the will guide you through any obstacles that may arise. Your ability to connect with people from all walks of life and your inclusive approach to governance will undoubtedly serve as a powerful catalyst for positive change and sustainable development.

**From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja**

THE candidate of the African Democratic Congress (ADC) in the November 11 governorship election in Kogi State, Hon Leke Abejide, has hailed Governor Yahaya Bello for the execution of projects that have imparted on the lives of citizens.

Abejide gave the commendation when he visited Governor Bello to congratulate him for the peaceful conduct of the election and to wish him well in his future endeavours as he prepares to hand over to the Governor-elect in a few days.

Abejide, who is currently representing Yagba Federal Constituency in the House of Representatives, declared his support for the Governor-elect, Ahmed Usman Ododo, during the visit.

The ADC candidate, who was received by Governor Yahaya Bello and the Governor-elect, Ododo, noted that it was the right of every citizen who has the constitutional qualification to run for an election but that when the result is declared and a winner has emerged, that should mark the end of politics.

He said all candidates in the November 11 governorship election were qualified Kogi citizens but that only one could be elected and that was the person God had chosen at that time. Abejide added that he would support Ododo to succeed in the interest of the people of Kogi State.

"Your Excellency, let me congratulate my brother, Ahmed Usman Ododo, the governor-elect of our dear state once again. We all ran a good race and we also

**ADC candidate hails Gov Bello on achievements**



**Abejide**

believed that at the end of it, only one candidate would emerge and we have Ododo as that candidate today.

"My participation in politics is about the people and once elections are over, all issues around it must be put behind to forge a progressive administration.

"The interest of our people supersedes that of individuals. I will support Ahmed Usman Ododo to succeed in the interest of our people," he said.

Hon Abejide also commended the Governor-elect for striving to ensure peace and tranquility, noting that prior to the election in 2023, one factor that counted for the governor-elect was his ability to talk to and bring many people on board his team.

While welcoming the governorship candidate to his Abuja residence, Governor Bello reiterated the

importance of unity in the quest for realising the state's vast potential.

Reflecting on the abundance of natural and human resources bestowed upon Kogi by God, he warned that without unity, it could become a proverbial scenario of "when two brothers fight, strangers will inherit their property."

Governor Bello commended Abejide for playing politics without bitterness, saying Ododo, who would be sworn-in in exactly a week, would require the support of every citizen of the state to succeed.

On his part, the governor-elect stressed that the consolidation and continuity of good governance in Kogi State demanded the collective contributions of all stakeholders.

He urged everyone to view the development of the state as a shared responsibility.

**Reps direct ministries to refund Covid -19 intervention fund**

**From Jidauna Yanung Abuja**

THE House of Representatives Committee on Public Accounts has asked the Federal Ministry of Industries, Trade and Investment to refund the #75bn allocated to it as Covid-19 Intervention to the coffers of the government.

The committee also asked the Federal Ministry of Health to refund to government coffers #10 bn meant for vaccine productions, which was not utilized for that purpose.

The committee gave the directive to the two ministries as they resumed investigative hearings on the expenditure of the Covid -19 intervention fund by MDAs.

The committee frowned at the refusal of the Ministry of Industries to honour its invitation on three occasions without

any excuse.

This follows the adoption of a motion by Hon. Bassey Akiba (LP, Cross River). The committee asked the ministry to refund the money appropriated to it during the Covid -19 pandemic in the country.

Chairman of the committee, Hon. Bamidele Salaam (PDP Osun), had informed members that

despite a series of invitations extended to the ministry, its officials had failed to respond or appear before the committee.

Also, the committee asked the Chief Executive Officer of the Rural Electrification Agency( REA) Salihijo Ahmed to submit documents on the utilisation of the agency's Covid-19 Intervention fund to the committee.



**Ododo**



**Pete**



## Politics

# 2024 budget: SERAP, others sue Akpabio, Abbas

**Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP) and 20 concerned Nigerians have filed a lawsuit against the Senate President, Godswill Akpabio, and Speaker of the House of Representatives, Tajudeen Abbas.**

THE group is suing the lawmakers for unilaterally and arbitrarily increasing the allocation for lawmakers from N197bn to N344bn, an addition of N147bn, the highest since the return of democracy in 1999." Mr Akpabio and Mr Abbas were sued for themselves and on behalf of members of the National Assembly.

The lawmakers had last month raised their allocation from N197bn proposed by President Bola Tinubu for them in the budget to N344bn. The lawmakers will in total draw N514bn from the 2024 budget. The lawmakers also in 2023 increased their own budget from the originally proposed N169bn to N228bn.

In the suit number FHC/ABJ/CS/68/2024 filed last Friday at the Federal High Court, Abuja, the Plaintiffs are asking the court to determine "whether the lawmakers, in the exercise of their powers over appropriation/money bills, can unilaterally increase their own budget without the representation of the budget by the Executive."

The Plaintiffs are asking the court for "a declaration that the National Assembly, in the exercise of its powers over appropriation/money bills, cannot unilaterally increase its own budget without the representation of the budget by the President in line with section 81 of the Nigerian Constitution 1999 [as amended]."

The Plaintiffs are asking the court for "a declaration that the action of the National Assembly, unilaterally increasing its own budget from N197 billion to N344 billion, without the representation of the budget by the President is a breach of the democratic principles of separation of powers and checks and balances."



Akpabio



Abbas

The Plaintiffs are seeking "an order of perpetual injunction restraining and preventing the National Assembly from unilaterally increasing its own budget, in the exercise of its powers over all appropriation/money bills, without the re-representation of such appropriation/money bills by the President in line with the Nigerian Constitution."

In the suit, the Plaintiffs are arguing that: "Allowing the National Assembly to continue to unilaterally and arbitrarily increase its own budget would fundamentally undermine the letter and spirit of the Nigerian Constitution, public trust, and the rule of law."

The Plaintiffs are also

arguing that "The arbitrary and self-serving increase by the lawmakers of their own respective duties in the allocation of interest of Nigerian citizens. Conduct for Public Officers [Fifth Schedule Part 1] of the Nigerian Constitution, oath of office, and arbitrarily increasing their own democratic principles of budget in the Appropriation Bill separation of powers and checks and balances."

According to the Plaintiffs, the President has violated the "Unless the reliefs sought are Code of Conduct for Public Officers." will continue to breach the "Paragraph 1 of the Code of Conduct for Public Officers Constitution and the rule of law, which provides that 'a public officer shall not put himself in a position where his personal interest conflicts with his duties and responsibilities.'"

The suit filed on behalf of SERAP and 20 concerned Nigerians by their lawyers "Members of the National Assembly have put their interest above the public interest and 'well-being and prosperity of the Federal Republic of Nigeria', contrary to their oath of office.

"It is a necessary implication of the rule of law that, except where the law gives a discretion to a public functionary, he can only act in accordance with the law, as to do otherwise may enthrone arbitrariness.

"The increase and insertion of line items in the Appropriation Bill 2024 by the National Assembly is not commensurate with the constitutional commitments to public services and goods; decreasing public revenues and increasing level of public debts, and the poor economic and social realities in Nigeria."

"The President presented the Appropriation Bill 2024 made

up of N27.5 trillion Naira to the National Assembly on 29 November 2023. The National Assembly on 30th December, 2023 passed the Appropriation Bill 2024 in the sum of N28.7 Trillion."

"That while exercising its legislative powers, the 1st and 2nd Defendants increased the Appropriation Bill by N1.2 Trillion, wherein the 1st and 2nd Defendants unilaterally increased allocations made to the National Assembly in the Appropriation Bill 2024 presented by the President from N197,932,625,616 Billion Naira to N344.85 Billion."

"The President signed the ₦28.7 Trillion Appropriation Bill 2024 into law on 1st January, 2024. The 2024 Budget is in deficit of ₦9.18 Trillion."

"The Budget/Appropriation Act 2024 is yet to be gazetted as at the time of filing this suit and public access to the gazetted 2024 Budget/Appropriation Act is restricted."

"The National Assembly after inserting new line items to the Appropriation Bill 2024 and altering the budgetary allocation to already inserted line items did not submit same to the President for re-representation by the President before going ahead to present the Appropriation Bill to the President for assent." No date has been fixed for the hearing of the suit.

**Ripples Nigeria.**

**"The Plaintiffs are asking the court for "a declaration that the National Assembly, in the exercise of its powers over appropriation/money bills, cannot unilaterally increase its own budget without the re-representation of the budget by the President in line with section 81 of the Nigerian Constitution 1999 [as amended]. The Plaintiffs are asking the court for "a declaration that the action of the National Assembly, unilaterally increasing its own budget from N197 billion to N344 billion, without the re-representation of the budget by the President is a breach of the democratic principles of separation of powers and checks and balances."**



# IMAGES

## PLGS HOLDS INTERDENOMINATIONAL THANKSGIVING FOR GOVERNOR MUTFWANG

The Plateau State Government last Sunday held an interdenominational thanksgiving service in the aftermath of the reaffirmation of Governor Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang's victory at the polls by the Supreme Court Abuja, at the Rwang Pam Township Stadium, Jos.



Plateau State Governor, Barr. Mutfwang with the Guest Preacher, His Eminence Bishop Francis Wale Oke, Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria President



L-R: Commissioners for Information and Communication, Hon. Musa Ibrahim Ashoms, Higher Education, Dr. Mrs. Kachollom Gang and Finance, Hon. Grace Shwarta Dongkum



From Left are, Mr. Moses Nwan mni, HoS, Barr. Rauta Dakok, SGS, Arc. Samuel Nanchang Jatau with wife and Chief of Staff Government House, Engr. Jeremiah Satmak and wife



Cross section of members of the Plateau State Executive Council



Governor Mutfwang and wife, Barr. Helen Mutfwang at the service



Former Governor of Plateau State, Sen. Jonah David Jang with wife Ngo Talatu Jang



From left are, Former Military Governor of the State, Maj. Gen. Lawrence Anebi Onoja mni, exchanging pleasantries with the Gbong Gwom Jos, His Majesty, Da Jacob Gyang Buba CFR and wife, Ngo Rakiya Gyang Buba



General Manager, PRTVC, Rita Kachollom Pam with the Chairman, NUJ Plateau State Council, Ayuku Pwaspo

Photos: DANLADI DUK



## Politics

# Governors destroyed LG administration

**According to the ex-minister, elections hardly take place in the local government and when elections are held, opposition parties don't win but the "governors' linkmen and partymen".**

Former Minister of Health, Olorunnimbe Mamora, has said that governors destroyed the Local Government (LG) administration in Nigeria by imposing caretaker chairmen on the people at the grassroots and failing to allow the conduct of free and fair polls at the local government level.

MAMORA, who was also a Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation, made this known on Inside Sources with Laolu Akande, aired on Channels Television recently. He said, "If I would be very frank, the governors destroyed the local governments. That's the truth. Don't forget, I was very much involved. Local government chairmen were elected under Abdulsalami Abubakar in 1998 with a three-year tenure which should have terminated in 2001, but towards the end of the termination of the tenure, the local government chairmen under the aegis of ALGON started making moves to the National Assembly, then headed by Anyim Pius Anyim as Senate President and Ghali Na'abba (of blessed memory) as the Speaker of the House.

"They (LG chairmen) were asking for the extension of their tenure to be four years in line with the state and the federal. That was the beginning."

Mamora, who was the Chairman of the Conference of Speakers of State Houses of Assembly in 2001, said the move was challenged "because Section 7 of the Constitution has placed everything in the local governments under the state through laws made by the state house of assembly.

"We challenged it because it was like trying to usurp the powers of the state houses of assembly," he said. The Speaker of the Lagos State House of Assembly between June 1999 and June 2003 said the National Assembly went ahead with the bill to make local government chairmen tenured for four years, and he and his then colleague-speakers went to court.

"While the case was then in court because of the interest of the governors, they came in to join, and because they joined, the case was taken straight to the Supreme Court and the Supreme Court ruled that the National Assembly had no business in determining the tenure," he said. The ex-Senator for Lagos East Senatorial District from June 2003 to June 2007 said then President Olusegun Obasanjo "invited us speakers to the Villa and appealed to us because their tenure was about to end and new



Mamora

local government chairmen were yet to be elected." "That was when he (Obasanjo) then persuaded us that each state should go and put in place a kind of stop-gap situation; that was what led to the state making laws for caretaker committees, which were supposed to be a temporary thing to take care of that lacuna, that is, the tenure of the local governments finishing and the new one yet to be elected.

"That is the genesis of caretaker committees, which the governors now abuse. You now see it all over the place; something which was supposed to be in the interim now contravenes Section 7 of the constitution that talks about democratically elected chairmen," he added. According to the chieftain, elections hardly take place in the local government and when elections are held, opposition parties don't win, but the "governors' linkmen and partymen". He said the abuse of the caretaker model gave birth to the issue of LG funds allegedly held by some governors.

Channels Television.

## I'm happy it's over' - Gov Sule

The Governor of Nasarawa State, Abdullahi Sule, still basking in the euphoria of his victory at the Supreme Court on Friday which affirmed his election, expressing his joy that the election litigation is over.

The Supreme Court had dismissed the appeal of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) governorship candidate David Umbugadu against Sule's election as the governor of Nasarawa State.

Reacting to his victory at the apex court later on Channels Television's Politics Today, Sule said, "I am happy it is over. It is finished, that is the end of it and we can now focus on the job and move on." The governor said he at no time entertained any fear of losing his seat ahead of the Apex Court judgement. "I was expecting to win, the reason being first at the tribunal, we had three judges and they disagreed with themselves, they could not even agree, all the three of them. Two of them disagreed with us and therefore we lost, one of them had a very comprehensive report and he voted for us and said we won.

"We picked from there and went to the Appeal Court where there are now more experienced three judges; and all the three of them unanimously said we won, so you can imagine we went into the Supreme Court with a lot

of confidence, I did not doubt in my mind about the fact that we are going to win," he said.

In his defence of his victory in the polls, Governor Sule stated that he had been overwhelmingly voted for by the people of the state. He explained that his party had lost senatorial seats due to internal conflicts and not because of a decrease in support within the state.

He maintained that he was backed by all leaders of his party during and after the March 18,

2023 governorship election.

In their judgement on Friday, the Supreme Court panel of justices in a unanimous decision dismissed the PDP candidate's case for lack of merit and no cost was awarded.

The Election Petition Tribunal in Lafia had on October 12, 2023, nullified Governor Sule's victory and declared David Ombugadu as the winner of the p o l i t i c s .

Consequently, Governors Sule and the All Progressives

Congress (APC) sought to overturn the verdict by appealing the judgment of the tribunal.

The court of appeal in its judgment on November 23, 2023, faulted the verdict of the tribunal and affirmed Sule's election as governor. According to the appellate court, the tribunal wrongly relied on the evidence of eight of the PDP witnesses whose statements on oath were not front-loaded alongside the petition.



Sule



## NEWS

## Brace up, unite other youths associations, Pampe tells PYC

By EZEKIEL DONTINNA

AN erudite public speaker and human rights activist, popularly known as the "People's Professor", Comrade Luka Pampe, has berated the Plateau Youth Council (PYC),

He charged them to brace up and unite all other ethnic youth associations under one umbrella towards a common positive front.

He gave the charge Saturday, while delivering his keynote address as guest speaker at a one day summit on peace and security with the title: "Redefining Plateau Youths Participation in Stemming the Tides of Community Attacks in Local Governments and Surveillance Strategies", held at the Azi Nyako Youth Centre, Dadin-Kowa, Jos, the state capital.

The Public Speaker said there was a need for the youths to adopt a consensus building strategy that would bring to an end issues that have been bottled up in the hearts of communities through a round table to reconcile issues. Pamper pointed out that death has no political party, hence the need for them to unite towards a common positive front.

He expressed worries that the crisis on the Plateau has since been an age long phenomenon because the root causes and factors provoking it has been more of economic struggles, but later snowballed into a political crisis, leading to fighting themselves. This created room for their enemies to take advantage of the cracks.

While commending the convener of the summit, Pampe called on Plateau stakeholders to stop playing politics with recruitment of 'Operation Rainbow' personnel, advising them to employ those with human intelligence and surveillance strategies where counterintelligence could be imputed in arresting the unabated attacks on Plateau communities.

He, therefore, challenged the leadership of the PYC, being the umbrella body of all other youth associations, to brace up and take control of coordinating these sectional ethnic youths groups to deal these series of attacks and should not leave only the affected ethnic youth associations to face the enemies.

On his part, the convener of the summit, who is also the PYC Publicity Secretary, Comrade Walshak Kumwen, commended the guest speaker for doing justice to the topic, disclosing that, "statistics shows that majority of those apprehended as suspects during unrest are youths. As young people, we have a huge role to play as far as peace is concerned in the state," he advised.

"So, I felt it is important for us as the umbrella body of all the youths on the Plateau to be able to bring the youths together to



Pampe

discuss the way forward, because if we agree as young people that we will stay in peace, I assure you that we will stay in peace, but if we do not agree, we will not.

"We are going to be tactically implementing the resolutions that have been reached at this very important summit."

Meanwhile, the Speaker,

Plateau State House of Assembly, Rt. Hon. Gabriel K. Dewan, accompanied by the Chairman, House Committee on Youth Matters, Hon. Joseph Gokum, called for unity of purpose among the youths and that they should continue to pray for President Bola Tinubu and Governor Caleb Mutwang of Plateau State.

## IHSOSA inaugurates newly elected national executives

From MUSLIUDEEN ADEBAYO

A new national executives that will pilot the affairs of Islamic High School Old Students Association, Orita Basorun, Ibadan for the next two years has been inaugurated.

Our correspondent recalls that the members of the national executive were elected in December last year.

The inauguration took place during the bi-annual convention of the association.

The event was held within the premises of the school on Saturday.

The eight-man national executives inaugurated include a lecturer from Lead City University, Ibadan, Dr. Bayonle Busari, (National President) Lateef Adesina (Vice President) and Muftau Olaniyi Zubair (General Secretary).

Others are Omowumi Emmanuel (Assistant General Secretary), Olubisi Abiola Davies Ojo (Public Relations Officer), Ismaila Oyebayo Bello (Treasurer), Quadri Olorunseun Ishola (Financial Secretary) and Nafisat Yetunde Adejumo (Welfare Officer).

Busari, in his acceptance speech, explained that the task before the new executives is enormous but achievable.

He added that the new executives will make efforts to sustain the laudable developmental programmes embarked upon by previous past administrations.

"I stand before you today to lead a team of newly elected national officers that will pilot the affairs of our association

for the next two years. I am not in doubt that the task before us is enormous but achievable. The stake is high, just as the expectation is challenging.

"Since our election and now we have had consultations and the encouragement that we have received is an elixir, signaling that we are not alone in carrying the torch of further development of our alma mater and taking the school to a greater height.

"In the run up to the national delegate election, we made certain commitments towards uplifting our school. I want to assure you that we will stand by all that we said. However, let me put it on record that we can not do it alone. I crave our indulgence and call on all of us to heed our call whenever the need arises, especially in the area of project identification and execution.

"Not only this, there is a need to synergise the execution of projects that the various sets from our school may want to embark upon. In the light of this, we will liaise with the school management and other stakeholders in prioritising the needs of the school while IHSOSA will remain the clearing house for the execution of such projects.

"The new Executive Committee shall make efforts to sustain the laudable developmental programmes embarked upon by previous past administrations. We will also renew our efforts towards the completion of pacesetting stride, made

THE Northern Youth Association of Nigeria (NYAN) took a swipe at public services women appointees' involvement in financial scam, with the observation that responsibility should only be given to persons with maturity, experience, and trustworthiness to handle a ministry, department or agency saddled with the duty to manage public financial resources.

The association is however, not saying that the country lacks outstanding, competent, and experienced women with good moral disposition to steer any MDA in Nigeria. The issue is in the fact that sometimes rogues are picked only to become to the nation's public or even private services a

## NYAN tasks govt on appointment guided by track-record

From ABBAS GUNGURA, Bauchi



Bala

menace.

The president of the association, Comrade Godiya T. Adams, in a press conference in Abuja recently, applauded the appointments made by President Bola Ahmed

Tinubu, describing them as truly representative and competent-driven despite some of the loopholes, especially in women appointments into the federal service.

lecture, Alumni Week, and Founder's Day and make these fora points of attraction to all members and avenues to socialise and share ideas.

"We intend to strengthen and sustain the scholarship programme already in existence for our indigent students. The school library will be supported by the association to assist our students and teachers have access to educational resources that will make learning fun and interesting to them. We are going to liaise with critical stakeholders to ensure the posting of quality teachers and N.Y.S.C. members to complement the staff strength of the school. The environment of the school shall also be given a facelift to make the school attractive and conducive to teaching and learning. Not only this, all past leadership of the association will be accorded due recognition in a Hall of Fame to be established soon

"I have listened to the various calls and messages that have been put across to us since our election, particularly on the amount payable as annual dues by each set. We have taken notice of the concerns expressed, and I want to implore us that where there is a will, there will always be a way. We should not be discouraged by the amount as this contribution may pale into insignificance in the face of the amount of money needed to meet the various needs of our alma mater.

"Let me also reiterate that the welfare of all alumni, without discrimination, shall receive our utmost attention. The same will go for all members of staff and students of our great school.

Permit me to end my speech with this borrowed passage from one of Chinua Achebe's novels:

"A man who calls his kinsmen to a feast does not do so to redeem them from starving. They all have food in their own houses. When we gather in the moonlight at the village ground, it is not because of the moon. Every man can see it in his own compound. We come together because it is good for kinsmen to do so. Therefore, let us continue with the team spirit and enjoy the power of togetherness. Let's smile, not because we don't have problems but because we are stronger than the problems.

"Alone, I can smile, but together, we can laugh. Alone I can enjoy, but together we can celebrate. Alone I can talk but together we can speak. Let's promote things that unite us more than things that cause disunity. Unity is great strength. Everyone is important according to their own unique purpose.

"On behalf of the new Executive Committee, I thank all those who have worked tirelessly, day and night to ensure the success of today's event. I thank our Baba, the Emeritus president of IHSOSA, Alh. LAB Adigun for creating the time, despite his old age, to travel down from Lagos to witness today's event. Ayò yin yòò dalé. I equally thank all stakeholders, elders, and leaders who are present here today for the sustained interest in the affairs of our alma mater. I pray Almighty Allah continues to shower us with His blessings. Thank you and God bless."



# News

## Senator congratulates wife as new Lord Mayor

By John FWAH, Kaduna

SENATOR Sunday Marshall Katung representing Kaduna State South Senatorial district, has congratulated his wife, Abigail who was recently elected as the Lord Mayor of Leeds City, United Kingdom.

Abigail emerged as the first African woman to hold that position, which her husband said, it came 'at the heels of her hard work, dedication, and integrity.

The senator said this in a statement he personally signed and made available to our correspondent.

He said, I heartily congratulate my wife, Abigail Marshall Katung, on her election as the Lord Mayor of Leeds City for the 2024/2025 term.

My wife's election, unanimously done, reflects the positivity of extracting strength that is inherent in our diversity for the good of everyone.

Her election is an affirmation to me that when our unique differences are nurtured, it creates a sense of belonging that paves the way for collective social growth and progress for all.



Sunday

More significantly, being the first African woman to hold that position highlights the limitless opportunity that unity confers on a society. And ours shouldn't be an exception in creating a merit-filled space for the utilisation of our individual skills.

As I congratulate her on this achievement that is coming on the heels of her hard work, dedication, and integrity, I wish her more recognition in her quest to serve the public

## Involve social workers in social investment programmes- NASoW

From MUSLIUDEEN ADEBAYO

THE Nigeria Association of Social Workers (NASoW), has appealed to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu to involve social workers in the Social Investment Programmes embarked upon by his administration.

The association made this appeal in a letter delivered to the office of the President recently in Abuja which was signed by its National President, Alhaji Mashood Mustapha.

Mustapha in the letter, a copy of which was made available to journalists through the National Public Relations Officer of the association, Musliudeen Adebayo, urged Tinubu to consider the inclusion of social workers within the programme's framework.

He noted that contributions of social workers will not only strengthen the implementation process but also uphold the core values of social responsibility and compassion that our nation embodies.

Mustapha in the letter titled "Open letter to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu on the need to involve social workers in the Social Investment Programme", noted that it is evident that Tinubu's leadership has brought about positive changes in the country.

Mustapha in the letter also appealed to Tinubu to ensure that the Nigeria Council for Social Work is constituted in accordance with the Nigerian Council for Social Work Establishment Act 2022.

NASoW president while speaking further, enjoined Tinubu to prioritize and oversee the necessary measures to ensure that the council is constituted in full accordance with the Act.

He added that the President should ensure that qualified and dedicated social workers who can contribute to the council's mission of upholding the highest standards of social work practice, are appointed.

"I trust this letter finds you well and thriving in your esteemed position as the leader of our great nation. I am writing to commend your profound expertise in steering the modification efforts within the National Social Investment Programme under the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs.

"The strides made under your guidance have been commendable, showcasing a keen understanding of the complexities surrounding social investment. It is evident that your leadership has brought about positive changes, fostering a more inclusive and robust programme.

"However, I would like to draw your attention to a critical aspect that could further amplify the impact of the National Social Investment Programme. While the modifications have been instrumental, the engagement of qualified social workers is imperative for the programme's holistic success.

"Trained social workers bring specialized skills that go beyond the administrative framework. Their expertise in understanding the social dynamics and addressing the unique needs of individuals and communities

would contribute significantly to achieving the desired objectives of the programme.

"By integrating social workers into the team, the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs can ensure a more empathetic and tailored approach to the diverse challenges faced by beneficiaries. This approach aligns seamlessly with the mission and vision of the National Social Investment programme, enhancing its effectiveness in safeguarding the well-being of our citizens.

"We kindly urge you to consider the inclusion of social workers within the programme's framework. Their contributions will not only strengthen the implementation process but also uphold the core values of social responsibility and compassion that our nation embodies.

"Also we appeal for the proper constitution of the Nigeria Council for Social Work in accordance with the Nigerian Council for Social Work Establishment Act 2022.

"As you are well aware, the Nigerian Council for Social Work plays a pivotal role in ensuring the highest standards of professional conduct and ethics within the social work sector. The establishment of this council through the Act is a commendable step towards fostering a robust framework for social work practice in our nation.

"The importance of aligning its structure with the provisions set forth in the Nigerian Council for Social Work Establishment Act 2022 cannot be overstated. A proper constitution is vital not only for compliance with the law but also for the effective functioning of the Council in achieving its intended objectives.

"We respectfully appeal to your esteemed office to prioritize and oversee the necessary measures to ensure that the Nigeria Council for Social Work is constituted in full accordance with the Act. This includes appointing qualified and dedicated individuals who can contribute to the council's mission of upholding the highest standards of social work practice.

"By addressing this matter promptly, we can strengthen the social work sector in Nigeria, empower professionals, and ultimately enhance the well-being of our citizens. We are confident that your commitment to the rule of law and good governance will guide the resolution of this issue," he said.



Mashood



## Making religion work for us

Nigeria is a very, very religious country. Worship centres dot every corner of our streets. There is hardly any street you cannot find one worship centre or the other. Christian and Muslim worship centres compete for space with each other. Indeed, they are found side by side in some cases. As a matter of fact, residential houses and relaxation spots that do not house a worship centre are considered abnormal. Anything the average Nigerian person does, he claims God is at the centre of it all.

Thus, you hear the cliché "if not for God" or "my God is greater than any other thing". Nigerians fight for their gods. They kill in the name of their gods. Yet claim God created everything and all things. Every waking day, a new church or mosque springs up in a corner of our society yet nothing seems to work well for our county. Our leaders, adherents of either of the two major religions seem to have found a very convenient way of beating us, the followers back into line, each time we stray off the mark.

Least I be misunderstood, religion practiced properly, keeps us in check. It is the moral fibre that holds the society together. It points us in the right direction whenever we miss the point or veer off the moral radar. But religion is not an industry. You cannot pray your way to development neither can you do same to success. No matter how hard you pray, the era of miracles is long gone there are no longer free manna from heaven. Even our holy books are replete with directives on the need to work and use whatever talent one is endowed with for one to succeed in life.

Ours is a religious society yet nothing works. We start every event by calling on God to take control and take charge of proceedings yet our prayers seem not to go beyond the ceiling of the building in which the events hold. Muslims and Christians seem to be in competition with each other not to bring dividends

of development to the fractured and is sick. society but to outdo each other in soiling their hands in the public till. When they hit the brick wall, they resort to religion. And the gullible followers fall for their antics.

Religion to Nigerians is a means to an end. However, you manage to use it to your advantage is all that is important. People steal and when they are found out, they say they are being persecuted because of their faith. We do things that are completely at variance with our faith yet we claim that we are guided by that faith. We feel no qualms taking shelter under falsehood and lies.

Look at the resources our country is blessed with. Do we have any reason to be where we are? Instead of working to build a just and fair society, we are building one that is

Boko Haram is an indication of the mess we have gotten ourselves into as a country. We have built an army of disillusioned people that are now ventilating their anger on our society. No one seems to care where we are headed to as a country. No one is taking responsibility and is doing something to bring us out of the woods.

All we hear is that we need to pray. But I ask, pray to whom and for what? We cannot wish banditry away neither can we pray away the biting poverty that is consuming our land. We cannot wish away herder/ farmers clashes but have to put in place deliberate measures to curb them. God will not come down from heaven to change the course of our history for us, we will have to do that by ourselves.

Unless we show Him a willingness to work for change, He cannot help us. He has given us all the enablement to succeed but we have refused to use them. Look around us and see how blessed we are yet nothing is working. Roads, absent. Electricity, zero. Infrastructure completely non-existent yet we fight ourselves over nothing on behalf of God?

Those who brought the two religions to us have since realized that if they do not manage their activities well, they are not going to make any headway. Dubai is an example. All investments are channeled to this desert just because they have shown a willingness to change their story. We are no longer our brother's keepers. We have become very individualistic and self centred and no longer care what happens to our neighbours. We build mega Churches and Mosques at the expense of industries. We cannot pray our way out of poverty in the name of religion, we need to change and change for the better.

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## News

### Former Military Administrator calls for unity

By JIDAUNA DARING

FORMER Military Administrator of Plateau State, Maj. Gen. Lawrence Onoja has called on Plateau people to remain united so that together they can move the state forward.

Gen. Onoja made the call during Christian interdenominational thanksgiving service for the governorship victory of Barr. Caleb Mutfwang at the polls and reaffirmation of the Supreme Court, held at the Rwang-Pam Stadium Jos, on Sunday.

He described the large crowds as a clear sign of the people's acceptability of Governor Mutfwang as their leader and congratulated him over his victory at the Apex Court.

Gen. Onoja also enjoined Plateau People to give Governor Mutfwang the necessary support so as to enable him transform the state to a land of milk and honey.

He condemned in totality the recent killing in some part of the state and challenged the security agencies to be more proactive in handling security breach in order to save lives and property. He added that Benue and Plateau people have suffered injustice on insecurity matters.

Also speaking, former Governor of Plateau State, Senator. Jonah David Jang while appreciating God over Governor Mutfwang's reaffirmation prayed God to give him the wisdom to lead the people of the state in the right path.



Mutfwang

Sen Jang challenged Christian faithful to surround their lives to Christ. He urged Christians to be doers of God's words at all time.

Former Governor of Adamawa State, Boni Haruna while rejoicing with Governor Mutfwang over his victory at the supreme court advised him to dedicate the victory to God and also seek his presence in whatever he do at all times, saying that with God all things are possible.

Speaking on behalf of the traditional rulers, Gbong Gwom Jos and chairman councils of chiefs and Emirs, His Majesty, Da Jacob Gyang

Buba CFR congratulated Governor Mutfwang and assured him of their readiness to support his administration in order to promote peace in the state.

Da Buba expressed concern over the enmities created during the last elections amongst Plateau people was disturbing to the traditional rulers. He urged Plateau people to shun all forms of political and tribal differences when it comes to politics for the betterment of the state.

Our correspondent reports that the occasion featured songs ministrations and prayer session among others.

From JIDAUNA YANUNG, Abuja

MINISTER of the Federal Capital Territory, FCT, Nyesom Wike has vowed to do everything possible to ensure that projects under president Bola Tinubu are not abandoned.

The FCT Minister stated this recently after an inspection tour of some projects in the territory.

He pointed out that most of the projects would be completed and commissioned by the president. According to Wike, no work has stopped in all the sites since Tinubu came on board. The minister expressed the belief that by May to December this year, most of the projects would be completed and handed to the communities.

Wike expressed satisfaction with the progress of work so far, particularly at Guzape Lot 11 which he said was going on very fast.

### 'No project will be abandoned under Tinubu'

The minister directed the contractors to go ahead with the construction of the road, adding that the project was part of those to be commissioned by the president in May.



Wike

### Benue addresses water challenge at IDPs camp

From TERESE TUHWA, Makurdi

WORRIED by persistent scarcity of water supply at the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) camps in Benue State, Benue State Emergency Management Agency (BSEMA) in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Water Resources, Environment and Climate Change have stepped up supply of water to the IDPs camp at Ortese in Guma Local Government Area.

Acting BSEMA Executive Secretary, Sir. James Iorpuu and Commissioner for Water Resources, Environment and Climate Change, Mr Ugwu Odoh had carried out an assessment tour of the dam project at Hiinyam, Nyiev Council Ward of Guma Local Government. It is aimed at exploring a way out through community engagement.

While addressing the IDPs, the BSEMA boss stressed the importance of water to human beings, saying the IDPs have a right to water for drinking purposes and other important uses.

Iorpuu explained that Governor Hyacinth Alia's administration is passionate about the welfare of IDPs and was poised to address their plight permanently.

He assured them that

through coordinated approach and proactive steps, his office and Ministry of Water Resources, Environment and Climate Change would solve the perennial problem of water in all camps.

He appreciated the Medicines San Frontiers for sustaining its intervention in areas of health, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) to Ortese IDPs camp.

In his remarks, Commissioner of Water Resources, Environment and Climate Change, Mr Ugwu Odoh, represented by the Permanent Secretary of the ministry, Alhaji Efu Ali Suleiman, said the ministry and BSEMA would liaise with the community to attend to issues of water supply in IDP camps. He reiterated the state government's commitment to addressing issues associated with water scarcity, ecological and environmental challenges.

The Information Officer of BSEMA, Comrade Tema Ager, disclosed in a statement that during the visit, about 10,000 litres of water was supplied to the Ortese IDP camp amidst excitement by the displaced population.

"We have it on authority that since assumption of duty, Governor Hyacinth Alia administration has focused attention on the plight of the IDPs and it is working with the Federal Government to build cluster housing settlement for them.

It could be recalled that the Federal Government through the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management laid a foundation for a cluster settlement housing scheme in Makurdi Local Government area in Benue state in a bid to return the displaced home.

The suspended Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management, Betta Edu in company of Governor Hyacinth Alia had laid the foundation and also visited the IDPs camp at Achwa where food items and other items were supply to them.

### BACAS old students put smiles on orphans faces

From ABBAS GUNGURA, BAUCHI

THE national body of Bauchi College of Arts and Science (BACAS) Old Students Association has distributed food items, other necessities worth over #500,000 to orphans and patients on admission in Bauchi.

The items were procured from freewill cash donations made by the old students under its humanitarian outreach services to communities which are targeted at vulnerable

members of the public.

Presenting the items at the Bauchi Orphanage Center to the officer in charge at the weekend, the National Chairperson of BACAS Old Students Forum, Barrister Fatima Abubakar, said that the gesture was to complement government's efforts in the upkeep of the orphans and also identify with the children with a view to giving them a sense of belonging.

She disclosed that the money used for the purchase of the items was from free will donations by the old students.

She therefore enjoined the management of the orphanage to make judicious use of the items for the benefit of the orphans under their care.

Barr. Fatima then prayed for God's blessing, protection and guidance for the orphans. And further implored the children to study well, be of good behaviour and become responsible citizens in the society.

The officer in charge of the orphanage, Hajiya Mairo Malami, while receiving the items, expressed gratitude on behalf of the beneficiaries. She assured that it would be put to use for the intended purposes.

Malami then thanked the donors and prayed to God to bless their lives and the old students association at large.

Our correspondent reported that the items donated at the orphanage center include: 2 bags of 50kg rice, 1 bag of 50kg sugar, 3 cartons of detergent, 3 cartons of soap, 3 cartons of pasta and 3 cartons of Macaroni.

In a related development, the old students also reached out to over 100 patients on admission at the Bauchi State Specialist Hospital. Each patient received a package containing one measure of sugar, one sachet of medium detergent and a soap.

The beneficiaries, their relatives and staff of the

hospital expressed delight. They commended the leadership of the association for their kind gesture. They further called on other associations and individuals to emulate the philanthropic gesture of the BACAS Old

### Police rescue Abuja kidnapped victim, arrest one

From JOHN FWAH KADUNA

KADUNA State Police operatives have denied criminal elements any active space, as personnel of the Command rescued a victim kidnapped from Abuja, arrested one of the kidnappers, recovered the victim's vehicle and the kidnappers' operational firearms.

ASP Mansur Hassan, PPRO, said in a release on behalf of the State Commissioner of Police, A.D. Ali and made available to our correspondent.

It said, On Wednesday 18th January, 2024, operatives attached to Kawo Divisional Headquarters, Kaduna, received a distress call of a kidnapping incident from Abuja indicating the culprits and their victim were transiting through Kaduna.

The operatives at about 0010 hours blocked a grey Toyota Hilux van, registration number Abuja RBC 90 DC with four passengers, the driver inclusive, suspected to be the vehicle conveying the kidnappers and their victim.

On sensing danger and in an effort to escape, one of the kidnappers fired at the policemen and they responded accordingly. In the resulting gun duel, the



Abubakar



Feature

Preserving Nigeria's cultural heritage: necessity for national identity

By JANADA JOSHUA FALI

NIGERIA is a country that is rich in cultural heritage, boasting a diverse range of ethnic groups, languages, traditions, and arts. However, this valuable heritage often faces the risk of being forgotten or lost due to modernization, globalization, and changing societal norms. It is imperative that Nigeria takes active steps towards preserving and promoting its cultural heritage, as it is an integral part of its national identity and can greatly contribute to its development.

One of the main reasons for preserving Nigeria's cultural heritage is to strengthen the sense of national identity among its citizens. Cultural heritage acts as a link between the past, present, and future, providing a sense of continuity and belonging. By preserving and celebrating their cultural heritage, Nigerians can foster a stronger sense of unity and pride in their diverse heritage, fostering a stronger national identity that transcends ethnic, religious, and regional differences.

Preserving the cultural heritage of Nigeria also plays a crucial role in the development of the country's tourism sector. Nigeria has immense tourism potential, with its rich cultural heritage being a major attraction for both domestic and international visitors. Tourists often seek authentic cultural experiences, such as traditional festivals, arts and crafts, and historical landmarks. By preserving and highlighting its cultural heritage, Nigeria can tap into this potential and generate revenue, creating employment opportunities and contributing to the overall economic growth of the nation.

Furthermore, this will allow for the transmission of traditional knowledge and skills to future generations. Many traditional practices and craftsmanship are passed down through generations, carrying within them centuries of wisdom, creativity, and ingenuity. By preserving these traditions, Nigeria ensures that the younger generation has access to this invaluable knowledge, allowing them to learn and appreciate their roots. This is especially



important as Nigeria faces the challenges of globalization and the erosion of traditional practices in the face of modernity.

To preserve Nigeria's cultural heritage, there are a number of measures to consider. Firstly, there needs to be increased awareness and education about the value and significance of cultural heritage across all levels of society. This is through school curricula, community outreach programs, and public

campaigns that emphasize the importance of cultural heritage.

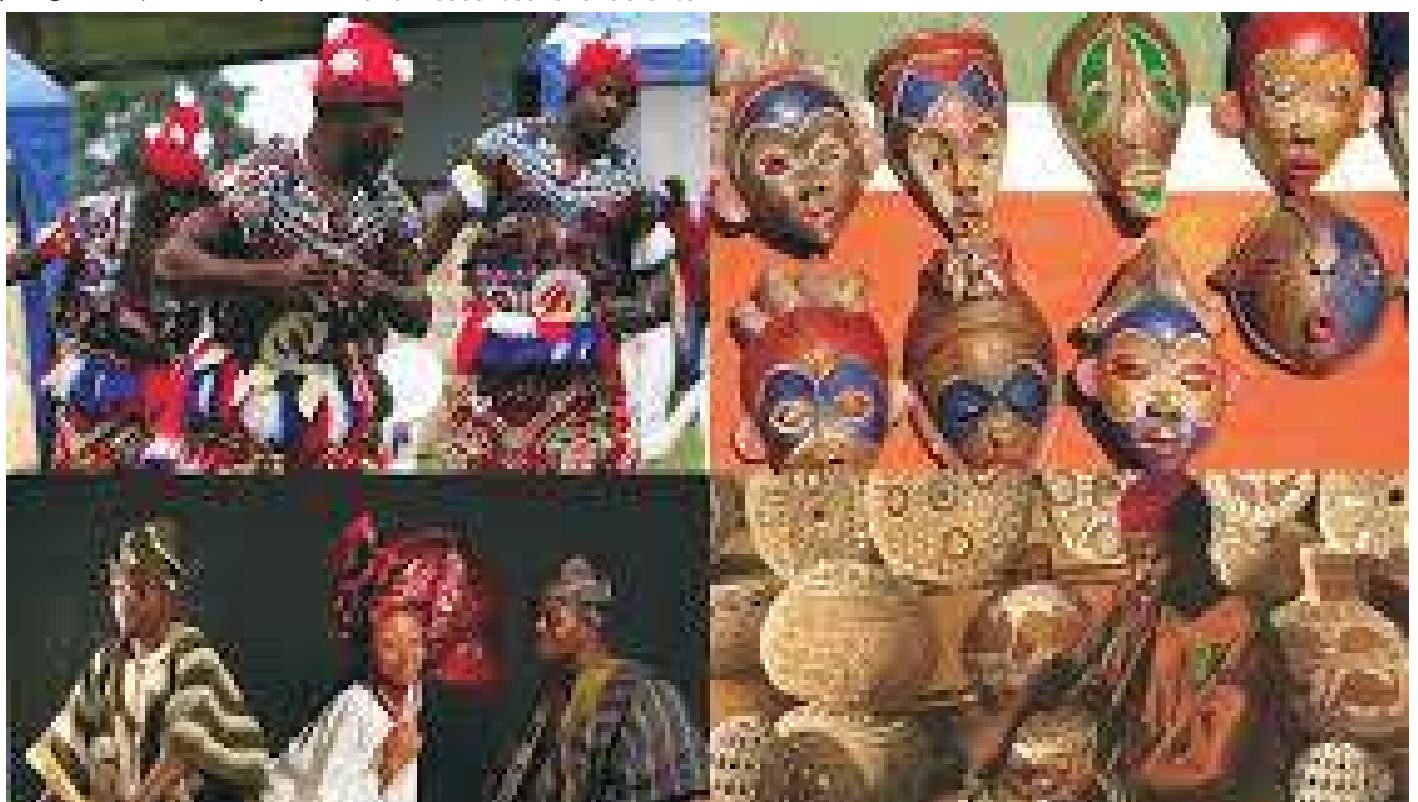
Secondly, there should be efforts to financially support and empower cultural institutions, such as museums, art galleries, and cultural centers. These institutions play a vital role in preserving and promoting Nigeria's cultural heritage, safeguarding artifacts, hosting exhibitions, and conducting research. Also making adequate funding and resources available to

enhance their capacities and ensure their sustainability.

Thirdly, collaboration and partnership between government agencies, community organizations, and cultural practitioners are essential in preserving Nigeria's cultural heritage. This involves fostering dialogue, sharing resources and expertise, and involving local communities in decision-making processes regarding cultural preservation and promotion.

In conclusion, preserving Nigeria's cultural heritage is not only a matter of identity and pride but also a catalyst for development and tourism. By taking proactive measures to safeguard its cultural heritage, Nigeria can reap the benefits of cultural tourism, strengthen national unity, and ensure the transmission of traditional knowledge to future generations.

**Fali is of National Museum, Jos.**





## Foreign News

### Western countries press China on minority rights

WESTERN countries used a U.N.-backed review of China's human rights record on Tuesday to press Beijing to do more to allow freedom of expression, protect the rights of ethnic minorities and repeal a security law in Hong Kong that is derided by independent activists, among other things.

China's ambassador in Geneva, Chen Xu, led a delegation from some 20 ministries in China for the review under the U.N. Human Rights Council. He stressed China's progress in poverty eradication, said citizens engage in "democratic elections," and said freedom of religious belief is safeguarded.

"China upholds respect for and protection of human rights as a task of importance in state governance," Chen said through an interpreter. "We have embarked on a path of human rights development that is in keeping with the trend of the times and appropriate to China's national conditions and so-called historic achievements in this process."

"We uphold the people-centered philosophy and strive to deliver a better life for all the people," he said.

The process, which encourages constructive recommendations over sharp criticism, nevertheless gave way to firm, if not scathing, advice to China from some leading Western countries.

Leslie Norton of Canada called on China to end "all forms of enforced disappearances targeting human rights defenders, ethnic minorities and Falun Gong practitioners" and urged the repeal of the Hong Kong security law.

Czech Ambassador Vaclav Balek urged China to "end the criminalization of religious and peaceful civil expression by ethnic and religious groups — including Muslim, Uyghurs and Buddhists, Tibetans and Mongolians — under the pretext of protecting state security" and "stop cross-border kidnappings and intimidating Chinese citizens living abroad."

Kozo Honsei, Japan's deputy permanent representative in Geneva, called for better protections of the rights of minorities in Tibet and the western Xinjiang region.

The hearing offered a wide-ranging look at the human rights situation in China. Bolivia's envoy commended China's efforts to reduce deforestation, Burundi's representative urged China to improve access to health care in central regions and to better housing in Hong Kong and Macao, and Iran praised China's "national action plan for human rights."

An extraordinarily high number of more than 160 countries — some critics of Beijing, some allies — registered to take part in the discussion. That meant each country had a maximum of 45 seconds to speak, forcing some ambassadors into what at times felt like a speed-reading exercise.

China's delegation had a total of 70 minutes to make its case.

The "universal periodic review" involves all U.N. member states coming up for scrutiny — at times sharp — by other countries roughly every five years. The 3 1/2-hour discussion aims to offer constructive criticism and produce a written report that will offer recommendations, not criticism.

Several groups such as Falun



**XI JINPING**

Gong and pro-Tibet activists held small demonstrations outside the U.N. Geneva compound during Tuesday's discussion.

Several human rights groups had events planned outside China's review, and the Tibet Advocacy Coalition, the World Uyghur Congress and human rights defenders in Hong Kong were expected to hold a joint news conference after the proceedings.

Another advocacy group aims to speak out against the forced repatriation from China of

women from North Korea who fled the nation under leader Kim Jong Un's rule.

On Monday, four independent human rights experts who work under a mandate from the council called for the release of Jimmy Lai, a former Hong Kong publisher on trial for alleged national security violations, and for all charges against him to be dropped.

At China's last review in 2018, the United States and other countries voiced concerns about its treatment of Muslim Uyghurs in Xinjiang.

### US's Blinken begins four-nation Africa tour

UNITED States Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Monday said the US is committed to deeper relations with Africa despite global crises as he opened a four-country tour of the continent.

Blinken is touring four democracies on the Atlantic Coast — Cape Verde, Ivory Coast, Nigeria and Angola — as security deteriorates in the Sahel and doubts grow about a key US base in neighbouring coup-hit Niger.

US President Joe Biden welcomed leaders from Africa in 2022 in a show of newfound attention to the continent. But he did not visit Africa last year as promised.

Blinken nonetheless quoted Biden as he vowed, "We are all in when it comes to Africa."

"Our futures are linked, our prosperity is linked, and African voices increasingly are shaping, animating and leading the global conversation," Blinken said as he opened talks in Cape Verde.

"The United States is committed to deepening, strengthening and broadening partnerships across

Africa," Blinken said.

He called Cape Verde, a Portuguese-speaking archipelago of around 500,000 people that has cooperated with the US on law enforcement and naval stops, a "beacon of stability" and a "strong, principled voice".

Much of the continent has been uneasy about the billions of dollars in Western aid to Ukraine, and Cape Verde's Prime Minister Jose Ulisses Correia e Silva told Blinken that his country "strongly condemns" Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Silva also criticised the recent spate of coups in Africa and said that Cape Verde was "guided by the values of liberal democracy".

Blinken toured the port in the capital Praia, expanded as part of nearly \$150m given to Cape Verde through the Millennium Challenge Corporation, which grants US aid to countries that meet democratic standards.

The US government body said last month that it would work with Cape Verde on a third package,

### Russia will consider property confiscations for convicted army

RUSSIA'S parliament will consider a law allowing for the confiscation of money, valuables, and other property from those deemed to spread "deliberately false information" about Moscow's military actions, a senior lawmaker said Saturday.

Vyacheslav Volodin, speaker of the State Duma, wrote in a Telegram update that the measure would apply to those publicly inciting "extremist activities" or calling for the introduction of sanctions against Russia, as well as those "discrediting" the armed forces, a criminal offense under a law adopted as part of Moscow's crackdown on dissent after it sent troops into Ukraine in February 2022.

"Everyone who tries to destroy Russia, betrays it, must suffer the deserved punishment and

compensate for the damage inflicted on the country, at the cost of their property," Volodin said. He added that under the law, those found guilty of "discrediting" the army also face being stripped of any honorary titles.

Volodin said the bill would be brought to the Duma, Russia's lower parliamentary chamber, on Monday.

The existing law against "discrediting" the Russian military, which covers offenses such as "justifying terrorism" and spreading "fake news" about the armed forces, is regularly used to silence critics of the Russian President, Vladimir Putin. Multiple activists, bloggers and ordinary Russians have received long jail terms.

Russian state media reported last month that one of the country's bestselling novelists,

THE upper house of Britain's Parliament has urged the Conservative government not to ratify a migration treaty with Rwanda. It's a largely symbolic move, but signals more opposition to come for the stalled and contentious plan to send some asylum-seekers on a one-way trip to the African nation.

The House of Lords voted by 214 to 171 on Monday evening to delay the treaty that paves the way for the deportation plan. The treaty and an accompanying bill are the pillars of Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's bid to overcome a block on the deportations by the U.K. Supreme Court.

Members of the Lords, who are appointed rather than elected, backed a motion saying Parliament should not ratify the pact until ministers can show Rwanda is safe.

John Kerr, a former diplomat who sits in the Lords, said the Rwanda plan was "incompatible with our responsibilities" under international human rights law.

"The considerations of international law and national reputation ... convince me that it wouldn't be right to ratify this treaty at any time," he said.

The vote has little practical impact, because the House of Lords can't block an international treaty, and the

### Rishi Sunak's Rwanda migration bill suffers blow



**Sunak**

government says it will not delay. However, ignoring the demand could later be used against the government in a legal challenge.

Lawmakers in the House of Commons approved the bill last week, but only after 60 members of Sunak's

governing Conservatives rebelled in an effort to make the legislation tougher.

Monday's vote indicates the strength of opposition in the House of Lords. Many there want to water down the bill — and, unlike in the Commons, the governing Conservatives do not have a majority of seats.

The Lords will begin debating the bill next week. Ultimately the upper house can delay and amend legislation but can't overrule the elected Commons.

The Rwanda policy is key to Sunak's pledge to "stop the boats" bringing unauthorized migrants to the U.K. across the English Channel from France. Sunak argues that deporting unauthorized asylum-seekers will deter people from making risky journeys across the English Channel and break the business model of people-smuggling gangs.

London and Kigali made a deal almost two years ago under which migrants who reach Britain across the Channel would be sent to Rwanda, where they would stay permanently. Britain has paid Rwanda at least 240 million pounds (\$305 million) under the agreement, but no one has yet been sent to the East African country.

Human rights groups have criticized the plan as inhumane and unworkable. After it was challenged in British courts, the U.K. Supreme Court ruled in November that the policy was illegal because Rwanda isn't a safe country for refugees.

In response to the court ruling, Britain and Rwanda signed a treaty pledging to strengthen protections for migrants. Sunak's government argues the treaty allows it to pass a law declaring Rwanda a safe destination.

If approved by Parliament, the law would allow the government to "disapply" sections of U.K. human rights law when it comes to Rwanda-related asylum claims and make it harder to challenge the deportations in court.



**Antony Blinken**

and Silva invited the Peace Corps to return after a decade-long absence.

Later on Monday, Blinken will head to Ivory Coast, where he will watch the host country take on Equatorial Guinea in the Africa Cup of Nations.

The match will take place at the 60,000-seat Olympic stadium built with support from China, whose own Foreign Minister Wang Yi visited last week.

Along with Russia, China —

which is seen by the US as the top global rival — has rapidly expanded its influence in Africa in recent years.

While China has doled out loans for infrastructure projects, Russia's powerful and ruthless Wagner Group of mercenaries has been deployed to Mali, the Central African Republic, and allegedly Burkina Faso.

A delegation visited Moscow last month from Niger, whose military last year toppled elected President Mohamed Bazoum months after a visit by Blinken aimed at bolstering him.

Niger had been the linchpin in US efforts to counter armed groups who have ravaged the Sahel, with the US building a \$100m base in the Nigerien desert city of Agadez to fly a fleet of drones.

The government expelled forces from former colonial power France.

While Niger has allowed the US to keep its nearly 1,000 US troops, General James Hecker, the US Air Force commander for both Europe and Africa, said late last year that "several locations" elsewhere in West Africa were being discussed for a new drone base.

As Blinken opens his visit, US Ambassador to the United Nations Linda Thomas-Greenfield is touring three other West African nations — Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone, and Liberia, where she is attending a presidential inauguration and monitoring a peaceful transition of power in a



## Feature

# Your Excellency, Plateau State Governor, Caleb Mutfwang sir...

By **BULUS GAMBO**

YOUR Excellency my humble Governor, Barrister Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang sir, though I found it quite expedient to write this thoughts to you, I hope that it will get to you and you will read it so that my joy will be full. Firstly, I wish to from the bottom of my heart join many other citizens of the state in congratulating you on your historic victory at the Supreme Court of Nigeria which affirms you as the duly elected Executive Governor of the state. Though it has been quite a long stressful walk to victory, my friends and I never lost hope and faith that this God-given mandate to you through the citizens of this peace-loving state will eventually be established to the glory of His name.

Let it also be established that many people even some close to you never believed that this victory shall come to pass. I even heard that some of them at a point during our traumatic journey stood on the fence thinking that our boat may eventually capsize. For the majority of Plateau citizens however, they were resolutely optimistic that the Lord is certainly on our side and victory is assured because He uses the foolish things of the world to confront the wise.

As humans, when things got tough, we had every cause to express fear and anxiety, but my trust in God never wavered due to our Abrahamic covenant which assures us that 'all things work together for good for them that trust God'

Sir, I can still recall with great nostalgia that after the Appeal Court ruling against you and the entire interest of the people of the state, you still stood firm as a dogged leader prayerfully hopeful that 'God who started a good work in us shall never abandon us'. For this reason, I was not surprised by your pragmatic perseverance considering your upbringing and family background where you have continued to draw strength from. The little I asked about the antecedents of the Mutfwang's family depicts the fact that the family had raised an alter a long time before now.

Today, we have every reason to celebrate the Almighty God for seeing you and us through these hiccups of injustice to the very glorious end through Christ who throughout this journey never for once abandoned us.

Sir, just as it was not easy for the truth to be established in the court on your matter, I am convinced beyond reasonable doubt that you are aware of the obvious; it has not been palatable for the entire citizens of this state. From a historical perspective, since 1<sup>st</sup> April 1994, Plateau State has been almost overwhelmed by many unprovoked and senseless killings which have consequently led to the death of hundreds of thousands of innocent lives.

This violence first took place after Alhaji Sanusi Mato was appointed Sole Administrator of Jos North Local Government Area which was rejected by the indigenous groups. Of course, I think the natives have a right to protest if the appointment led to their marginalization as minorities in this country. Though the appointment was eventually reversed, this development sometimes spark controversy over the ownership of Jos. Despite concrete historical evidence at our disposal which indicates that the indigenous groups own the city of Jos, in Plateau State, the contestation over the ownership of the city by the Hausa/Fulani has over the years led to a breakdown of law and order.

In the aftermath of the conflict of 1994, the Justice Fibersima Commission of Inquiry was constituted to investigate the



**Mutfwang**

disturbance. Unfortunately, the state government till today is yet to implement the white paper report of the Commission of Inquiry. In fact, many other Commissions of Inquiries were constituted after several attacks which followed but nothing tangible has come out of the various reports. In this regard, the perpetrators of these heinous crimes against humanity are freely walking on our streets with impunity. Consequently, many of these evildoers can still do anything and simply get away with it. For these kind of people, human life is cheap and can be carelessly terminated whenever they want it done.

Plateau State also had other bitter violent conflicts in 1995, 1997, the September 7th - 11<sup>th</sup> Jos Crisis, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024. The Dogon Nahauwa massacre where more than three hundred persons were killed including the most recent unprovoked attacks in Mangu, Bokkos and Barkin Ladi Local Government Areas of the state where more than 200 innocent people were killed by Fulani marauders last Christmas Eve of 2023. It is on record that most of these violence in the past were unprovoked attacks meted out against the natives of the state. But if as others ignorantly claim; these conflicts were unavoidable due to the consequences of climate change, the fundamental question to ask is; is this problem enough reason for the natives to be chased out of their ancestral homes? In the aftermath of almost all these attacks, Commissions of Inquiries were constituted but none of its whitepapers have so far been implemented. Rather, these unabated and unprovoked attacks have led to the citizens losing their loved ones and suffering various socio-economic and political setbacks which have left much to be desired in terms of developmental anticipations. Many families have lost their breadwinners. Your Excellency sir, it is also on record that these attacks have virtually rendered hundreds of the citizens of the state orphans, widows, and widowers with no hope of a better tomorrow.

In recent years, many social commentators and politicians have pushed forward a fallacious agitation that these conflicts on the Plateau are basically between herders and farmers.

The truth however is that it's an unrelenting jihad and or deliberate attack mostly aimed at dislodging the natives from their ancestral homes. In fact, since the 2001 attacks, it has become more evident that these land grabbers have continued to push the natives' further hinterland away from arable lands to own them permanently. Regrettably, most of the victims of these unending attacks have become refugees in their own lands. We must also come to terms with the reality of the fact that these acts of criminality should not be given any ethnic or religious coloration. We should deal with criminals just the way and manner they ought to be treated. The state must hugely invest in the security sector knowing too well its relevance to socioeconomic and political advancement of the state.

To help curb this menace of insecurity, you should strengthen the operational capacity of Operation Rainbow, community policing, and other volunteer groups to help bring all these criminals to book. As it is today, Your Excellency, Plateau citizens need protection and you are obligated to do everything and anything possible within the confines of the law to get it done. I wish to also advise you particularly on the need to lobby for one of the turcado Warcraft to be brought to Plateau to help deal with the present insecurity problem facing the state. Alternatively, a Police helicopter can also be located at the Kerang axis to help respond to emergencies when the need arises. The bottom line however is that natives must be encouraged to defend themselves should any such ugly incident occurs in the future. This if done can help in no small measure towards sustaining our collective peace for progress on the Plateau. But again, there is an urgent need for the government to implement the various recommendations of these Commission of Inquiries to sanction all those found wanting to serve as deterrent.

Sir, before I go any further, I am convinced that amid all these calamities, the true Plateau story is not told to the outside world due to lack of effective and efficient state-owned media organizations to shoulder this single important responsibility. Consequently, the narrative in public domain is that

Plateau people are very troublesome, intolerant, aggressive, and not hospitable in character. But again, in their gimmick to get more sympathy and support, enemies of the state have continued to disseminate fallacious ideology bringing religious coloration into the remote causes of the crisis.

Sir, over the years, the two state-owned media organizations (Nigeria Standard and Plateau Radio Television Corporation, PRTVC) have attempted to change the narratives but are incapable of doing so due to some obvious reasons. These two media organizations have today become a shadow of themselves due to absolute equipment and lack of adequate staff strength. Staff morale has been quite low too in most recent years.

The Nigeria Standard group of newspapers which was established by the Military Administrator of the state, Police Commissioner J D Gomwalk in 1972 has today become a shadow of itself. The newspaper organization which used to produce daily hardly produces twice a week this time around.

Most of the good hands have left and many are still leaving the organization while there is pragmatically a huge gap between senior and junior staff due to lack of employment to fill available empty places. A near similar situation is happening in PRTVC where the organization is day in and out losing its status in the Nigerian broadcast media industry. Certainly, though these state media organizations fall within the scope of the state government's social responsibilities, the government must acknowledge that investing in the sector is not a waste of resources. The issue of improving media workers' allowances should be topmost on your agenda considering the hazards they go through daily to get their jobs done.

From a much broader perspective, however, the entire civil service on the Plateau needs a complete re-jik. This is more so because many parastatals have gone into a state of comatose and the philosophy imbibed by many state workers is to just collect their salary without justifying it and life goes on. In some offices, there is no conducive and or enabling environment for the smooth running of anticipated obligations as many staff are significantly redundant.

Subsequently, unlike what was obtainable in the past, truancy and indiscipline have become the order of the day in most ministries, parastatals, and agencies in the state. Most of the postings of civil servants before your emergence as Governor had been based on the 'who you know syndrome' which is not in the interest of the growth and sustainable development of the state. Teaching and nursing workers who know their ways have remained in urban areas for a long time while others who know no body upstairs continue to live and die in rural settlements. The punishment and or reward mechanism in governance is gone with the wind. We have seen situations where workers scramble for perceived lucrative departments and agencies even when they are not qualified to handle such places but their wishes are automatically granted by the powers that be or their godfathers.

But, Your Excellency, if the fortunes of our civil servants must be turned around for the better, there must be a proper reorientation and injection of a new concept of positive ideology through seminars and workshops.

**To be continued**



# THE NIGERIA STANDARD'S WORLD

With PALANG KASMI

## Health

### why your face looks swollen

THERE are many reasons why your face looks swollen, it will be nice to look at the possible causes in this piece written by Paul Frysh.

**Medication:** Facial swelling can be a side effect of some common medications, including: ACE inhibitors for high blood pressure (enalapril, lisinopril, ramipril)

ARBs for high blood pressure (irbesartan, losartan, valsartan)

**Corticosteroids**

**Estrogen**

Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (aspirin, ibuprofen, naproxen) Thiazolidinedione's (pioglitazone, rosiglitazone) for diabetes

**Drug allergies:** It might not be a medication side effect, but your body's allergic reaction. This can cause swelling in your face and elsewhere. It may also cause an itchy rash on your skin and breathing problems, sometimes serious enough to require emergency care. Common triggers are antibiotics (such as penicillin), aspirin, ibuprofen, anti-seizure meds, and chemotherapy drugs.

**Bug bite or sting:** Those tiny critters (bees, wasps, spiders) can give you a mighty bite or sting that inflames and irritates your skin. This usually gets better in a few hours or days.

An allergic reaction can worsen the swelling, sometimes away from the bite itself. In some cases, this can be a sign of a serious response called anaphylaxis



**Sinusitis:** It usually starts inflamed simply by touching with the common cold. This jewelry, makeup, or plants like makes it easier for bacteria to poison ivy. Sometimes it's an infect your sinuses, the small allergic reaction, but it also hollow, bony areas near your could be toxins like battery acid cheekbones. A stuffy, blocked or bleed. Or just too much of nose is the most obvious any substance. Even saliva can symptom. Pain and swelling dry and inflame your lips if you happen around your nose, lick them too much. Try to figure cheeks, eyes, and forehead and out and avoid the cause. Overnight get worse when you bend the-counter drugs and creams over. Your doctor can help you are usually enough to ease your treat it with rest, pain symptoms.

**Cushing's Syndrome:** Your antibiotics. face can get a rounded, "moon-

**Preeclampsia:** If you're faced" swollen look from this pregnant and your face, hands, rare condition. It happens when or feet swell all of a sudden, it your adrenal glands make too may be a sign of this serious much of the "stress hormone" condition. You might also have a cortisol for too long. You might headache, nausea, trouble also have more fat around your breathing, or belly pain. It starts belly and neck, weaker muscles, around 20 weeks into a and purplish bruises or stretch pregnancy and causes a rise in marks. Treatments include blood pressure. Tell your doctor surgery if a tumor caused the right away if you notice condition, chemotherapy, symptoms. It can damage radiation, or medication to organs -- often the liver or lower your cortisol levels.

kidneys -- and is risky for your **Superior Vena Cava**

**Syndrome:** This isn't likely unless you have lung cancer, lower layers of skin. In kids, it's non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, or most common in the face and other cancers that spread to the neck. The first sign is usually red chest. The superior vena cava is and swollen skin that's warm a vein that carries blood to the and sensitive to the touch. You heart from the head, neck, and chest. If it gets blocked, usually

sometimes nausea, drowsiness, by a cancer, it's called superior and trouble thinking. You could vena cava syndrome. Your face, see red streaks, bumps, or sores arms, neck, and upper body on your skin. Get medical care often swell up. You also might right away if you notice these start to cough more and have signs because it can be very trouble breathing. Call your doctor right away. Call 911 if serious if you don't treat it.

**Contact dermatitis:** Your have trouble breathing. face gets itchy, red, and **Courtesy webmb.com**

with painful, dry, itchy skin, serious sunburn can cause your face to swell and blister. You could even have a headache, dizziness, and nausea. So cover up with hats and protective clothing, use sunscreen that has an SPF of 30 or higher, and stay out of the sun during the brightest part of the day.

**Food allergy:** If you're allergic to things you eat or drink, your body will react if it comes across them. Fish, nuts, and dairy are common triggers. This may inflame your face within minutes, especially around your lips and eyes, as well as your tongue and the roof of the mouth. You may also feel light-headed, nauseated, and itchy on your skin or inside your ears, mouth, or throat. Call 911 and use an epinephrine pen if you were prescribed one.

**Angioedema:** It's when too much fluid collects under your skin, commonly around your face. It's not always clear what causes it, but it can happen because of an allergic reaction to a wide range of things, including pollen, latex (in rubber), insect bites, food, water, and even sunlight. Medications can also cause it, even without an allergic reaction.





# EVERY SOW WORLD

With PALANG KASMI

## Inspirational woman

# Don't give up, you can achieve your goal

**She was initially contented with school certificate but is now awaiting a PhD. She is an educationist, mother, grand-mother, philanthropist, founder and proprietress of Peret Private School located in Yaba, Lagos. A lover of women empowerment, Mrs. Beatrice Zuhumben is a professional member of Counselling Association of Nigeria (CASSON), Association of Child Learning Psychologists (ACLP), and certified professional teacher by Teachers Registration Council (TRC). The mother of four who is a recipient of many humanitarian awards, recalls how she nurtured her personal dreams from being a typical village girl to a fulfilled professional, and speaks about the source of her passion for supporting indigent women. PALANG KASMI writes.**



Zuhumben



### Your brief bio

I am Beatrice Paul Zuhumben, a mother of four children, grand mother, and Educationist. I was born on the 18th of February 1971 in Jos, Plateau State to the family of Late Pastor Abalis Diyoland and Mama Lois Abalis Diyol from Grong of the then Chip District (Now Jibam district) Pankshin Local Government Area of Plateau State. I am married to Kasum of Jibam, Nda Engr. Paul Daniel Zuhumben on the 3rd April 1993 and I am blessed with four children. I own a school in Lagos Peret Diamond School nursery and private school which has over 100 pupils".

### What was growing up like

"I was born in Jos, my Dad was a carpenter, but I didn't grow up in Jos, we moved to Pankshin, that's where I did my early childhood, and I started my education Primary 1-3 at LEA primary school. I moved to Lafia, with my uncle where I completed at St. Williams Primary School Lafia in 1983. I got admission to Plateau College Sharam,

and went. Along the line, I spent holidays with my parents and when resuming to school, payment of school fees became a problem, they couldn't afford it all at once, I was always paying in bits, and facing this embarrassment of "who has not paid his or her fees". So I was always among those people that did not pay school fees. Among us, I realised that there was some of my classmates that were not experiencing school fees drive so I prayed to God and said please help me to be like them, and to be a parent that will also pay my children's school fees in one instalment when I grow up to avoid the kind of embarrassment I faced. In my secondary school, Governors and rich kids attended, so another thing I remembered was how we will be passing and resuming school, pulling our Iron boxes, while the rich kids will be passing us in their parents cars, non of them even stopped to give us a lift. So I started praying and saying please God, me too, I will like to give my children that kind of life. Significantly, growing up in

that school environment gave me hope that life could be better. I now had a bigger vision and wider dream about aspiring to be a great person. And in school, friendship then, was based on your parents status, nobody will tell you where to belong. Unfortunately for me, I did not do well in my school certificate, I can't tell if it was because I was intimidated or what. And that was the beginning of my misfortune. I knew I was a smart child, but I didn't get my exams. Even in the local setting where I stayed, they saw me as a smart child and they nicknamed me "The English girl". The push I needed at that time was for somebody to ask me at 17 years to go back to secondary school and continue with my education but there was nothing like that. I was still there and didn't know when the vision will come, until my husband came for my hand in marriage and we got married in 1993. Then 2 days after the wedding, we travelled to Lagos. When I saw Lagos, I was excited with a kind of fulfillment and I said wow, my dream is coming true. I took in immediately after I got married, and my husband bought our first car, and started teaching me how to drive. I said wow, God has answered my prayers. He eventually enrolled me into a driving school, and I gave birth to my first daughter, and then of course, I started driving my daughter to school, so for me, another big dream of mine was met. Then I recall promising God that if he actualises my dreams, I will return help and give lift to those who don't have a car, so I took it upon myself to encourage and pick my neighbour who did not have a car to and fro school runnings. I was always eager to help and pick her and her children to school. Initially, I was contented and refused to go back to school thinking I had arrived until in 1999 when my sister

in law, Miss Yosi Zuhumben challenged me to go back to school. She told me I was intelligent and need to go back. "Beatrice why don't you go back to school? You are intelligent". I was amazed that someone noticed the potential in me, so as if I just woke up from sleep, I went and bought a form from Micheal Otedola College of Primary Education Epe, Lagos and did grade 2, NCE part time. I further went to University of Lagos where I bagged a B.Ed. (2006-2011) degree second class upper, went further to do my Masters, M.Ed (2014) and came out with a good grade which got me enrolled for my PhD, which I'm currently doing, I am running and collecting my data in Jos. Along the line, my prayers was to make my children and husband proud of me. I am glad love for children education came to fruition in 2016, through the founding and establishment of Peret Diamond School Lagos, which serves as a platform for coaching, mentoring, instilling discipline, integrity, impacting valuable principles in young children, and contributing to developing future leaders in the society.

### What do you attribute to your success story?

First my husband. He has been very supportive of my education and career. He pushes me to aspire and succeed. When my sister in law challenged me to go back to school, he encouraged and supported me, if not I would have been nowhere today. In my PhD research which I'm presently doing, he is constantly advising me on ways to do it and I am advancing in my research work. He actually made all those my childhood dreams come true, one thing I ever did that was correct was to

say "Yes I do", and marry him, and then all those my early childhood dreams just came to pass, the dream of I will go to school, my children will not owe school fees, I will drive my children to school among others. I am grateful to him for helping me fulfill my dreams. My sister in law too was my major breakthrough, she opened my eyes to wake up and pushed me to move on.

### Why are you passionate about supporting women and the indigent

I am a beneficiary of inspiration by my sister-in-law. And after staying all my life in Lagos, I have seen that every woman here is pushing to be a better version of herself, and trying to give back to society. That is why I started impacting in the lives of women and the girl child. I just feel that if I can achieve the things I did, every woman and girl too can, or even do better. I realised that in rural communities, women are the breadwinners of their families. I also see them doing petty businesses to survive. I realised I need to help them to set up their business's, and I need to assist someone that can be accountable to do something, so I see some women and give them support in form of soft loans to see what they can do with it. Also, in the course of my PhD, I realised I can do something to touch the lives of women. So when I went to the village this Christmas, I organised skills acquisition. We must strive hard not just be any woman, but a woman who can make an impact on her family. So in line with my PhD theses, I organised a skills acquisition training on soap making and other things for the women in the village, and I saw the passion in them and promised them that it will be yearly training, even if that is the gift I will bring to them every yuletide season. And in the process, I will support them to set up the businesses.

### Tell us about your recent SWS award for your humanitarian services

I felt so happy. I was so amazed that although I have lived the most part of my life in Lagos for 31 years, but someone in Jos had picked me here in Jos and said I deserve an award. And because someone noticed the little thing I am doing, this will just encourage, and motivate me to do more.

### Trafficking in Plateau IDP camps and the country is a challenge, any word on the menace

We just have to fix our eyes in our environment, watch out for these people and do whatever we can do. "Say something", when you see them. In Lagos, many people will call me and say "Your sister here is suffering", "They are maltreating her here". Then I will come and speak to them in my language or the one that they will understand and ask "Are you happy where you are?". Because the way people maltreat these girls is sad and painful. These girls are vulnerable, sometimes we find them in our church environment, what we do is we remove them from a house they are not comfortable in, and take them to the family that will help them or better their life's. Therefore I advice people affected by conflict, and are living in Internally Displaced Persons Camps (IDP's) to be careful with people or organisations that come for their children with a promise of taking them away to give them a better life. Be careful with anyone that comes to say they will help them. Those offering help should have the fear of God before visiting those camps.

### Any advice to the struggling woman

Don't give up, one day, someone will identify you and a bigger help will come. Like the women I supported during this Christmas, they didn't ask me, I just asked them a simple question "If you get support, will you do better?" and they said yes. So you see, help can come from anywhere. Just don't give up. Keep pushing. I believe like me, you can still achieve your goal, regardless of obstacles and any challenges.



Editorial

Relocation of agencies to Lagos: Need for caution

RECENTLY, the Federal Government announced the relocation of some agencies from Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory, back to Lagos. The Central Bank of Nigeria, which was among the agencies relocated, in an internal memo last week, announced that the transfer of some of its departments to Lagos was on the grounds that its headquarters in Abuja is congested with staff.

Similarly, the Minister of Aviation and Aerospace Department, Festus Keyamo also announced the relocation of the FAAN headquarters from Abuja to Lagos.

The move has caused a lot of rumpus between the Northern part of the country and the South. ABOUT 58 Senators from the North have vowed to challenge the decision and ensure its subsequent reversal while the Southern prominent people like the South-South leader, Chief Edwin Clark said there is nothing wrong with relocating some departments of the CBN to Lagos.

ACCORDING to Clark, nobody was consulted when the Navy was moved to Kano when the Shippers House and the Nigeria Maritime Authority, NMA, were moved to Abuja before former President Olusegun Obasanjo moved them to Lagos.

Prominent among the voices against the move is the Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF). They had condemned the relocation of the two federal government agencies, claiming that the decision was to further under-develop the northern part of the country.

THE Federal Capital Territory was conceived after the Civil War which lasted for 3 years, ending in 1970 to give all Nigerians a sense of belonging.

IT remains the seat of the nation government, hosting a plethora of Federal Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) like the National Judicial Council, National University Commission, the National Identity Management Commission, an international airport, among others.

It is in this backdrop that we call on the federal government to reconsider the relocation of federal government agencies from Abuja to Lagos to avoid painting it as a bias government which is trying to favor a particular part of the country. AS it stands, it is already giving the relocation, an ethnic colouration.

It should further make widespread consultations regarding certain decisions and policies to avoid being lopsided in the destitution and allocation of resources and federal agencies.

LAGOS, the former capital of Nigeria, is industrially clustered, hence, the decision to relocate these agencies is unnecessary and uncalled for.

WE call on the federal government to maintain status quo by reversing the decision in order to give confidence to Nigerians on the President Tinubu led government.

MOVING these agencies to Abuja is tantamount to breaching the essence of the Federal Character Commission.

"Dogo yaro" as the neem tree is popularly called in Nigeria, means " tall man in English when translated from "hausa". The botanical name is Azadirachta Indica. The average height of a neem tree is about 30 metres, and its Branches are over spreading. The tree was first introduced to Nigeria in 1928 by the colonial government who developed plantation of it to check desertification and to provide shades in hot, dry and windswept areas. Kebbi state to be precise. It is a tree that is easily found in every nook and cranny and is about the only kind of tree planted in this region because, of the harsh weather. It is also found in some States such as Nasarawa and Abuja.

The fruits and seeds of the tree are the sources of the much acclaimed neem oil. Neem leaf may help manage skin ailments like eczema and psoriasis. Neem bark has potential as a food additive and is often considered a pitta pacifier due to its bitter taste. Neem fruit and seeds from which neem oil is extracted.

Neem oil helps treat skin ailments and other health issues.

Neem oil aids in asthma treatment and also helps control phlegm fever, and cough. Have a few drops of neem oil everyday, and increase the dose gradually. This should help. The oil is also used traditionally to cure asthma

Neem oil can play a major role in treating gum disease. Mouth washes that contain neem extracts inhibit the growth of bacteria that causes oral issues. In fact neem oil is added to certain toothpastes as the oil acts as a purifier and an



Benefit of neem oil

antimicrobial agent.

Neem oil can be used to treat leprosy. It is also used to treat malaria, a touch or drop of the oil into your mouth can be useful.

Neem oil can treat more than 60 types of nail fungus. The oil is applied to the affected area numerous times in a day until the infection heals.

The oil extracted from neem flowers is used in aromatherapy as it has a

restorative and calming effect on the body. For this reason, neem flower oil is an important ingredient in various creams and massage oils. Regularly massaging with neem oil can also help reduce muscle and joint pains. The massage can also help alleviate lower back pain, treats wounds and rashes. The topical use of neem oil was found to aid wound healing, especially when used in combination with haridra capsules an ayurvedic medicine brand.

Just dilute neem oil with water and add 100 ml of this concoction to your bathing water. This can also help treat skin allergies.

Neem works wonders for psoriasis, the most common problem associated with this disease is dryness and scaling. Neem oil helps in getting rid of the itchiness and irritation. It also helps in keeping the skin moisturized, thus reducing the dryness and scaling.

Neem oil works as a natural substitute for anti-aging products and as a protective agent against skin damage caused by UV rays. It deeply penetrates skin to restore moisture, enhance elasticity, smooth wrinkles, stimulate collagen production, and heal crack caused by dryness. It reduces skin redness and brings out a healthy glow. It unclogs pores and follicles while soothing irritated skin without leaving a greasy residue, makes neem oil an effective agent for acne-prone skin. It prevents future breakouts by eliminating acne-prone bacteria purging impurities, tightening the pores.

Neem oil naturally removes dandruff and balances hair natural pH level, preventing future dandruff. Neem oil to the scalp moisturizes hair from root to tip. Maintain the health of the scalp and repairs split ends which can arrest the development of hair growth and create frizz. Neem oil can rejuvenate and fortify dull, frizzy hair by conditioning it to restore its luster and strength.

There are various colors of neem oil ranging between golden yellow, yellowish brown, reddish brown, dark brown, greenish brown and bright red. It is known to have a strong odour that can be likened to have a mixture of peanut and garlic aromas.

Letters by Joy Asheson Dankuje Mass communication Federal University Lafia

What turns woman off a man

SO, what can you do to turn off a woman? Whether you are already in a relationship or searching for one, staying away from a woman can keep you in her good graces. Turn offs are traits, action, or behaviors that cause someone to feel bored, disgusted or even lose sexual interest. In this article you will see a woman's biggest turn off, what they mean.

**IGNORING HER:** If you dismiss a woman she may think you don't value her. The silent treatment does not always work on women. They usually like talking things out. By ignoring her, she might think you are saying "I don't really care about what you are saying or your feeling" even if you are not. Show her that you do care, by actively listening to her. Put your phone down, look into her eyes and engage in the conversation.

**BEING CLOSE MINDED AND JUDGMENTAL:** Women want a partner they can talk openly and honestly with having strong opinions is great, but so is being open to hearing others if you shut down opinions that are not yours or make harsh comment about other people, she may just walk the other way. Keep an open mind and have civil conversation instead of being insistent about your own opinion. It's perfectly okay to be opinionated but do not forget to hear other sides.

**BOASTING ABOUT YOUR SELF:** Bragging about your asset could turn a woman off. Being confident is one thing, but humble bragging is another. Humble bragging is when you causally bring up accomplished or skills to boast about yourself indirectly. Studies have shown

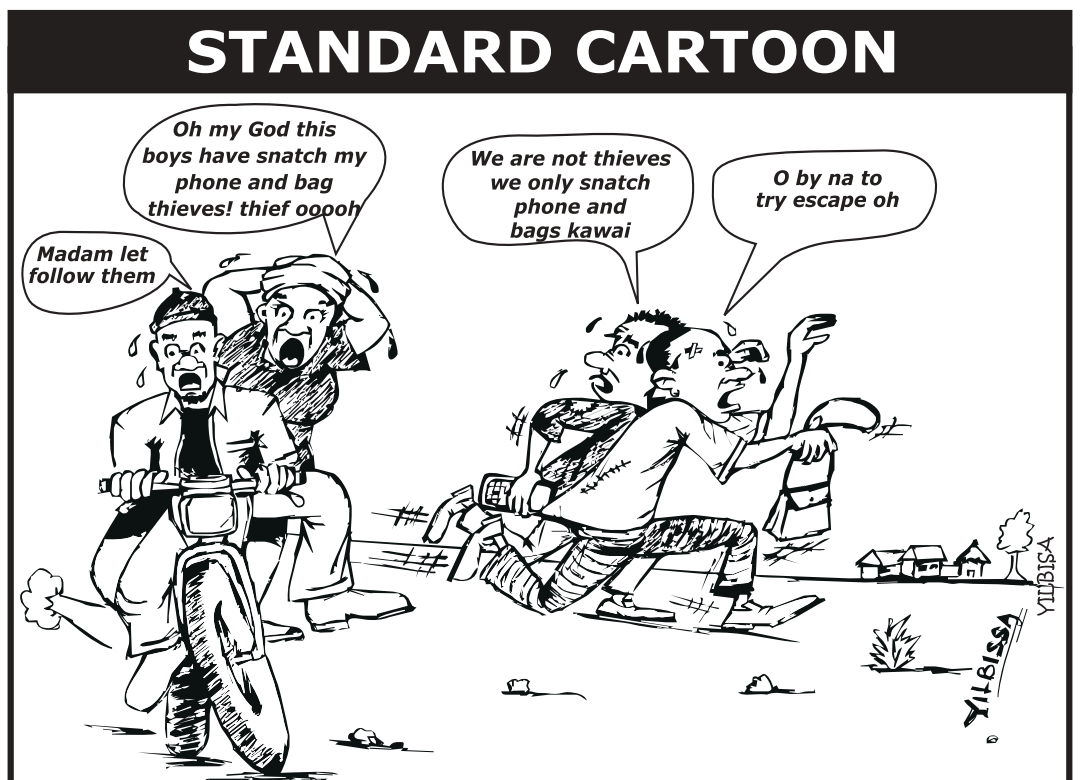
that this type of self admiration can make people like you less. Aim to only bring up your achivem or skills when she asks about them. It's okay to show off what you have got to offer, but turn it down a bit to appear less self absorbed.

**BEING SEX OBSESSED**  
If sex is the only thing they are after, a woman might end the relationship. A major turn off is not listening to what she wants. Being too pushy or always talking about sex might make her think you value her sexiness over personality. Try following her lead instead of putting your needs first. It's okay to say what you want, but give her the chance to say "yes or no" and honor that.

Having an aggressive attitude women don't want to "walk on eggshells" when they are around you. Being assertive can be a positive trait, but being combative might be a major turn off. A woman wants to be able to talk to her partner about anything, and if you are automatically defensive, having conversation can be difficult. Control your anger if you are naturally defensive person. Being aggressive is inappropriate, unacceptable even illegal in many instances.

**POOR HYGIENE:** I wasn't even going to include this but based on some of my past dates, it still needs to be said. Brush your teeth, shower daily, Wear deodorant.

Wash your clothes. This should not have to be said, guys. It is a turn off for women when you can't take care of even the most minor of adult's responsibilities.





## Opinion

# Adopting mentally healthier “no gree for anybody” mantra

*It is important to state that I do not equate “no gree for anybody” with aggression/irritability or anger in all instances. However, I think it is important that in resisting people riding us roughshod and demanding better conditions, we should be mindful of boundaries, people's idiosyncrasies, and our mental and physical health as well as that of others. Perhaps we can re-channel the “no gree for anybody” and adopt the “no gree for unhealthy mental health” mantra.*

A few days ago, the air was filled with cheer: Resounding with echoes of “happy new year” and the characteristic exchange of pleasantries to usher in the new year. Goals were set. New year resolutions were made and perhaps broken almost immediately too. And not a few people had high aspirations for a better year. If I am to go by what I have seen and heard, health and wellbeing appear to be strong considerations for the new year. In prepping for a better and healthier 2024, a substantial number of people have cited mental health as topping their priority lists and plan to be deliberate about safeguarding their mental health.

In no small measure, the increasing attention given to mental health, albeit inappropriately, is welcome. After all, we cannot aim for a healthier society without healthy mental states. However, I cannot help but muse over the new mantra “no gree for anybody” and its many variations that allegedly came into public space towards the twilight of the preceding year as a slogan for 2024 among Nigerian youths — but which now appears to have been adopted across age groups. It can be described as upholding one's rights, defending one's turf, or being more decisive. Certain people have

argued that the mantra speaks to a positive move for a better country by its youths' resisting acquiescence, which is presumed to be part of the sundry problems that have plagued Nigeria, insisting that it is high time to demand for improved conditions. In other words, the desire for change for a better Nigeria.

Anyway, like every ideology there are bound to be outliers who will distort the underlying good intentions and there is the possibility of it being misrepresented or understood. Little wonder the spokesperson of the Nigeria Police Force described it as a nidus for rebellion and expressed concerns about the trending mantra and its revolutionary tendencies. Although, such innuendoes can be unsettling and appear as threatened infringement of one's human rights, it is appropriate to remind the citizenry to act within the confines of the law. Contrary to the seemingly austere warning from the Nigeria Police Force, the endorsement of the mantra with regards to security issues by the representative of the Nigeria Defence Headquarters was a more charitable action.

Now, the question is: What is the relationship between the “no gree for anybody” mantra and the angst of a psychiatrist? Or simply put, what has this mantra got to do with mental health? As a psychiatrist, I prefer to interpret the “no gree for anybody” mantra as one that motivates individuals to be more assertive, confident, and resilient. One that spurs individuals to aspire for actualisation and these seem to be the case in some situations. Intriguingly, information from social media suggests that some individuals in their pursuit of wider social media visibility and “likes” use this “no gree for anybody” mantra to

**By Margaret Isioma Ojeahere**

showcase aggression, bullying, intimidation, and egomania.

*Quite disconcerting is the interpretation and display of “no gree for anyone” as aggression, irritability, or anger in its subtle or profound forms. Usually, there exists a bidirectional relationship between the subject and the target. Anger can be a normal reaction to untoward events, information, thoughts, and/or actions directed at a person or thing. It can be a positive and valuable emotion, if properly harnessed.*

Certain others who perceive forms of disenfranchisement have adopted the mantra as an opportunity to project distress emotions, such as aggression or unusual anger. Although, these actions can be argued to be part of the process of evolution from subservience to boldness, a phase of change from learned helplessness to emancipation in a population that has been largely marginalised, I have concerns about the significance of these on the mental health of all involved.

Quite disconcerting is the interpretation and display of “no gree for anyone” as aggression, irritability, or anger in its subtle or profound forms. Usually, there exists a bidirectional relationship between the subject and the target. Anger can be a normal reaction to untoward events, information, thoughts, and/or actions directed at a person or thing. It can be a positive and valuable emotion, if properly harnessed. Conversely, it can be a symptom of ill-health, or reaction to the threat or experience of an illness, its course, management, or the outcome of the illness.

Studies have linked mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety, self-harm, and some physical health conditions such as elevated blood pressure, headaches, and migraines with anger. Biological, psychological, socioeconomic factors including the changing climate have been identified as causes of aggression/anger. Unsurprisingly, current conditions in Nigeria present a good medium for varying levels of aggression vis-à-vis health concerns. Therefore, in asserting our posture, we should be mindful of our actions and words, how we use them and who we use them on. Targets of hostile actions such as bullying, intimidation or aggression may experience mental health conditions such as anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSD), depression and in some cases, have recourse to suicide.

A great number of Nigerians are experiencing forms of emotional distress. Some people are like the Indian rubber ball that bounces back while some are at their wits' end. Some people may see the “no gree for anybody” as a call to claim their rights and some for better governance, while for the person on the receiving end, whose struggle you may never know, it may just be the last straw that will crush his/her resolve and hope of a tomorrow worth enduring for.

*“Let us gree” to learn about mental health and check in with a professional if we perceive that we are experiencing symptoms. “Let us gree” to be regular on our medications if we are already on any. I could go on and on but adopting a “I gree to pay more focus on my mental health” may not be a bad one and it is devoid of warnings and threats from law enforcement agents. Enjoy a*

*healthy 2024 as we “no gree” for harmful mental health practice.*

It is important to state that I do not equate “no gree for anybody” with aggression/irritability or anger in all instances. However, I think it is important that in resisting people riding us roughshod and demanding better conditions, we should be mindful of boundaries, people's idiosyncrasies, and our mental and physical health as well as that of others. Perhaps we can re-channel the “no gree for anybody” and adopt the “no gree for unhealthy mental health” mantra.

As we progress in 2024, we can plan to be deliberate about engaging in more mental health conversations, promote mental health in our institutions and social circles, whilst creating safe spaces for such conversation. Indulge more in relaxation techniques such as deep breathing, meditation, music, and art therapy to mention a few. Be conscientious with our brain and physical exercises. Set realistic expectations and learn to de-stress. “Let us gree” to show empathy and be kind to others, learn to keep a gratitude diary, and reduce social media time.

“Let us gree” to learn about mental health and check in with a professional if we perceive that we are experiencing symptoms. “Let us gree” to be regular on our medications if we are already on any. I could go on and on but adopting a “I gree to pay more focus on my mental health” may not be a bad one and it is devoid of warnings and threats from law enforcement agents. Enjoy a healthy 2024 as we “no gree” for harmful mental health practice.

Margaret Isioma Ojeahere is a consultant psychiatrist with J

**AKINTAYO ABODUNRIN**

## Substituting elder care for befitting burials

NIGERIANS love celebrations, especially burials. We spare no expense on what we call a ‘befitting burial’. Though the children of the deceased might be hand-in-glove with poverty, they do not mind borrowing heavily to give their departed father or mother a befitting burial.

One has heard stories of people who borrowed to bury aged parents that they never cared for in their old age. Some older people suffered, but the children were far away, leaving their sick and senior parents to the benevolence of the community, only to turn up for befitting burials after they passed.

Some say befitting burial is only ego-tripping and a waste of hard-earned money on the part of the bereaved. The dead are gone and unaware of befitting burials. They won't share in the merrymaking, so why use them as an excuse to party? It is we, the living that are grandstanding.

There is an anecdote about the Nobel Laureate, Professor Wole Soyinka, explaining why he refused to spend lavishly on burying his mother several years ago. Asked why he opted for a low-key burial, he was said to have retorted, “I can't lose my mother and lose my money”.

Well, nobody is contending that people who have the resources and who took care of their parents should not organise decent burials with a lot to drink and eat. It is those who, as we say in Ibadan, ‘sun Beere si Mapo’, meaning hold a loud, ostentatious burial for parents they never cared for in old age, that are being called out because care for elders in their

lifetime is crucial. It is a duty expected of all children and state institutions. However, the number of well-run and adequately funded care homes for elders in the country is very few.

One doesn't need the gold in Fort Knox to ensure their aged parents live decent and respectable lives. Even the government, especially states and local councils, must prioritise this. Sadly, this is one area we only regard a little in Nigeria. Many people are apathetic to elder care but won't mind becoming heavily indebted to hold befitting burials.

In this light, one particularly applauds the O.B. Lulu-Briggs Foundation, a leading non-partisan not-for-profit based in Rivers State and its focus on elder care through its Care for Life Program. Through the initiative established 22 years ago, the Foundation chaired by frontline industrialist and philanthropist Dr Seinye O.B. Lulu-Briggs, has extended comprehensive support, including healthcare, monthly sustenance, housing, and spiritual care to over 600 elders across 12 Local Government Areas in Rivers State.

Apart from taking care of senior citizens' spiritual and material needs, the O.B. Lulu-Briggs Foundation also organises parties, including Valentine's Day and a New Year event that commences its activities annually.

Further demonstrating the Foundation's concern for senior citizens is its purpose-built Biokpo Recreational Centre for the Elderly. It opened in 2007 for lonely and isolated elders to mingle, socialise and receive spiritual guidance, meals, and medical attention. Though it was closed in

2019 because of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is now open.

Commendably, the O.B. Lulu-Briggs Foundation has always respected its duty of care to the senior citizens, ensuring all their needs are met and constantly celebrated. It was a most delightful sight on January 1, 2024, to see senior citizens dancing to the melodious music from Afy Douglas, the choir from the Chapel of God International, Port Harcourt (which Dr Lulu-Briggs pastors) and children from Saint Augustine's, a primary school adopted by the Foundation.

The senior citizens enjoyed the event, a vibrant mix of praise, worship, and dance. But even this was not the icing on the cake. This came when Dr Lulu-Briggs announced the institution of an annual N250,000 congratulatory award for elders turning nonagenarians under the Foundation's care. The joyous peals of laughter that rang out were

heartwarming.

With Christ as her cornerstone, Dr Lulu-Briggs didn't forget to pray for the elders, saying, “May you continue to walk in faith, guided by God's love and inspired by His word.”

Now, this is as it should be. Our senior citizens should be celebrated in their lifetimes, and we should generously care for them just like the Foundation does. It doesn't make sense to abandon one's aged parents only to turn around to roll out the drums for their burial. There is no justification for that. Even as the economic pinch continues, care for elders is sine qua non. The Good Book admonishes us to respect our parents, and caring for them in their old age comes under this. It is time we eschew ‘befitting burials’ for quality, comprehensive elder care corporately and individually.

**Abodunrin is the manager of La Sien Media.**

**“In this light, one particularly applauds the O.B. Lulu-Briggs Foundation, a leading non-partisan not-for-profit based in Rivers State and its focus on elder care through its Care for Life Program. Through the initiative established 22 years ago, the Foundation chaired by frontline industrialist and philanthropist Dr Seinye O.B. Lulu-Briggs, has extended comprehensive support, including healthcare, monthly sustenance, housing, and spiritual care to over 600 elders across 12 Local Government Areas in Rivers State. Apart from taking care of senior citizens' spiritual and material needs, the O.B. Lulu-Briggs Foundation also organises parties, including Valentine's Day and a New Year event that commences its activities annually.”**



Features

# How social media breeds violent conflict in Nigeria

**In Nigeria, what used to be a platform for healthy banter and exchange of ideas, X (former Twitter), has degenerated to a platform for spreading hate and ethnic dog whistling. writes AYODELE ADIO**

IN Nigeria, what used to be a platform for healthy banter and exchange of ideas, particularly X, has degenerated to a platform for spreading hate and ethnic dog whistling. Charlatans and ethnic entrepreneurs who before now had no audience, have suddenly gained traction, amassed huge following and become the leading voices in a senseless battle for ethnic supremacy. The result is heightened polarisation and mutual distrust among citizens of various ethnic groups.

Although Nigeria has a long history of ethnic and religious polarisation, the 2023 general elections triggered the rise of a new set of ethnic nationalists who are now radicalising an entire generation. Sadly, these dangerous folks have discovered an effective means of propagating their agenda, spreading propaganda, and fuelling extremism, as a means to retaining political power and plundering state resources. The tool utilised is social media. What they do not realise, or perhaps choose to ignore, is that their exploitation of social media is accelerating the potential for violent conflict.

In 2012, a group of Buddhist ultranationalists, led by deeply polarising figures like Ashin Wirathu, a monk, took to Facebook to target Muslims throughout Myanmar. They used social media to spread misinformation and fake news that blamed Muslims for violence and all sorts of criminality. In many instances, they described Muslims as invaders of their region who posed a threat to the Buddhist majority. Expectedly, violence broke out within months of this vicious campaign, leading to the killing of several Muslims, with at least 8,000 of them displaced. By January 2018, at least 24,000 Rohingya Muslims had been killed and 18,000 of their women and children brutally raped.

Barbra Walter, a professor of Political Science explained how societies fracture, how social media amplifies the schism, and how such fractures lead to violence. "For a society to fracture along identity lines," she argued, "you need mouthpieces, people who are willing to make discriminatory appeals and pursue discriminatory policies in the name of a particular group. Harnessing the power of the media which they often control, they work to convince citizens that they are under threat from an out group and must band together to counter the threat."

This feeling of being threatened creates a we versus them mentality that radicalises moderates to take extreme positions and make violent confrontation against an outgroup permissible. Once a group is made to believe that it is superior, the tendency to view others as expendables, or as cannon fodder necessary to maintain its status



becomes a reasonable consideration.

While this phenomenon is driven by reckless politicians who promote identity politics at the expense of ideas and principles, this piece seeks to focus on how social media is an accelerant and why the misguided activities on these platforms would inadvertently lead to violent conflict.

In Nigeria, what used to be a platform for healthy banter and exchange of ideas, X (former Twitter), has degenerated to a platform for spreading hate and ethnic dog whistling. Charlatans and ethnic entrepreneurs who before now had no audience, have suddenly gained traction, amassed huge following and become the leading voices in a senseless battle for ethnic supremacy. The result is heightened polarisation and mutual distrust among citizens of various ethnic groups. If this pattern is left unchecked, violent confrontation will become inevitable.

While this phenomenon is driven by reckless politicians who promote identity politics at the expense of ideas and principles, this piece seeks to focus on how social media is an accelerant and why the misguided activities on these platforms would inadvertently lead to violent conflict. It will also appear that those in authority are ignorant of the dangers posed by the activities of these ethnic nationalists on social media and the need to act urgently.

**Why Is Social Media Dangerous?**

Barbra Walter also notes that "As social media penetrated countries and gained a large share of people's attention, a clear pattern emerged; ethnic

factions grew, social divisions widened, resentment at immigrants increased, and violence began to increase." Hence, she concluded that open unregulated social media platforms turned out to be the perfect catalysts for the conditions that lead to war.

The business model of social media platforms is to keep audiences hooked and engaged for long spells of time. However, various studies by researchers have revealed that what people like the most is fear over calm, and outrage over empathy. People are far more likely to get reactions for their posts by being provocative than by being sensitive. Which is why every now and then, we see people make provocative posts on their pages and when you check their histories, you'd notice that they once were on the opposite side of that incendiary view. Such individuals learnt quickly that it is far easier to go viral by offending people's sensibilities than by showing empathy. In other words, what keeps people engaged, as Professor Barbra concludes, is exactly the information that leads them towards anger, resentment, and violence.

More importantly, it is imperative to consider legislation that makes it unlawful for any person to publish or share contents that portrays criminality, depravity, or the lack of virtue of a group of citizens, of any tribe or religion that exposes them to ridicule or contempt.

**Avoiding Conflict**  
To avoid full-blown conflicts, the most aggressive and brazen voices on social media must be drowned out. We risk the rise of extremists' groups and the worst of ethnic nationalism if we allow these peddlers of hate and misinformation unfettered reach on the internet. Without further delay, the government should

enlist the support of social media companies to go beyond sharing community notes on misleading posts, to the outright deactivation of accounts that spread hate and bigotry.

More importantly, it is imperative to consider legislation that makes it unlawful for any person to publish or share contents that portrays criminality, depravity, or the lack of virtue of a group of citizens, of

any tribe or religion that exposes them to ridicule or contempt.

Finally, we must encourage the politics of ideas and not of identity. Those who seek to occupy public offices must be made to campaign on their value propositions and not the basis of the ethnic groups that they represent.

Ayodele Adio, a political and communications strategist, is national publicity secretary of Youth Party.

Change of Name

**NANJUL**

I, formerly known as **SMART NANJUL GWAKPON**, now wish to be known and addressed as **NANJUL RIMKAP GWAKPON**. Date of birth is 16/10/1997. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.

**WILSON**

I, formerly known as **WILSON JOY COMFORT**, now wish to be known and addressed as **GWAKZING SAKMICIT WILSON**. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

**NANKAT**

I, formerly known as **YAKUBU YWANFA**, now wish to be known and addressed as **NANKAT YWANFA YAKUBU**. Date of birth is 23/12/1999. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

**VICTOR**

I, formerly known as **NANCHANG ABARSHI WUYEP**, now wish to be known and addressed as **VICTOR WANGVEN ABARSHI**. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

**NANBOL**

I, formerly known as **HADIZA TONGA**, now wish to be known and addressed as **NANBOL KURMICHIT NANNA**. Date of birth is 27/7/2000. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

**SALEH**

I, formerly known as **SALE MUAZU**, now wish to be known and addressed as **MSALEH MUAZU MUHAMMAD**. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

**FOM**

I, formerly known as **DUNG YOP DAVOU**, now wish to be known and addressed as **FOM YOP PAM**. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

SPACE FOR SALE



# News

## Encomiums showered on VC FUL over restoration of peace

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

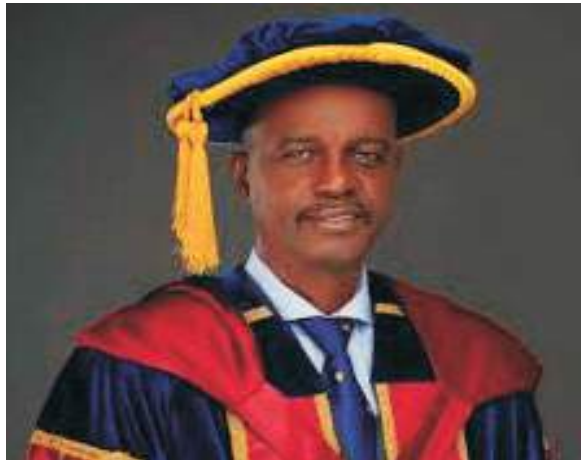
THE Vice Chancellor of the Federal University, Lokoja, Professor Olayemi Akinwumi was at the weekend, showered with praises over restoration of peaceful coexistence in the university community.

The Vice Chancellor who celebrated his 60th birthday over the weekend, was recognised as a man of peace and development.

Akinwumi was also given special honour on his leadership acumen that brought to an end the crisis he inherited from the immediate past administration which was described as unhealthy and dirty.

The Rector of Kogi State Polytechnic, Lokoja and Chairman of the birthday celebration, Dr. Salisu Usman Ogbo gave the commendation in his opening remarks.

The rector described Professor Olayemi Akinwumi as an international scholar and seasoned administrator who within a very short period in office, had recorded numerous achievements both in academic and infrastructural



Olayemi

development.

Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic, of the university, Professor Mohammed Audu in his welcome address, said that the birthday celebration was a worthy event and a beautiful day for the celebrator and well wishers to be alive to witness the occasion.

He described Professor Olayemi Akinwumi as a famous scholar and historian who has paid his dues in academic circle.

Responding, the celebrant and Vice Chancellor of the Federal University Lokoja, Professor Olayemi

Akinwumi, appreciated all those who made time out of their tight schedule to grace the celebration.

According to him, "The success of my 60th birthday celebration today couldn't have been made possible without the strength of our university community and existing cordial relationship

"My gratitude also goes to the organising committee who worked for a long time now towards the realisation of today's event"

High point of the occasion was a book review written on the celebrant and unveiling and presentation of the Festschrift".

## Supreme court ruling:Kaduna NUJ felicitates with governor

From John FWAH Kaduna

THE Kaduna State Council of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) has congratulated Governor Uba Sani over the ruling by the Supreme Court which affirmed him as the duly elected governor of the February, 2023 gubernatorial election.

A release E-signed by Asma'u Yawo Halilu, Council Chairman

and Gambo Santos Sanga, Council Secretary, said,

"The Kaduna State Council of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) wishes to join other well meaning Nigerians to congratulate the Executive Governor of the state, Senator Uba Sani over the last Friday ruling by the apex court, affirming him as the duly elected governor of the February, 2023 gubernatorial election held in the state.

"The Kaduna Council of NUJ also described the decision of the court as a resounding victory for all peace loving citizens of the state. They are also appealing to all and sundry to support and cooperate with Governor Uba Sani for a more peaceful and prosperous Kaduna State.

In the statement, they expressed optimism on the ability and capacity of Governor Uba Sani to effect



Sani

positive changes and developmental policies and restore the hope of the common man, especially in the areas of peace and security, unity and religious harmony, as well as socioeconomic and political growth.

According to the statement, Governor Uba Sani has demonstrated visionary qualities of a leader with genuine concern for the welfare and wellbeing of his citizens through renewed approach towards interethnic and religious tolerance in all sections of the state, hence the need for prayers and cooperation by all to enable him succeed in his developmental projects.

The statement further implored people in Kaduna State to take advantages of the meaningful

## CBT: WAEC fixes dates for 2024 mock examination

THE West African Examinations Council (WAEC) has scheduled Tuesday and Wednesday, January 23 and 24, 2024 to conduct a free mock examination for all candidates participating in the upcoming first series of the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) designed for private candidates.

The mock examination will be carried out digitally to better prepare candidates for the actual exam, which is computer-based and set

to commence nationwide on Wednesday, January 31, 2024. The Head of National Office of WAEC Nigeria, Dr.



Mamman

## Bauchi governor expresses concern over Hisbah Board failure

From ABBAS GUNGURA, Bauchi

BAUCHI State Governor, Bala Mohammed, has expressed concern over the inability of the state Hisbah Board to address the increasing immorality and anti-social behavior affecting the attitude of youths and children across the state.

Governor Bala while attending to a forum of chief Imams within various Juma'at Mosques in Bauchi Metropolis at the Government House, assured them that he would reposition the board in a most interesting way that would allow competent people to effectively handle its activities.

He revealed that plans are underway to appoint Senior Special Assistants from different Islamic and Christian organizations to further support the government's commitment in societal re-orientation.

The governor encouraged Ykubu Ibrahim Hamza, said they were at the Government House to congratulate the governor on his recent Supreme Court Victory. He described the idea to reposition the Hisbah Board as a step in the right direction.

He however, emphasized the ministry's commitment to complement the governor's efforts towards addressing all forms of deviant behaviors in the state.

Speaking on behalf of the delegation, the state Commissioner, Ministry of Religious Affairs, Alhaji



Bala

## We will revive lost glory of cultural heritage

From ANENE AIKE, Sokoto

GOVERNOR Alhaji Dr. Ahmad Aliyu of Sokoto State has promised to revive the lost glory of cultural heritage in the state.

The Commissioner for Culture and Tourism, Aminu Magaji Bodai, stated this while welcoming the management of Sokoto Heritage Reloaded Initiative at his office.

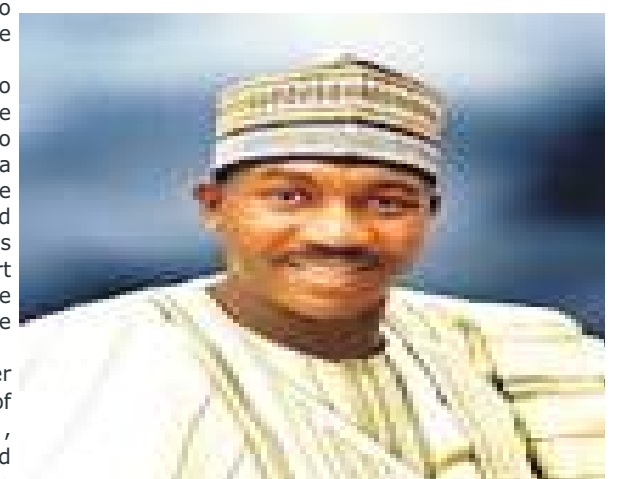
The commissioner who was overwhelmed by the existence of Sokoto Heritage Reloaded as a corporate entity in the state for over a decade, assured the entourage of his ministry's massive support and cooperation for the development of the organization.

In his speech, the founder and Executive Director of the organization, Nuruddeen Muhammad Mahe, said they were at the

commissioner's office to - Sokoto government

congratulate him on his appointment and to cement the existing cordial working relationship with the continued support and cooperation with the ministry's policies and programmes for the overall development of the state.

The Convener General also informed the commissioner of the organization's intention to celebrate its 10th-year anniversary this January 2024. He assured the commissioner of Sokoto Heritage Reloaded forum was created by the youths to



Aliyu

Amos Dangut, disclosed this information in a statement released on Monday through the council's spokesperson, Mrs. Moyosola Adesina.

According to Dangut, candidates are expected to log on to the mockcbt.waec.org.ng portal using their mobile phones or personal computers to take the exam.

The portal for the mock examination will be accessible throughout the two days, and candidates will be allowed to access the examination page a second time if the first attempt fails. He further mentioned that additional information, including login details, would be sent to all registered candidates via their email addresses and phone numbers once the registration is closed. Dangut also added that the council would provide a link to the tutorial video on how to use the exam portal across all its social media handles, while extending best wishes to all the candidates for the upcoming exam.



## View Point

# IT and enhanced farming

ADEWALE KUPOLUYI

THE era of going into agriculture using crude farming tools is gradually being forgotten in view of demands for large scale agricultural production and quality farm produce in the country. The use of information technology (IT) applies to the soil, seed management, irrigation, mechanisation, storage and other activities. The justification for the introduction of IT came to the limelight with recent technological developments.

This was the bone of contention of the Principal Investigator, SmartSoil Project, Prof. Olusegun Folorunso, saying the importance of the initiative in boosting agricultural production and promoting food security is huge. He stated that this is possible through the Digital Soil Mapping for Optimal Agricultural Yield and Sustainable Soil Biodiversity Management in Southwest, Nigeria Using Artificial Intelligence, at the capacity building workshop for researchers and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs). The theme of the workshop was, 'Digital Agriculture for Food Security: Accelerating the Development and Adoption of Agri-Based Digital Innovations in Southwest, Nigeria'.

"You may recall that this project started last year. Without doubt, the importance of soil fertility and its effects on crop performance and yield can never be over-emphasised. Yet, majority of farmers either overlook this important fact, or largely underutilise it, principally due to their inability to investigate or estimate correctly, the level of nutrients inherent in the parcels of land available to them, and by extension, do not know if the land is actually suitable for the crop they are planning to grow on the same land. This, in turn, affects their yield negatively and, consequently, their income. The SmartSoil project offers to solve this fundamental issue by utilising existing cutting-edge techniques in soil science, coupled with new technology in computer science, to provide site-specific fertility status of soils, especially in Southwest, Nigeria.

"This will enable farmers to have an idea of the nutrient status and crop suitability of their land, using digital technologies. Since this project is interdisciplinary, it also calls for collaborations with so many organisations, researchers, and SMEs in the fields of soil, computer, and agricultural



sciences", Prof. Folorunso stated further and that donor agencies are interested in building capacity with emphasis on youths and women, while other stakeholders are not totally excluded, which is why the various participants were invited to make an input into the forum.

To really show that the workshop made the appropriate impact, it had five different sessions and modules on 'Basics of Digital Agriculture: Challenges and Prospects', 'Remote Sensing, GIS and GPS in Digital Agriculture', 'Baseline Survey and Analysis in Digital Agriculture Research', 'Digital Soil Mapping and Land Use Planning', and 'Project Management and Fundraising' while another session explained practically 'Precision Agriculture Using Drone Technology'; by an experienced speaker.

In addition to the array of resource persons, there was the question and answer session, which availed researchers and SMEs an opportunity to replicate most of the knowledge acquired to successfully bid for digital agriculture-based projects and opportunities. A further look at the SmartSoil project indicated that it can actually transform the nation's agriculture through the provision of modern soil information system using digital soil mapping and artificial intelligence techniques and hyper-local soil information

in a way that is easily accessible and affordable to farmers and other resource-deficient target groups of youths and women and end-users. It guides farmers for the sustainable use and management of soils resources as well as agronomic advisory service to improve agricultural yield and productivity, food security, promote soil biodiversity conservation, and adaptation to climate change among farmers.

The essence of all these is to increase agricultural productivity of smallholders and large-scale farmers through the provision of accessible and reliable hyper-local soil information to boost food production. Not only that, the project focuses on the this particular region of the country because the zone has a large farming population and the

major crops in the zone are cassava, maize, yam and cocoa, to mention a few. The project involves the pioneering the use of Unstructured Supplementary Service Data (USSD) and Interactive Voice Response system for agricultural purposes by accessing soil details about any target soil attributes anytime, anywhere in Southwest, Nigeria. By using this system, farmers can simply send a USSD short-code to a dedicated mobile line and the information generated can be used personally, shared with fellow farmers group and cooperative and other agronomic service providers.

In short, digital agriculture is fast emerging as a transformative trend, as demands for digital interventions in the agricultural sector is particularly evident in

a country such as ours, where farming is predominantly carried out on a subsistence or smallholder scale. These practices often suffer from significant inefficiencies, resulting in a fragmented and often weak agriculture industry. The imperative to enhance efficiency and transparency within this sector is motivating both established and emerging stakeholders to explore digital solutions. In the final analysis, the utilisation of digital tools in agriculture not only holds the potential to drive agricultural transformation, but drives inclusiveness through increased participation of women and young individuals in farming. It is hoped the the nation's drive for the attainment of food security would get a boost with this timely intervention.

**"The essence of all these is to increase agricultural productivity of smallholders and large-scale farmers through the provision of accessible and reliable hyper-local soil information to boost food production. Not only that, the project focuses on the this particular region of the country because the zone has a large farming population and the major crops in the zone are cassava, maize, yam and cocoa, to mention a few. The project involves the pioneering the use of Unstructured Supplementary Service Data (USSD) and Interactive Voice Response system for agricultural purposes by accessing soil details about any target soil attributes anytime, anywhere in Southwest, Nigeria. By using this system, farmers can simply send a USSD short-code to a dedicated mobile line and the information generated can be used personally, shared with fellow farmers group and cooperative and other agronomic service providers"**





BY JENNIFER YARIMA

YEAR in and out, Nigeria celebrates our fallen heroes and living veterans. These are our military personnel who got incapacitated or died in active service to the nation. It's indeed necessary to ensure that these incredible individuals are remembered for their sacrifice for the good of our nation. The celebration is always held to commemorate the nation's departed compatriots as well honour our living veterans.

Armed Forces Remembrance day was initially observed on November 11 every year, with the remembrance day for world war 11 veterans in the British Commonwealth of Nations. In Nigeria, the date of 15<sup>th</sup> January is always regarded as significance as it marks the surrender of Biafran troops to the federal troops in 1970. This event marked the end of the Nigeria civil war which aim was to divide the unity of Nigeria.

Its heartwarming that each

year a solemn gathering takes place at the cenotaph of the unknown soldier where security chiefs, political leaders, members of the Nigeria legion and other stakeholders come together to pay tribute to our brave war veterans who made the ultimate sacrifice on the battle field. Many soldiers who

soldiers, more emphasis should be given to raise reasonable funds to meet up with some very challenging conditions of these survivors.

It is disheartening to know that ex-service men in some parts of this country had threatened high way protests over unpaid 45 years' pension arrears. The



## ...Remembering our fallen heroes' sacrifices

lost their lives during the war were laid to rest on the battlefield which is why cenotaphs are installed for this commemoration across the states of the federation.

Fantastic as these arrangements are to remember the brave contributions of these men, something seems to elude our minds on how most of these ex-service men and widows of the fallen heroes are hardly surviving. This sad phenomenon always get one worried that only emblems are produced to generate financial support for families and dependents of fallen war veterans; yet their conditions are in sorry stage as they barely live. It is expected that reasonable Nigerians if not all should be making meaningful contributions into the purse so long as the emblem is proudly displayed during each celebration.

Since the official launch is carried out by our revert political leaders across the states and only ceases to be valid when such persons laid the wreath on the cenotaph of the unknown

big question is how did we get to this unfortunate point? Enjoyable retirement is the dream of every Nigerian worker. But for some ex-military men; life after service has not been that easy.

Recently in Oyo State, retired soldiers popularly known as "I'm Alive" as well as the next of kin of those who lost their lives in active service vowed to take to all federal roads to express their displeasure over the nonpayment of their pension arrears which has spread for about 45 years. They marched under the sun, chanting solidarity songs and bearing to placards to legion building, an ancient building which lacks maintenance, portraying the neglect these ex-soldiers and their next of kin are facing.

Most of these senior citizens who are in their 70s and 80s and struggling with one age-related ailment or the other called on the Federal Government of Nigeria, President Tinubu as well as other stakeholders to grant them their demands and pay them their entitlements.

Lamenting over this pressing issue, the National Coordinator, The Able Voluntary Discharged Soldiers of Ten Years and Above, Corporal Babawande Phillip rtd recalled that more than 100 ex-servicemen had died in abject poverty during the struggle for their right.

For God's sake, do these people who had put their live in the frontline of battle to redeem Nigeria's image be reduced to such a miserable disposition? Many of them died before their time because they have no money to take care of themselves. These people need to be salvaged from their predicament.

The plight of these people calls for urgent attention as their families are languishing in pains.

The cry of some widows is that they did not enjoy their husbands while alive and their benefits are nowhere to be found. Some say their children even mock them saying "we got Nigeria, President Tinubu as nothing from your years of service in the military". This is regrettable.

How long should this sad and

unbearable phenomenon continue? One expects a swift change to be championed by all service chiefs in the country and our political leaders who have the will power to make necessary changes that can better the lives of those who deserve the best available care.

No wonder, some young people have reservations about joining the force for fear of either abrupt attacks that live them with permanent disabilities without care or abandoned families at the mercy of the society.

Let's take a look at how many soldiers have sacrificed their lives during the civil war and in the fight against insurgency. During the civil war, there were about 100,000 overall military casualties. Since the insurgency started in Nigeria's north east region, hundreds of members of the armed forces have died in the line of duty. This is the more reason why the needful must be done to ensure that the families of our incapacitated or deceased military personnel are not left at the mercy of our society.



By JIDAUNA DARING

THE importance of judiciary as the name implies is the third arm of government that is saddled with the responsibility of interpreting the law of the land to the people. This responsibility cannot be complete without involving tribunal, judges and lawyers.

These actors as far as their roles are concern in any given nation remain the people that makes the judiciary system to work both nationally and internationally.

This of course means that the relevance of the judiciary cannot be overemphasized since its function is to ensure fairness in the court of law in whatever case brought before it to seek redress if the rights of the people must

## The place of judiciary in transparent judgment

be unfolded when it comes to justice, fairness and equity.

It is a fact that the judiciary no doubt contributes immensely to citizens trust and social peace in any given society or nation. This is because it is commonly said that the judiciary is the last hope of the common man when it comes to administering justice to the people at any given point.

This has indicated that the judicial industry should as a matter of fact uphold to nothing but to continue with the concept of rendering quality services to the people that have unresolved issues or cases in any given court of law in the land as a reputable industry.

In view of this, judges on their part should know that they are trained professionally to work in any given court to ensure that people that have unresolved issues before their respective courts get fair justice. This is because according to the law that established their respective courts, judges are the people that decide on the fact of whatever cases that are lodged before them before ruling on the matter as the court pleases. Again, judges should also be fair minded in discharging their constitutional rights.

It may interest you to know that in Nigeria justice is referred to cornerstone of democracy

because lawyers remain the sentinels of the law. This no doubt indicates that lawyers also play pivotal role in upholding the rule of law when it comes to ensuring fair trial and safe guarding citizens in the society.

With good attributes on the role of judiciary in Nigeria. It has no doubt become very imperative for the judiciary to as a matter of urgent public importan do something about the issue of financial inducement before delivering judgment in any given court.

In this regard, what some times baffles Nigerians are no other thing but the way judgments are being decided by some judges of the court this has led to the increase in injustice when it comes to delivering judgment to the people that have heard, from their clients,

the have genuine cases. In fact, because of the corrupt practice that is gradually gaining access into the judiciary it has virile into the air space that some judgments in Nigeria are being delivered based on whom you know or with money bag which like play like joke is gradually become the order of the day in our judicia system.

This type of practice is something about the issue of becoming so pronounce after election when it comes to litigation issue that raises from some of the candidates that contested during the election but stand not be satisfied with the outcome of the election and decided to seek for justice in the court.

However, since it is the lawyers that handle whatever case they

for the judiciary to become stainless in delivering judgments, lawyers should on their part imbibe the true spirit of telling their clients the truth about whatever case that is to be taken to the court, this if done amongst lawyers would not no doubt give room for good practice as far as the law profession is concern, to save Nigeria.

In fact, the 2023 tribunal and Appeal Courts judgments if it hadn't been corrected by the Supreme Court, the Nigerian Judiciary could have been rated as the worse system as far as some judgments of the cases were concern. It is believe,that the entire judicial body needs to review the judgments that were done in a miscarriage way in order to bring transparency in the system.

***"It may interest you to know that in Nigeria justice is referred to cornerstone of democracy because lawyers remain the sentinels of the law. This no doubt indicates that lawyers also play pivotal role in upholding the rule of law when it comes to ensuring fair trial and safe guarding citizens in the society".***



By EZEKIEL DONTINNA

It was indeed celebration galore last Sunday at the popular Rwang Pam Township Stadium Jos, when Plateau people converged in an unprecedented number celebrating and thanking God for seeing Governor Caleb Mutfwang through the Supreme Court victoriously

Apart from the mammoth crowd that filled the stadium to brim, leaving majority of people struggling for a comfortable space to view what was happening, all roads leading to the venue were filed up to the stadium as people colorfully dressed in green & white kept trooping in making the main entrance so choked up.

People were seen pushing in and out to a point of stamped, leaving some few who desperately wanted to have a feel of the occasion with some minor degrees of injuries leading to few hospitalized. One of the Red Cross personnel, Joe Destiny said, "there are a lot of casualties, but we were able to attend to them appropriately."

"Actually, it was because of the movement of the crowd and the struggle to witness this celebration that made them to sustain some degree of injuries with one having his leg fractured. We were able to attend to them and thank God; they are responding to treatment. There is no report of life lost", he disclosed.

Surprisingly, and as always been the case in the capital city of Jos, where major streets go dry on Sundays, last Sunday event was completely a different ball game. The usually empty streets that always witness a few who only hangout after church service went busy, forcing many people to trek far distance because of how high the traffic was.

However, it may sound somehow new to recall ever holding such a memorable ceremony in Jos, the Plateau State capital city. Certainly, if one would beg for a reminder, this, possibly, could be the first of its kind in the political history of the state because most of the ceremonies of this magnitude were not of a returned thanks to God after Court verdict.

What we are familiar with decades past at the Rwang Pam Stadium Jos, were mostly the usual political rallies, swearing-in ceremonies of politicians who hardly return to say bye, cultural festivals, anniversaries and other events that attract such attention and such mammoth crowd.

The never thought about and mind boggling complexity that seams confusing to many was the mind behind organising such an event after series of legal battles. Of course, the Mutfwang-led government saw the need to organised an Interdenominational Thanksgiving Service, where every denomination joined him in appreciating God for his victory at Supreme Court.

To some, it may sound unnecessary, time and resource

wasting, but there is no denying the fact that, counting your blessings one by one is much better than counting your losses. This, to a large extent, could be the driving force behind this celebration.

Certainly, in this journey of stewardship, one positive step is worth celebrating and the Governor's decision to fall back in gratitude to God demonstrated the biblical story of the ten lepers who were healed by Jesus Christ, but only one returned to thank Him.

were song ministrations from COCIN Headquarters Choir, ECWA Women Fellowship, Ezra Jinang, Caps and Solomon Lange respectively as people dance praising God.

Sampling the opinions of personalities who graced to occasion, the Plateau State Coordinator of Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTD), Mr. Philemon Dagwa, said, "this is the Lord's doing and is marvelous in our eyes because it calls for celebration for the victory God has given the people of Plateau



## Plateau holds interdenominational thanksgiving for Mutfwang



It may interest you to know that, unlike the academic certificate that is awarded after graduation, this, like marriage certificate comes before embarking on proper studies. So, it is not out of place to begin to appreciate every step and watch out what blessings to receive from God.

What started like the normal Church Thanksgiving Service with series of prayers sessions, later snowballed into what appears to be more or less a call for dance away occasion. There

State. It is not for Governor Mutfwang along but the people of Plateau State.

"With this victory, there will be no issues of party differences, tribalism, nepotism and anything other thing. All that we want is, let us look at Plateau first before anything. So, celebrating this victory is something that we need to thank God for. It is a welcomed idea because it is the first of its kind on the Plateau. Let us unite and rally round the Governor", he encouraged.

On his part, Elder John Dawel

Mbar, said, "it is a day of joy, it is a day of a great vision. This is Plateau demonstrating the unity of Plateau. Look at the mammoth crowd and it is an indication of the fact that, Governor Mutfwang is a good person if not, you will not see this crowd here".

Also, Hon. Dabo Shuaibu, advised the Governor to chose those who would sincerely serve him saying, "God has done his part and it left for the Governor as we are looking up to him. So, may God grant him the wisdom to not disappoint people. Gone were the

time for court issues so, he should settle down for good governance because there are lot of expectations from people".

However, Senior women were not left in this celebration. A retired Civil Servant, Mama Grace and Mama Helen Simon Go'ar, could not hide their joy in appreciation to God. They were so proud of Governor Mutfwang and prayed God to lead him. They all encouraged younger ones to serve with all their hearts.

Delivering his exhortation, His Eminence, Bishop Francis, said, "Plateau is healed! From today, the day of this Thanksgiving, God will make new things happen because we have moved from cleansing to healing. The Mutfwang's cleansing to healing and to wholeness has nothing missing, nothing lacking and nothing absent.

"It means, whatever has been taken away from you before, it is restored. So, if the fingers taken from you, the have come back. If the ears have been taken off before, the Lord of life will restore them back. I declare that, Plateau, through your praise and Thanksgiving, your friction will not rise again!", he declared.

There were series of prayer sessions by Rev. N. C. Thompson, Rev. Dunka Gomwalk, Most Rev. Dr. Timothy Yahaya, Revd. Dr. Gideon Para-Mallam and the COCIN President, Rev. Dr. Amos Mozho. The occasion was also graced by ECWA President, Rev. Dr. Stephen Panya Baba, State CAN Chairman, Rev. Fr. Polycarp Lubo, PFN President, His Eminence, Bishop Francis Wale Oke among other distinguished dignitaries.



# IMAGES

## PLGS HOLDS INTERDENOMINATIONAL THANKSGIVING FOR GOVERNOR MUTFWANG

The Plateau State Government last Sunday held an interdenominational thanksgiving service in the aftermath of the reaffirmation of Governor Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang's victory at the polls by the Supreme Court Abuja, at the Rwang Pam Township Stadium, Jos.



Governor Mutfwang (right) Speaker, PLHA, Rt. Hon. Gabriel Dewan (middle) and Chief Judge of the State, Justice David Mann



From left are, Pastor Yiljap Abraham, Rev. Dr. Steven Dangana and Rev. Dr. Yunusa Nmadu Jnr.



Cross section of denominational Heads led by the ECWA President, Rev. Dr. Stephen Panya Baba and CAN Chairman, Rev. Fr. Polycarp Lubo



ECWA Jos DCC Women Fellowship presenting songs at the service



COCIN Headquarters Choir ministering in songs



Children of the Executive Governor during the thanksgiving service



Mammoth crowd at the thanksgiving service



Cross section of dignitaries within and outside the state

Photos: DANLADI DUK



**Odd World**

**Man who spent £12,000 turning himself into a dog**

A man who forked out £12,000 to transform himself into a dog has opened up about being "sad" about the "misconception" around him becoming a dog.

It's hard to not love dogs, but one man loves them so much he decided to make himself into a huge furry pooch. Toco, from Japan has spent a staggering two million Yen on a human-sized collie costume so he could look like his favourite breed of canine and fulfil his lifelong ambition.

However Toco has shared the reality behind his journey, admitting he gets upset when trolls judge him. He previously told *The Mirror* that he feared 'coming out' in real life because of the reaction he gets and said: "I rarely tell my friends because I am afraid they will think I am weird. My friends and family seemed very surprised to learn I became an animal.

"Since childhood, I have had this unspecific fantasy of becoming an animal. I wonder whether it was a desire for transformation," he added. Despite forking out thousands of pounds on a hyperrealistic collie costume, Toco still struggles with people's perceptions of his

hobby.

When asked about the negative remarks he gets around fetish, Toco told *The New York Post*: "I'm just sad that people can think that. I love animals and enjoy play-acting like a collie. This is my hobby, so I will carry on. It makes me happy and other people happy, too."

He regularly shares 'day in the life' videos on his YouTube channel as he learns how to eat, play and train like a pooch - with thousands of viewers watching. In one video titled "I want to be an animal" Tocco can be seen on a walk along the street, sniffing other dogs in the park as well as having a roll around on the floor.

Channeling his canine alter-ego is an ongoing process for Tocco, as he enjoys "doing things that only dogs do" as it makes him feel like a real pet. He also enjoys tummy rubs and mimicks the movements of a collie.

Toco eats fake dog food, lays in a hammock and even has his own cage. However it's the human activities where he still needs his hands that prove to be more of a struggle, as his paws get in his way.

Source: *Mirror*



**Curbing this unending extrajudicial killings**

IF there is anything unfortunate phenomenon presently generating great concern in our country today, it is this consistent issue of unabated incidences of human rights violations perpetrated by our security agents with impunity in this country. In fact, I recently stumbled on a report published by an international human rights organization, the Society for Civil Liberties and Rule of Law, an intersociety organization where it claimed that over 100,000 Nigerians lost their lives in the hands of security agencies within the past eight years.

Accordingly, the human rights group which stated that the most affected states where such unfortunate incidences occurred included Imo, Anambra, Enugu, Bayelsa, Rivers, Delta, Kaduna, Abia, Borno, Ebonyi, Edo, Cross River, Akwa Ibom, Plateau, Taraba, Niger, Yobe, Bauchi and Adamawa states among others it further noted that the figure was obtained through its review of activities of security agencies covering the period between August 2015 to December 2023.

Interestingly, the submission of the organisation did not come to me as a surprise considering the rot continuously recorded in the nation's security hierarchy in most recent years. I can also recall with sincere gratitude to God that I almost become a victim of such brutality after I was send on assignment to cover the violence which erupted in Numan, Adamawa State some years back. As a stranger on getting to the local government secretariat in the heart of the town, I introduced myself to the chairman of the council and wanted to request for someone to accompany me round to enable me see things for my self when I learned that another violence was erupting.

I immediacy collected my gadgets and headed for the area. On getting there I met the officer in charge of the security at the unit and, I was confronted by him who insisted that I should properly identify myself. After showing him my identification card and other relevant documents including my equipment, not satisfied perhaps; the officer directed one of his juniors to take me away and ensured that I was executed. It took God's divine intervention through one of the officers who protested that he knew the church media organization I was working for before I was eventually saved. I can tell you that in the course of my career as a journalist, there are uncountable times while covering conflicts, I have been threatened by security agents in this country.

I have also heard stories about some of my colleagues in journalism profession who not lucky enough have been killed by these overzealous security agents. But again, it is also on record that many citizens of this nation have been either beaten mercilessly and or even killed for no fault of theirs. During the last #EndSARS protest in Lagos, thousands of people marched against the activities of the disbanded Special Anti-Robbery Squad accusing it of police brutality including torture, killings and extortion. The protest went on for days until security forces cracked down on the demonstrators at the Lekki toll Plaza in Lagos. In the midst of the protest, some security agents were alleged to have killed many innocent citizens who came out to protest on the need to ensure effective and efficient police reforms including the concern over police

brutality on innocent in the nation.

Though, at a point, the Nigerian authorities promised to investigate the issue and security authorities vehemently denied this report, it later became obvious that many Nigerians lost their precious lives during the protest. As it is, nothing has been heard as to establishing the actual number of deaths and or compensation paid to the relations of the entire victims of this heinous acts against humanity.

Contributing on this same issue, another human rights group; Global Rights, disclosed that more than 800 incidences of extrajudicial killings have taken place in the last three years. In the mass atrocities casualties report published by the group, it revealed that 848 extrajudicial executions took place in Nigeria between 2020 and June 2023 with 127 cases recorded in the first half of last year.

The group also acknowledged that most of the atrocities were recorded in the areas of terrorists' attacks, cult killings, communal clashes and direct extrajudicial killings.

Many military officers in the rank and file have over the years been allegedly found wanting and sometimes accused of breaking rules of engagements during conflict situations with impunity.

Last year, two soldiers, were arrested for the killing an Islamic scholar, Sheik Goni Aisami Gashua in Yobe State. The duo, who were tempted to carry out this killing after falling I love with the deceased expensive car, never thought that they will be apprehended. Surprisingly, the Sheik was driving between Kano and Gashua in the north-eastern Yobe region, when the soldiers he gave a ride killed him. To God be the glory, they were subsequently caught, dismissed and sentenced, kudos to the Army. However, there are still many other cases which are pending prompt investigations.

At the peak of the various attacks on Plateau indigenous groups in the state, military identification cards were allegedly found at crime scenes but nothing was done on the matter. The shopisticated way and manner some of these atrocities were committed also raised so many eye browse and allegations of possible security infiltration or direct involvement.

Since it has not been outrightly proven however, I wonder if the authorities concern can intensify efforts towards investigating the matter to help clear possible doubts. Out of great concern, the entry point verification of our to be security agents must be re-strategized so as to ensure people with criminal records are not recruited into the system.

Most times, the politicization of our recruitment excise has led to these recruitment agencies engaging unqualified and unpatriotic Nigerians into service. In fact, we have heard several reports where-by security agents who have undergone military trainings absconding from serving their fatherland to only God knows where.

Therefore, if we as a people sincerely intent to tackle the rising cases of extrajudicial killings in the country, our stakeholders and other authorities concern must always do the needful while conducting background checks during recruitment programmes. On the other hand, our security agents in this country must discard temptations of crossing the red lines while conducting their anticipated obligations to the nation.

Periodically, sensitive and relevant trainings, workshops and seminars should be held to further educate our security agents on contemporary rules of engagements. This if done will perhaps help reduce the menace of extrajudicial killings in the country.



## View Point

## Karl Kumm University : Proclaiming power of the gospel

By  
Rev JOHN YUSUF DUWAM

To God's Glory, the newly established Karl Kumm University Vom after the inaugural Sunday worship continues to experience worship services alongside Monday and Friday devotions. These worship activities were organized to enable character molding and excellent service to humanity. The second worship service held on the 10<sup>th</sup> September, 2023 witnessed increasing participation as the new Acting Chaplain Rev John Yusuf Duwam applauded the efforts of The Vice Chancellor (Prof Nanven Audu Gambo), the Registrar (Mr. Benjamin Dachomo), the University Librarian (Dr. Mrs. Lydia Endaben Lakan) and the Bursar (Mr Promise Sokyese) for their focus towards ensuring spiritual growth and advancement of the Academic, Non-academic and the entire students who are determined to excel in all ramifications. (Romans 1:16f, Ephesians 2:8-10).

This newly employed academic staff, Rev. John Yusuf Duwam who was asked to play the nascent role of chapel activities cemented the first message with the second sermon titled **"The Power of the Gospel"**. Taking his reading from Romans 1:16 and Ephesians 2:8-10, Rev Duwam exposed that, The Power of the Gospel is the complete power of God and all His salvation plans in Christ Jesus that no other lesser power on earth can stop. It is the power of the gospel that will enable the whole KKU and its community to sustain the first and endless worship and devotional programs and academic excellence that the University is focusing. To stress this, KKU is the result of the power the gospel.

The secret of maintaining first message up the second and throughout generations would come through this topic: **THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL**. The term 'Power' has various or series of connotations and examples: it could be political, military, religious, traditional, administrative or Bureaucratic and parental powers. In Physics, it involves locomotive force/exerted transfer of energy. Again we have meta-physical powers and these patterns of power operate in their categories and mode of operations. Yes, the power of the Gospel is operating in both the meta-physical and physical but above all it is the Almighty power from the All-powerful God. It means it is both natural and supernatural power thus the power that is above every lesser powers.

Illustratively, the Power of the Gospel is above every mortal Presidents, Army Generals, Pastors, Bishops or General Overseers, Imams or Sheiks. It is above Proprietors of Universities and schools, indeed above the Vice Chancellor and Professors. In fact multi-billionaires or rich people as well as poor people are below this power of the Gospel/Christ/God. The concept of Power as used especially in New Testament context is deeply connected to the Greek term 'Dunamis'; equally related to 'Dunamai', 'Dynamo', and Dynamic. This would make one to think of the explosive power of Dynamite in the study fields such as Chemistry, Physics, Geography and related ones.

Considering the power of God in Bible Times and episodes, it is the power of God that was laid down at creation, thus power of the **spoken word** which is the same power. It was/is the power that guided great men of faith like Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Job, Esther,



Deborah, Ruth, Kings David, Solomon, Josiah, Apostle Peter, John and so on. These men of faith like you/me were all endowed with the POWER OF THE GOSPEL. Remarkably, it is the power that raised JESUS from the death, in other words the **resurrection power** which is the hope of every true believer leading to eternal life. This power of Christ Jesus is the secret that totally make up the power of the Gospel. The power of God is manifested through and in the Holy Spirit which is operating today in Christians beyond human fathom. By extension, it is the power to give/endow you with various gifts and talents. Examples: voice to be Choristers, the energy to be a vibrant Christian youth engaging in activities like Boys Brigade/Girls Brigade and the power to conquer challenges and experience victory daily.

Based on the context of this Bible reference (above), it is good to briefly consider the writer apostle Paul in relation to this word Power. Paul was a powerful and zealous young person in all human endeavors during his days. He was well respected citizen that had international license and power to kill people in any geographical location of his days. He had letter of authority to zealously get hold of believers of Christ and kill them at his wish or the power to put some in prison for interrogation and molestation.

Historically, Apostle Paul (versatile Professor of Jewish Law) discovered this Gospel's power and his life changed from acquiring international license to kill Christians all over the Roman Empire to becoming one of the early great believers and thinkers that brought revolutions in world view that today history of Christianity and of knowledge in general cannot be written without him. It implies that the power of the Gospel enhances the acquisition, dissemination and application of the knowledge (Science and Technology) that every Christian possesses. Verse 10 of this Ephesians chapter two stressed that the reason or purpose why the Power of the Gospel changes every believer is to do good works, in other words to transform the society. The motto of this Great University in summary: **Knowledge, Character and Service** are connected to the secret of this greatest and Almighty power according to the biblical passage in context. The Power of the Gospel brings godly and useful knowledge. The godly Knowledge produces character. The character leads to rewarding and excellent service or good works to humanity to the glory of God.

Looking at Ephesians chapter two that bring forth this message, **Verse 8** teaches on the power to save. Yes

the power to save is not yours but is the grace of God in its divine power. God's Grace is God's power to save from sin. It is to be noted that this power of the Grace of God is not the grace to sin. Again, the power to believe is equally known as Faith which is expected from you and me so that God's power becomes effective in us and makes things to work. By way of application; it is the power that brought the church into being!!! This power of the gospel brings salvation, deliverance, knowledge, academic success and prosperity. This exceeding power has brought all Bible believing denominations into being!!! In fact, each church or chapel that reverences Jesus depends on this power of the gospel. This is the power that brought the Gospel right from Israel to Europe, Nigeria, Plateau State and now Karl Kumm University, Vwang.

Practical Application: **Verses 9&10** ended with the purpose of this power that is "to do goods works" as a Professor, Lecturer, non academic staff and as a pioneer set of students. It is the power to both save you and tell you/us/me what to do for the betterment of the cosmos. The power of the gospel is the power to explore or exercise your area of specialization like Christopher Columbus that discovered America, who was a

Sunday school teacher and son of a Priest from England. The power of the Gospel does not restrict you to becoming a Physicist, Microbiologist, Entomologist, Management Scientist, Mathematician, Logician, Computer Scientist, Philosopher, Chemist, Cyber Security expert and all good and acceptable professions.

The Power of the Gospel is not limited to only one tribe but to all creatures, therefore all are one in Christ. Again, Gospel power is **not** limited to one denomination or church affiliation because Christ is more than all preachers both true and false ones, all over the world. This God's power breaks every barrier in human struggles. There may be challenges in people's lives as long as life tarries but the power of the gospel always prevails. The Grace of God (Sola Gratia) for the salvation of all who believe is the representation of His power on humanity. Human response or responsibility is to have faith (Sola Fide) in Christ Jesus which brings the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit to guide, comfort and direct followers in all generations. Once humankind accepts and receives Christ by faith, transformation of the individual begins and continues through this power of the Gospel. The Gospel transforms a person spiritually, academically/educationally, psychologically, socially and economically or financially; this is the expectation of the Proprietor of this noble Faith-based University (KKU). Coming from the angle of Hope, this power of the Gospel will one day leads to building a befitting Chapel for worship and evangelism.

**CONCLUSION:** for the Gospel power to be experienced in its practicality, Rev. Duwam organized the pioneer students into presenting first 'special' Choir song from the Sacred Songs and Solos (530). The University resolved to commence devotions every Monday by 10:00am. The Vice Chancellor, Registrar, Librarian, Bursar, Staff and students were all in attendance during the first Monday devotion of 11<sup>th</sup> Sept. 2023. The Acting Chaplain Rev. Duwam gave the devotional charge from Psalm 133 titled "the Power of Godly Unity" which will allow God to harness the expertness and proficiency of every staff and student into complete unity for the advancement and excelling of KKU and the entire Christendom. The students agreed to be holding fellowship every Friday by 4:00pm. The Acting Chaplain inaugurated the first students' fellowship on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> Sept. 2023 with the exhortation on "the Secret of Godly Knowledge" from Psalm 119:98f.

The Acting Chaplain prayed that the power of God will be leading The Vice Chancellor of the University (Prof Nanven Audu Gambo) to be well focused and committed to excellence as he will be leading the Management, staff and students of KKU to always seek the blessings of God during devotions. Finally, this nascent and mission minded KKU Chapel solicits for prayers and support from all beloved Christians, as essential worship materials and instruments would be gladly received for the transformation of lives through THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL and to the Glory of God. Remain blessed.

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## News

### NSCDC FCT Commandant charges personnel on intelligence

BY EZEKIEL DONTINNA

THE Commandant of Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Command, Olusola Odumosu has charged officers and men of the Command to engage in active intelligence gathering to tackle the current security challenges in the territory.

He gave this charge during a briefing with personnel at the Command's headquarters, Wuse, Zone 5, Abuja, Tuesday.

In a statement released by the Command's spokesperson, CSC Idoko Samuel A, Odumosu said "the criminals are not ghosts, they are members of the various communities we live in.

"We must therefore intensify efforts by fully activating our intelligence architecture to identify them and ensure they are brought to book".

He decried the influx of bandits, especially in communities located in the hinterlands and the fringes of the FCT, stressing that, their activities was escalated by the porous borders shared with Niger, Kaduna and Nasarawa States.

Odumosu maintained that all hands must be on deck, and called for heightened collaboration and cooperation of his personnel with the people for a seamless exchange of necessary information to bring the fight against insecurity to a logical conclusion.

"While our war against vandals is on going, we must beam our search light on the issue of kidnapping that has become the order of the day in FCT.

"We must work closely with FCT residents at all levels to get credible information and real time intelligence which is



Wike

the key to any successful intervention.

"Without information to work with, there is little or nothing the security agencies can do.

"We must therefore do all we can to bring an end to insecurity by harnessing our areas of strength and using credible intelligence as a tool," Odumosu added.

The Commandant appreciates the Minister of the FCT, Barr Nyesom Wike for the support he is giving to security agencies in the Federal Capital Territory and assured him and other residents of an end to the current situation soon.

"With the support of the Minister of FCT, and collective efforts of security agencies, we are going to put an end to

kidnappings, one chance, vandalism and other forms of criminality in the FCT.

"I urge FCT residents to be vigilant, security conscious and to reach out to us whenever they see any suspicious movement of individuals, group of people or materials.

The Commandant assured residents that the security challenges are surmountable if everyone plays their part.

"Security is everybody's business and not that of the government or security agencies alone.

"All of us are involved and it is time to join forces to restore peace and security to the FCT", the Commandant urged.

ALL preparations are in place by the Plateau State Government to launch in no distant time, an Oil Palm Plantation covering over four thousand (4,000) hectares of land in Qua'an-Pan Local Government Area of the state.

The State Commissioner for Agriculture and Energy, Hon. Bugama Samson Ishaku, disclosed this Tuesday while declaring open the Oil Palm Sensitisation Seminar organised by the State Government in partnership with Continental Oil Palm and Agric, Services Consortium, held at the De-bridgeville Hotel Jos, the State capital.

Represented by the Programme Manager Plateau Agricultural Development Programme (PADP), Hon. Ishaku Samaila Jilemsam, said, "as soon as His Excellency become available for the project, we will kick start. It is not just launching oil palm, there is coconut, coffee, banana, polonium, mango, avocados and so many tree crops that are going to be part of it.

"You know, previously, because of the Supreme Court issues which you are all aware, it was going to be difficult to get his attention. Now that that is behind us, he is going to give us a date when he is available. The seedlings are already there and you can see some them on the stage.

### PLSG sets to launch Oil Palm Plantation soon

So, when he is available, he will do the ground breaking", he assured.

Bugama, however, revealed that government was going to use out of the 4,000 hectares, 3850 hectares for the plantation, while 150 hectares would be set aside for the construction or establishment of the mill refinery on the Plateau and their

goal was to have finished products leaving Plateau State and not raw materials.

He assured the people of Plateau of Governor Mutfwang readiness to remove poverty from the state in line with his campaign mantra of the "Land Is Green" saying, "the land is truly green and the time is now".



Mutfwang

### Taraba restricts tricycles operation, bans motorcycles

As part of measures to tackle rising insecurity in Jalingo, the state capital, Governor Agbu Kefas of Taraba on Monday announced a restriction of the operation of tricycles from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Mr Kefas also announced a ban

on the use of all types of motorcycles, including power bikes, in the state capital.

Tricycles are the most common means of transportation in the state, especially in the Jalingo metropolis. However, robbery with tricycles at night has become commonplace within Jalingo.

A few weeks ago, a civil servant, Lawen Bazing, was gruesomely murdered by suspected robbers in Jalingo.

The deceased boarded a commercial tricycle from the Mile Six area to a popular night club, De Crux Nite Club, about 300 meters away from where he was killed.

His assailants stabbed and robbed Mr Bazing before dumping his body in a drainage channel.

"Defaulters will be arrested and tried by the mobile court and the motorcycles and tricycles will be confiscated and destroyed," the governor said, according to a statement by Agbu Koku, the secretary of the government's security committee.

"The measure is as a result of the sudden spike in the activities of criminals in Jalingo," it added.

It also disclosed that the state deputy governor, Aminu Alkali, on behalf of the governor, inaugurated a task force to enforce the order.

The committee has the Commissioner of Police Joseph Eribo as the chairman, with the Federal Road Safety (FRSC), the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), National Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), Taraba Marshal, and the Chairman of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) to serve as members while the Secretary, Home Affairs and Special Services Department will serve as its secretary.

But many residents of Jalingo have criticised the development, saying it would cause further hardship to the people.

A resident, Chibuike Linus, told PREMIUM TIMES that the decision would affect residents because "Keke (tricycle) is the only means of transportation in Jalingo.

"Many business owners, especially those who operate at night, like hotel owners, beer

parlor owners, provision shop owners and food vendors will feel the pain.

"Also those who arrived at night from long journeys will be affected as the only means of transportation in Jalingo is the Keke," Mr Linus said.

He said the government should have prepared other means of transportation, like taxis, before taking the decision.

"Many people who do business at night and travelers rely on Keke due to lack of vehicles. What do you expect such stranded people to do? I think the government should reconsider this restriction particularly at this critical moment," another resident, Aminu Sule, said.

"Simply because some people are using tricycles to perpetuate crime should not be an excuse to restrict the operation of Keke as they are also using other vehicles for crime," Mr Sule said.

A Keke operator, Stephen Danjuma, who said he is a civil servant, said he took to the trade due to the bad economic situation.

"I don't think it's the right thing to do because some of us cannot meet up our means with the little salary we are receiving, we depend on riding Keke at night to meet up. It will affect a lot of people including the passengers. The government should change the decision."

Isa Saleh, a Keke operator in his late 20s, said, "I have been riding keke for two years now, so the thing will affect both the operators and the passengers because we get more money in the night by carrying passengers who like night outings and travelers that arrive late."

However, a woman, Hanatu Luka, applauded the governor's decision. "Apart from the security aspect, our husbands will be coming home early."

### NAF, ICRC strengthen collaboration on humanitarian laws

From DORCAS PANKYES

IN efforts aimed at fortifying partnership, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Nigerian Air Force (NAF) have both stressed the need to intensify their collaboration in promoting International Humanitarian Laws (IHL).

In a statement by Air Vice Marshal Edward Gabkwet, Director of Public Relations

and Information, Nigerian Air Force, he noted that the ICRC, renowned for its impartial and humanitarian missions worldwide, has played a pivotal role in training numerous NAF officers and enlisted personnel on IHL principles. This is in line with the ICRC's commitment to protecting the lives and dignity of those affected by war and internal violence.

The organization's collaboration with armed forces worldwide extends to working closely with the NAF and advocating for the adherence to laws governing armed conflicts during hostilities. These were disclosed during a recent visit by the ICRC team, led by Mr Yann Bonzon, to the Chief of the Air Staff, Air Marshal Hasan Abubakar, at NAF Headquarters.

Speaking further, Mr Yann disclosed that the ongoing collaboration between the NAF and ICRC, reflects a shared commitment to upholding humanitarian values and ensuring the humane treatment of individuals impacted by armed conflicts.

He also noted that the dialogue between the 2 organizations, serves as a testament to their dedication to advancing humanitarian efforts and fostering a culture of respect for human rights amid the challenges posed by conflict situations.

While commending the NAF for its efforts in ensuring personnel adherence to IHL, Mr Yann used the opportunity to convey his appreciation for NAF's unwavering support and the protection provided to ICRC staff during their humanitarian activities, particularly in the Northeast

and other operational areas across the country.

He also expressed the organization's commitment to continue dialogue with the NAF until common ground is reached on addressing humanitarian needs.

In his response, the Chief of the Air Staff, Air Marshal Hasan Abubakar, extended his gratitude for ICRC's substantial contributions to NAF's activities. He specifically noted the impactful role played by ICRC in areas of humanitarian assistance, training, and research in operational theatres, units, colleges, and training institutions.

He also emphasized the positive influence of ICRC's involvement in enhancing the handling of humanitarian activities.

Speaking further, Air Marshal Abubakar echoed the sentiments of collaboration and cooperation and reiterated NAF's readiness to engage with ICRC and other organizations in ensuring the adherence to humanitarian laws while executing operations.

The meeting concluded on a positive note, highlighting the commitment of both organizations to jointly address, and overcome humanitarian challenges.



Gabkwet



## Sports

By **DANNY MURPHY****Why Liverpool did not miss stars**

THERE was a concern that Liverpool might not be able to create chances or finish them without Trent Alexander-Arnold and Mohamed Salah in their team, but they showed against Bournemouth that they are able to fill that void.

Reds boss Jurgen Klopp has got an abundance of talent at the front end of the pitch but it is hugely important for him to have Diogo Jota fit and looking sharp after his injury problems at a time when Salah is away at the Africa Cup of Nations.

The most impressive part of Jota's game is his finishing, and his record from open play since he joined Liverpool in 2020 puts him up there with the very best strikers in the Premier League.

His end product rarely falters and he produced again on Sunday with a couple of really high quality finishes in Liverpool's **emphatic 4-0 win**, the kind that Salah usually produces.

The other area of the pitch where the Reds have had a lot of rotation this season is in midfield, where Alexis Mac Allister has more often than not played in the holding role.

Like most people, I don't think that is his best position - he reached double figures in goals for Brighton last season in a more advanced role - but he showed against Bournemouth how good he is an attacking sense.

Similarly to Jota, Mac Allister has only just come back from injury and was making only his third start after missing most of December, but he also looked sharp.

Again, the timing couldn't be better for Klopp because before Alexander-Arnold suffered a knee injury in the FA Cup win over Arsenal, he was the one providing the ammunition for Liverpool's forwards with his amazing passing from the middle of the pitch.

Alexander-Arnold's biggest quality is his bravery on the ball and willingness to make things happen, because he is not afraid to make mistakes.

Without him, Liverpool needed someone else to step up against Bournemouth, and be able to get on the ball under pressure and try to use it in the same way.

Mac Allister did it, and did it really well. He always looked to play forwards and hit a couple of wonderful passes, especially in the first half. Overall, he made a real contribution in helping Liverpool take control of the game and extend their lead at the top of the table.

Jota and Mac Allister both played extremely well against Bournemouth but there were plenty of other positives for Liverpool.

Darwin Nunez chipping in with a couple of goals will do his confidence the world of good, but I don't think he is under as much pressure to score as people might think.

The great thing with Nunez is that he does not seem to get down on himself or appear frustrated when he misses chances, which is a great characteristic for any striker to have.

What he has also got going for him is that he is playing in a



**Nunez was about to turn 23 when he joined Liverpool from Benfica for an initial £64m in 2022. The fee could rise to a potential £85m with add-ons**

wonderful side that makes lots of chances, along with a lot of other players who contribute goals.

So, at the moment, he does not have to be a 25 goal-a-season striker for Liverpool to win things.

Liverpool have been champions of Europe and won the Premier League with one main scorer, Salah, before. They had Sadio Mane and Roberto Firmino backing him up too, but they didn't have as many goals coming from midfield as they do now.

That means Nunez has time to evolve in this squad, and the key thing for him is that he has got to keep on improving.

I think there are certain attributes in players that make them likeable to the masses. One of them is an abundance of energy and a willingness to work and Nunez has that.

He never stops trying and, physically, he looks great on the

eye because he is quick and strong. Everyone notices him, and you can't fail to appreciate that part of his game.

Then, of course, you come on to the more delicate subject of his finishing and technical ability and opinion differs about how much he can develop there.

When people talk about young strikers like Nunez who have come to the Premier League, a lot of them say they will get better with age, over time and by playing more games.

I actually spoke about this recently with Michael Owen and Gary Lineker, who were both a bit better at scoring goals than I was, and they were both talking about how it is possible to learn or at least improve certain types of finishes.

That was interesting in itself as I would have said off the cuff that, when it comes to finishing, you

have either got it, or you haven't.

I think what they meant is that, as a striker, when you self-analyse your game in the first couple of years of your career, there are certain finishes that you are better at than others.

From looking at Nunez recently, I think it is fair to say he is more comfortable with more instinctive, one-touch finishes than when he has got time.

So, he can work on what he does when he does have that time, and maybe decide to do things differently in those situations.

I remember when I was at Liverpool, Robbie Fowler used to score loads of goals from an angle at the near post and I asked him if it was luck.

He said no, he always hit it as hard as he could towards the near post because keepers always think you are going to the far post and, also, it was the nearest part of the goal.

I thought, well that makes sense, no wonder he keeps smashing them in like that. Those are the little things that Nunez can learn and change about his game.

Ultimately, though, I do believe the best goalscorers in the world are up there because they have this undeniable gift that cannot be taught, which is to be calm in front of goal in the big moments and the big games, when everyone else might panic.

Owen scores two late goals for Liverpool to win 2001 FA Cup final Michael Owen had it from the start - he had electric pace but in those split-seconds of finishing, it was as if everything slowed down for him, and he did it in all the big finals he played in too.

We will have to wait and see if that ever happens with Nunez, but he is in the perfect place to work on that side of his game.

Klopp called his team 'mentality monsters' after they won the 2022 FA Cup and they seem to have got their belief back after their struggles last season. They won comfortably on Sunday, but we've seen how many times they have recovered from going behind in games.

The bigger thing for me though,

that has seen them turn into this winning machine that is five points clear at the top of the table, is their physicality is back to its best too.

I don't know if they did something in pre-season that made a difference, or the summer signings brought in some new energy, but they look like the best Klopp teams of the past with their tenacity and intensity.

Last season, especially early on, I'd watch them and think they looked flat. Now, all over the pitch they all look at it, whether it is recovery runs, pressing or moving the ball.

The competition there is for places has maybe helped with that, I know it did for me when I was a player.

Out of the whole midfield and front three, Salah is really the only one who you could say knows he is going to play.

So, everything is looking good for Liverpool at the moment. At the start of the season, I don't think anyone thought that come the end of January they would be top of the league and still in all four competitions - I certainly didn't.

You always expect new signings to take a little while to bed in and form new relationships on the pitch, especially in midfield where Liverpool had such an overhaul and did not get two of the players they wanted, Moises Caicedo and Romeo Lavia, who both ended up at Chelsea.

They ended up with Wataru Endo instead, who wasn't their first choice, but even that has worked out pretty well.

The hard work starts here, though. Klopp and his players know already that they are in a great position but they can't stop now.

I am not expecting them to either. Klopp's teams have twice lost the title to Manchester City on the final day of the season, in 2019 and 2022, and I think they are there for the long haul this time too.

**SOURCE: BBC SPORT**



**Before his two goals against Bournemouth, Nunez had only scored once in the Premier League since 29 October**



# Sports

AFCON 2023



Victor Osimhen endured a frustrating time in front of goal, and failed to add to his strike against Equatorial Guinea in Nigeria's opener

## Super Eagles go through to last 16

NIGERIA beat Guinea-Bissau 1-0 to progress to the last 16 of the 2023 Africa Cup of Nations.

BBC SPORT said that, the winner came when Opa Sangante diverted a Moses Simon cross into his own net nine minutes before the break.

Both sides had goals ruled out in the second half for offside, while Nigeria striker Victor Osimhen also had an effort disallowed for handball.

Jose Peseiro's side finished second in Group A behind Equatorial Guinea, who beat hosts Ivory Coast 4-0.

The Super Eagles will face the second-placed side from Group C, which will be Senegal, Guinea or Cameroon, in the last 16 on Saturday (20:00 GMT).

Meanwhile, Bouchra Karoubi became the second woman to referee an Afcon final game, following in the footsteps of Salima Mukansanga in Cameroon two years ago, with the Moroccan also making history by heading the first all-female officiating team at the finals.

Guinea-Bissau had no chance of progressing to the knockout stages, but played their part in an entertaining match at the Felix Houphouët-Boigny Stadium.

In some respects it was a game to forget for African footballer of the year Osimhen, who failed to bury any of the opportunities he had to score.

However, the Napoli striker played his part in the only goal after Simon launched a darting run down the left.

The winger drilled a low ball into the path of Osimhen which Sangante had to deal with some seven yards out, but the centre-back ended up smashing the ball into his own net.

Osimhen closed the first half by missing a good chance as he headed wide after meeting a cross from the left wing, and the story of the second half was once again one of Nigeria pushing forward while Guinea-Bissau sat back and lacked spark in attack.

Minutes after Osimhen headed a cross from Ola Aina wide, Baciro Cande's side counter-attacked and Dalcio forced Stanley Nwabali into a

low save.

Osimhen thought he had finally scored to double Nigeria's lead in the 59th minute when he turned Bright Osayi-Samuel's cross into the net from close range, but the officials spotted he had clearly handled the ball prior to putting it into the net.

Alex Iwobi side-footed wide for the Super Eagles before Nwabali had to claw away Fali Cande's dipping free-kick and Nito Gomes diverted wide from the resulting corner.

Guinea-Bissau forward Francilino rifled in a rising shot in the 83rd minute after a

run through the middle, but that goal was ruled out for offside and a minute later Nigeria saw another effort chalked off.

Osimhen's low shot across goal was saved by Jonas Mendes before substitute Zaidu Sanusi converted the rebound, but the flag went up for an offside earlier in the move.

Ivory Coast's surprising collapse in the other Group A game meant a point would have been enough for Nigeria to progress, but Jose Peseiro will be aware that his side will need to be more clinical in attack if the West Africans are to go deep at the finals.

## Hosts on brink of early exit after shock rout

HOST nation Ivory Coast will have to rely on other results to avoid a shock Africa Cup of Nations group-stage exit after Equatorial Guinea thrashed the Elephants in a huge upset in Abidjan.

BBC SPORT said that, Emilio Nsue's double, Pablo Ganet's 25-yard free-kick and Yannick Buyla's late goal gave the National Thunder a famous win that sealed top spot in Group A.

Ibrahim Sangare twice had equalisers ruled out for the Ivorians when they were only a goal behind, but the Elephants wasted a host of chances and were made to pay by their clinical opposition.

Some Ivorian players were in tears at the final whistle as they were loudly booed off by an angry partisan crowd at Alassane Ouattara Stadium after one of the biggest surprises in Afcon history.

The Equatorial Guinea

contingent, meanwhile, celebrated wildly after registering another seismic victory at the finals and they will face a third-placed side from Group C, D, or E in the last 16 on Sunday.

Their best performance at an Afcon tournament was reaching the semi-finals as hosts in 2015 but they finished above three-time champions Nigeria and the Ivorians, two-time winners, in an unexpected twist.

Their hopes of progressing were boosted after Group B drew to a close later on Monday, when Ghana finished their campaign third in the table on two points.

When Nsue steered Equatorial Guinea into the lead against the run of play from Carlos Akapo's cross near the end of the first half, Ivory Coast boss Jean-Louis Gasset held his head in his hands on the sidelines.

LIVERPOOL say the leg injury Mohamed Salah suffered at the Africa Cup of Nations is "worse than first feared", but Egypt remain hopeful he can return for a potential semi-final.

BBC SPORT revealed that, Salah was injured in Egypt's 2-2 draw with Ghana on Thursday in Group B.

Egypt reached the knockouts on Monday after a dramatic 2-2 draw with Cape Verde as Salah watched from the stands.

Liverpool said the 31-year-old will return on Wednesday for an "intensive rehabilitation programme".

The club added Salah's injury was "worse than first feared", but he will be treated with a "view to being back in action as soon as possible for club and country, giving him the best chance to return to compete at Afcon" if Egypt continue to progress.

"It makes sense that he's doing the rehab with us," said Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp on Sunday, before Salah's return was confirmed.

The Egyptian football association had initially said on Friday that Salah would only feature in the tournament again if his nation advance to a quarter-final on 2 or 3 February.

Klopp added: "I would say if Egypt qualifies for the final, if he's fit before the final, then probably yes."

However, Salah's agent Ramy Abbas Issa

## Salah returns for 'intensive' treatment at Liverpool



Mohamed Salah helped Egypt reach the final of the Africa Cup of Nations when it was held in 2022

subsequently appeared to cast doubt on the forward's chances of taking any further part in this year's Afcon.

"Mohammed's injury is more serious than first thought and he will be out for 21-28 days, and not two games," he posted on X, formerly Twitter.

"His best chance at participating in the current Afcon is by undergoing intensive rehabilitation in the UK and rejoining the team as soon as he is fit."

If Salah was out for 21 days from the date he sustained the injury, he would not be available again until 8 February, three days before the Afcon final.

Klopp had suggested on Friday that Salah's hamstring problem was likely to be severe, given the player had

missed just 10 league games for the Reds in more than six seasons.

"He was shocked and couldn't see why he was hit by something so intense," said the German.

"You have these hamstring injuries in a different way. He felt it and we know how rarely Mo goes off, or needs to go off, so it is definitely something."

The last of Egypt's seven titles at the Cup of Nations came in 2010, a year before Salah made his international debut and they finished runners-up in the 2017 and 2021 editions.

He scored a late penalty last Sunday to help Egypt draw 2-2 with Mozambique to avoid an embarrassing opening defeat earlier in the tournament.

Salah is convinced he will win the Afcon "sooner or later".

"I would love to win it, absolutely," he said. "It will happen somehow - that is what I believe. Whatever I believe, I achieve - so sooner or later, it will happen."

"I have won everything possible but this one, not yet. Everybody knows what it means to any player to win an Africa Cup."

Fortune was not on their side, admittedly - Sangare thought he had prodded them level almost instantly and the stadium erupted only for the video assistant referee to rule his close-range finish out for offside.

When the Nottingham Forest midfielder curled home a lovely left-footed strike early in the second half, the VAR decision was far more marginal but also correct as the home fans were again left crestfallen.

And, after Ganet's fabulous free-kick found the top corner in the 73rd minute to leave Yahia Fofana grasping at air, the hosts fell apart defensively as they were regularly caught on the counter.

Two minutes later, former Middlesbrough and Birmingham forward Nsue finished a two-on-one to tuck home his fifth goal of the tournament, leaving the 34-

year-old clear as the competition's leading scorer after his hat-trick in the 4-2 win over Guinea-Bissau.

At the last Afcon in Cameroon two years ago, two of the four teams to progress from third place had three points - but both had a superior goal difference to that of this tournament's hosts.

Egypt made it through to the last 16 at the Africa Cup of Nations after drawing 2-2 with Cape Verde following a dramatic finale to Group B in Abidjan.

BBC SPORT said that, Egypt had looked set to finish third behind the Blue Sharks and Ghana before stoppage-time goals in both games.

However, Cape Verde levelled six minutes later and the Pharaohs secured second spot as Ghana threw away a 2-0 lead in added time against Mozambique.

Egypt, with the injured Mohamed Salah watching on, trailed at the break through Benchimol's smart finish but half-time substitute Trezeguet volleyed them level in the 50th minute.

The Pharaohs had known victory would be good enough to send them through in second place and, with Ghana leading Mozambique, they celebrated wildly after Mohamed lobbed Vozinha to put them 2-1 up in added time.

But drama followed after the Video Assistant Referee (VAR) sent match official Alhadi Mahamat to his pitchside monitor to rule whether Mohamed had controlled Trezeguet's ball forward with his chest or hand.

## Pharaohs through after dramatic finale

which meant Egypt progressed to the knockout stages despite drawing all three group games in Ivory Coast.

Trezeguet steps up as Salah watches on Salah had been ruled out after being forced off during the 2-2 draw with Ghana last Thursday, but the forward was in the stands for what proved to be a nervy evening for the record seven-time continental champions.

The 31-year-old will return to Liverpool for treatment on his leg injury - and agent Ramy Abbas Issa has cast doubt on whether Salah will even be fit should Egypt reach the final on 11 February.

The Pharaohs trailed at the break despite bossing the first period, and Trezeguet epitomised their renewed purpose when he fired over straight after the restart.

Trezeguet was at the heart of Egypt's best openings, firing wide from range and forcing Vozinha to palm away a curling effort, and it was no surprise he unlocked the Cape Verde defence for Mohamed's goal.

Egypt were runners-up at the 2017 and 2021 finals and, after squeezing through to the knockout stages, still retain hope of Salah returning to clinch a first Afcon title since 2010.



Emilio Nsue scored twice for Equatorial Guinea to take his tally for the tournament to five



Sports

# Australian open: Gauff beats Kostyuk to reach semi-finals

FOURTH seed Coco Gauff played nowhere near her best but still managed to scrape past Ukraine's Marta Kostyuk and reach the Australian Open semi-finals.

BBC SPORT said that, the 19-year-old American made 51 unforced errors and hit just 17 winners in a 7-6 (8-6) 6-7 (4-7) 6-2 victory.

The US Open champion fought back from 5-1 down in the first set and could not serve out the second but kept calmer than Kostyuk in the decider.

Gauff will play Aryna Sabalenka or Barbora Krejčíková in the last four.

"I'm happy, really proud of the fight I showed," said Gauff, who had never previously gone beyond the fourth round in Melbourne.

"Marta is a tough opponent and always makes it hard. I really fought and left it all on the court."

Defending champion Sabalenka takes on Czech ninth seed Krejčíková in their quarter-final later on Tuesday.

The 25-year-old Belarusian, who lost to Gauff in the US Open final in September, is yet to drop a set at Melbourne Park this fortnight, conceding just 11 games on her way to the last eight.

The other two quarter-finals in a women's singles draw blown open by a string of high-profile early exits take place on Wednesday.

One of China's Zheng Qinwen, Russia's Anna Kalinskaya, Ukraine's Dayana Yastremska and Czech



Kostyuk

Republic's Linda Noskova - none of who have ever played in a Grand Slam semi-final - will meet Gauff, Sabalenka or 2021 French Open champion Krejčíková in Saturday's showpiece.

Aiming to become the first player since Naomi Osaka three years ago to win back-to-back majors, Gauff had breezed into the Australian Open last eight with a series of clinical and composed performances.

However, her display against world number 37 Kostyuk - the highest-ranked player she has faced so far - was far from convincing.

Both players looked tight and tense in a match where they made 107 unforced errors in a total of 246 points.

The three-hour contest featured 16 breaks of serve and Gauff took nine of them - including three in the decider.

The teenager has looked a different proposition over the past six months, playing with

more confidence and trust in her ability under the guidance of renowned coach Brad Gilbert.

Showing more faith in her previously shaky forehand has been a key factor in her renaissance after a chastening first-round exit at Wimbledon last year.

Since then, Gauff has lost only four matches and remains unbeaten at the start of the 2024 season.

But that old failing reappeared, particularly in the second set, as Gauff had to dig deep to find a way past Kostyuk.

On her resilience, Gauff said: "I was just trying to get one more game in the first set, make it competitive and then one game turned into another."

"In the second, I gave myself opportunities but became a little bit passive and when I came out in the third I was just trying to play aggressive and hit through the court."

CAMERON Norrie says he can take confidence from going "toe-to-toe" with the world's best players at Grand Slams after falling agonisingly short of the Australian Open quarter-finals.

BBC SPORT said that, the British number one was beaten by German sixth seed Alexander Zverev in an absorbing five-setter in Melbourne.

Norrie, 28, was knocked out as Zverev won a first-to-10 deciding tie-break.

"I would rather [go close] than not play as well. There were only a few points in it," said Norrie.

"I think [Zverev] is probably one of the best players in the world at the moment and playing close with him at a Grand Slam is exactly where I want to be."

After one of his best performances at a major to beat Casper Ruud in the third round, Norrie played even better against Olympic champion Zverev.

Norrie, aiming to beat a top-10 opponent at a major for the first time, was bold and aggressive in the key moments as he twice fought back to level the match.

But mistakes in the tie-break of a tense final set proved costly as 19th seed Norrie lost 7-5 3-6 6-3 4-6 7-6 (10-3).

"Cam has been playing amazing tennis and I'm just happy to be through," said a relieved Zverev, who secured victory after four hours and five minutes.

Zverev, aiming for his first Grand Slam title, will face Spanish second seed Carlos Alcaraz in the quarter-finals on Wednesday.

Two-time major champion Alcaraz, 20, won 6-4 6-4 6-0 in

# Norrie loses to Zverev in Melbourne



Norrie

his last-16 match against Serbia's Miomir Kecmanovic.

Norrie had not beaten Zverev in their four previous meetings - not even taking a set - and planned to analyse videos of those matches to concoct a gameplan which could hurt the former world number two.

Facing a similar winless run against three-time major finalist Casper Ruud, Norrie regularly rushed to the net and played boldly in an attacking display.

The question was whether the British number one would employ similar tactics against Zverev or retreat to a more accustomed style of grinding from the baseline.

While he was not as keen to go forward as often, wary of Zverev's ability to pass him with his potent backhand, Norrie continued to mix things up in a bid to reach the Melbourne quarter-finals for the first time.

But, after executing so well throughout the contest, the 28-year-old's game

unravelled in the fifth-set tie-break.

"That was the difference. I mis-executed a couple of balls and he served really well," said Norrie.

"There was nothing in it, and credit to him, I think he played a more complete match than me."

Two poor drop shots helped Zverev move into a 4-2 lead and from that point, it quickly slipped away from Norrie.

A double fault put Zverev 6-2 ahead and the 26-year-old German used the momentum to seal a victory that ended British interest in the singles at Melbourne Park this year.

Despite the pain of not reaching the second Grand Slam quarter-final of his career, Norrie will eventually reflect on an encouraging start to the 2024 season.

The left-hander struggled for form at the end of last season but seeing him reinvigorated with extra facets to his game bodes well for his hopes of returning to the world's top 10.

"I know I've got the top-10 level in me. I want to just keep taking steps towards that and I'm having fun playing," said Norrie, who had never been beyond the Melbourne third round before.

"It was great to see, especially in a Slam that I've not really done well at all or felt really comfortable."

Midway through the third set, there was a short stoppage when a protester threw 'Free Palestine' and anti-war leaflets on to the court.

The woman, who was standing on the front row behind one of the baselines, was booed by many in the crowd before she was dragged out of Margaret Court Arena by two other spectators.

Ball kids quickly picked up the paper as Norrie and Zverev, who was receiving at that end of the court, briefly returned to their chairs.

Shortly after the protester had left the stadium, the pair who removed her returned to huge applause with the match having already resumed.

Zverev criticised the lack of tournament security during the incident, saying it was "surprising" because of the "strict" measures for players in the locker room.

"When something like this happens, it shouldn't be another fan dragging the other person out," he said.

"It should be the security guys that should be there quite quickly. It shouldn't take them three, four minutes, that

# Paris 2024 Olympics will be 'third time lucky'

ZHARNEL Hughes will certainly hope that proves to be the case in 2024.

This summer, in Paris, the 28-year-old will chase his first Olympic medal after injury and error ruined his previous two attempts.

A knee ligament problem denied him the chance to compete in 2016 before the heartbreak of Tokyo 2020, when he had a false start in a 100m final that saw Italy's Marcell Jacobs crowned a shock champion.

It is the experience of three years ago in particular that made his World Championship success all the more significant.

Having broken two long-standing British sprint records in an outstanding 2023 season, Hughes became the first British man to make the world 100m podium for 20 years as he claimed his first individual global medal in Budapest last summer.

"This year I'm relaxed. I'm not really thinking about what I have done last season. It's a whole new year, Paris 2024 is what we're looking forward to and I'm just looking forward to going out there and giving my best again."

"They say third time is always lucky, so I'm hoping to make this one count."

The world 100m final proved so tight that Hughes momentarily believed he had

beaten American champion Noah Lyles to gold, bursting into celebration as he crossed the finish line.

That was an indication of the confidence with which he had arrived at the championships, reinforced by running 9.83 seconds to break Linford Christie's 30-year British 100m mark and 19.73 to beat John Regis' 200m record.

The bronze confirmed on the big screen moments later would not detract from Hughes' ecstasy over at last seizing his opportunity and delivering in a major final.

"Confidence has always been there. Belief was where the issue was," says Hughes, who failed to qualify from his semi-final at the previous Worlds in 2022.

Hughes also made headlines last season by claiming to have accurately predicted the time of both his British record runs, to the hundredth detail, writing them down in his notebook on the morning of the races.

A firm believer in manifesting his dreams into reality, the Anguilla-born Hughes, who is also a qualified pilot, has a vision board on the wall of his living room at his home in Jamaica which lays out his sporting and personal goals.

But when it comes to Paris, times will be of secondary importance.

"The time doesn't matter there as long as I get a medal. The Olympics could be won in 10 seconds flat."

While yet to decide his race plan with coach Glen Mills - the man who oversaw Usain Bolt's illustrious athletics career - Hughes hopes to improve his British records and achieve success at the European Championships in Rome in June before aiming for the Olympic podium.

Qualification for the Diamond League Final is also on his radar, with athletics' 15-meet series starting in Xiamen in April and culminating in the two-day title decider in Brussels in September.

"I know people will be expecting a lot of big things from me now but I won't allow it to go to my head," says Hughes, set to feature in a Netflix documentary following the world's top sprinters later

this year.

"I am just taking it day by day, step by step, getting the progress done according to what my coach and I are working on."

"In the past I have allowed myself to think too far ahead. I'm living in the present. I try not to focus too much on the expectations because that will lead to extra pressure on myself."



Zharnel Hughes won his first global individual medal at the World Athletics Championships in 2023





"Some of these graduates were able to go far to other mission stations. For instance, Malam Sabuda Magem opened SIM school in Karu (FCT Abuja) Gwari Land. Thus, the following people that graduated from Teachers Training Center Billiri also founded the following schools. Sam Bello in an interview further pointed out that others became residential cooks, house keepers, gardeners for the SIM missionaries". Capill also pointed out that Vera, "the wife of Jack Nicholson, trained Chabuwi, the wife of the first SIM covert in Gelengu who she called a faithful helper and Amsa who were employed by the SIM as midwives to work in the SIM Clinic."

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## 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 4<sup>th</sup> 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 and about one hundred thousand people. The breakdown is as follows:

Tangale - Ten (10) Students  
Kaltungo - 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,



Literacy Class at Kalorgu Kaltungo in 1923 Set A. This Picture was sent to the Researcher by Tim Geysbeek SIM Archive USA

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 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 7<sup>th</sup> 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 Danhausu 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 Danhausu. 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 Kaltungo 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.

### 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 learning.

Some of these graduates were able to go far to other mission stations. For instance, Malam Sabuda Magem opened SIM school in Karu (FCT Abuja) Gwari Land. Thus, the following people that graduated from Teachers Training Center Billiri also founded the following schools.

Sam Bello in an interview further pointed out that others became residential cooks, house keepers, gardeners for the SIM missionaries". Capill also pointed out that Vera, "the wife of Jack Nicholson, trained Chabuwi, the wife of the first SIM covert in Gelengu who she called a faithful helper and Amsa who were employed by the SIM as midwives to work in the SIM Clinic". For Bala Audu in an interview some were employed as security men in the school, clinics and the home of the SIM missionaries". While others were employed as pastors and missionaries by the SIM missionaries.

Spread of Christianity/ Planting of Churches in Tangale-Waja District.

Generally, the education strategy used by SIM in Tangale-Waja District marked a great water way in these areas. Traditional religion, syncretism, idolatry and other evil activities were at their peak in Tangale-Waja District before the coming of SIM. Through the education strategy of SIM churches were planted in these areas with many people coming to the knowledge of Christ.

SIM made Gombe division in particular a source of the spread of the gospel to places like Kano, Zaria, Bwari and many more. SIM did this by training the natives to carry on the work of evangelism to other places. Maiture in an interview opined that, "the graduates from the teachers College Billiri later became missionaries in all parts of Northern Nigeria".

Concluded

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