

**Mutfwang
congratulates
Senator-elect,
Reps-elect**
P 2



Nigeria will surmount security challenges- NCTC Page 21

TCN upgrades transformers as national grid stabilises Page 4

Broos cautions Bafana about Eagles' threat Page 30

THE Nigeria Standard



VOL. 13 NO. 816

WEDNESDAY, February 7, 2024

N200

Email: nigeriastandarddailynewspaper@yahoo.com

APC accuses opposition of protests over inflation

NIGERIA'S ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) has blamed the opposition for fueling protests in some cities over the rising cost of living for political reasons.

Social media platforms on Monday had tens of videos from protests in Minna,

Niger State, and the city of Kano, both in Northern Nigeria.

The ruling party's spokesman Felix Morka in a statement said the protests in both northern states were "orchestrated and coordinated effort to instigate unrest and undermine the government".

The protesters took over major roads and blocked vehicular movements in the cities. They carried placards to register their grief over the rising cost of living, urging the government to help ameliorate their suffering.

The cost of living in Nigeria has tripled in the last eight months.

Occasioned by President Bola Tinubu's removal of petrol subsidy, food prices, and transportation costs have been the major indicators of hard times for 46% of Nigeria's 200 million population living in poverty.

Nigeria's inflation figures reached a record 27-year high in 27 years in

December 2023, according to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). Consumer inflation rose for the 12th straight month in December to 28.92% year on year from November's 28.20%.

Former Nigerian vice president Atiku Abubakar and leader of the opposition People's

Democratic Party (PDP) said Tinubu has demonstrated a poor response to Nigeria's economic challenges and is setting the stage for a prolonged and deeper domestic economic crisis.

"His economic policies, drawn from a so-called renewed hope agenda, are

Continued on page 2



PDP Governors Forum Chairman, Governor Bala Abdulkadir Muhammed, Governor Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang in a photograph with other PDP Governors during a visit at the Government House, Rayfield, Jos recently
Photo: DANLADI DUK

Only under-18 will be issued birth certificate
Page 2

FG renews suspension of flights to Niger Republic
Page 2

PLSG to partner media for devt
Page 2

Mutfwang signs electricity law

By PETER TITLE

PLATEAU State Governor, Barrister Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang, yesterday signed the State Electricity Bill into law.

Signing the bill into law at the New Government House, Little Rayfield before the Speaker, Plateau

State House of Assembly, Rt. Hon Gabriel Dewan and members, the state Chief Judge, Justice David Mann, the State Executive Council members, experts in the electricity sector, the governor said the event was a milestone towards achieving the dream that had eluded the state for a

long period.

According to him, no one can underscore the importance of electricity. He pointed out that apart from water, electricity signing was so dear to him. Adding that "Electricity is part of human lives".

Governor Mutfwang who spoke passionately about

the importance of electricity, noted that electricity accelerates modern developments.

"As for me, this is the beginning of a journey to greatness. I therefore, invite investors to come to Plateau State, so that we move together" he stressed.

According to Mutfwang, with the support and collaboration of all, the sky would be the limit in achieving the desired results. The governor thanked the legislature for assent.

Giving synopsis before the signing of the bill into

Continued on page 2

News

Continued from page 1

ironically dashing hopes, creating pain and causing despair," Atiku tweeted in early February.

Morka, however, disagree with the opposition leader. He described the economic situation in Nigeria as "transient pains" of important reforms that are

Central Bank Governor, others to appear before lawmakers

CENTRAL Bank Governor, Finance Minister, others to appear before Nigerian lawmakers

Mr. Cardoso and others are to brief the lawmakers on the state of the naira and the implementation of the 2024 budget.

By Bakare Majeed February 6, 2024 Reading Time: 2 mins read

Nigeria's Central Bank Governor, Olayemi Cardoso, will appear before the House of Representatives to speak on the state of the economy, the Clerk of the House, Yahaya Danzaria, announced on Monday.

Mr. Cardoso is scheduled to speak to the lawmakers during plenary to brief them on the free fall of the naira and other issues affecting the monetary side of the economy.

According to the statement issued by Mr. Danzaria, the CBN governor will appear before the lawmakers for a sectorial debate focusing on the financial sector.

He is to appear alongside the Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister for the Economy, Wale Edun; the Minister of Budget and National Planning, Atiku Bagudu and the Chairman of the Federal Inland Revenue Service, Zach Adedeji.

Mr. Cardoso and others are to brief the lawmakers on the state of the naira and the implementation of the 2024 budget.

Speaker Abbas Tajudeen had last week announced

Mutfwang signs electricity law

Continued from page 1

law, the State Attorney General and Commissioner of Justice, Barrister Philemon Dafi, explained that electricity was capital intensive and as well, a key towards

APC accuses opposition of protests over inflation

crucial to economic reality being implemented by Tinubu who took over from former President Muhammadu Buhari in May 2023.

"It behoves us as good citizens of our beloved

country to stand fast with our government in this noble stride. In due time, these policy reforms will yield enduring beneficial transformation of the material conditions of life in the country," Morka said.

said the ongoing reforms will attract investors who are studying the current administration's reforms. He promised that inflow from the investors would address the lack of stability in the FX market.

While the government continues to preach "light at the end of the tunnel," Nigerians are hurting as the cost of living continues to skyrocket.

Between the time Mr. Tinubu took office and now, the naira has depreciated by approximately 68 per cent; 50 per cent in 2023 alone.

that the sectorial debate for the financial sector "will assess the nation's readiness to mobilise the necessary financial resources for implementing the budget."

In November last year, the House held the sectorial debate for the security sector with appearances by the service chiefs, the Comptroller General of Customs Bashir Adeniyi and the Inspector General of Police, Kayode Egbetokun.

However, despite the debate on insecurity, non-state actors continue to kill with impunity while kidnappers are operating freely across the country.

Biting reforms of the current administration President Bola Tinubu's reform of the foreign exchange system and the petroleum downstream sector has created the unintended consequences of inflationary pressure.

Shortly after his inauguration, Mr. Tinubu halted the corruption-ridden petroleum subsidy scheme and subsequently announced the unification of the foreign exchange system.

The value of Nigeria's naira has declined since the commencement of the unification policy as the currency is weighed down by illiquidity and commonplace speculative practices among market operators and street traders.

On Monday, Mr. Cardoso

development of any climate. According to Barr. Dafi, the state, after signing of law, would allow for a competitive market that even local government councils could establish their electricity firms.

development of any climate. According to Barr. Dafi, the state, after signing of law, would allow for a competitive market that even local government councils could establish their electricity firms.

development of any climate. According to Barr. Dafi, the state, after signing of law, would allow for a competitive market that even local government councils could establish their electricity firms.

development of any climate. According to Barr. Dafi, the state, after signing of law, would allow for a competitive market that even local government councils could establish their electricity firms.

development of any climate. According to Barr. Dafi, the state, after signing of law, would allow for a competitive market that even local government councils could establish their electricity firms.

development of any climate. According to Barr. Dafi, the state, after signing of law, would allow for a competitive market that even local government councils could establish their electricity firms.

development of any climate. According to Barr. Dafi, the state, after signing of law, would allow for a competitive market that even local government councils could establish their electricity firms.

development of any climate. According to Barr. Dafi, the state, after signing of law, would allow for a competitive market that even local government councils could establish their electricity firms.

development of any climate. According to Barr. Dafi, the state, after signing of law, would allow for a competitive market that even local government councils could establish their electricity firms.

development of any climate. According to Barr. Dafi, the state, after signing of law, would allow for a competitive market that even local government councils could establish their electricity firms.

development of any climate. According to Barr. Dafi, the state, after signing of law, would allow for a competitive market that even local government councils could establish their electricity firms.

development of any climate. According to Barr. Dafi, the state, after signing of law, would allow for a competitive market that even local government councils could establish their electricity firms.

THE National Population Commission (NPC) says birth certificates will not be issued to persons older than 18 years of age.

The National Population Commission (NPC) says birth certificates will not be issued to persons older than 18 years of age.

The NPC State Director of Oyo State, Mr. Akin Oyetunde, said on Tuesday in Ibadan that this is according to Act 1992, Birth and Death.

He said, "The NPC is guided by an Act propagated in 1992, so, any child born before 1992 will not be issued a birth certificate."

"Instead of birth certificate, people born before 1992 and those above 18 years will be given Attestation of Birth."

"However, those below 18 years will be issued birth certificate by the commission."

The Oyo State director added that all local governments in the state

Only under-18 will be issued birth certificate - NPC

have birth and death registration centres.

The National Population Commission (NPC) says birth certificates will not be issued to persons older than 18 years of age.

The NPC State Director of Oyo State, Mr. Akin Oyetunde, told our reporter recently in Ibadan that this is according to Act 1992, Birth and Death.

He said, "The NPC is guided by an Act propagated in 1992, so, any child born before 1992 will not be issued a birth certificate."

"Instead of birth certificate, people born before 1992 and those above 18 years will be given Attestation of Birth."

"However, those below 18 years will be issued birth certificate by the commission."

The Oyo State director added that all local governments in the state

have birth and death registration centres.

He explained that "every local government has its own birth and death registration centres. No local government has less than three registration centres."

"The certificates issued at the centres are the same everywhere and acceptable wherever it's tendered."

On the postponed National Population and Housing Census earlier slated for 2023, Oyetunde said everything was set for the exercise.

He said, "We are prepared and only need the Federal Government to give the go-ahead. All materials for the exercise have been distributed to local governments."

"All those who are to take part in the census have been trained; all is set to hit the ground running."

FG renews suspension of flights to Niger Republic

THE Federal Government of Nigeria on Monday renewed the suspension of commercial flights from Niger Republic to Nigeria and from Nigeria to the nation's northern neighbouring country.

Our correspondent reports that this was part of the resolution made by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) against Niger Republic.

It would be recalled that on July 26, 2023, the Military Junta ousted its duly elected President, Mohamed Bazoum in a coup and was replaced by General Abdourrahmane Tchiani.

The restriction, according to the statement made

available to New Telegraph included the directive that no commercial flight from Niger should overfly Nigerian airspace and no flight from any Nigerian state should overfly Niger's airspace.

This directive (Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) was contained in a letter titled: ECOWAS Restriction on the Republic of Nigeria, from the Nigerian Airspace Management Agency (NAMA) Aeronautical Information Services dated February 2, 2024 and signed by the Director of Air Traffic Services, Tayo John, on behalf of the agency's Managing Director and Chief Executive.

The letter stated: "In

accordance with ECOWAS resolutions, all commercial flights from Niger to Nigeria, or from Nigeria to Niger, or from Niger overflying Nigeria, or from any state overflying Nigeria to Niger are suspended."

The letter added, "These restrictions do not affect: (a) Over flight aircraft through Niger airspace; (b) Aircraft in a state of emergency and (c) Special flights."

It directed further that "special flights are to obtain authorisation from the permanent secretary, Ministry of Aviation and Aerospace."

A NAMA insider told Thisday that the NOTAM came as a result of the military takeover by the



Tinubu
military junta in Niger Republic.

PLSG to partner media for development

By PETER TITLE

PLATEAU State Government promised to partner and collaborate with the media in the state for the development of the state.

Governor Caleb Mutfwang therefore urged them to enhance local content creation, presenting government activities and programmes in indigenous languages for better public understanding.

He stated these during a

courtesy visit by management of Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), Jos Network Centre, led by its Zonal Director, Mrs. Rifkatu Daniel, at the New Government House in Little Rayfield, Jos, recently.

Emphasizing the crucial role of the media in fostering societal unity, Governor Mutfwang highlighted the significance of people-oriented programmes with relevant content to create awareness and convey

accurate narratives about the community.

He expressed satisfaction with the performance of NTA Jos and commended the station for effectively disseminating information despite the emergence of new TV stations nationwide.

He expressed his administration's determination to support the media industry, in order to change negative perceptions about Plateau and preserve its heritage for future

generations.

The Zonal Director, Mrs. Rifkatu Daniel congratulated Governor Mutfwang on his Supreme Court victory and expressed optimism about his transformative impact on the state.

She appealed for the governor's support in providing essential tools to enable the station to fulfill its statutory functions of informing, educating, and entertaining the public.

Mutfwang congratulates Senator - elect, Reps-elect

By PETER TITLE

PLATEAU State Governor, Barrister Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang has congratulated the recently elected Senator Pam Mwadkon Dachungyang and House of Representative Member, Honourable Daniel Asama Ago over their victory at the rerun election held at Northern zone and for Jos North and Bassa Federal House of Representatives.

According to the governor, the duo should see it as a victory for Plateau people and

urged them to work assiduously for the progress of the people of the state while at the National Assembly.

Mutfwang gave this charge when the elected National Assembly members in company of the state chairman of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), Hon. Chris A. Hassan, paid a solidarity visit to him at the New Government House, Little Rayfield, Jos on Monday.

Prince Pam Mwadkon Dachungyang, was elected under the African Democratic

Party (ADP), while Daniel Asama Ago was elected under Labour Party (LP).

Mutfwang said "It is the Plateau People's Party (PPP), a party that cuts across every divide that elected you overwhelmingly. A party that doesn't know tribe or ethnicity. It is beyond your expectations, the people voted, so the best for you to reciprocate is to work for them."

He therefore assured them of the government's support and advised them to liaise

with former Senator Mwadkwon and House of Representative member Agah whom he said were conversant with the intrigues of the National Assembly for results.

While presenting the elected members to the governor, Hon. Chris Hassan, the State Chairman of (PDP), said they were in the Government House as a mark of appreciation to the governor for his wise counsel and support during the struggle. He commended people of the

state for their overwhelming support and urged them to reciprocate by providing dividends of democracy to the electorate.

Newly elected Senator Pam Dachungyang thanked the Plateau people for the support and promised not to disappoint them.

On his part, Hon. Daniel Asama, said he lacked words to express his gratitude to the people but assured that he would reciprocate by working assiduously for the people while at the National Assembly.





Business & Economy

Building a smart marketplace for food

According to the Cadre Harmonisé, an initiative focused on food and nutrition analysis that conducts biannual studies across 26 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), approximately 26.5 million Nigerians are expected to experience extreme levels of food insecurity in 2024. Almost 9 million children are at risk of suffering from acute malnutrition or wasting. Among these devastating figures, nearly a third of these children could face severe acute malnutrition (SAM) and require urgent nutrition treatment. Benson Adenuga writes.

MEANWHILE, farmers working to put healthy, affordable food on the table are losing yields due to theft and ongoing conflicts. As instability affects Nigerians in conflict areas, food security, availability and access remain at risk. Severe weather events such as the El Niño crisis are striking, and inadequate infrastructure reduces the shelf-life of fruits and vegetables. Disasters such as these are becoming more fierce and too frequent.

Parallels can be drawn between two industries providing basic human necessities in Nigeria: energy and food production. Nigeria's grid produces energy at a quarter of its capacity, highlighting the inefficiency of basic infrastructure. The costs of food and essential non-food commodities continue to climb due to constraints on supply.

As Nigerians face a climate crisis, malnutrition, and rising inflation, families face hunger and often have no choice but to take on debt to cover their basic needs.

Private investment is needed to increase Nigeria's food resilience and self-reliance

Investment in enhancing the economic potential of businesses and individuals in the agricultural sector can build resilience and self-reliance. Private capital is needed to create upgrades across the agricultural value chain, focusing on innovation at various stages of production, processing, distribution, and consumption of agricultural products.

We grow produce in Africa yet prioritise value addition abroad, allowing processed goods to be imported back into the region. Focusing investments on processing facilities for value addition and agro-industries to develop agricultural goods locally could significantly increase farmers' earning power, creating higher incomes and reducing post-harvest losses.

"We are also supporting AFEX's plans to improve the scale, speed and development of local processing capacity – creating jobs and helping to expand operations beyond its current fleet of over 200 warehouses in Nigeria, Kenya, and Uganda, where macroeconomic issues such as high inflation and interest rates, domestic tax hikes and climate events exacerbate the need for impact investment Elsewhere, the Nigerian Stored Products Research Institute is leading the implementation of innovative technologies to realise greater value from the agri value chain. Another effort, the Nigerian Incentive-Based Risk Sharing System for Agricultural Lending (NIRSAL), has facilitated over \$373 million in financing to support exports, including investment in storage facility projects. The partnership between NIRSAL and private investors has enabled the construction of new warehouses and silos in various regions across the country."



Q: The costs of food and essential non-food commodities continue to climb due to constraints on supply

Farm inputs and investments in technology offer solutions that provide farmers access to high-quality seeds, fertilisers, safe agrochemicals, and innovative agricultural technologies that can elevate productivity. Since 2013, BII has committed \$165 million to support leading fertiliser manufacturer, Indorama Eleme Fertilizer and Chemicals Limited in constructing and operating the world's largest single-train urea plant in Port Harcourt. BII's financing aims to maximise Nigeria's potential by reducing our heavy reliance on imported fertiliser. We can and should become more self-sufficient,

increasing the competitiveness of Nigerian exports.

Reducing post-harvest losses with infrastructure development

Improving infrastructure such as storage facilities, modern farming machinery to replace labour-intensive methods and upgrades to roads can decrease post-harvest losses, and improve efficiency. This can help facilitate the transportation of agricultural products to global, regional and national markets.

In November last year, BII committed US\$26.5 million to AFEX, Africa's leading commodities platform. The investment will help multiply storage capacity and implement warehouse technology with next-generation software that

captures post-harvest pricing. This enables up to 200,000 more farmers to maximise sales from crop harvests, projected to double farmers' income.

We are also supporting AFEX's plans to improve the scale, speed and development of local processing capacity – creating jobs and helping to expand operations beyond its current fleet of over 200 warehouses in Nigeria, Kenya, and Uganda, where macroeconomic issues such as high inflation and interest rates, domestic tax hikes and climate events exacerbate the need for impact investment.

Elsewhere, the Nigerian Stored Products Research Institute is leading the implementation of innovative technologies to realise greater value from the agri value chain. Another effort, the Nigerian Incentive-Based Risk Sharing System for Agricultural Lending (NIRSAL), has facilitated over \$373 million in financing to support exports, including investment in storage facility projects. The partnership between NIRSAL and private investors has enabled the construction of new warehouses and silos in various regions across the country.

In line with this trend, at a national level, Nigeria invested

NGN 66 billion in silo complexes, grain aggregators and warehouses to increase capacity to preserve agricultural goods such as grain – staples of the Nigerian diet. Despite this progress, more solutions are needed.

Building a modern food marketplace

As the global population grows, demand for more diverse and nutritious foods and robust supply chains will intensify. Harnessing science and technology will ensure that food supplies are sustainable and protected from extreme weather events.

Disruptive technologies provided by companies such as SunCulture combine solar water pumping technology with high-efficiency drip irrigation so farmers can increase their productivity while spending less. Through our climate innovation facility, we also support Pula, an agricultural insurance and tech company that designs and delivers innovative agricultural insurance and digital products. Its mission is to help smallholder farmers endure yield risks, improve their farming practices, and bolster their incomes over time.



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, Ardova 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."

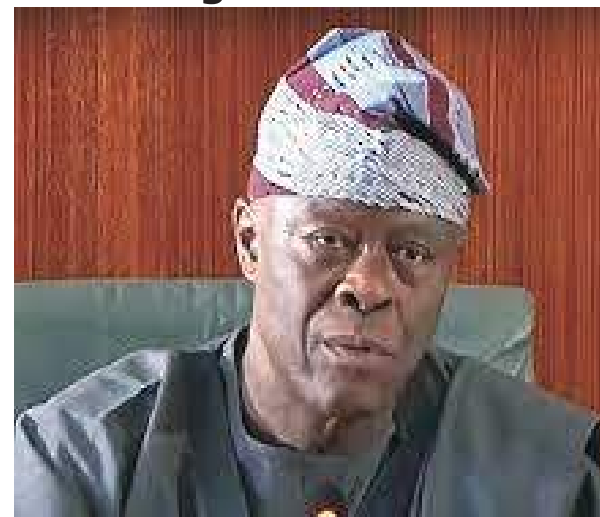
The Dangote Petroleum Refinery is an industrial plant that transforms crude oil into various usable petroleum products such as diesel, gasoline, jet fuel and kerosene.

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.



Edu

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.



Business & Economy

Illegal mining: Can government's intervention curb trend?

Former Nigeria Minister of Works and Housing, Babatunde Fashola once was quoted as having said Nigeria has the largest bitumen deposit in Africa and the world, saying despite that, the government spends millions of dollars to import 500,000 metric tonnes of bitumen for road construction annually. Similarly, the Director-General of the Nigerian Geological Survey Agency, the agency saddled with the responsibility of generating the geoscience data, Dr Abdulrasaq Garba, had once revealed that there are about 44 mineral types in 450 locations across the 774 local governments. KEHINDE OSASONA writes.

WHILE also reeling out mineral occurrence in the country in a recent release, the Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI) listed some of the mineral depositions to include granite, aggregate, Laterite, Coal, Shale, Columbite, Tin Ore, Gypsum, Feldspar, Marble, Dolomite, Tantalite, Kaolin, Fluorite, QUARTZ, Basalt, Talc, Manganese, Barites, Zircon, and precious stones like Tourmaline, Topaz, Sapphire, Amethyst and Garnet.

Nigeria has "very vast" gold deposition with occurrences in Niger, Osun, Kebbi, Kaduna, Kogi, Kwara, Zamfara, Katsina, Kano, Nasarawa, Bauchi states and the Federal Capital Territory, while Wolframite has occurrences in Kaduna, Kano, Bauchi, Niger, Kwara, Zamfara and Nasarawa states; same way Lithium has "vast" occurrences and could be found in Nasarawa, Kwara, Kaduna, Niger, and Zamfara states.

In Ebonyi, Zamfara, and Plateau states, some parts of Benue State and the FCT, there is silver, while Copper associated with minerals like lead could be found in Bauchi, Zamfara, FCT, and parts of Nasarawa State.

Despite being rich in these high-valued minerals, our correspondent findings further revealed that unlawful mining costs the country \$9 billion each year, with the only money coming from a 3 per cent royalty paid by the few licensed miners.

Today, Illegal mining is rife from Itagunmodi to Igun, Iyere, Igila, and other poor, gold-bearing areas in Osun state, and Kwali, Daki Takwas, Zugu, Wawan Icce, Yan Kaura, and other gold-bearing communities in Zamfara state, among other places.

Sadly too, most of the resources are left in the hands of illegal miners. While many countries, including Ghana, South Africa, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea Bissau, China, Russia, have attracted big investors to mine their gold and generate sizeable revenue from the value chain, Nigeria only begun the process of coming



up with the all-important geosciences data a few years.

It is believed that illegal mining, especially of gold, was responsible for the high rate of insecurity in parts of Niger state. The state Governor, Umar Bago, while addressing the inaugural state executive council said the administration would no longer tolerate the activities of illegal miners in the state.

Consequent upon the sad development, Bago had threatened to stop mining activities in the state to enable government profile all those involved in such businesses across the state and keep accurate record of their activities.

Again, when an explosion occurred in major parts of Ibadan a few days ago, the Oyo state Governor, Seyi Makinde, was quick to attribute the blast to explosives reportedly stored by illegal miners who had long engaged in mining activities in the state.

Aside that, concerned Nigerians have also attributed some of the security challenges in the country to illegal mining activities and other shoddy deals involved.

Interventions

There are grumbles that the former administration of President Muhammadu Buhari did little or nothing in arresting the menace, but the administration it would be recalled not only set up a mining police committee comprising the Inspector-General of Police, Chief of Army Staff, National Security Adviser (NSA), and

ahead to ban mining activities in Zamfara State and declared the state a "no-fly zone" due to worsening insecurity.

President Bola Tinubu employed a new strategy by hitting the ground running, warning that illegal miners' and unlicensed miners must go.

Tinubu fired the first salvo when he took the fight to the United Nations (UN), compelling declaration that the time is now for UN member states to show, with their actions, that they mean what they say concerning the crackdown on terror financing, economic sabotage, and illicit mineral & arms smuggling in the developing world.

At the 78th United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in New York City last year, the Nigerian president said: "The fourth important aspect of global trust and solidarity is to secure the continent's mineral-rich areas from pilfering and conflict.

"Many such areas have become catacombs of misery and exploitation. The Democratic Republic of the Congo has suffered this for decades, despite the strong UN presence there. The world economy owes the DRC much but gives her very little.

"Foreign entities that are abetted by local criminals, who aspire to be petty warlords, have drafted thousands of our people into servitude to illegally mine gold and other resources.

"Billions of dollars meant to improve the nation now fuel countless violent enterprises. If

threaten peace and place national security at grave risk.

"Given the extent of this injustice and the high stakes involved, many Africans are asking whether this phenomenon is by accident or by design.

"Member nations must reply by working with us to deter their firms and nationals from this 21st-century pillage of the continent's riches. To keep faith with the tenets of this world body and the theme of this year's Assembly, the poverty of nations must end.

"The pillage of one nation's resources by the overreach of firms and people of stronger nations must now end."

Clamp down on miners

Walking the talk, back home, the federal government last year clamped down on the illegal activities of miners and their foreign collaborators when it revoked 1,633 minerals titles previously given to non-complying mining companies.

The Ministry of Solid Minerals Development, headed by Mr Dele Alake, also promised to clean up the solid minerals sector for international competitiveness, urging all stakeholders who have acted wrongly in the sector to turn a new leaf.

Alake announced the new move during a press briefing in Abuja, alleging that the mineral title holders' licenses were revoked due to failure to pay mandatory annual service fees of N1, 500 per cadastral unit.

He lamented that the mining firms who have held the licenses for years, making huge profits from mining sites, still failed to make necessary payments accrued to the government.

"It is indeed very unconscionable for corporate bodies making huge profits from mining to refuse to give the government its due by failing to pay their annual service fee.

"It is indeed a reasonable conjecture that such a company will be willing to pay royalties and honour its tax obligations to the government. The amount the companies are being asked to pay is peanuts compared to their revenue projections, he said.

Similarly, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), last year arrested 13 Chinese nationals in Ilorin, Kwara state, for allegedly indulging in unlawful mining activities.

In addition, the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) apprehended at least 21 suspected illegal miners in Cross River state in May of last year.

Expert's take

Stakeholders and experts in the sector are of the opinion that those who sponsor illegal mining also fund banditry and cattle rustling in mining communities in order to incite violence among cattle breeders.

Some of them, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said conflicts arising from their activities have further created a platform for illegal mining to thrive.

When asked by *Blueprint Weekend* why the illicit act has continued unabated despite government efforts to thwart miners' activities, a Geologist, who does not want his name in print, blamed the government for not doing the needful.

According to him, if the government wanted to discourage illegal mining and improve activities, there must be thorough monitoring, law enforcement, use of satellite geo-mapping and that policy summersault must be avoided.

Politics

Nasarawa PDP chieftain, Haladu Akwashiki defects to APC

HALADU Akwashiki, a chieftain of the Peoples Democratic Party, PDP, and football administrator in Nasarawa State, has officially severed ties with the PDP and embraced the ruling All Progressives Congress, APC.

Akwashiki, in a letter dated January 31st, cited the exceptional leadership qualities of the APC at all levels as the primary motivation behind his decision to switch parties.

The letter was addressed to the Chairman of the APC in his Nassarawa Eggon ward, in Nasarawa Eggon Local Government Area of the state.

Akwashiki pledged unwavering loyalty to the leadership of the APC.



Akwashiki

In his letter, he conveyed assurance of actively contributing his

quota to the progress and development of the APC at every tier of governance.

From **ABBAS GUNGURA,**
Bauchi

AS Bauchi, Ningi and Katagum Local Government Areas in Bauchi State join in the 3rd February 2024 re-run election for the state Assembly constituencies of Bauchi State, whose election in 2023 general were nullified by the Appeal Court in Abuja, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has said the process so far was peaceful across 42 polling units in the state.

The commendation was made by the Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC) of the Commission in the state, Alhaji Ibrahim Nura, shortly after going round some of the polling units to monitor the process.

According to Alhaji Nura, so far, the exercise has been peaceful in all the 42 polling units.

"There was no issue of malfunctioning of election machines, materials and missing names of voters", the REC further disclosed.

"By-election is ongoing in 42 polling units of four state

Bauchi re-run election: REC commends peaceful conduct



Yahaya

Assembly constituencies, in three local government areas of Bauchi, Ningi and Katagum," Alhaji Mohammed Nura, explained.

While expressing happiness over the large turnout of voters, the REC in Bauchi commended the voters for conducting themselves in an orderly manner.

He noted that due to the large turnout of voters, the commission was compelled to inform security agencies to deploy more personnel for crowd control.

Alhaji Nura who expressed satisfaction with the zeal of the voters coming to cast their votes accordingly, advised political parties to play by the rules of the election and shun ballot snatching, vote buying, and thuggery among others.

The Resident Electoral Commissioner also advised the voters against interfering with the counting and announcement of election results.

He therefore called on the voters to ensure that they stay 10-15 meters away from the center after casting their votes while awaiting vote counting.

In a related development, the Senator representing Bauchi South Senatorial Zone, Sen. Shehu Buba, while commending voters for responding to their call to come out in their numbers to vote for APC, blamed Bauchi State government and PDP for using huge amount of money through their unpatriotic agents to influence the voters to vote for candidates of PDP.

He described the situation as unfortunate, unpatriotic, retrogressive and shameful to the ruling party in the state that it can not win elections honestly. "This proves that PDP is not popular in Bauchi State, hence they only use money to buy people," Buba explained.

Plateau stakeholders applaud rerun elections

By **PALANG KASMI**

SOME stakeholders have rated the conduct of Saturday's Plateau North Senatorial and Jos North / Bassa Federal Constituency elections, held across 6 Local Governments of the state high.

Our correspondent observed that the re-run elections conducted by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) on February 3, 2024 was generally peaceful, with tight security at checkpoints to ensure adherence to restriction of movements. However, it was observed that while there was massive voter turnout in some areas, voter apathy marred participation in some polling units. There was also the absence of security in some of the polling units visited.

One of the stakeholders, Commissioner for Lands and Survey, Hon. Peter Gai, who cast his vote at Kabong Central 1, Polling Unit 032, Jos North LGA, said despite lack of security agencies at the polling unit, the arrangement by INEC is good and the people were conducting themselves in an orderly manner.

At his polling unit, the voter turnout was impressive.

"As you can see, the people are eager to exercise their democratic rights. They are peaceful and it is commendable", he said.

At Jos South Local Government Area, the Transition Implementation Committee Chairman (TIC) Chairman, Vwang Dung Gyang, who voted at Darangi 1, Unit 11, Chugwi, Vom, at 11:52 am, said though his party was excluded from the elections, he was happy to participate and vote.

He described the voter turnout in his polling unit as peaceful and quite impressive. "The people are law abiding citizens so they came out to vote, tax payers' money must not be wasted," he added.

On his part, the Director of Press to the Plateau State Governor, Mr. Gyang Bere who cast his vote at 12: 14pm at his Polling Unit, Dandyes, EC 30 A, Vwang, Chugwi, Jos South LGA, said as early as 8am, voters started queuing to cast their votes. He said voters at his polling unit were conducting themselves peacefully as they exercised their franchise.

On his part, Commissioner for Transport, Hon. Davou Jatau Gyang, while describing the entire

process, said although people of Plateau North are traumatised with the exclusion of his party, the PDP from the ballot sheet, but nonetheless, the people have found a suitable option in the ADP party's candidate and are now trooping out to vote.

He appealed to voters to come out en-masse to vote to prevent a situation where they lose out completely from making a choice or participating.

At the Hill Station Junction 2 Polling Unit,

023, Jenta Adamu located at the NUJ Office, there was voter apathy. Out of 123 registered voters, INEC officials told newsmen that only 25 of them came out to vote as at 2:30pm.

They were seen waiting for more voters to turn out to exercise their franchise.

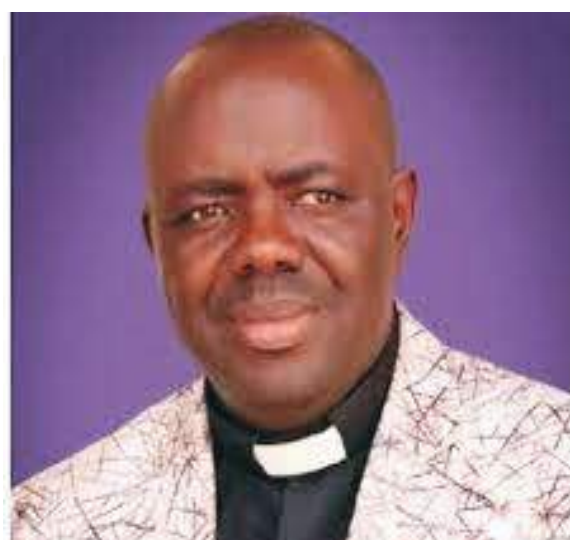
Also at many polling units in Jos North and Jos South LGAs, there was the presence of INEC officials with few electorate participating in the process.

By elections: Why SDP stepped down for PDP

From **VICTOR GAI,**
Jalingo

THE leadership of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), in Taraba State, has revealed the reason why the Social Democratic Party (SDP) candidate in the by elections for Jalingo/Yorro/Zing Federal Constituency, Innocent Jabayang, stepped down for the People's Democratic Party (PDP) candidate, Sadiq Tafida.

The Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) in an interview with newsmen in Jalingo, dismissed the speculation that they pressurized the candidate of the Social Democratic Party (SDP), Innocent Jabayang for the by election for Jalingo/Yorro and Zing Federal Constituency to step down



Jirapye

for the candidate of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Sadiq Tafida.

Mr Jirapye said that Jabayang willingly stepped down after the governor consulted him a few hours

before the election. He said CAN was only informed after his decision.

Jipreye said: "CAN was informed about the decision because of our earlier resolve to support the

aspiration of the SDP candidate.

"When he willingly decided to withdraw to support the PDP candidate, the governor reached out to us because of our earlier resolve and we held a meeting with the SDP candidate and he confirmed his decision to us. CAN did not force him to step down".

All efforts to reach Jabayang through phone calls and text messages proved abortive.

With this development, the major contenders in the election are Sadiq Abbas of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Aminu Liman of the New Nigerian Peoples Party (NNPP) and Aminu Malle of the All Progressives Congress (APC).

Politics

Is attack on judiciary justified?

The 2023 general elections brought the Nigerian judiciary under heavy criticism, even as the integrity of the judges were impugned. Is criticism of the judiciary justified? TOPE SUNDAY asks.

IN the aftermath of the 2023 Presidential elections, Nigerians have been very vocal in their criticism of the judiciary. Many decried what they saw as judicial interference, lack of independence, and partisanship in the handling of election petitions.

There were widespread allegations of vote rigging and malpractice during the 2023 general elections, with various parties contesting the results.

The role of the judiciary in resolving these disputes has been put under the microscope, with many Nigerians expressing dissatisfaction with the performance of the country's legal system.

Much of the criticism has focused on the perceived lack of independence of the judiciary from political influence. Many have accused the courts of being subject to pressure from the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) or other powerful interests, leading to biased rulings and miscarriages of justice.

Despite these criticisms, however, there have also been voices of support for the judiciary. Many have praised individual judges for their integrity and commitment to upholding the rule of law, even in the face of pressure from powerful interests.

Notable critics

A lot of Nigerians via social and traditional media have criticised the judiciary. While some of the critics are relatively unknown, criticism by legal gurus whose opinions are considered to be authority like the former President of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), Olisa Agbakoba (SAN), carries a lot of weight.

For Agbakoba, the judiciary is the most undemocratic arm of government. The learned Silk, while reacting to the speech by retired Justice Musa Dattijo Muhammad at his valedictory session, held recently in Abuja, also said the National Judicial Council (NJC) needed to take note of the points that were raised by Justice Dattijo to address the decay in Nigeria's judicial system.

Agbakoba also emphasized that Dattijo's speech was not in any way impugning the character of the Chief Justice of Nigeria, Olukayode Ariwoola, but was addressing the inconsistencies of the office in itself.

Also, a Nigerian Professor based in the United States (US), Farooq Kperogi, in an article titled: "Lawan and Supreme Court of Shameless Judicial Bandits" which he shared on social media platforms, criticised the Supreme Court over its recent judgment that confirmed former Governor of Akwa Ibom State, Godswill Akpabio and Senate President Ahmad Lawan as senatorial candidates of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in the February 25 elections.

He also described the apex court "as the most hopeless Supreme Court in the history of the world's supreme courts."

Judiciary can be criticized, not scandalised - Falana

Speaking at the public presentation of "Dis Life No Balance; An Anthropology of Nigerian Diaspora Voices, a book, co-authored by Professors Farooq Kperogi, Moses Ochonu, and Dr. Osmund Agbo, in Abuja recently, Mr. Femi Falana, a Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN), argued that judiciary can be criticised, noting that judges had in the past criticised their judgments.

Falana, who cited various instances where judges disagreed over judgments, however, warned against



scandalising the judiciary.

He said: "From time to time, the Justices of the Supreme Court subject the judgments of their brethren to harsh criticism which are expressed in dissenting opinions.

"For instance, in *Abacha v The State*, Olufemi Ejiwunmi J.S.C. was peeved that his colleagues decided to discharge the appellant despite what his Lordship regarded as the overwhelming evidence of his involvement in the brutal murder of the Late Mrs Kudirat Abiola.

"In a critical dissenting opinion, his Lordship referred to the judgments of his colleagues as "the tyranny of the majority." The Hon. Justice Cletus Nweze, who passed on a few months ago, never hesitated to write dissenting judgments whenever he felt that the decision of the Supreme Court could not be justified on legal grounds.

"Occasionally, his Lordship does so with some caustic words for his learned brethren in the Court. For instance, in the controversial case of *Uzodinma v Ihediora*, Nweze predicted that the majority judgment would haunt the Supreme Court for several years to come.

"Truly, the judgment has been haunting the Court since then and may continue until the judgment is revisited in the future.

"In the same vein, in *Oghenovov & Anor v Governor of Delta State & Anor* (2022) LPELR-48062(SC) the Supreme Court

dismissed the appeal for want of locus standi. Convinced that the majority judgment was wrong the Hon. Justice Nweze delivered a dissenting judgment where he held that: "It would, in my view, be a grave lacuna in our system of public law, if a pressure group, like the federation, or even a single public-spirited taxpayer, were prevented by outdated technical rules of locus standi, from bringing the matter to the attention of the Court to vindicate

the rule of law and get the unlawful conduct stopped.

"Incidentally, the leading judgment in the case of *APC v Machina* was read by the Honourable Justice Nweze. No doubt, the judgment was anchored on technicalities as the appeal succeeded on the ground that the respondent ought to have commenced the pre-election case by filing a writ of summons instead of originating summons. "Out of the 5-member panel of the Court, Agim and Jauro JJSC vehemently disagreed with the majority judgment on solid legal grounds that are devoid of sentiment.

"In particular, the Hon. Justice Jauro stated that he had painstakingly read the affidavit in support of the originating summons and cannot identify any crime reference to warrant the filing of a writ of summons in the case.

"It is submitted that the right to criticize the decisions of courts in a democratic society is part of the fundamental right to freedom of expression guaranteed by section 39 of the Nigerian Constitution and article 9 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights (Ratification and Enforcement) Act Cap A9, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004.

"It has been observed that in a democracy, the three arms of government and all institutions including the courts are necessarily the subject of criticism. No public institution maintained with public funds is exempted from criticism scrutiny.

"It is submitted while the general right to criticize decisions of courts is not disputed, lawyers and members of the public are not permitted to scandalise judges or accuse them of corruption or misconduct without proof. In reacting to the controversial judgment of the court in *Machina's* case, Kperogi referred to the justices of the Supreme Court as "shameless judicial bandits."

"With respect, Professor Kperogi ought not to have engaged in such vulgar abuse in criticizing the judgment of the apex court.

"... It is pertinent to note that the Justices of the Supreme Court have continued to welcome criticism of their judgments.

"Two years ago, while speaking in Abuja on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of his call-to-bar along with some Justices of the Supreme Court, Court of Appeal, Judges in other courts, and senior lawyers in the country, the immediate past Chief Justice of Nigeria, Justice Ibrahim Tanko Muhammad said, "As critical stakeholders in the task of justice delivery, you have the responsibility of drawing our attention to where things are going wrong or on the verge of going wrong."

"Justice Muhammad was emphatic when he said that it would not be out of place for lawyers to subject Justices in the country to criticism where necessary as a step to ensuring improvement in the justice delivery system.

"Justice Muhammad, however, said that such criticism must be offered in good faith and objectivity that will propel judicial officers on the bench to enhanced performance. I concur with the retired Chief Justice"

'2023 polls exposed judiciary'

Also speaking on the criticism of the judiciary, an Abuja-based Legal Practitioner, Chris Nevo Esq., said the 2023 general elections exposed the judiciary to forensic scrutiny, adding that the attack against the institution was not meant to scare the judges.

He said: "First, the attack is not, and can never be justified by any rational person. In my sincere estimation, it is also, in most cases, not an attempt to cow them.

"There may be a few instances, where the intent is clearly to brow beat the Judiciary. Notwithstanding, vicious and acerbic criticism of some aspects of their actions or conduct, should not be misconstrued.

"The 2023 general elections was unique and unparalleled in terms of the degree of awareness, mobilisation, interest, and

participation. It offered hope and created alluring excitements, as people were made to, and, did genuinely believe that their vote would count.

"They had fervently relied on and trusted the fact the election would be substantially IT/electronically driven to leapfrog the usual manipulations, and they conscientiously invested in it.

"When it came and eventually ended the way it did, especially at the national level, people, especially, the young and digital savvy could not be persuaded by the reasons or justifications provided by INEC for the abysmal disappointment, they were also enraged by the misplaced confidence with which INEC decreed 'Go To Court' for those dissatisfied.

"Since the Judiciary has been churning out some mysterious Judgments/decisions founded more on technicalities than substantial justice.

"The endpoint is that people became frustrated with the Judiciary and began to vigorously and fiercely interrogate their actions and decisions at every forum and any means - conventional/digital media.

"In all, the criticism is an admixture of frustration and the desire for the right to be done that will put an end to the theater of absurd in the conflicting and contradictory judgments of the courts occasioned by the 2023 elections.

"The elections opened up the Judiciary to forensic scrutiny as never before, and, there will be no end in sight until real justice starts surfacing."

'Bad losers criticising judiciary'

For Social Critic, Akinboye Adeoye, only bad losers were criticising the judiciary.

While reacting to Agbakoba's allegation against the judiciary he said: "The accusations against the judiciary and Supreme Court have become predominant as a result of bad losers during the recent elections.

"Those who did not produce sufficient evidence in courts, expected the Courts to manufacture evidence for them as if the Supreme Court were Father Christmas.

"The same Agbakoba cautioned those he called armchair lawyers to stop condemning the supreme court justices. He is one of the pioneers of those objectionable and ridiculous 25 per cent votes of Abuja superiority. That Abuja Federal Capital votes is superior to 36 State votes. Agbakoba is bitter over the losses of his candidates.

"Are the Supreme Court justices not first and foremost lawyers that some people alleged to be liars? Those that Late Chief Gani Fawehinmi referred to as "legal mechanics".

"That a lawyer can argue 'A' and 'B' here, and 'C' there depending on the highest bidders. Political and opposition lawyers are doing worse to our judges.

"How many of the senior lawyers are professionals in their conduct? The other day, one took a dead case in the Imo state of Ihedioha to court after four years.

"Let Agbakoba come out, especially in the recent cases where the Supreme Court delivered a judgment that was not in order. Let him articulate it point by point and not be going to the past."

IMAGES

PDP GOVERNORS FORUM VISIT MUTFWANG

The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Governors Forum, led by the Chairman, Sen. Bala Abubakar Mohammed, Governor of Bauchi State recently visited the Plateau State Governor, and donated the sum of one hundred million naira for Mangu, Bokkos and Barkin Ladi LGAs victims



Governor Mutfwang of Plateau State responding to the message by the PDP Governors



SGS, Arc Samuel Nanchang Jatau (left) with the PDP State chairman, Hon. Chris Adukuchili Hassan



From left are, HoS, Barr. Rauta Dakak, CoS Government House, Engr. Jeremiah Satmak, Sgs, Arc. Samuel Jatau and PDP chairman Hon. Chris Hassan



Cross section of members of the State Executive Council



Metropolitan Development Board

CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE

The General Manager, Jos Metropolitan Development Board, **Hon. Arch Hart Bankat**, AFLPMA MDA. M CID KSM, JP on behalf of the management and the entire staff of JMDB heartily congratulate the Executive Governor of Plateau state, His Excellency, **Barr. Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang** on his well-deserved victory at the supreme court to secure the mandate of the people of the state as freely given at the polls.

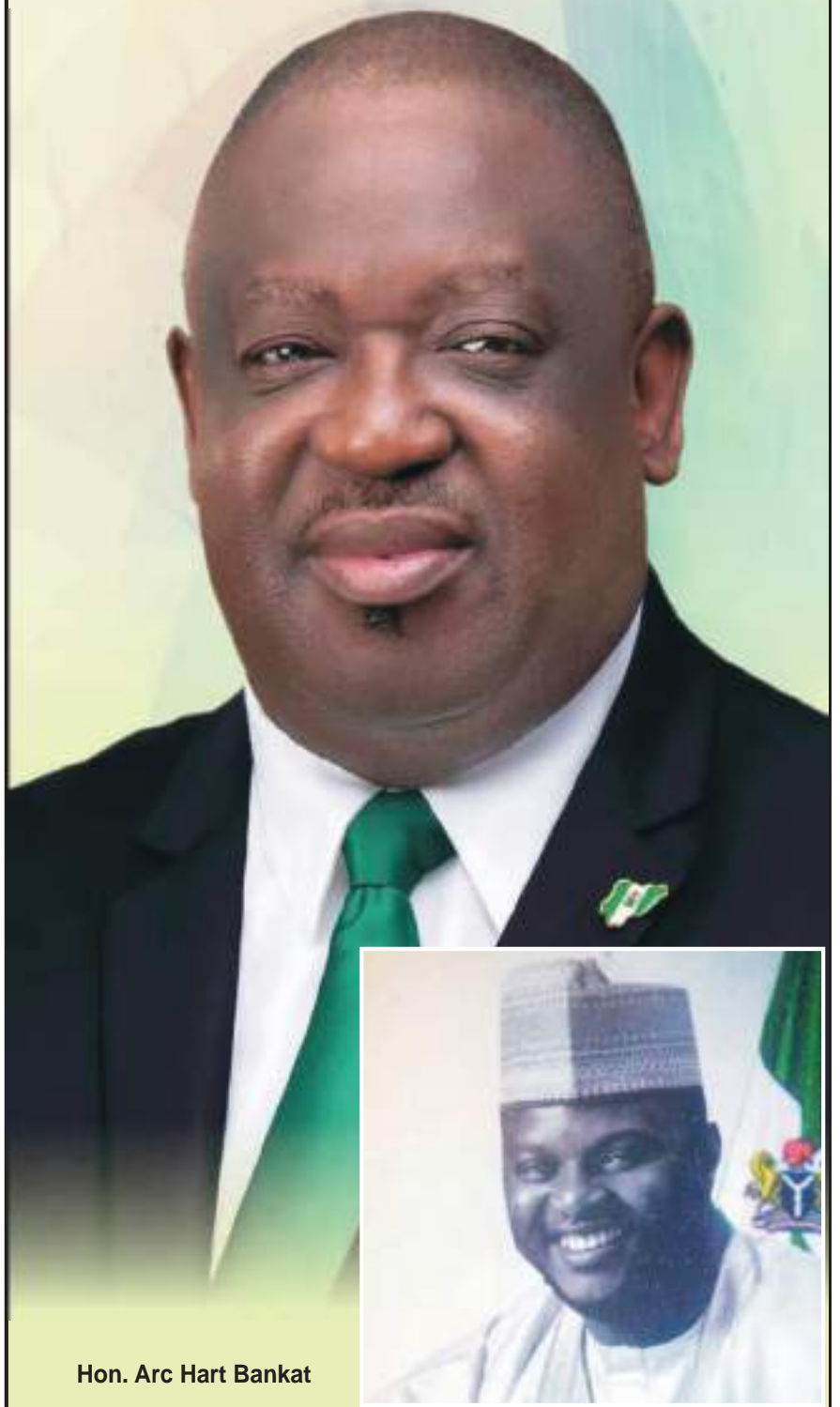
We in JMDB wish to identify with the victory and pray that the Almighty God will grant you the wisdom, good health and enablement to meet the yearnings, aspirations and expectations of the people of the state.

We have no doubt that your stewardship will be distinguished by the fear of God, justice and selfless service to humanity and to the glory of God.

Once more congratulations, your Excellency on this well-deserved triumph.

Signed:

Hon. Arch. Hart Bankat
General Manager JMDB



Hon. Arch Hart Bankat

Politics

Supreme Court ruling and Plateau politics

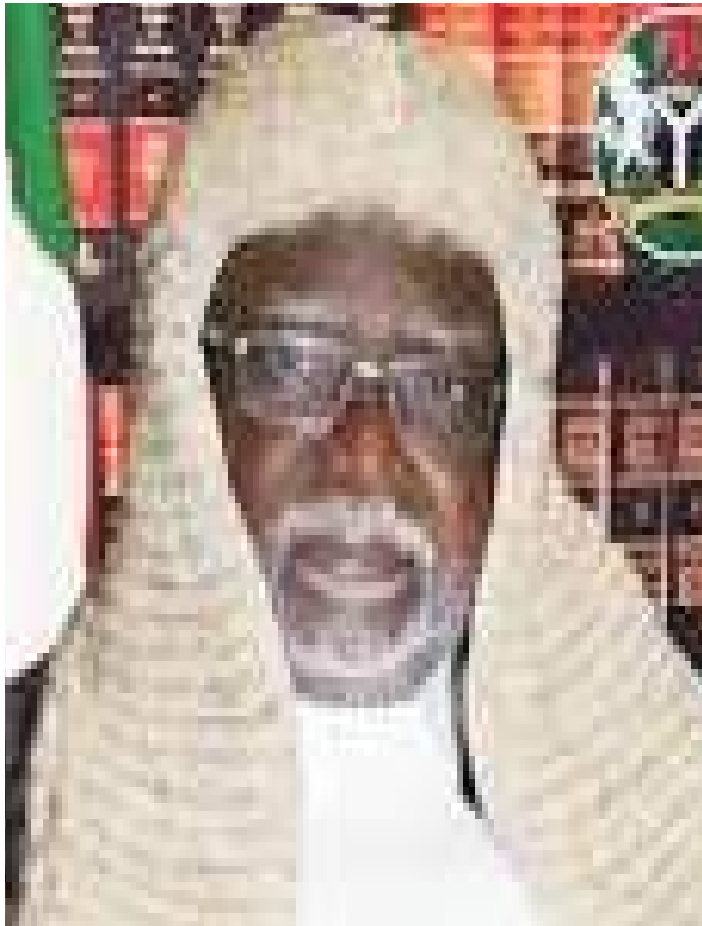
This prose is a commentary on matters arising from the novel political situation that the supreme court ruling of Friday, January 12, 2024, on the Plateau State governorship appeal, has created. Novelty which is described as relating to something new, is a visible reality of any organic society. AYUBA YILGAK'HA.

WHEN Ideas, policies or laws, which were painstakingly made and celebrated yesterday become obsolete today, it is because change is a constant as one of the ancient philosophers, Hericlitus, will put it. Practically speaking, the increasing complexity and dynamics of evolving societies often have the potential to throw up new and challenging situations or a situation that will require quick and appropriate solutions to manage that reality. The outcome of the supreme court ruling which upturned the appeal court ruling that favoured the All Progressives Party's candidate on November 19, 2023 and validated the victory of His Excellency Barr. Caleb Mutfwang (BCM) of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) at the ballot as well as at election tribunal, has created novel situations that were not known to law. Before the apex court ruling, the Court of Appeal tribunal, through its rulings had sacked two (2) senators; five (5) members house of representatives and, sixteen (16) house of assembly members including the governor, on the ground that they were not validly nominated and sponsored for lack of 'party structure'. On that insinuation, the appeal court which is the final court to entertain any case arising from state assembly and national assembly elections, by law had invalidated the mandate of these state and national assembly members as well as the governor who were all PDP members. The difference, however, was that while the governor governor had the extended opportunity to further appeal to the supreme court, these law makers had no such window of opportunity to try their luck at the 'policy court'.

After the court of appeal judgement in respect of the governorship, governor Mutfwang whose mandate has been voided, promptly, approached the supreme court with an appeal which sought the review of the judgement that ousted him from office. The appeal of the governor was for the final court to determine whether the decision of court of appeal tribunal that removed him against the verdict of the lower election tribunal which validated his victory was right and, also, prayed that the verdict of the former be voided in his favour. The appeal was considered and his prayers were summarily and favourably answered.

The judgement indicated that the appeal court judgement was done in error, maintaining that the appellate court has no jurisdiction to entertain pre-election matters; neither does it has the powers to determined whether a party has structure or not. In specific terms, the novelty in this whole political situation is that the supreme court has declared that the judgement of the court of appeal was wrong but, yet, so many 'political heads' have rolled as the PDP lost its elected members at state and national levels with the principal offices some of them were controlling before the appeal court hurricane that befell it took place.

The whose situation is a dicey political lock-jam. What will be the way out? Will the beneficiaries of the appeal court judgement which was declared incorrect get away with it or something can be done legally to redeem those lost mandates? These are questions that have continued to generate heated debate amongst legal experts, political actors and public affairs commentators, some of which have made extreme, moderate legal, political or even moral submissions. There is no absolute solution because the issue at stake is not clearly known to law in Nigeria. The supreme court ruling has created a new political lock-jam in the state and the politics of Nigeria with dicey future implications if not legally addressed. In politics, there



Ariwoola

can never be absolute solution, really. Before now, I used to think I went to school but the legal firework that followed the conduct of the 2023 election in Plateau State which produced elected representatives with His Excellency, BCM as tended to prove me substantially wrong. It was through that legal tussle that I got to learn legal phrases, terms or terminology like "justice in rem", "functus officio" and "writ certiorari", etc but my interest is on the first three.

Justice in rem refers to justice in respect of peculiar cases. Elementarily, the idea of justice in rem as applied to election tribunal cases is that, tribunal and appeal tribunals are special purpose courts which are set up to strictly and specifically handle issues arising from the conduct of election. They are different from conventional court cases. Here issues that do not directly touch on the election (including pre-election matters) are excluded, if not proactively raised within fourteen (14) days of the event or matter in contest by members of the political party involved who have stake (for instance as aspirant(s)). Also, fresh evidence which were not captured and presented at the point of filing any election case cannot be presented at any appeal after the case has been heard and decided at a lower court. This means that election tribunals cannot entertain any extreneous issue that has nothing to do with the conduct of election itself. This explained why the issues of fake certificate of president Tinubu and, the double nomination of the vice president, Shettima; the issues of party structure, invalid nomination of PDP candidates in Plateau State were jettisoned by the supreme court.

Functus officio, by description, means that ruling of court or tribunal cannot be benefitted in retrospect. Therefore, the ruling of the supreme court which favours governor Mutfwang cannot be benefitted by state assembly whose fate were sealed at the court of appeal. By implication, they have to bear the cross of the fate that has befallen them within the context of functus officio. That is the position of law but not the position of politics, considering that the issues at stake are novel. Hence, the back and

forward political puzzle that is on going in Plateau State.

The writ of certiorari is, technically, an anti thesis of functus officio. In a sense, "it is a formal order issued by a higher court, typically, an appellate court, to a lower court or tribunal. It instructs the lower court to send up the entire record of the specific case for review. This, essentially, allows the higher court to re-examine the lower court's decision and, potentially, overturn it or correct any errors it finds." In other words, lower tribunal or appeal tribunal court judgements can be reviewed. It is in the light of this postulation that political pundits like Hon. Timothy Holy, a former member House of representatives for Pankshin, Kanke and Kanan wrote as follow: "I am of the strong opinion that all PDP members of the State Assembly sacked by the Appeal Court should resume their offices immediately to continue from where they were stopped. This is because of last Friday's judgement of the Supreme Court (per Justices Okoro, Helen & Emmanuel Agim). For our national assembly members, our Distinguished Senators and Honourable Members should immediately write to the Senate President, Rt. Hon Speaker and the Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC intimating them of the Supreme Court nullification of the decision of the Appeal Court regarding their elections. These decisions are in line and in conformity with the positions of Justices of Supreme Court that sat on our case last Friday that the Court of Appeal lacks jurisdiction in all the cases. Taking this path is actionalising the decision, consolidating our position, and giving life to the judgment." I don't know but this opinion is more political than the explicitly legal process which wit of certiorari prescribes. In other words, the supreme court has not asked the appeal court to submit its decision regarding the state and national assembly members from Plateau State.

Some moralist have proposed that the beneficiaries of the allegely faulty appeal court rulings in Plateau State, particularly, the 16 yet to be sworn-in house of assembly members and the

national assembly members including the former governor of the state, Senator Simon Bako Along who was recently left his ministerial appointment and sworn-in at the red-chamber to represent Plateau South Senatorial zone are to resign. How easy this suggestion can go will be a matter of conjecture.

We are in a democracy. While these issues are being debated, one question that readily comes to mine, also, is that going forward, should matters of election (election disputes) be allowed to be handled by the Independent Electoral Commission (INEC) solely together with the tribunal courts as it were. This is be after final results of elections are collated and winners declared and returned elected, these outcome are often further tested at the tribunal up the final court, as the case may be and, in some cases, some of the winners the electoral umpire had earlier returned are reversed or have their victories invalidated. In as much as the two steps process of validation of victory is to ensure proper checks on human tendencies, has the arrangement addressed our fears in the light of present realities?

The second concern that needs reconsideration is that if electoral tribunals and appeal tribunals are to continue to preside over electoral disputes in Nigeria, at what point should the state and national assembly election be tribunal concluded in the light of the current Plateau contradiction? Will candidates contesting at those leveled be allowed, henceforth, to pursue their case up to the supreme court like it were in the case of governorship and presidential poll? It this should happened, it means more responsibility for the apex court because the number of electoral cases they will be handling will increase exponentially. Now, which way to go on this matter.

Democracy has its practical good sides and downsides. In theory, the system promises equal opportunity for all citizens to participate which is good. In addition, we have been taught that democracy is a game of numbers but left in glaring delirium about who has the convincing powers to determine the winning majority. Is it the court or the people? Whichever way you look at it, there are issues.

If the majority democracy relies on, is not qualitative to the extend that the people are substantially armed with knowledge to make informed choices or decisions regarding the alternatives that are available to them and, also, without duress or compulsion from any quarters, there will be problem. In other words, the rule of the majority democracy emphasises could throw up possibilities that are counter productive if the majority lacks the requisite quality to make decisions that work for all. This concern is captured in the view of a philosopher, Franz Kafka, who wrote that: "One idiot is one idiot. Two idiots are two idiots. Ten thousand idiots are a political party." What does this suggests to you? Kafka's postulation is pregnant with meanings. Commenting on the philosopher's submission, an anonymous commentator stated, emphatically, as follows: "Never underestimate the power of idiots in large numbers. They can even elect an idiot to represent them as president." This submission with the commentary that it attracts is very instructive. They spoke to the reality of how an unformed majority of people, who are united in action, could produce a leader of their kind in a democracy!

Again, allowing the courts to determine the will of the majority is a relative challenge too. How can the the will of the majority be left at the mercy of 3, 5 or 7 panel of justices who might be pruned to human inducements or errors to decide? Ain't this result in thwarting the will of the people in some

cases?

Another concern that needs mention for public discourse is when the will of the people is decided based on legal technicalities. In a democracy, there is no technicality that is as important as the expression of the will of the majority which democracy is anchored on as it were. Unfortunately, legal technicalities have take precedence in legal jurisprudence. This is a situation whereby a matter that concerns the will of the people is sacrificed on the altar of legal technicalities. Granted, technicalities have it place in law as it is in any other profession but its applicability in a democracy should always reflect the will of the majority. No more, no less!

In view of the novel issues arising from the contradictions generated by the appeal court ruling and, the subsequent supreme court ruling which, finally, validated the election of governor Mutfwang with the state/national assembly members losing their seats, on the same ground, because the latter could not have the opportunity to test their fate at the apex appeal court, responsibility has beckon on the national assembly to rise to the occasion to salvage our democracy from sliding towards anarchy. The assembly is called upon to promptly and critically review the Nigeria's legal system, particularly, our electoral laws with the view to curtail the reoccurrence of these new realities of politics and legal demands that have emanated from Plateau state!

It is important to note that any issue arising from this legal tussle that is not trashed will resurface itself in the future general elections. With the issue of party primaries being the the exclusive preserve of the political parties, there is the need to promptly legislate on the conduct of political parties to ensure internal party democracy thrive. Intra party democracy has to be taken seriously if, as a nation or states, we must get our leadership recruitment process right.

The point has to be reiterated that the recruitment of party officials at all levels must be taken seriously to make sure that capable hands who have the wherewithal to, efficiently, run the affairs of political parties emerged without undue manipulation from transactional politicians. This point has to be stressed with emphasis. Nigeria is party democracy and, therefore, the place of party structure cannot be taken carelessly, going forwards. In other words, when Nigeria gets it right at the party level, the county's democracy will be better. Political parties are like family units of a society. In a party democracy, citizens have to belong as active members of a political platform in order to contribute in shaping the society through participatory leadership recruitment process. A citizen who belongs to no political party in a multiparty democracy is like members of a society who have no family root. Plateau politics is at stake. Which way to go: The way of "functus officio" or "writ of certiorari"? Anyway, in a sporting competition, "any team can have a bad century!", as Janice Peterchak will put it. However, in a contest between good (virtue) and evil (vice), good should prevail or win by all legitimate means. As the legal issues generated by the 2023 general settles, it is important to state that the next election is no far anymore. Therefore, those who emerged victorious at the polls/tribunal courts should roll off their sleeves and settle for responsible and purposeful governance. This is because the people that voted them into power deserve nothing short of good governance that is driven by quality leadership. Wake up Nigeria; the world is watching. May the country, generally and; Plateau State, in particular, prosper in peace, unity and sustainable development!

NEWS

Tinubu congratulates Dangote

From
JIDAUNA YANUNG, Abuja

PRESIDENT Bola Tinubu has congratulated the President and Chief Executive Officer of Dangote Group, Alhaji Aliko Dangote on the conferment of Senegal's highest national order, "the National Order of the Lion," on him. Tinubu, in a statement in Abuja by his Special Adviser on Media and Publicity, Ajuri Ngelale said that the president congratulated Dangote on the award of the National Order of the Lion by President of Senegal, Macky SALLY. "The award is the highest order of Senegal and was bestowed on the foremost business man", the statement stated. President Tinubu applauded the industrialist for his enterprise and ingenuity, creating jobs and



Tinubu

opportunities for many in Nigeria and across West Africa, as well as contributing to their economies which the

award further affirms. He commended Dangote and wished him the very best in his endeavours.

Police confirms abduction of passengers traveling to Abuj

From
AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

THE Kogi State Police Command has confirmed the abduction of passengers traveling to Abuja in GIG and ABC Transport Buses.

The Command Public Relations Officer, SP William Aya, in a statement made available to our correspondent, indicates that the incident happened, but the DPO, Local Vigilantes, and Hunters

have been in the bush in an effort to rescue the victims.

According to him, two buses were involved, but he cannot say how many passengers were kidnapped during the incident.

He further disclosed that the Commissioner of Police, CP Bethrand Onuoha, has deployed additional Tactical Squad consisting of Quick Response Unit, Police Mobile Force, Counter-Terrorism Unit, as well as conventional police personnel to the area to continue with the bush combing and ensure that all victims are rescued unhurt.

Our correspondent reports that the passengers who were



Onuoha

National malaria programme laments malaria prevalence

By PETER TITLE

THE officials of National Malaria Programme also visited the Executive Governor of Plateau State, Barrister Caleb Mutfwang on a courtesy call where they lamented the high rate people were dying as a result of sickness. Led by Mr Timothy Obot, the National Coordinator of the programme intimated Governor Mutfwang that despite the awareness on the eradication of Malaria, people including pregnant women and children also die of the illness which he said was unacceptable.

He called on the Governor to intensify the campaign for free Malaria in state just as he was optimistic that was achieved, he explained

that it would further boost the tourism potential of the state as "Home of peace and tourism".

Mr Obot urged the Plateau State Government to turned their search light on the eradication of Malaria saying that it has killed 31 percent out of the global deaths caused by the pandemic.

Governor Mutfwang thanked the Malaria team for the visit saying the government under his watch underscores alot of attention towards Malaria eradication.

He urged them to look beyond the normal net distribution which has become a routine but to equally equipped the Primary Health Care

necessary drugs lamenting that they were in shambles.

SEVERAL bandits, two soldiers and a mobile police officer were killed on Monday during a fight that ensued after the outlaws attacked a security camp in Zamfara State.

The terrorists had attacked security personnel stationed at the Government Day Secondary School, Dauran in Zurmi Local Government Area of the state.

Multiple sources from Dauran and Zurmi towns told PREMIUM TIMES that the attack, which began around 9:30 a.m., was launched by the terrorists to avenge the arrest of one of them by the soldiers on Sunday after being identified by locals.

"Some residents who were once kidnapped spotted a bandit in the market on Sunday and alerted the soldiers that were stationed in the community. The soldiers came and arrested the suspect and took him away," a community leader in Dauran, who asked not to be named for security

By PETER TITLE

GOVERNOR Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang of Plateau State has applauded the efforts of the United Nations Children Education Fund (UNICEF) for their quick intervention in mobilising medical personnel, resources and medications to the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) camps to treat and take care of people affected by the killings of innocent people across the state.

He made this known when Dr. Tushar Rane, UNICEF, Chief Field Officer Bauchi and his team paid a courtesy visit to the governor at the Old Government House, Rayfield, Jos recently.

According to Governor Mutfwang, UNICEF was a partner in progress that was always in the forefront, assisting victims of displacements, helping in areas of education to children

traveling in two buses from the eastern part of the country to Abuja, were kidnapped on the Inele-Eteke Ogugu new road in Kogi East Senatorial District.

Our reporter also gathered that GIG and ABC Transport buses heading to Abuja were hijacked by kidnapers in Kogi State.

The source further disclosed that the GIG bus left Umuahia at 7:30 am on Saturday on its way to Abuja.

According to the source, the GIG company said they have contacted security services and are tracking them.

3,072 gender-based violence cases recorded in FCT

From
JIDAUNA YANUNG, Abuja

ABOUT 3,072 Gender Based Violence (GBV) cases have been recorded

in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) since the

Mutfwang promised to looked into their demands and possibly solving them

saying the health needs of the citizens cannot be taken for granted.

Bandits, soldiers, policeman killed in gunfight in Zamfara

reasons, told PREMIUM TIMES Monday evening. "That was what caused the attack."

Two groups of terrorists were said to have stormed the camp, a government secondary school now being used by the soldiers.

"Most of the soldiers were inside the classrooms that now serve as their rooms when they started hearing gunshots," a youth leader in Zurmi, Abubakar (surname withheld), said. "The two soldiers killed and the mobile policeman were the ones on duty outside so they fired back. They exchanged fire for some time before the other soldiers joined."

He said several terrorists were killed by the soldiers but only two bodies were recovered as the bandits retrieved and withdrew with the others.

"Terrorists don't leave behind dead bodies of their friends. They try as much as possible to take away all dead

Mutfwang commends UNICEF for assisting crisis victims



Mutfwang

as well as providing potable and safe water to the populace. He urged them not to relent but do more in that regard.

The governor appealed to UNICEF not to be tired of providing to humanity but stressed that he would be very happy if their organisation would ensure that the displaced people were settled back to their ancestral homes.

Mutfwang said that the state government would continue to collaborate with international partners in the area of health as well as other critical sectors for the development of the state.

Earlier, the UNICEF Chief Field Officer, Bauchi, Dr. Tushar Rane explained that they were in the state to condole with the governor and the people of the state over the senseless killings that took place recently which

he noted that the children were mostly affected which has disrupted their education.

The chief field officer said that as a result of the barbaric killings which has displaced thousands of people from their homes, UNICEF immediately swung into action by deploying medical supplies to the affected places.

According to Dr. Rane, they also set up temporary health clinics as well, to provide services to individuals who are in need. He said that UNICEF has so far attended to and treated over 187,000 people with different ailments as a result of hardship faced by the crisis.

He thanked the governor for his assistance and called for both UNICEF and the state government to collaborate for the interest of all.

beginning of this year. The mandate secretary of the Women Affairs secretariat of the Federal Capital Territory Administration, Mr Adebayo Benjamin disclosed this at a news briefing in Abuja.

According to him, the recorded cases covered a wide margin of abuses, including domestic, sexual assault, rape, and other forms of violence against women and children.

He highlighted the urgent need for intensified efforts to combat the issues and protect vulnerable individuals, particularly in the nation's capital.

"As of today, we have data of 3,072 Gender Based Violence, GBV, on the national dash board in the FCT, not in the country", he stressed.

News

Youth killed at Kaduna re-run election

From John Fwah, KADUNA

One ugly incident recorded during the last Saturday's re-run election was the killing of a youth, Mansur Maishago in Rigachikun, Igabi Local Council of Kaduna State.

It was learnt that Maishago, who was a Sociology student of the Kaduna State University (KASU), was allegedly hit by a stray bullet when the election turned violent.

Our correspondent gathered that consequently, some youths barricaded the Rigachikun-Zaria expressway in protest, calling on security agencies to fish out persons behind the shooting.

It was learnt that the student was allegedly shot at his shop during a crisis involving the police and some hoodlums, who also allegedly snatched and ran away with the results of some polling units.

An eyewitness who pleaded anonymity, said violence erupted when the counting of ballots started and it was observed that a particular party was leading at Box 06 of the Women Centre ward in Rigachikun.

According to the witness, "when counting was in progress, a group of thugs in the company of police officers, stormed the area in a Hilux vehicle with number plate RBC 144 AP, snatched the ballot box, and took away



Sani

the INEC officials".

He added: "After they left, a former Speaker of the Kaduna State House of Assembly, Yusuf Ibrahim Zailani, who is also a resident of the area, came to the scene in the company of some police officers. Then the crowd started shouting 'karya ne! Ba ma yi!' (It's a lie! We disagree!)" "It was at that moment that the police officers accompanying the former Speaker, started shooting in the air. A female police officer shot into the crowd and a stray bullet hit Mansur Mai Shago whose shop was nearby," the eyewitness alleged.

Also, a party agent, Ibrahim Adamu, who was at the polling centre, said he was attacked by thugs who wounded him in his right hand as he tried to run for his dear life.

Meanwhile, military officers were drafted to the

spot to ensure the barricade was dismantled and vehicular movement restored.

Another eyewitness said: "The soldiers drafted to Rigachikun dispersed the protesting youths that blocked Rigachikun-Zaria expressway."

Many residents of the area, however, remain apprehensive, following an attempt by angry youths to burn down the house of the former Speaker, who they blame for the shooting of the student.

Responding to the issue, the Kaduna State Police Command said investigation had commenced on the matter.

Spokesperson, ASP Mansir Hassan, who confirmed the development, said a Deputy Commissioner has been put in charge of the investigation, and that the outcome would be made public.

Kaduna NUJ commends Governor Sani

efforts of the State Government in ensuring the security of lives and property of citizens and that more efforts should also be channeled along the Kaduna-Abuja highway.

It also said that the State Government should ensure that heavy duty trucks plying township roads should maintain the 6pm status quo

of restriction of movement along township routes.

The Congress also stressed "That the State Government should provide adequate security and an enabling environment especially for journalists.

The Communique Drafting Committee includes Usman Sani as Chairman, Rahila Abdullahi Secretary.

Nema seeks collaboration to address disaster

From JIDAUNA YANUNG, Abuja

The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), has called for collective efforts to reduce the impact of disasters, especially on vulnerable communities.

Director General of the agency, Mustapher Ahmed stated this recently, at the opening of a technical workshop on United Nations Disaster Risk Reduction Monitoring and Reporting of the Sendai Framework 2015_2030 held in Abuja.

He said, stakeholders must recognize that the diverse needs and vulnerabilities of our

people and communities are crucial for the overall stability and sustainability of Nigeria.

The NEMA boss called for the sustainability of the tempo of driving the monitoring and reporting of disaster risk management activities on the UN Sendai Framework monitor with a vision to achieve the lead country in West Africa sub_region and Pan Africa as a whole.

He emphasized that collective efforts can make a difference in reducing the impact of disasters, protecting vulnerable communities, and fostering risk-informed sustainable development.



Deploying technology for common good

IN the good old days, life was so simple, yet not so easy to deal with because of the absence of the tools that are available to us these days. To be honest, I have forgotten how my hand writing looks like. I am certain a lot others share the same concerns that currently occupy my mind. I am not sure too if hand writing is still taught in our schools where you are scored in the subject at examination. I sometimes think that we are losing some of our core values due to the fact that society is making some form of progress.

To be sure, this progress is good. Modern and easier ways of doing things are sought and found and jobs get done in record time and with less stress. That is where we have found ourselves. Yes, thanks to technology we have been able to do a lot of tasking jobs with relative ease. Unfortunately, this new ways of doing things provided by technology seem to have the potential to create some form of dislocation to the very society that worked very hard to create it in the first place. Science is an important and excellent tool which has helped in solving a lot of society's problems. However, in course of trying to solve some of these issues, it has generated further problems needing further interrogation and resolution.

With an android phone in a person's hand, he can do a lot of things both positive and negative. He can create wealth and add value and he can as well cause confusion and destroy the society that has worked to ease the performance of tasks that were hitherto not easy to perform. The new media has been a source of blessings to many and has equally been a source of sorrow for many. Some have

lost their lives simply because technology had been deployed wrongly.

If you live in any crisis prone area you will understand what I am talking about. Crises are effortlessly stocked with the use of new technologies. People get killed for no fault of their own because some mad and unconscionable persons decide to spread what is commonly referred to these days as fake and unverified news. I often allude to the "an fara" phenomenon, particularly in Jos. This situation often creates tension-filled situations. I remember a couple of years back I had the misfortune of being in the Terminus area to pick up a friend who had come into town for the weekend. While waiting for him to cross over from the opposite side of the busy road, everything just went bursts and everyone started running.

In the confusion that ensued, my friend, who was new in town almost towed the same line until I told him to calm down and comport himself. When he entered the car he asked what the problem was and I told him that no one can exactly say what the problem was. As we drove out of the Terminus area we saw a lot of cars that ran into each other and in the process caused a lot of damage to themselves. Indeed, as we were making our way out of the crowd back to safety and sanity a woman ran towards us struggling to gain entry into my car so she could escape the madness. When she could not gain entrance I asked her what the problem was but she could give me no reason. When I picked her and we went out of confusion and to sanity, I again asked why she was running and she said she saw everyone running and she too joined to escape from what was not known to her.

This is how bad our situation has become

since 2001. We have become a sort of "killjoy to ourselves. We no longer have the presence of mind to analyze situations but act on the spur of the moment by just drawing conclusions and joining the fray. Another instance would further buttress our present-day realities. During the Ebola conflagration, a lot of unverified stories occupied our social media space where a lot of people had to take salt baths and drank salt which led to their untimely deaths. People who were suffering from hypertension exacerbated their conditions by gulping down huge amounts of salt and had to be rushed to medical facilities where some could does not make it just because some ladies started a joke in their university hostel which went viral and caused untold hardships to many families.

What "Random Musings" set out to do this week is to bring to the fore some of the harms we bring upon ourselves by the misuse of modern technology. That as much as there are a lot of advantages in deploying modern technology, we must and should be able to show restraint in ensuring that we do not use it negatively. Whatever we do that would lead to negative consequences for society is best left out. If we must return to learning handwriting so that it would increase our capacity to be patient and objective, let us learn patience again. I dare suggest that these new technologies that have brought about sorrow and tears to some families like in the words of the music icon, Fela Kuti, should be subjected to some form of control. If this is not done, some mad person would come up someday and use the tool that is supposed to ease our work to destroy our society.



News

Mutfwang commiserates with clergy's family, Dariye

By PETER TITLE

GOVERNOR Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang has commiserated with the families of Reverend. Dr. Musa Gotom, former President, Church Of Christ In Nations (COCIN), who died recently and Chief Joshua Chibi Dariye, the former Governor of the state over the demise of his mother, Kaka Saratu Dariye who also went to be with the Lord recently.

Mutfwang who was at their residences at Rahol Kanang, TCNN, Jos South Local Government Area to register his condolences with his state executive members said Rev. Dr. Gotom would be greatly missed by the Church and the students of the Theological College of Northern Nigeria, (TCNN), whom he had taught and mentored until his death.

According to him, death cannot cease to bring sorrow but as children of God and as believers of Jesus Christ, there is the hope that there is resurrection and it is inevitable.

Governor Mutfwang said, Rev. Dr. Gotom was privileged to serve humanity and thanked God for the life the deceased lived even after retirement, stressing that he was a leader you can run to anytime and anywhere for advice.

Responding on behalf of the family, Nde Lazarus Bewarang thanked the governor for finding time despite his tied schedule to condole with the Gotom family.

According to him, the



Mutfwang

former COCIN President lived a fulfilled life and impacted many lives. He pointed out that through several Jesus's films translated in Ngas language, many received Christ as their personal savior.

Nde Bewarang further said the deceased served as General Secretary before rising to the position of President of Church. He died at the age of 83 years and will be buried on the 13th February, 2024.

Earlier at the Residence of Chief Joshua Chibi Dariye, Governor Mutfwang urged the Dariye family to see death as inevitable that every soul must test.

He said that their late mother would be remembered for bringing up her children in a Christian way and was proud that the

children never disappointed her. That was why they were giving back to society.

Mutfwang agreed that it was a trying moment for the family and prayed God to fill the vacuum left and to comfort the family.

Chief Joshua Chibi Dariye, the former Governor of Plateau State while responding on behalf of the family, said his mother died a fulfilled woman believing that she was resting with the Lord.

While thanking the Governor for the condolence visit, he said he would not have been happy if death occurred during his travails.

Dariye advised Governor Mutfwang to break the jinx that existed by providing dividends of democracy to the teeming populace as seen and was evident everywhere in the state.

By PETER TITLE

FOLLOWING the improved security situation in Mangu Local Government Area of Plateau State, Governor Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang has further relaxed the earlier imposed curfew in the locality.

The curfew will now be observed from 8pm to 7am in order to allow residents to engage in their agricultural and economic activities, thereby contributing to the overall development of the state.

A statement signed by Gyang Bere, the Director of Press and Public Affairs (DOPPA), to the Governor in a statement, said the adjustment in the period for

PLSG relaxes curfew imposed on Mangu

the curfew was made after careful consideration and consultation with the State Security Council.

The governor, according to the release, encouraged community leaders from diverse backgrounds, irrespective of faith or ethnicity, to continue their strategic engagements aimed at nurturing trust, fostering tolerance, and promoting better understanding among the people.

While urging the residents of Mangu Local Government Area to strictly adhere to the curfew by remaining indoors between 8pm and 7am, it

enjoined them to refrain from taking the law into their own hands.

Governor Mutfwang also called on the security personnel to fulfill their constitutional responsibility of enforcing the curfew effectively to prevent any breach of law and order.

The statement further expressed gratitude for the cooperation and support received so far, and urged the community to maintain their collaboration with the security agencies to ensure the complete restoration of peace and order in the local government area.

Police smash fake US dollars, Naira syndicates

From WILLIE ATTAH, Gombe

TWELVE persons are now in police net in Gombe following their arrest over printing and disposing of fake US dollars and Naira notes to the public.

The syndicate whose members were paraded before newsmen, were arrested in Bajoga, Funakaye LGA and Dukku, Dukku LGA, where they operate.

According to ASP Mahid Muazu Abubakar, the Gombe State Command's Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), six of the suspects were arrested on the 23rd January, 2024 in Bajoga town after a tip off.

He explained that on the same day, around 10:00 am, information got to the Bajoga Divisional Police Headquarters that one Buba Muhammadu, 45 years, went to a chemist belonging to Muhammad Ismail with



Etim

counterfeit notes of one thousand naira.

He said on receipt of the complaint, police detectives moved to the scene and arrested Buba Muhammadu and recovered the exhibits.

Mahid added that further

investigation led to the arrest of five others, including Abubakar Muhammad who was arrested in Kano State and exhibits recovered from him were 500 pieces of fake 100 US dollar bills and 265,000 counterfeit of Naira currency.

The four others arrested in the syndicate are: Jungudo Muhammadu, 53 years; Adamu Yusuf Mallum, 30 years; Abdulhamid Abdullahi, 60 years and Salihu Abdulhamid, 50 years.

The other syndicate, the PPRO revealed, were also arrested after a tip off on 24th January, 2024 in Malala, Dukku LGA in possession of sixty three pieces of fake 100 US dollar bills.

Those arrested in Malala are, Haruna Adamu, 60 years, from Taguji, Darazo LGA of Bauchi State; Garba Ibrahim, 25 years from Hashidu, Gombe State; Samaila Musa, 30 years from Gombe-Abba, Gombe State; Sa'adu Muhammed, 23 years from Badarawa Quarters, Kaduna State; Yusuf Abdullahi, 30 years from Gombe-Abba, Gombe State and Muhammadu Umaru, 26 years from Gombe-Abba, Gombe State.

He said all the suspects confessed to have committed the crime and will be charged to court for prosecution.

He urged the people of the state to be more vigilant and report all cases to the appropriate authorities as opposed to taking the laws into their own hands.

Police recover rustled cows, donkey

From ANENE AIKE, Sokoto

THE Nigeria Police, Sokoto Joint Operatives Team have recovered 20 cows and a donkey along Kware to Gada

forest from suspected rustlers, the state Police

Commissioner has revealed.

The Commissioner of Police, CP Ali Kaigama, disclosed this while parading the recovered animals to newsmen in Sokoto. He assured the general public that rustlers will definitely be wiped out of Sokoto.

CP Kaigama, who was represented by the Police Command's spokesperson, ASP Ahmed Rufai, said the recovered animals were stationed at the state police command and would be handed over to the owners. The commissioner stated that on 16 January this year, at about 1100 hrs, a team of Anti - kidnapping Operatives attached to the state Criminal Investigation Department (CID), in conjunction with the SWAT acted on an intelligence and intercepted yet-to-be-identified armed cattle rustlers along Kware - Gada bush.

According to him on

sighting the police, the rustlers took to their heels, and after giving a hot chase, they abandoned the stolen cattle, and as a result, of these, 20 cows and one donkey were recovered at the scene".

He disclosed that following a discreet investigation by the Command, one Malami Hayatu, a resident of Durbawa Yarbarade village in the Kware Local Government Area was identified to be the owner of the cattle.

The commissioner however, revealed that the suspects were at large and the police did not relent in their efforts toward a thorough investigation to ensure that the suspects were arrested to pave the way for a free crime society in the state.

Reacting to the issue of Hayatu he said the cattle were rustled in his residence at Durbawa village on that fateful night

by the rustlers.

"On the 14th of January, this year, armed robbers attacked my house in Durbawa village and carted away 20 cows and one donkey. We couldn't challenge them because they were armed and followed their footprints but we did not trace their whereabouts", the cows owner lamented.

He however added that as a result, he reported the issue to the police station. "And thank God, the state Police Command was able to retrieve the cattle, and is being handed over to me", he said.

He also commended the Nigerian Police for their action which led to the retrieval of the rustled cows.

Hayatu also appealed for more support to the security agents to enable them discharge their mandate in the state,



Hayatu Kaigama

Foreign Commentary

Biden's re-elect fortunes intact despite US, middle East strikes

On Friday, the United States conducted a series of strikes on sites in Syria and Iraq that it said belonged to Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and affiliated militias. The air raids came in retaliation for the January 28 attack by the armed group Islamic Resistance of Iraq (IRI) on a military base in Jordan that killed three US soldiers and injured more than 40 others.

IN a statement issued the same day, US President Joe Biden said the response would not stop at IRGC targets. On Saturday, American and British forces bombarded Houthi bases in Yemen in an apparent continuation of efforts to degrade their ability to disrupt maritime shipping in the Red Sea. There may be more attacks in the coming days as well, but clearly, the US is refraining from directly hitting Iran, which it accuses of supplying weapons to IRI.

A military response was politically unavoidable for the Biden administration. As is normally the case in an election year, any serious domestic development or international incident involving US interests or prestige becomes a defining moment for the sitting administration, whether Republican or Democratic.

The measured retaliation reflects the fact that the US president has a lot to worry about in terms of domestic perceptions and the attitudes of voters he seeks to sway in his favour as well as the dramatic changes in his own party's electorate.

Since October 7, the Israeli government has sought to portray Hamas's attack as an Iranian act of aggression. After the January 28 attack in Jordan, some Republican members of Congress echoed this position.

South Carolina Senator Lindsey Graham minced no words in agitating for a direct US strike on Iran itself. His Republican colleagues Tom Cotton of Arkansas and John Cornyn of Texas seconded his call.

Former President Donald Trump, who is the likely Republican nominee for the presidential election in November, took a rather isolationist stance and insisted that the Jordan attack would not have taken place had he been in charge.

Establishment Republicans like Graham, Cornyn and Cotton may no longer reflect the general mood among the rank and file who now form Trump's solid base and are trying to change the party's position on foreign policy. Indeed, the Make America Great Again crowd is loathing to expand US entanglements overseas and prefers to see



Biden

financial resources used domestically, for example, to strengthen the southern border and halt the influx of migrants and asylum seekers.

But it is not just the core of Trump's base that embraces this anti-escalatory stance. Given that the vast majority of Americans worry about their country getting dragged into a war – about 84 percent, according to one recent poll – Trump's isolationist rhetoric has widespread appeal.

Democrats in Congress, perhaps feeling the growing pressure, reacted to the Jordan attack by calling for a strong but "proportionate" response, a euphemism for a measured strike on pro-Iran militia targets but without directly hitting Iran. Such positions were articulated by

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer of New York and Senators Ben Cardin of Maryland and Jack Reed of Rhode Island.

Indeed, the Biden administration's response to the Jordan attack has practically marked the midpoint between hawkish Republicans' calls for striking Iran directly and the Democrats' calls for a limited reaction. According to the Pentagon, its strikes included the command and control centers of Iran's IRGC and its affiliated militias – in Syria, Iraq and Yemen – as well as their drone and intelligence capabilities.

American foreign policy decisions and actions rarely impact the outcome of presidential elections, even

less congressional elections. This time around, however, Biden's choices may make or break his chances for re-election.

In his administration's response to the Jordan attack, he had to reconcile his declared disinterest in widening the conflict in the Middle East with the need to respond to an act of aggression against US troops in the region. But the response that he ordered was nonetheless an escalation of tensions that may lead to the dreaded widening of the conflict.

Biden decided on this response, likely with his re-election campaign strategy in mind. Knowing that he is unlikely to persuade many hardcore Republicans to switch their votes from

presumptive nominee Trump to him, Biden seeks to get the support of most independents and some moderate Republicans in November. Reports following the New Hampshire primary indicate that Biden may be able to count on segments of these two groups to support his campaign.

Usually supportive of moderate positions in US foreign policy that protect American interests and prestige, many independents and moderate Republicans are likely to approve of Biden's response to the Jordan attack.

While he may be gaining their support, Biden may be losing the support of others. Indeed, the most important problem for him may be in his own Democratic Party, where the sentiment is clearly shifting – slowly but perceptibly – away from traditional support for military action overseas and for Israel.

Young voters in general, who were crucial for Biden's victory in 2020, and young Democrats have soured on the president's policy choices, especially those related to Israel and the Middle East. They accuse him of hypocrisy because of his contradictory positions on the Russian war on Ukraine and the Israeli war on Gaza.

Crucially, the president's fortunes may depend on whether Muslim and Arab Americans decide to vote for him in November. Currently, the support of both communities is in doubt as Biden continues to ignore their calls for a ceasefire in Gaza and is doing nothing to stop the Israeli slaughter, in which more than 27,000 Palestinians have been killed.

While his retaliation for the Jordan attack may be the right geopolitical move that US foreign policy requires, it is unlikely to restore to him any support from young Democrats and Muslim and Arab Americans.

What Biden needs to do to gain their support is to dissociate himself and his administration from Israel's genocidal war, its apartheid system and its occupation of Palestinian land. Indeed, his re-election remains uncertain without a new, morally defensible direction in US foreign policy in the Middle East.

"Young voters in general, who were crucial for Biden's victory in 2020, and young Democrats have soured on the president's policy choices, especially those related to Israel and the Middle East. They accuse him of hypocrisy because of his contradictory positions on the Russian war on Ukraine and the Israeli war on Gaza. Crucially, the president's fortunes may depend on whether Muslim and Arab Americans decide to vote for him in November. Currently, the support of both communities is in doubt as Biden continues to ignore their calls for a ceasefire in Gaza and is doing nothing to stop the Israeli slaughter, in which more than 27,000 Palestinians have been killed. While his retaliation for the Jordan attack may be the right geopolitical move that US foreign policy requires, it is unlikely to restore to him any support from young Democrats and Muslim and Arab Americans."

Foreign News

Sunak sad over King Charles III's cancer news

THE prime minister said he was left "shocked and sad" by the news but is in "regular contact" with the monarch.

The King, 75, has postponed all public duties and began "regular treatments" for his condition on Monday.

The Palace confirmed he does not have prostate cancer but few further details have been disclosed.

Mr Sunak told BBC Radio 5 Live: "He'll just be in our thoughts and our prayers - many families around the country listening to this will have been touched by the same thing and they know what it means to everyone."

It is understood the King's weekly audiences with Mr Sunak will continue in person, unless doctors advise he limits such contact.

The Palace has stressed the King will continue with his constitutional role as head of state, including completing paperwork and holding private meetings.

On Monday, the Palace said the monarch "remains wholly positive" about his treatment and "looks forward" to returning to his normal schedule.

The King returned to London for outpatient cancer care from his home in Sandringham, where he was seen waving to crowds during a 10-minute walk to church the previous day.

The Prince of Wales - who was due to return to public duties this week following the Princess of Wales's abdominal surgery last month - is expected to cover some of his father's engagements while the King receives care.

The King informed both his sons personally about his diagnosis and Prince William is said to be in regular contact with his father.

The Duke of Sussex, who lives in the United States, spoke to his father and is travelling to the UK to see him. According to reports, he could arrive as early as Tuesday afternoon.



Charles

The Palace has not indicated when the King will return to public duties.

It is unclear whether official visits to Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Samoa scheduled for later this year will go ahead.

The King's cancer diagnosis follows a procedure at a private London hospital more than a week ago for a "benign" prostate condition.

Media caption, Listen: PM 'shocked and sad' at King's cancer diagnosis

On Monday, the Palace said "a separate issue of concern was noted and subsequently diagnosed as a form of cancer" during that treatment.

The King chose to go public about his cancer treatment, the Palace said, as he had been a patron of a number of cancer-related charities when he was Prince of Wales.

The Royal Society of Medicine thanked the King for highlighting "how cancer is indiscriminate" and urged members of the public eligible for cancer screenings to make an appointment.

Simon Lewis, who was Queen Elizabeth II's press secretary between 1997 and

1999, praised the King for his openness, adding "20 years ago there would have been a very abrupt, short statement and that would have been it".

He told Radio 4's Today programme the cancer diagnosis would be "a lot to process" but said "I know from people around him that he will be absolutely itching to continue" with his formal constitutional duties behind the scenes.

One-in-two people in the UK develop some kind of cancer during their lifetime.

There are more than 200 types of cancer - the most common ones in the UK are breast, lung, prostate and bowel, according to the NHS website.

For many types of cancer, the chance of getting it increases with age. UK figures suggest, on average each year, more than a third (36%) of new cancer cases were in people aged 75 and over.

You can get all the latest royal stories and analysis straight to your inbox every week with our Royal Watch newsletter - sign up here

Ukraine's president confirms plans for military shake-up

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has said he plans to reshuffle Ukraine's military and political leadership.

The comments, on Italian

RAI TV in an interview broadcast late on Sunday, follow weeks of speculation that Zelenskyy intends to dismiss Valery Zaluzhny, commander-in-chief of

Ukraine's military.

Zaluzhny, who was appointed by Zelenskyy months before Russia invaded in February 2022, is popular with troops and the wider population. He has denied speculation that he has political ambitions.

He and the president have been at odds for some time over the conduct of the war, as the country grapples with low ammunition, personnel shortages after a failed counteroffensive, and the need for more troops.

Zelenskyy sought to downplay the implications during his comments on the reshuffle.

"When we talk about this, I mean a replacement of a series of state leaders, not just in a single sector like the military," he said.

"If we want to win, we must all push in the same direction,

NORTH Korea's recent escalation of threats and more tests of weapons aimed at South Korea haven't done much to upset the calm in the nation's capital.

"We learned to be numb," said Renee Na, a 33-year-old office worker in Seoul who was one of a dozen South Koreans who sounded more indifferent than scared when talking with The Associated Press.

"Our generation grew up seeing North Korea use nuclear provocations as showmanship to maintain the stability of its regime," Na said. "When they act up, it doesn't feel like a real threat, but more like an annual event they stage when they need to shore up internal unity or want outside help."

That's a stark contrast to recent comments from Pyongyang, where leader Kim Jong Un said in January that his nation was abandoning its fundamental objective of peaceful reconciliation with South Korea. He also repeated a threat to annihilate the South if provoked.

At the same time, North Korea has conducted a streak of weapons testing, including what it described as simulated nuclear attacks on the South.

Worries about a direct provocation were amplified after the North fired hundreds of artillery shells into waters near its disputed western sea boundary with South Korea, prompting the South also to fire. The fast-paced, competitive nature of life in South Korea makes it easy for many to ignore North Korean threats. And public interest here in North Korea tends to mirror the rise and fall in tensions.

But there's also a sense that South Korea has few options to counter the leverage Kim has with his nuclear arsenal. Years of missile launches and other weapons tests have moved Kim much closer to his goal of having a nuclear arsenal that could viably strike both his neighbors and the United States.

South Koreans are increasingly worried Washington may hesitate to

South Koreans calm amidst North's escalating threats



Kim

defend the South if Kim has more missiles with the range to strike the U.S. mainland.

South Koreans' security anxieties have long been kept in check by the U.S.-South Korea alliance and by past inter-Korean projects such as South Korea tours to the Diamond Mountain resort and the jointly operated Kaesong factory park, said Han-Wool Jeong, director of the Korea People Research Institute. Those joint economic projects, pushed by past liberal governments in Seoul, were halted as inter-Korean ties worsened under subsequent conservative governments.

Jeong said many now believe South Korea's security depends entirely on the U.S.-South Korea alliance.

Since taking office in 2022, conservative South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol has moved to expand the South's combined military exercises with the United States and Japan to cope with the North's evolving threats. He has also sought stronger assurances from Washington that the United States will decisively protect its ally if North Korea attacked with nuclear weapons.

While many analysts downplay the possibility of a war on the peninsula, some believe Kim may choose to raise pressure on the South with a direct but contained military

action. The poorly marked sea boundary — the site of skirmishes and attacks in past years — could be a crisis point. Both Koreas in recent months have breached their 2018 military agreement to reduce border tensions, which had established buffers and a no-fly zone.

"It's clear North Korea wants to use the April parliamentary elections to create momentum in South Korea for Yoon's removal from office and could possibly conduct a large provocation to increase military tensions to the maximum and try to influence voters to oppose Yoon's hard line," said Bong Youngshik, a North Korea expert at Seoul's Yonsei university.

The animosity between the Koreas is keenly felt by Kim Giho, a fisherman on the western border island of Yeonpyeong, where a North Korean artillery bombardment killed four people in 2010.

"When tensions rise like this, our boats can't move in and out of sea, and that hurts our livelihoods," Kim said. "We are again evacuating to shelters with our military resuming firing drills and that really raises our sense of isolation, tension and fear. It's especially traumatizing for older people who experienced the shelling of 2010."

Senegal parliament delays election after chaotic vote

SENEGAL'S parliament has voted to delay the presidential election to December 15 in a chaotic vote that took place after opposition lawmakers were forcibly removed from the chamber as they debated President Macky Sall's earlier

decision to delay the crucial election.

Sall announced on Saturday that the election, which was scheduled for February 25, would be postponed, pitching the West African nation into

uncharted constitutional waters, and triggering violent protests.

Parliamentary backing came late on Monday when 105 MPs in the 165-seat assembly voted in favour of the measure, which delays the election until December and keeps Sall in office until his successor is installed.

The bill initially set an election date on August 25, and the move to delay the poll even further is likely to risk more unrest. The president, who has served the maximum two terms, was originally due to leave office on April 2.

Sall has said previously he has no plans to extend his term, but protesters are sceptical.

As the lawmakers debated the bill on Monday, security forces fired tear gas at protesters who had gathered outside the parliament in Dakar, burning tyres and criticising Sall.

Demonstrator Malick Diouf, 37, said he had no preferred candidate and did not even have a voting card, but felt it was crucial to come out and protest. He condemned the proposed delay, announced just as campaigning was due to start, as a "constitutional coup" and an assault on democracy.

The mood in parliament was also tense with some deputies shoving and pushing one another, leading to a temporary recess.



Zelenskyy

Feature

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

By **BULUS GAMBO**

Continued from last week

THEREFORE, one of the fundamental problems which has hindered good governance in this country has been the issue of corruption within the hierarchy of the civil service. Not once or twice, for instance, I have heard cashiers in local government councils here on the Plateau bribed their ways to remain in lucrative positions for decades to continue siphoning state's resources for themselves. Thus, many of such officers have rejected promotions and refused going back to school or tender higher certificates so that they will be removed from these lucrative or juicy offices. These acts of personal aggrandizement have reached a pitiful phenomenon where a cashier in junior Cadre has several houses and cars which ordinarily his salary till his retirement cannot afford him get these things. Many such junior staff and or officers are constantly seen in beer parlors and other social centers squandering ill-gotten state resources through nefarious engagements with impunity. It is also true that many heads of government agencies and or parastatals lack innovations to propel their respective organizations to greater heights and or cannot justify government's huge investments where they supervise. Today, many of such heads of government agencies and or parastatals are not innovative to the extent that they are completely computer illiterates. That is the more reason why government documents are typed and printed in market places or kiosks on the streets, the implications not better imagined.

But of course, the issue of corruption has become a cankerworm in the Nigerian system due to the philosophy of "it is our turn to chop" mentality which has enveloped the entire system today. Sir, there is also massive poverty in the land. The last time I checked, the statistics of poverty level in the states tremendously unpalatable.

According to the State of the States' Report 2022 edition, which is intended to facilitate Subnational Governance Reforms for a New Era, Plateau State is one of the states that reduced its FAAC dependence while increasing its total revenue. FAAC dependence dropped from 77 percent in 2020 to 55 percent in 2022. At the same time, total revenue increased by 214 percent from 69.5 billion in 2020 to 207.1 billion in 2022. Though IGR increased by 12 percent from 19 billion in 2020 to 21.4 billion in 2022, the rise in IGR did not totally account for the over 1 billion addition in total revenue. Rather surprising also is that despite the seemingly impressive performance in revenue, the state's fiscal performance among the 36 states, fell from 18 in 2020 to 29 in 2022.

Again, Plateau had the highest personnel costs to revenue ratio amongst the 36 states. The personnel-to-revenue ratio was 48.09 percent. Total personnel cost amounted to 34.2 billion in 2022. The state's IGR was neither sufficient to cover the cost of salaries and wages of 27.5 billion nor able to meet overheads which amounted to 20.71 billion. Basically without federal transfers, the state lacked the finances required to adequately fund its own civil service let alone invest in human capital development or social protection.

At 24th position, Plateau State ranked in the 3rd quartile of the total health spending per capita while ranking in 1st place amongst 36 states in total education spending per Capita. The state attracted no foreign investment that year. With an estimated GDP of 150 billions, Plateau State at 33rd position ranked amongst the

states with the smallest economy size." For me, Your Excellency, this report has holistically captured our predicament knowing too well how deprived the state has been in the past decades.

Efforts must therefore be made to reduce the cost of governance in the state. No doubt, Plateau is amongst states which are struggling to overcome poverty with little effort so far recorded. This excruciating poverty level has led to many parents unable to feed and or pay their children's school fees.

I was however pleased after I heard sometimes back; to help cushion difficulties faced by the students of the University of Jos, you provided buses for transportation to the students to reduce their sufferings as a result of the fuel price increase in the country. Sir, how I wish you would continue with this magnificent intervention considering the situation we have all found ourselves in this country right now. If I may advise you, sir, I think such buses should be made available to our students permanently and also extended to our other state-owned tertiary institutions. Your Excellency sir, if I should have my way, all top government officials must send their children to public schools and universities under your watch. This would perhaps generate the passion in them to concentrate on rebuilding our dilapidated schools in the state.

To speak the truth, most youths on the Plateau are not getting it right. Many of them have indulged themselves in acts of drunkenness, drug usage, and or criminality. Many say an empty mind is the devil's workshop, but I think, we have not engaged our youths seriously enough. The most vulnerable ones are located in the slums which are easy targets for criminally minded elements and some of our nasty politicians whose desire is to create havoc in our communities and society. Sir, you must restore smiles on the faces of our youth and their parents.

Thus, your administration must take away these distractions and re-orientate our youths on better ways of reviving themselves for the sake of their future. In line with this, sustainable efforts must be made towards reducing the cost of education significantly as we move forward. Some of our bright but economically vulnerable students should be offered special scholarships to pursue their educational careers at ease.

Sir, most of our hospitals and government-owned clinics have become a shadow of themselves. That is the more reason why, this government must find lasting solutions to overcome the problems bedeviling our healthcare sector. Special attention should be given to the health sector considering its relevance to the development of the state. In fact, more hospitals must be built even as many more medical personnel should be employed to bring the system back to life. To further help solve this problem, unnecessary medical tourism by top government officials must be discouraged.

My dear Governor, you must also make deliberate efforts to transform the tourism sector considering its lucrative disposition to revenue generation and national integration. It is always recommended by tourism experts that Plateau State has what it takes to lunch itself into global recognition as far as the tourism sector is concern. You must also encourage farmers to go into modernist farming as well as create an open market for them devoid of middlemen intrusion and manipulation.

It's high time that Plateau State redeem its status as big brother in the entire Middle Belt region. As it is, vulnerable Christians in southern Kaduna, Southern Bauchi and other parts of the entire region look up to



Mutfwang

the state for motivation. Unfortunately, leaders of the state in most recent past have failed in gingering the citizens to appreciate this great role and sustain this legacy.

Though you have started well, there are still a lot of things to be done. Most significantly, what you need to do now is to ensure that Plateau people are united. This is significant because of what played out during the legal tussle which took many of us by surprise. The division created by overzealous politicians was really unimaginable. Now that politicking is over, everything possible should be done to unite the citizens considering the challenges ahead. In the light of this development, our traditional rulers, various leaders of indigenous groups, and the Plateau State Initiative for Development and Advancement of Natives, (PIDAN) should be brought together to help facilitate a way forward for this dear state of ours.

Even as I wish you well as you continue to govern this state in the fear of God, I pray for good health and long life for you in your mission to rescue the state from its present predicaments. I pray that you remain focused as you govern the state knowing too well that the task ahead will not be that easy. Sir, I believe that you will break the jinx of repeated mistakes in governance to the glory of our Almighty God if Christ carries. I equally know that the eyes of the opposition is on you to see what you will eventually become in the next coming years. I am also convicted

beyond all things that one with God has the majority thus, if you remain on the side of our Lord, though you walk through the valley of the shadow of death, thou should never be shaken. Sir, if you think you must please everyone on the Plateau, then you will never pull Plateau out of the woods. Therefore, you must be dogged in your decisions and pray God to help you implement policies for the betterment of the entirety of the people of the state.

If you must succeed sir, please do not listen to rumour-mongers whose deceit is to come in odds hours to pitch you against many who have great passion for the advancement of Plateau people. Sir, you have a great and significant duty to God and man to turnout the fortunes of the state and this duty you must not fail. I knew that when the righteous is on the throne of leadership, the people will rejoice and enjoy and no weapon formed against us shall prosper.

All I can say for now is; the time to consolidate on the dreams of the founding fathers of the state is now. I equally know that God has given Your Excellency an opportunity through His grace to redeem us from all this shame and you should not disappoint Plateau people as long as this breath remains in your body. I pray for peace upon Plateau, I pray for progress and prosperity of the state. Lord, I resist the spirit of human manipulation and declare that we shall not go back to Egypt in Jesus name. God bless you Your Excellency and good luck sir.

Concluded

EVER'S WORLD

With PALANG KASMI

Living

Traits of mentally strong women

BELOW are 10 qualities that define mentally strong women. These traits include being self confident, productive, optimistic, a go-getter, a fear-tackler, caring, unafraid to stand up for what one believes in, proud, unbothered by what others say or think, and true to one's self. The author stresses that mental strength is not about physical appearance or popularity or wealth but rather about one's character and taking care of oneself. The article motivates women to support each other and reminds them of their inner strength when experiencing depression or anxiety.

Our world is made up of so many incredible women, and so many amazing changes in our world are being made by women who recognize their importance. We are impacting lives in great ways. Today, I want to remind all of us of how strong we are mentally!

Being a mentally strong woman is not about how cute we look on any given day. It is not about being popular, and it's not about earning the most money. It is about our character. It is being good examples for others and taking good care of ourselves at the same time.

We all have this strength within us, and it is very important that we do not forget this. When you are going through rough times, such as depression and anxiety, or simply need to remember how awesome you are, come back to this blog and review my top 10 characteristics of mentally strong women!



Characteristic 1: Confident

Confidence is a huge part of being mentally strong. Being confident is a great sign of self-love, and it helps us to stay away from comparing. We are happy in

our skin and at peace in our minds. Being confident is a great comfort. We can always go the extra mile by sharing our confidence with others, but at the end of the day, being confident is a personal accomplishment.

Characteristic 2: Productive

Our minds want to feel accomplished. Spending time on worthy causes and important matters keeps our minds happy. Mentally strong women are constantly asking, "What else can I fit into my day?" This is a good way of thinking, but it is also very important to take breaks, breathe, and not overwhelm ourselves.

Characteristic 3: Optimistic and positive

Mentally strong women see the glass as half full and not half empty. We want to bring good vibes with us everywhere we go. It may not always be possible to display optimism and positivity at all times, but we want to do our best to keep a growth mindset as often as we can. Our brightness greatly impacts our moods and others' moods as well.

Characteristic 4: "Go-Getter"

Being a "go-getter" is putting dreams into action. It is envisioning great opportunities in the future. When we envision positive outcomes, we are more likely to achieve those visions. Our minds thrive on creative and critical thinking. Chasing our dreams and working to make our powerful thoughts a wonderful reality is my definition of being a "go-getter," and it is a

great perspective to have in general!

Characteristic 5: "Fear Tackler" Mentally strong women face their fears, problems, and issues. We tackle them head on, and we do not run away from them. We all run into different fears throughout our lives, but it is how we handle them that will determine if we are being mentally strong. We all have it in us to face our fears, but sometimes we don't know how to do so. Time is the best solution to this confusion. We shouldn't have to rush to overcome a fear, but we should definitely start taking steps toward the ultimate goal of overcoming the fear. Slow and steady often wins the race with this one!

Characteristic 6: Caring

Mentally strong women take care of themselves, while also caring for others. It is necessary for us to develop positive relationships with ourselves. We all want to be happy, and I have found that most of us who practice the concept of being kind are the happiest. We feel good about ourselves when we are kind, and others want to be around us when we show kindness. This all falls under the category of caring. We are at our best when we are caring and loving individuals.

Characteristic 7: Not afraid to stand up for what you believe in

When we believe something is wrong in society, we speak up! Mentally strong women do not watch others get bullied. Instead, they take action. Mentally strong

women advocate for themselves and for others by displaying good morality and values in their everyday lives. In doing this, their positivity rubs off on others.

Characteristic 8: Proud

Showing pride in ourselves is not always being egotistical. We deserve to feel proud of ourselves and our accomplishments, and we deserve to share our pride. A mentally strong woman remains respectful when feeling excited and proud. They do not feel the need to make others feel less important in the process.

Characteristic 9: Not phased by what other people say

People make mistakes and say hurtful things at times, but a mentally strong woman can overcome the "haters" by ignoring those comments. Ignoring these messages is difficult, but it is possible. We never want to feel defined by others, so we must learn to not be phased by the negativity that other people might bring into our lives.

Characteristic 10: True to yourself

Last but certainly not least, mentally strong women are completely and totally true to themselves. There is no need to change oneself to satisfy others, and we do not need to change to impress others. Showing that we are comfortable with the lives we have been given is a major part of being true to ourselves, and loving our mind goes right along with that comfort.



EVER'S WORLD

With PALANG KASMI

Nutrition

Fruits to eat to avoid cough and cold

THE cold climate can be a lot of fun with Christmas, but it can also make us sick. Here we discuss the fruits to avoid during cough and cold as well as fruits to eat during cough and cold.

Catching a cough or a cold always gets the spirits low. To get one's feet on the floor faster than usual, one should take note of the fruits that help the body fight off the irritable condition. The question 'What fruits can we eat during cold and cough?' can linger in your head when you are experiencing either cough or cold or both.

Therefore, this article has grouped fruits that benefit our body's fight against the common cold and cough. Let us find out what fruits to avoid during cough and cold!

Here are some foods to eat during cough and cold:

Lemons: Perhaps the most readily available vitamin C-rich fruit on the market is the good old and humble lemon. Lemons contain Vitamin C, which protects the body from cough and cold infections. Lemons are therefore essential to increase the body's immunity against a host of common ailments. Lemons also aid the body in repairing DNA and produce adequate amounts of serotonin. When one is down with a cold and cough, it is recommended that the subject takes lemon juice mixed with lukewarm water and a little honey.

Pineapples: This not-so-popular seasonal fruit is a dynamite stick in fighting a person's cold and cough conditions. This is because pineapples contain the enzyme called 'bromelain'. This potent anti-inflammatory agent can break down mucous due to its mucolytic properties. These characteristics of bromelain are enough to make the pineapple a must during episodes of



cough and cold.

Pomegranate: Pomegranate juice contains vast amounts of the antioxidant 'flavonoid.' Flavonoid is very useful in stopping the growth of viruses inside the infected human being. Studies show that daily intake of pomegranate juice may decrease the chances of a lengthy bout of cough and cold by almost 40%. Along with this, pomegranate juice is full of anti-inflammatory and antibacterial properties. No wonder it is one of the fruits to eat during cough and cold.

Bananas: Bananas come in handy while tackling cases of cough and cold to a great extent. When the body experiences cough and cold, as well as tendencies of vomiting and nausea, eating bananas can significantly reduce the chances of deterioration of the symptoms.

Strawberries: Strawberries contain nutrients such as potassium, manganese, vitamin C, and dietary fibres. These combinations make them a potent wall against a lengthy

type for a person suffering from cough and cold. Bananas supply crucial nutrients to a sick body and help in the speedy recovery of the same.

Kiwi: This less popular fruit is one of the hidden surprises in this list. Kiwis are excellent sources of nutrients the body needs to ward off cough and cold infections. Scientific experiments have suggested that regular intake of kiwis during bouts of cough and cold drastically reduces a person's condition of sore throat. Kiwis contain certain

micronutrients, which, when consumed, boost the movement of white blood cells in the bloodstream. As well stated by science, these white blood cells protect the human body from foreign objects like germs.

Watermelon: Watermelons come with the antioxidant lycopene, which gives them their red colour. Lycopene limits illness in humans and helps keep inflammation in the respiratory system during infection.



period of cough and cold.

Blueberries: Blueberries have the highest content of antioxidants in the fruit family. Hence, these are essential in keeping a person healthy long-term.

Apples: Apples are full of flavonoids, the antioxidants that can potentially decrease the risk of diabetes, cancer, and heart disease. Its other health benefits include a more robust immune system, which would protect you from cough and cold.

Fruits are generally needed in any diet to stay healthy. While discussing fruits to avoid during cough and cold, one must remember that there are not many on the list. Considering fruits to avoid during cough and cold, one could refrain from eating fruits kept in the refrigerator. These fruits being cold may aggravate the already severe condition in a patient.

We have to place citrus fruits on the list of fruits to avoid during

cough and cold. This is because citrus fruits could cause acid reflux in a person already nursing a cough and cold. Under these circumstances, it could worsen if acid reflux adversely affects the throat and activates coughs. Even though this does not always happen, it is better to take caution. Citrus fruits like oranges, limes, and grapefruits are some examples of fruits to avoid during cough and cold.

Loaded with micronutrients, anti-inflammatory properties, and antioxidants, fruits are undeniably nutritious. According to studies, the vitamins present in fruits can help strengthen your immune system.

Fruits can also be highly beneficial during those cough and cold days. Apples, berries, pineapples, and much more can help keep inflammation at bay.

However, say no to citrus fruits during cough and cold. They are the handful of fruits to avoid during cough and cold. They have been put under the category of 'fruits to avoid during cough and cold' since citrus fruits may cause acid reflux, irritate our throat, and trigger coughs.

Flebo.com



Editorial

Rerun elections : A post mortem

RERUn elections were conducted by the Independent National Electoral Commission in 26 out of the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory, FCT, Abuja, on Saturday 03 February 2024 for Federal lawmakers. While in some cases, it was held to fill vacancies created by the demise of lawmakers, in some cases, it became necessary because of the resignation or removal of lawmakers due to post election litigations.

IN Plateau State, it was conducted in an atmosphere devoid of rancour even with the noticeable lapses like the absence of some sensitive materials in some polling units which disenfranchised eligible voters of the affected areas. The voters exhibited calm and patience until the situation was resolved.

IT is disappointing, to say the least, that the election in most parts of the country, including Plateau State, were marred by irregularities which include the disappearance of some sensitive materials in some polling units in Tudun Wada, Kabong, Naraguta B Ward. INEC was forced to postpone the elections to Sunday, to ensure that the affected voters exercise their civic rights.

REGRETTABLY, this has become a recurring phenomenon that doesn't only give Nigeria a bad image, but makes Nigeria look like a nation that condones any misbehavior or a lawless society.

THERE is no gainsaying, INEC staff are compromised, from every indication. The first step is to put its house in order by fishing out the bad eggs that want to make nonsense of every resource expended.

SADLY, election rerun that has become second nature to any general election in Nigeria, is very wasteful. Taxpayers money goes down the drain for some avoidable lapses, apart from cases where vacancies were caused by the death of elected politicians.

WE want to categorically state that it was our expectation that INEC had learnt from the lapses of the last general elections. A repeat of sensitive materials disappearing into thin air means an issue of this magnitude, which is an act that is a contravention of the law, had been handled with kid gloves.

VOTER apathy in areas that are known as PDP strongholds were visibly noticeable. The People's Democratic Party was disqualified by the Supreme Court from participating in the rerun. This singular behavior is a pointer to the fact that Nigeria's voters are still not enlightened to know that their vote is their power. Not coming out to vote is an ill wind that does no one no good. Instead, it gives undue advantage to the wrong person, or an unpopular candidate to win.

WE commend INEC for suspending the staff under whose watch the sensitive materials in Jos North got missing to pave way for thorough investigations. The perpetrators of this heinous crime should be fished out to serve as a deterrent to others.

IT would seem that in spite of security presence which was beefed up, irregularities marred the election in most parts of the country. Violence, ballot box snatching, result sheet disappearance, vandalism, thuggery, and even death was recorded. Money politics also played out as desperate politicians bought voters' conscience. Consequently, elections were suspended in some areas across the country.

WE wonder when we will ever get it right at the polls? So much taxpayers money has been invested in the general and rerun elections. However, it seems there is still much to be done to achieve credible polls in Nigeria.

WATER scarcity is a growing problem in the community of Gwarandok. The community's only water source, a small reservoir, drying up due to lack of rainfall and increased demand from a growing population. The community is facing a water scarcity crisis. The community's well has run dry, and the nearest water source is several miles away. Residents are struggling to find enough water for drinking, cooking, and cleaning. This has led to a number of issues for the community. As the water crisis deepens, tensions are rising between the different groups in the community. The mayor is working to find solutions, the community is demanding that something be done to address the problem.

Without access to clean water, many families have been forced to purchase bottled water or sachet water, which is expensive and often out of reach for those on low incomes. The lack of water has also led to a decline in agricultural production, as farmers cannot irrigate their crops.

The inability to irrigate crops or run businesses due to lack of water can also have a significant economic impact. The lack of water can lead to a decline in the local ecosystem, as water-dependent plants and animals may not be able to survive. Overall,



Water scarcity in community of Gwarandok, Plateau state

the lack of clean water has a devastating impact.

The economy has also suffered, as people struggle to run their businesses without access to water. Crops are dying and animals are starving, causing further hardship. The situation is critical and immediate action is needed to ensure the survival of the community. Access to clean water is a basic human right and a crucial component of a healthy and thriving

society. The Government should install a water filtration system and built rainwater catchment systems to collect and store rainwater. Another option is to use water conservation techniques, such as rainwater harvesting, grey-water recycling, water-efficient appliances, big reservoir, and fixtures. Community education and outreach will be key in implementing any solutions, as the community people will need to understand the seriousness of the situation and be willing to make changes in their own lives.

The power of unity

THE power of unity is one of the most important forces in the world. It brings people together, creates a sense of belonging, and gives us the strength to overcome challenges. Whether it's a community coming together to rebuild after a disaster, a workplace uniting to achieve a common goal, or a family supporting each other through tough times, the power of unity is what makes us stronger.

The power of unity can be seen in many different situations. For example, in the aftermath of a natural disaster, communities often come together to help each other recover. Whether it's clearing debris, rebuilding homes, or providing support to those in need, the collective effort of a united community can make all the difference. Another example is in the workplace, where teams that work together are more productive and efficient. They're also more likely to find creative solutions to problems and achieve their goals. And finally, within families, unity can provide comfort, support, and strength.

Even though unity can be incredibly powerful, it doesn't come easily. It takes effort, communication, and a

shared sense of purpose to bring people together. In the wake of a disaster, for example, it takes strong leadership and organization to coordinate the relief efforts. In the workplace, effective teamwork requires a clear vision and goals, as well as trust and respect among team members. And within families, open communication and a willingness to listen are essential for building unity. But when these elements come together, the results can be truly amazing.

The benefits of unity are far-reaching, both for individuals and society as a whole. On an individual level, unity can boost self-esteem, reduce stress, and improve overall well-being. It can also lead to greater happiness, since social connections are a key predictor of happiness. And on a larger scale, a unified society is more likely to be stable, peaceful, and prosperous. It's clear that the power of unity is something we should all strive for, both in our personal lives and in our communities. When people come together and share their unique perspectives, they can spark new ideas and create innovative solutions to problems. This is

because diversity leads to a greater variety of ideas, and people from different backgrounds can approach a problem in different ways. This kind of creative thinking is essential for the advancement of society.

The power of unity is undeniable. It's something that we all need, in our families, our workplaces, and our society. It takes effort and commitment to achieve, but the rewards are well worth it. Unity brings strength, happiness, and a sense of purpose to our lives. Let's remember the power of unity and make an effort to strengthen the bonds that connect us to each other.

Perfect! I'll finish the article with a closing statement.

As we go through our daily lives, let's remember the power of unity. Let's look for ways to build connections and strengthen our bonds with others. Even small acts of kindness and compassion can make a big difference. With a little effort, we can create a world that is stronger, happier, and more united than ever before.

written by Jummai Musa is a Mass Communication Student, Federal University of Lafia.

Standard Cartoon



Opinion

Rule of law: For a successful nation

By HASSAN GIMBA

THE promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies is the focus of goal number 16 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It also broached "access to justice for all and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels."

Strong institutions are necessary to respond effectively to the needs and concerns of nationals and are better placed to hold those in authority accountable.

The former President of the United States of America, Barack Obama, while addressing the Ghanaian Parliament during a courtesy visit to Ghana in 2009, remarked as follows: "No country is going to create wealth if its leaders exploit the economy to enrich themselves, or police can be bought off by drug traffickers. No business wants to invest in a place where the government skims 20 per cent off the top, or the head of the Port Authority is corrupt. No person wants to live in a society where the rule of law gives way to the rule of brutality and bribery. That is not democracy; that is tyranny, and now is the time for it to end. Africa doesn't need strong men; it needs strong institutions."

And what did Obama mean by Africa needing strong institutions, rather than strong men? The wisdom of these words is that strong institutions will help deliver democratic dividends in a consistent and just manner.

Obama, having African roots, knows Africa and Africans. In Africa, a leader is like an emperor who straddles over where he is boss. A local government chairperson sees the area as his farm and a Nigerian president has Pharaonic powers courtesy of the constitution.

No one among their staff can tell them what is right. Those staffers fear being discarded and not seen as 'loyal' for daring to be candid. They are well aware of what they will lose if that happens. And the emperors, having drunk from the chalice of absolute power, which absolutely corrupts, do not want in their circle those who do not say see him as infallible.

And this is one reason there is rampant corruption everywhere. Anybody at the helm of any ministry, department, or agency is lord of the manor there and does everything according to their whims and caprices.

However, countries with weak institutions that buckle under the leadership of men rarely succeed because of the absence of state institutions that can establish and

enforce rules. And because, in the absence of such, you have strong men at the helm, seldom do they subject themselves to the rule of law as the leadership tends to personify the institution. Ego runs the institutions.

There are ways to get it right as a nation. First, our leaders need to rethink their idea of leadership. A leader is to be there to serve and not to lord it over others; to give hope and uplift, not to render hopeless and cast down the people into penury. A leader must be someone ready to lead for the sake of God.

Then there must be justice. I will never tire of hammering it to all who care to listen that Sheikh Usman Dan Fodiyo, who said "The death of a thousand good men is not as tragic as having an unfit man in a position of national leadership," wrote in his book, Bayan Wujub al-Hijrah alal ibad, that "A kingdom (nation) can endure with unbelief, but it cannot endure with injustice."

To get justice, we must strengthen our legal and judicial systems. We need to reform our laws; and improve the capacity and independence of our judges and lawyers. This will earn the system more respect and bring

back the people's trust which is being steadily eroded.

And where the courts have adjudicated, we must respect that judgement. This is important for institutions saddled with safeguarding our democracy.

This brings me to the face-off if it can be termed that, between the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA).

"The Supreme Court, in a judgement on October 14, 2021, affirmed Chief Edozie Njoku as the national chairman of the party, upholding the decision of an appellate court that recognised him as such.

We have had instances in which the government and its institutions showed disdain for court judgements. The resultant effect of such is that the citizens become less law-abiding and less respectful of law enforcers, as well as less fearful of punishment for breaking the law.

The danger is that such escalate in proportion that the justice system and punitive facilities get overwhelmed. The rule of law is trampled upon if those running institutions have their way, and this leads to a bleak future.

To show how strong institutions and the legal system are elsewhere, read this:

On July 3, 2019, a federal appeals court denied President Donald Trump's border attempt to construct a wall between the United States and Mexico using funds unauthorised by Congress.

The ruling upheld two earlier district court orders that together permanently blocked the administration from building wall sections along the southern border in New Mexico, Arizona and California, using \$2.5 billion in diverted military funds.

The lawsuit, brought by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) on behalf of the Sierra Club and the Southern Border Communities Coalition (SBCC), challenged the president's abuse of emergency powers to secure border wall funds Congress denied.

And that was how it stood, with the president and all institutions concerned with that matter obeying the two lower courts' orders, until 31 July 2020, when in a 5-4 decision, the US Supreme Court allowed the construction to continue.

Can we have such a scenario in Nigeria?

Hassan Gimba is the Publisher and Editor-in-Chief of Neptune Prime.

THERE is no doubt that in this digital age, distractions are everywhere. It is difficult to focus with diverse information bombarding you on every side, both online and offline.

When you talk about online distractions, social media is the chief source. From social media notifications from multiple platforms to endless streams of content, staying focused has become a daunting challenge, which everyone should surmount to succeed in this era.

It is even more grave when you realise that the people most affected by these distractions are the youth, the emerging generation on whose shoulders the future of nations rests. Every leader needs to ask this question: how can we curb the distractions plaguing the emerging generation so that they can avoid spending their lives on the wrong things and become a burden to themselves and others?

Is it possible to help young people master the art of concentration, which is crucial for productivity and spiritual and mental well-being? Can we get the emerging generation to focus on the important things and jettison the distractions that consume their time, money, intellect, sound mind, etc?

Let's look at a few strategies and techniques that could help the emerging generation curb distractions and live focused and purposeful lives.

It is true that with the emergence of the internet, smartphones and digital technologies have revolutionised everything: communication, governance, work, entertainment, sports, etc. While these technological advancements have brought numerous benefits, they've also ushered in an era of unprecedented distraction. The constant barrage of notifications, emails, and social media updates has shortened attention spans and made it increasingly difficult to

Curbing the emerging generation's distractions

By AUSTIN UKPORHE

concentrate on tasks for an extended period. It is now a pandemic that calls for the type of global attention COVID-19 had.

The impact of distractions on the emerging generation is profound. Studies have shown that excessive screen time and multitasking can impair cognitive function, diminish productivity, and contribute to feelings of anxiety.

Furthermore, constant exposure to digital stimuli can hinder the development of critical thinking skills and impede academic performance. Its impact on human behaviour and relationships is well documented. Smartphone or social media addiction has become one of the top causes of strain in relationships. We must take it seriously.

To effectively tackle distractions, we should first identify the most common culprits. Social media platforms like Instagram, Snapchat and TikTok are addictive, often leading users down the rabbit hole of endless scrolling. Also, email and messaging apps such as WhatsApp create a sense of urgency, prompting individuals to constantly check for new messages often, consuming ample productive time. Additionally, the allure of streaming services, online gaming, and YouTube videos can derail even the best-laid plans for productivity.

To solve this problem, people need to take responsibility at all levels. Young people need to realise how much the distractions they are given to rob them and make critical decisions, especially in this first quarter of the year. Parents have a role to play, such as guiding children early to form the habit of focusing on the things that matter.

The government can evolve educational policies that can help and support campaigns and causes on youth development. Generally, leaders in all spheres, especially religious leaders, can do a lot to help the emerging generation focus. It is a collective responsibility everyone needs to be aware of.

There are a few things one can do as an individual. One is to set clear boundaries around the use of technology. Designate specific times of the day for checking emails and social media, and avoid using electronic devices during meals or before bedtime. You can create tech-free zones where concentration is paramount, such as the study or workstations.

The second thing you can do is to study to be quiet and to do your business as Apostle Paul wrote in First Thessalonians chapter 4 verse 11. It is important to practise being silent and meditating. It is the discipline of focusing your attention on the inside, quietening your mind, and ruminating on God's word and inspiration. Schedule a regular quiet time, praying time, and even thinking time. Retreat and be alone once in a while.

We should teach the emerging generation the importance of time management and treating things based on set priorities. They should be encouraged to use to-do lists and planners to organise tasks and allocate time effectively. By identifying high-priority tasks and breaking them down into smaller, manageable steps, individuals can avoid feeling overwhelmed and stay focused on their goals.

Contrary to what many believe, multitasking is not altogether a plus. It

can be a recipe for inefficiency. Encourage the practice of single-tasking, where individuals focus on one task at a time with full attention and intention. By immersing themselves fully in the present activity, they can achieve greater productivity and quality of work.

In dealing with distractions, one should build a support network of friends, family members, or peers who share similar goals and can provide invaluable encouragement and accountability. Encourage open communication and collaboration, where individuals can share their challenges and successes in managing distractions. Accountability always helps.

These are just a few strategies young people can employ to reclaim control of their attention and cultivate a greater sense of purpose and productivity.

Other kinds of distractions which have to do with character and lifestyle, such as pornography, sexual immorality, gambling, sports betting, cyber-crime, drug abuse and others, require more in-depth and comprehensive approaches and, in many cases, divine intervention. We will hopefully look at them subsequently. Have a fruitful February.

Reverend Austin Ukporhe is the Point Man at Remnant Christian Network, Lagos. Raised in Sokoto, northern Nigeria, he was trained in peculiar firebrand evangelism and was ordained as a pastor in 2001. He has experienced countless and diverse workings of the faithfulness of God over two decades and has developed a passion to see God's will for Nigeria become a reality.

Change of Name

<p>ABUS</p> <p>I, formerly known as AYUBA LOIS ABUS, now wish to be known and addressed as OBEBE LOIS ABUS. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>KUDU</p> <p>I, formerly known as KUDU GABRIEL ILIYA, now wish to be known and addressed as KUDU GABRIEL ILIYA. Correct date of birth 20th December, 1992. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>MARKUS</p> <p>I, formerly known as SAMUEL FAITH PAM, now wish to be known and addressed as MARKUS FAITH PAM. Correct date of birth is 24/8/1998. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>ISHORBO</p> <p>I, formerly known as ISHORIBO JONATHAN, now wish to be known and addressed as ISHORBO TERPASE JONATHAN. Correct date of birth is 12/05/1991. All former documents remain valid. First Bank. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>CHRISTOPHER</p> <p>I, formerly known as CHRISTOPHER EUNICE JUMMAI, now wish to be known and addressed as CHRISTOPHER ATSEVA EUNICE. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>PETER</p> <p>I, formerly known as PETER MONICA, now wish to be known and addressed as PETER MONICA HURUNG. Correct date of birth 6/4/1976 All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>
<p>OGBUZUO</p> <p>I, formerly known as OGBUZUO DAVID CHISOM and OGBUZUO DAVID, now wish to be known and addressed as OGBUZUO VITALIS CHISOM. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>KITBAP</p> <p>I, formerly known as KITBAP ISAIAC, now wish to be known and addressed as KITBAP ISAIAC USENI. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public please take note.</p>	<p>ONYINYE</p> <p>I, formerly known as MADUKWE ONYINYE JACINTA, now wish to be known and addressed as EZEANI ONYINYE JACINTA. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should</p>	<p>ABOK</p> <p>I, formerly known as AJANG DAVID KAZE now wish to be known and addressed as ABOK DAVID KAZE. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>FINJI</p> <p>I, formerly known as RHODA JOEL FINJI, now wish to be known and addressed as FINJI RHODA JOEL. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>EMMANUEL</p> <p>I, formerly known as EMMANUEL JOSEPH, now wish to be known and addressed as EMMANUEL JOSEPH MADUGU. Correct date of birth 14/2/2001 not 14/2/1997. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>
<p>YILKUDI</p> <p>I, formerly known as YILKUDI GERSHINEN MOSES, now wish to be known and addressed as YILKUDI GERSHINEN VICTOR. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>DANIEL</p> <p>I, formerly known as RUEBE KIGAMA DANIEL, now wish to be known and addressed as DANIEL KIGAMA REUBEN. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>DELGUN</p> <p>I, formerly known as KASSEM GOLIT, now wish to be known and addressed as DELGUN GOLIT. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>ADAM</p> <p>I, formerly known as ADAMU IBRAHIM IBRAHIM, now wish to be known and addressed as ADAMU IBRAHIM. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>FREDRICK</p> <p>I, formerly known as FREDRICK AHMADU IGAH, now wish to be known and addressed as FREDRICK AHMADU MONDAY. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>ABDULMALIK</p> <p>I, formerly known as MUHAMMAD UMMUHANI HAMZA, now wish to be known and addressed as ABDULMALIK UMMUHANI OLASUNKANMI. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>
<p>ABOK</p> <p>I, formerly known as ABOK GODWIN, now wish to be known and addressed ABOK GODWIN GARBA. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>MATARU</p> <p>I, formerly known as MATARU LOVETH UDOR, now wish to be known and addressed MATARU LOVETH ZAKKA. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>DAMILOLA</p> <p>I, formerly known as DAMILOLA ADEBOWALE NWUNE, now wish to be known and addressed as DAMILOLA KATHRYN NWUNE. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>IDRIS</p> <p>I, formerly known as AHMAD ADAMA, now wish to be known and addressed IDRIS ADAMA AHMAD. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>ASHE</p> <p>I, formerly known as GRACE JOHN ABIMIKU, now wish to be known and addressed as ASHE GRACE ALEXANDER. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>MONDAY</p> <p>I, formerly known as MONDAY CHIKE YAH, now wish to be known and addressed as MONDAY CHIKE AWUH. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>
<p>YAKUBU</p> <p>I, formerly known as BARJE GRACE YAKUBU, now wish to be known and addressed as YAKUBU GRACE BARJE. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>FENBAM</p> <p>I, formerly known as FENBAM NANLIN, now wish to be known and addressed as FENBAM GODIYA NANLIN. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>GODWINS</p> <p>I, formerly known as TANKO GIFT, now wish to be known and addressed as GODWINS NANSHIN GIFT. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>SUNDAY</p> <p>I, formerly known as FRANCIS EMMANUEL SUNDAY, now wish to be known and addressed as SUNDAY EMMANUEL DALYOP. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>YUSUF</p> <p>I, formerly known as YUSUF LAWAL, now wish to be known and addressed as YUSUF LAWAL ABDULLAHI. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>ISAAC</p> <p>I, formerly known as ISHAKU AMABU SALAMI, now wish to be known and addressed as ISAAC AMABU SALAMI. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>
<p>AGUNBIBISDE</p> <p>I, formerly known as AGUNBIADE SAMSON OJO, now wish to be known and addressed as AGUNBIADE SAMSON OLANIYI. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>PUNSHAK</p> <p>I, formerly known as PUNSHAK NANDAK, now wish to be known and addressed as PUNSHAK NANDAK GUKIR. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>PHILIP</p> <p>I, formerly known as PHILIP DAMWESH ILIYA, now wish to be known and addressed as PHILIP ILIYA DAMWESH. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>JOSEPH</p> <p>I, formerly known as JOSEPH EKELE BEN, now wish to be known and addressed as JOSEPH BEN EKELE. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>JOSEPH</p> <p>I, formerly known as JOSEPH LIPDO PONTIM, now wish to be known and addressed as JOSEPH LIPDO ZINGVEN. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>SATI</p> <p>I, formerly known as SATI ROTKANGMWA, now wish to be known and addressed as SATI ROTKANGMWA GOKUP. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>
<p>HARRY</p> <p>I, formerly known as HARRY ANYARO BITRUS, now wish to be known and addressed as HARRY ANYARO. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>JINAN</p> <p>I, formerly known as PONFA PONTIP AYUBA, now wish to be known and addressed as JINAN PONFA TIMIOH. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>UDEH</p> <p>I, formerly known as UDEH JANE KENNETH, now wish to be known and addressed as UDEH NGOZI JANE. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>SABITU</p> <p>I, formerly known as SABITU UMMIKURSUM, now wish to be known and addressed as SABITU UMMIKURSUM ABUBAKAR. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>ASABE</p> <p>I, formerly known as ASABE OUMAR VUETSUK, now wish to be known and addressed as ASABE OUMAR-SHITTEN. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>ADUKUNBEN</p> <p>I, formerly known as PETER SANDRA ADUKUNBEN, now wish to be known and addressed as ADUKUNBEN SANDRA PETER. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>
<p>SARAH</p> <p>I, formerly known as SARAH MUSA, now wish to be known and addressed as SARAH GOTOM GOKIR. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>NDONG</p> <p>I, formerly known as NDONG, PRISCILLA BARTHSON, now wish to be known and addressed as NDONG, PRISCILLA BARTHSON BENYOH. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>CATHRINE</p> <p>I, formerly known as CATHERINE MOSES, now wish to be known and addressed as CATHERINE DAKOOS. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>ABURIME</p> <p>I, formerly known as YAMMA ISAAC GLADYS ZINANMI, now wish to be known and addressed as ABURIME GLADYS ZINANMI. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>JEMIMA</p> <p>I, formerly known as JEMIMA ENO ONEH, now wish to be known and addressed as JEMIMA CHARLES JACK. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>AWASE</p> <p>I, formerly known as AWASE TERAH ANARI, now wish to be known and addressed as AWASE PRINCESS ANARI. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>
<p>ABUBAKAR</p> <p>I, formerly known as ABUBAKAR ISA ABUBAKAR, now wish to be known and addressed as ABUBAKAR ISAH ABUBAKAR. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>MATHIAS</p> <p>I, GOEWAM MATHIAS wish to state that my correct date of birth is 10/10/1993 not 9/9/1993. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>DANLADI</p> <p>I, formerly known as SOOMMUK JOSEPH ALPHONSUS, now wish to be known and addressed as DANLADI ALPHONSUS DAYOON. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>YUNUSA</p> <p>I, formerly known as YUNUSA GARBA YUSUF, now wish to be known and addressed as YUNUSA GARBA. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>AYUBA</p> <p>I, formerly known as AYUBA BARSHINE DECHI, now wish to be known and addressed as AYUBA BARSHIWE DECHI. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>SPACE FOR SALE</p>
<p>SPACE FOR SALE</p>	<p>SPACE FOR SALE</p>	<p>SPACE FOR SALE</p>	<p>SPACE FOR SALE</p>	<p>SPACE FOR SALE</p>	<p>SPACE FOR SALE</p>

News

Counterfeit product not from us - Oguntoyinbo

From MUSLIUDEEN ADEBAYO, Ibadan

THE manufacturer of Coco Samba Herbal Mixture, Bullion Go-Neat Global Ltd, has said that it had earlier informed the National Agency for Food, Drug and Administration (NAFDAC) about counterfeit products.

This became necessary in view of recent reports circulating on some Online media platforms regarding the falsification of the products.

The manufacturer noted that the falsified products are not from its stable.

Managing Director of the company, Ambassador Olufemi Ajadi Oguntoyinbo, made these declarations in a statement made available to journalists on recently.

He maintained that the company had earlier in 2022, lodged a formal complaint with the Director of the Investigation and Enforcement Directorate at the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) in Apapa, Lagos, regarding the counterfeiting of their product, Cocosamba Milk and Chocolate Flavored with Herbal Extract, bearing NAFDAC registration number A8-9149L.

Oguntoyinbo said it is crucial to note that before the registration of Cocosamba Milk and Chocolate Flavored with Herbal Extract, the company had been producing Cocosamba Bitters Alcoholic drinks with NAFDAC No A8-4418L.



Ajadi

He said however, due to low market demand, the production of Cocosamba Bitters Alcoholic Drink was discontinued, and the product has not been in production since the expiry date of the license.

"Bullion Go-Neat Global Limited, in response to the recent news, expressed its unwavering commitment to maintaining high standards in its manufacturing processes.

"The company commended NAFDAC for its role in ensuring that manufacturers comply with statutory laws related to standardization.

"The General Manager of the company, Ogunlade Samuel Oluseyi highlighted this commitment during the company's end-of-year gathering".

Oguntoyinbo said himself and the entire management team of the company, expressed shock at the news circulating and assured stakeholders that all necessary actions would be taken to address the issue promptly.

"The management and staff of the company have initiated efforts to identify individuals responsible for counterfeit products.

"They have pledged to collaborate with the Investigation and Enforcement Directorate at the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) in reporting and taking action against anyone found guilty of this illegal

'Those who tried to steal my mandate are coupists'

From GYANG PAM, Yola

GOVERNOR Ahmadu Umaru Fintiri has described those who tried to steal his mandate as coupists.

Fintiri in a broadcast to the people of the state said "I have remained calm when the coup to steal your mandate failed even when the perpetrators had the

temerity and shamelessness to go to the courts looking for what they failed to forcefully take but my conduct has remained the same".

According to him, "I don't look for what is not mine, but I have in reckless abundance, the patience and courage to protect what

is rightfully mine against any predator".

He said the Supreme Court verdict of Wednesday 31st January, 2024, officially silenced all the noise on the 2023 election in Adamawa State. Adding that the days of lying and deceit are over while the moments of false propaganda and cheap talks are gone.

Governor Fintiri disclosed that both himself and his deputy are humbled by the fact that the best way to pay them back is to serve them (people) well and spur them to even do more.

He says he must appreciate INEC for standing firm as an unbiased electoral umpire in the election even when its Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC) acted irresponsibly and unlawfully.

Even the Supreme Court in its judgment



Fintiri

Federal Government to get more arms for National Parks

From JIDAUNA YANUNG, Abuja

MINISTER of Environment, Balarabe Lawal has assured that the federal government will buy more arms for effective operations of the National Park Service (NPS). The minister gave the assurance recently when he visited the National Park head office and the National Biosafety Management Agency in Abuja.

Lawal said President Bola Tinubu was very much concerned about the operations of the parks because of the spate of insecurity in the country. He disclosed that there is a collaboration with relevant agencies to rid the nation's forest of bandits, illegal miners and the coastal areas of oil thieves.

The minister urged the National Biosafety Management Agency to be more proactive in its approaches to curb the inflow of unwanted genetically modified foods.

Lawal advised the agencies to work as a team and to be dedicated and punctual in their duties for effective discharge of their duties.

The Conservator General of the National Park Service, Dr Ibrahim Goni, urged the minister to review upwards the



Lawal

subventions of the Agency. On her own part, the Director General, National Biosafety Management

Agency, Dr Agnes Asagbra, solicited the minister's help to secure a bigger office space and more training for its staff.

Nigeria will surmount security challenges - NCTC coordinator

THE National Coordinator, National Counter Terrorism Centre, Office of the National Security Adviser (NCTC-ONSA), Rear Admiral Yaminu Musa (Rtd) has said that Nigeria would surmount her challenges of terrorism and other forms of insecurity in view of the commitment of President Ahmed Bola Tinubu and on the strength of ONSA under the watch of Mallam

Nuhu Ribadu.

A statement Tuesday by director of strategic communication NCTC-ONSA Abu, I. Michael noted that Admiral Musa enjoined Nigerians to be patriotic and believe that the country would be a better place hence the challenges confronting the country would give way through concerted efforts of well-meaning individuals and groups.

Admiral Musa while addressing the PhD Students of the Institute of Governance and Development Studies of the Nasarawa State University, Keffi who were on study tour to the NCTC-ONSA in Abuja says, "I have no doubt that Nigeria would surmount the challenges of terrorism and other forms of insecurity in the nearest future. Currently, the security situation in the North East and other parts of the country is gradually improving. I believe that our deliberations and proffered suggestions/way forward would further enhance our National security".

He explained that the threat environment has always been dynamic and required consistent appraisals and espousal of proactive strategies to tackle envisaged challenges, noting that the threat outlook would therefore demand multi-stakeholder collaboration across government and the citizenry in a well-coordinated whole of government and whole of society approaches to guarantee national security.

In line with this, the academia, according to him ought to contribute in revitalizing security in the country for national development through research, education and policy

engagement to enhance policy and effective decision-making at national and sub-national levels. He further added that the institutions of higher learning also need to sustain engagements with policymakers and security agencies to generate evidence-based recommendations for improving security in Nigeria. "By participating in policy discussions and providing expertise, you can influence the development of effective security strategies", he said.

The National Coordinator urged the academia to focus on building the capacity of next generation of leaders and security professionals by offering courses and programmes in security studies, peace and conflict resolution, declaring that "By providing a solid understanding of security issues, academia can help build a skilled workforce capable of addressing security challenges effectively".

Earlier, the leader of the students on the study tour, Professor Andrew E. Zamani, commended the National Coordinator for the privilege granted the students for interaction with the management of the centre in order to build on their knowledge, expressing the fact that the repository of the knowledge of terrorism and security generally reside at ONSA.

Professor Zamani disclosed that Nasarawa State University remained proud of the National Coordinator as one of its previous PhD students whose thesis on terrorism remained unmatched in the country.

He said a report that would identify areas of further research and collaboration would be written at the end of the study tour for presentation to the NCTC-ONSA.

Feature

The foundation for a successful nation

The promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies is the focus of goal number 16 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It also broached "access to justice for all and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels." Strong institutions are necessary to respond effectively to the needs and concerns of nationals and are better placed to hold those in authority accountable.

THE former President of the United States of America, Barack Obama, while addressing the Ghanaian Parliament during a courtesy visit to Ghana in 2009, remarked as follows: "No country is going to create wealth if its leaders exploit the economy to enrich themselves, or police can be bought off by drug traffickers. No business wants to invest in a place where the government skims 20 per cent off the top, or the head of the Port Authority is corrupt. No person wants to live in a society where the rule of law gives way to the rule of brutality and bribery. That is not democracy; that is tyranny, and now is the time for it to end. Africa doesn't need strong men; it needs strong institutions."

And what did Obama mean by Africa needing strong institutions, rather than strong men? The wisdom of these words is that strong institutions will help deliver democratic dividends in a consistent and just manner.

Obama, having African roots, knows Africa and Africans. In Africa, a leader is like an emperor who straddles over where he is boss. A local government chairperson sees the area as his farm and a Nigerian president has Pharaonic powers courtesy of the constitution.

No one among their staff can tell them what is right. Those staffers fear being discarded and not seen as 'loyal' for daring to be candid. They are well aware of what they will lose if that happens. And the emperors, having drunk from the chalice of absolute power, which absolutely corrupts, do not want in their circle those who do not say see him as infallible.

And this is one reason there is rampant corruption everywhere. Anybody at the helm of any ministry, department, or agency is lord of the manor there and does



Hassan Gimba

everything according to their whims and caprices.

However, countries with weak institutions that buckle under the leadership of men rarely succeed because of the absence of state institutions that can establish and enforce rules. And because, in the absence of such, you have strong men at the helm, seldom do they subject themselves to the rule of law as the leadership tends to personify the institution. Ego runs the institutions.

There are ways to get it right as a nation. First, our leaders need to rethink their idea of leadership. A leader is to be there to serve and not to lord it over others; to give hope and uplift, not to render hopeless and cast down the people into penury. A leader must be someone ready to lead for the

sake of God.

Then there must be justice. I will never tire of hammering it to all who care to listen that Sheikh Usman Dan Fodiyo, who said "The death of a thousand good men is not as tragic as having an unfit man in a position of national leadership," wrote in his book, *Bayan Wujub al-Hijrah alal ibad*, that "A kingdom (nation) can endure with unbelief, but it cannot endure with injustice."

To get justice, we must strengthen our legal and judicial systems. We need to reform our laws; and improve the capacity and independence of our judges and lawyers. This will earn the system more respect and bring back the people's trust which is being steadily eroded.

And where the courts have

adjudicated, we must respect that judgement. This is important for institutions saddled with safeguarding our democracy.

This brings me to the face-off if it can be termed that, between the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA).

"The Supreme Court, in a judgement on October 14, 2021, affirmed Chief Edozie Njoku as the national chairman of the party, upholding the decision of an appellate court that recognised him as such.

We have had instances in which the government and its institutions showed disdain for court judgements. The resultant effect of such is that the citizens become less law-abiding and less respectful of law enforcers, as well as less fearful of punishment for breaking the law.

The danger is that such escalate in proportion that the justice system and punitive facilities get overwhelmed. The rule of law is trampled upon if those running institutions have their way, and this leads to a bleak future. To show how strong institutions and the legal system are elsewhere, read this:

On July 3, 2019, a federal

appeals court denied President Donald Trump's border attempt to construct a wall between the United States and Mexico using funds unauthorised by Congress.

The ruling upheld two earlier district court orders that together permanently blocked the administration from building wall sections along the southern border in New Mexico, Arizona and California, using \$2.5 billion in diverted military funds.

The lawsuit, brought by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) on behalf of the Sierra Club and the Southern Border Communities Coalition (SBCC), challenged the president's abuse of emergency powers to secure border wall funds Congress denied.

And that was how it stood, with the president and all institutions concerned with that matter obeying the two lower courts' orders, until 31 July 2020, when in a 5-4 decision, the US Supreme Court allowed the construction to continue.

Can we have such a scenario in Nigeria?

Hassan Gimba is the Publisher and Editor-in-Chief of Neptune Prime.

Share this:

"And what did Obama mean by Africa needing strong institutions, rather than strong men? The wisdom of these words is that strong institutions will help deliver democratic dividends in a consistent and just manner. Obama, having African roots, knows Africa and Africans. In Africa, a leader is like an emperor who straddles over where he is boss. A local government chairperson sees the area as his farm and a Nigerian president has Pharaonic powers courtesy of the constitution. No one among their staff can tell them what is right. Those staffers fear being discarded and not seen as 'loyal' for daring to be candid. They are well aware of what they will lose if that happens. And the emperors, having drunk from the chalice of absolute power, which absolutely corrupts, do not want in their circle those who do not say see him as infallible".

Senator Ndume's outburst, hypocrisy or arrogance?



BY KENNETH DARENG

RECENTLY, Senator Ali Ndume who represents Borno South Senatorial District in the Red Chamber of the National Assembly, was on Channels Television as a guest on Politics Today where he fumed over the Federal Government's planned relocation of some departments of the Central Bank of Nigeria [CBN], and the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria [FAAN] to Lagos. The lawmaker who said, that only a reversal of the two measures would bring peace and going as far as threatening

President Bola Tinubu of the dare consequences in 2027. And it further underscores the position of the Arewa Consultative Forum [ACF], who had issued a statement describing the measures as, reeking in bad bad faith, and a deliberate ploy to further under-develop northern Nigeria. I also watched the distinguished senator speaking with rage and saying, "These Lagos Boys, they think Nigeria belongs to them and they can simply do whatever they want and get away with it." But that makes me to wonder also, Does the Federal Capital Territory [FCT], belongs only to the north? Otherwise why should a Federal government's decision be the concern of only the far northerners? Ndume who is a ranking member of the National Assembly should by now be knowledgeable enough to understand the status of Abuja as the nation's capital that is home under the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to the Gwari, Ibibio, Kanuri, hausa, Efik, Berom, Ishekiri, Yoruba, Ngas, Igbo and Tiv nationalities etc. The Senator even forgot that it is un statesman to play the card

of ethnicity in this regard on an issue that could ordinarily be seen as a mere administrative restructuring routine to enhance operational efficiency within the two organisations. Unfortunately, we live in a country where our so called leaders only see themselves as ethnic Champions instead of being nationalists. We are ruled by arrogant religious and ethnic bigots who instead of building bridges of national cohesion, would rather ignite sectional and selfish interests that does not augur well for progress and development. When the likes of Ndume and the Arewa leaders continue to think in the past and assume that every inch of Nigeria belongs to them and must be govern by their northern oligarches, they should be reminded that this is 2024, the people of other nationalities are wiser now and cannot be used and short changed. Although both the CBN and FAAN had given clarifications as to why the relocation was necessary, just like in the case of the CBN, the Governor Mr. Yemi Cardoso, had penciled the departments of the Banking Supervision, DBS, Other



Financial Supervision, OFISD, Consumer Protection, CPD, Payment System Management, PSMD, and Financial Policy Regulations, FPRD for relocation to Lagos- an exercise which 1,533 staff would be affected. According to the apex bank, the action is being necessitated by several factors including the need to align the bank's structure with its functions and objectives, redistribute skills to ensure more geographical spread of talent and comply with building regulations, as indicated by repeated warnings from the Facility Manager, and the findings and recommendations of the Committee on Decongestion of the CBN Headquarters. A former CBN Governor, Sanusi Lamido Sanusi has also attested to the measure being contemplated by the apex bank alludes to the fact that the capital being made out of the measure is just being politicized and whipping selfish ethnic sentiments unnecessarily by those who think they represent the northern interests even when it does not matter. Nigeria by now should transcend such narrow mindedness if we as a people are thinking of progress like in other

civilized climes. We should learn from countries like South Africa where the capital Pretoria is just but a small town serving as administrative base with few offices and yet, is the Capital. The world's Super Power, United States of America, USA, has Washington as its Capital, yet all most all its strategic socio-economic and military headquarters are spread across different locations for administrative convenience and efficiency. This is not a time for the northern elders to blackmail the federal Government. Ndume and the ACF should know that we are just in 2024 and 2027 may well take care of itself. The security forces should play the role they are expected to play. Apart from protecting the lives and properties of citizens and guaranteeing their safety, they should strive to build the lost confidence in them, by the people, stakeholders and the world. They should be seen to keep to their words of being "on top of the situation" as they always promise in their speeches to assure residents that they are the savior people are waiting for.

"Since 2001, Plateau has become a human slaughter house. Apart from casualties recorded from previous years, last year, over 200 persons were killed in coordinated attacks on the Christmas Eve of December 2023 as gunmen launched night attacks on the residents of Bokkos and Mangu LGA's"

Western education and sustainable democracy



BY EZEKIEL DONTINN

IT probably may sound seamless to have no perceptible effect on our internal selves, but our day-to-day open disposition exposes how confused we are as a people. We so much celebrated our explore to adopting what we called formal education and failed to see it as what should humble us. The advent of western education became fashionable and was a replacing thought from the old where signs and culture were instructive and having fifty as the new forty. People who were "fortunate" to walk their ways off those days, saw themselves as special human species. To some, the new was like how childhood impression lingers, waking up in a strange

bed that is not comfortable like sitting on your father's desk. It became truly quite strange and was like visiting the heavens where angels lived. In fact, we earlier received with great nostalgia like the arrival of a new born baby believing that, the dark old clouds that have denied us the chance to freely explore our stone age hidden talents and cultural believes had come and so, everybody delved into it. Every community craved so hard to see their younger ones being enrolled in the new system that comes with freedom to association, freedom of speech and the right to existence in any other human society. Although, it was at first received with mixed feelings, because it sounded alien and somehow confusing to compare with the old having been used to our ways of life as Africans. Yes, it was in record that our ancestors fought in defense of their tradition, but were tactically subdued to accept westernization reluctantly. However, as we began to wear the white man shoes and adopted their culture, most parts of our mental attitudes

tend to be in conflict with what was main to humble us. We ignorantly combined the two and it destroyed us instead of helping us. The essence and the initial prayers of our Founding Fathers was to see us fly competing with other nations, but it later became a trap that succeeded in clapping our feathers. Instead of progressing, we are retrogressing and it has cooked us into unnecessary modern slavery at the mercy of countries we did assisted then. Sadly, the situation has become terribly hot and we now feeling some strange and alien things we never bargained for happening to

our onces progressive sharp men, as they called country. We now use our celebrated Knowledge in a negative way and we do not need an Angel to tell us that we are truly suffering. Instead of bringing home awareness that can liberate our people from the dungeon of darkness, the educated ones are using their knowledge in manipulating their people. This is not only ascribed to politicians alone as always said, but the entire system. Sincerity has become an offense in so many climbs! Hardwork has been bastardized to self-rewarding! Prudence is now tagged naivity, leaving successful looters as the most intelligent-

enemies of our development. The big question craving for an answer is: What is the crime of western education in democracy? It is high time we talked sense to our individual self and embrace sincerity, hardwork and prudence as patriotic Nigerians and make a redress. Let us support the good ones among us and stop initiating into this mud that corrupts them. We have no other country to run to because this show of "intellectual mediocrity" will destroy us now that we are divided based on religion, state, region, ethnicity and tribes. May God help us!

"The advent of western education became fashionable and was a replacing thought from the old where signs and culture were instructive and having fifty as the new forty. People who were "fortunate" to walk their ways off those days, saw themselves as special human species."

By JIDAUNA DARING

IT is true that the unabated increase in crime or social vices has become the order of the day in Nigeria, particularly with the springing up of different bad syndicate groups which have remain very worrisome to innocent Nigerians who are on daily basis either kidnapped or killed without any provocation.

Some of these heinous or dastardly acts are of course perpetrated under the influence of drug or substance abuse, this act can only be curtailed through a concerted efforts by all and sundry, irrespective of religions background, geopolitical zone or tribe.

It is believed that loss of core values as a nation can be attributed to whatever challenges Nigerians have passed through or are still passing through when it comes to the issue of social vices bedeviling the country.

It was in view of this that the National Orientation Agency (NOA), in furtherance to its mandate of promoting positive values and attitudinal change in Nigeria, organized a one day security sensitization and re-orientation programme against political thuggery, kidnapping, drug addiction, radicalism, violent extremism and irregular migration tagged " Campus Focus" which took place at the NTA College Jos, recently.

Director General, NOA, Dr. Garba Abari who was represented by the state Director NOA, Plateau State, Mrs. Kaneng T. Pam- Hworo challenged students of tertiary institutions to shun all forms of social vices and imbibe the Nigerian core values of integrity, patriotism, Discipline, Self-Reliance, Dignity of Labour, Social Justice and Religious tolerance. Abari gave the charged at a one day security sensitization and Re-orientation programme.

He said that the programme was a continuous nationwide sensitization campaign aimed at the attitudinal re-orientation of students in tertiary institutions in Nigeria, adding that the agency has over the years implemented same in over 50 tertiary institutions across the six geopolitical zones of the country.

He pointed out that any immoral society filled with impurity is a threat to the progress of any nation, therefore stressed the need for students to embrace the core values of our nation as contained in chapter 2, section 23 of the Nigeria constitution and work together to ensure a moral society.

The Director said that the interaction would provide a veritable platform for continuous engagement with different stakeholders on how together they can proffer durable solutions to the challenge of erosion of our moral values as a people and a nation.

He noted that the campus focus programme has become highly imperative due to the myriads of vices that have bedeviled the Nigerian Tertiary institutions among which are cultism, Drugs and substance Abuse, Irregular Migration and

Trafficking in persons, and sexual and Gender Base Violence (SGBV).

Abari further explained that the objectives of the programme was to re-awaken the consciousness of students of tertiary institutions on the dangers of drugs and substance Abuse, Irregular Migration and Human trafficking and Cybercrimes, to sensitize students on the national core

developing themselves and also think about those good things that they can do for the growth of the country.

Buba noted that the problems being faced today is because of the lost of core values. He emphasized that as custodians of people, the traditional rulers equally work towards promoting the country's core-values at all times.

Presenting a paper on



The need for Nigerians to shun social vices



values and the need to embrace them, to create sustainable synergy between NOA, development partners and tertiary institutions for value re-orientation among others.

The Director also expressed the agency's profound appreciation to the International organization for Migration (IOM) for the gracious Support given to the agency towards the implementation of the programme, stressing that IOM has been the agency's strong partner through their tremendous support especially on the agency's efforts to raise awareness on irregular migration and human trafficking.

Earlier in his remarks while declaring the programme open, chairman Plateau State Joint Traditional Council, His Majesty, Gbong Gwom Jos, Da Jacob Gyang Buba who was represented by His Royal Highness (HRH) Gwom Rwey Heipang, Paul Tadi Tok urged students to imbibe the spirit of

"Overview of social vices on campus" by Dxecutive Director, Centre for Advancement, University of Jos, Mr. Yakubu Gomos said that the overall increase of social vices in institutions of higher learning in Nigeria has brought pain, sorrow and death to students, staff and the entire institutions, communities across the country.

Gomos also warned students to refrain from indulging in examination malpractice, stressing that parents should serve as role models to their children by inculcating good moral teachings in them so that they would not become way ward children. He advised parents to stop imposing choice of study on their wards when it comes to admission.

Also presenting a paper title, "The meance of Drugs and substance Abuse and its implications on National Development" by state Commandant, National Drug Law Enforcement Agency

(NDLEA) Plateau State, Mustapha Umar who was represented by Assistant commander, Drug Demand Reduction Unit, Mrs. Grace Goyal said that the menace of drug abuse has permeated into all ramifications of the society.

The commandant remarked that the drug abuse has succeeded in breeding out criminal gangs such as kidnapping, arm-robbery, cultism and terrorist group among others. He challenged students to stay away from any form of drug or substance abuse, saying that many youth have become way ward in life in the society and strongly called on students to say no to drug abuse for the sake of their live as future leaders.

Earlier in her remarks, state Director NOA Plateau State, Mrs. Kaneng T. Pam - Hworo who was represented by Mrs. Grace Tabuwas thanked all the guests and participants for honouring the invitation and urged the participants to step

down what they have learned to other students.

Mrs. Pam-Hworo said that if students on campus can key into all the said core values early in life, Nigeria will no doubt experience growth, development and stability it desires. "We will also see the emergence of a nation we can all be truly proud of as well as witnessing the restoration of our good name among the committee of nations".

Rector NTA College Jos, Professor Barnaba, Gbam expressed joy and appreciated NOA for chosing the college for the programme. He said that students have their future in their hands, hence the need for them to be of good character at all times both in school and at home.

SUNDAY STANDARD reports that the programme featured theatre for development by NOA, and other paper presentations by NDLEA, Nigeria police Force and NAPTIP.



Plateau State Specialist Hospital, Jos

CONGRATULATIONS

to

His Excellency, Barr. Caleb Mutfwang

on his Supreme Court victory



Gov. Mutfwang

The Chief Medical Director **Dr. Christopher S. Yilgwan** on behalf of the Management and the entire Staff of Plateau State Specialist Hospital, warmest facilitation with the **H.E. Barr Caleb Mutfwang** the Executive Governor of Plateau State and his Deputy Her Excellency **Ngo. Josephine Piyo**, Plateau State Executive Council, the Legislative arm, the Judiciary, The Traditional Council and the entire conscious, hopeful and loving people of Plateau State on the reaffirmed resounding victory at the Supreme Court as the duly elected Governor of Plateau State.

We thank God Almighty for bringing an end to these turbulent period of noising distractions through the Supreme Court victory. We are overjoyed that political distractions are over and the TIME is NOW to deliver more dividends of democracy to the people who are yearning for development and peaceful co-existence.

Your Excellency Sir, you have rekindled our hope for better Plateau and better health systems. We pledge our unflagging support to the green Cap Administration and have also remain resolute in providing better healthcare to the people of Plateau State and its environs.

We have learnt from you Your Excellency that you are a tested, trusted, dedicated, sacrificial and God fearing leader whom God has ordained with the will, wisdom and capacity to move Plateau to its place in the world stage.

You have indeed laid a solid foundation within this short period with such accuracy and precision to rebuild Plateau of our dreams where peace, Justice and progress prevails.

We pray to God for more grace and wisdom and may your tenure be filled with continuous positive impact for the collective achievements of our dear and cherished state.

Signed:

TALATU ACHAN ANGI ANIPR
Public Relations Officer

FOR: Management Plateau State Specialist Hospital.

Odd World

I want to attend my affair partner's funeral

- My husband is devastated

A woman has taken to social media to ask users whether she should attend her affair partner's funeral after learning about his death - but her husband doesn't want her to go. She doesn't know whether to attend the funeral.

The woman sparked outrage after revealing how she wants to attend her affair partner's funeral - despite still patching up her relationship with her husband. She explained how she cheated on her husband "several years ago" and has been working to earn his forgiveness ever since.

But now, after hearing the upsetting news about her affair partner's death, she wants to say her final goodbyes to her old flame. Taking to Quora, she asked: "I had an affair several years ago and my husband forgave me. Should I attend the funeral of my affair partner? My husband is devastated by the thought of my attendance."

However, she didn't quite receive the response she was expecting, with one user saying: "I think you should go! I think you should tell everyone you are going and that you care more about attending your affair partner's funeral than your current husband."

"I hope your husband has the good sense to say goodbye permanently because you are a heartache waiting to happen! I suspect from your question you will not understand this

answer." Another outraged user added: "If he had any, good sense, he should bury you with him. You must be a nightmare of a wife. For you to even consider going explains a lot about you."

While others pointed out how her attendance could cause even more hurt to her affair partner's family, especially if he cheated on his spouse too. A third user said: "So you've been carrying a torch for your affair guy for all these years and want to put that on full display to humiliate and devastate your husband by going to his funeral. An act of cruelty towards your husband and affair guy's family. Wow. Just. Wow. What a way to spit on his forgiveness."

"At least your husband will finally know what your priorities have always been and will, hopefully, file for divorce." One more user said: "Who exactly do you feel attending will give comfort to? You there only brings pain - to your husband and your lover's possible spouse and his family. The only one it soothes is you, you obviously still have feelings for him if you're even entertaining this notion. That's a larger problem."

'My husband's cruel behaviour after my mum's death leaves me considering divorce'.

Source: Mirror



This animosity must stop before it's too late

IT is a known fact today that majority of our citizens are not happy over the negative unfolding developments in the country. Unlike what was obtained in the past, there is no longer sincerity of purpose in the act of governance of this nation as administrative ingenuity has overwhelmed every sense of our collective responsibilities. It is so sad that Nigeria which got her independence in 1960 is yet to get it right as a promising developing nation. It's quite obvious that everything is going wrong and the center if care is not taken will no longer hold.

Since the emergence of this democratic dispensation, our political leaders have failed in ensuring that the common man is given a sense of belonging. These are not signs of end times but it's obvious that the handwriting on the wall is becoming unpalatable. As it is today, the excruciating pains necessitated by inflation and removal of fuel subsidy has left many to wonder how things have turned out for the worse for the ordinary man in this country.

When Nigeria became independent and was liberated from the shackles of colonial subjugation, our founding fathers had great hope for our nation. Most of them who sacrificed a lot and eventually put their lives on the line while liberating us were determined to liberate their coming generations from the difficulties which held them in bondage.

During their time, none of them withheld the legitimate economic resources of this country for no just reason. None of them syphoned and or diverted any of these resources into their private pockets neglecting their primary obligations. Though there were cases of regional sentiments, these leaders knew and ensured that their agitations and differences did not cross the red lines. In fact, even when such sentiments degenerated into the Nigerian civil war, majority of the citizens of this nation back then did not pray for the disintegration of the country.

Back then, our religious leaders transparently supported the truth and never shillyshalled their thoughts on the need to consolidate on the efforts of our founding fathers. Unfortunately, today, our religious leaders have thrown such spirit to the trash and have become so selfish to the core which is becoming detrimental to our cooperate existence as a nation.

The venom proliferated by some of our religious leaders today has caused a lot of pains and anxiety amongst the populace. In the aftermath of the Appeal Court order which warranted a by-election into the positions of the Senate, Plateau North and that of the House of Representatives of Jos/Bassa federal constituency, a clergy in Jos, Skeih Yahaya Jingere deliberately instigated the Muslim faithful to vote along religious lines. Though this was not the first time that Yahaya Jengre has allowed himself to be emotionally swept away, most of his comments have been instigative and unbecoming of a prominent spiritual leader of his capacity.

Not minding the consequences of their rebellious suggestions and thoughts, some of these clergies always think that they can use their positions in places of worships to instigate their follows into embarking on selfish religiously motivated adventures quite detrimental against our collective existence in the society.

We must however come to terms with

the fact that the problems and or challenges our nation is going through is beyond ethnic and or religiously motivated baseless sentiments. In fact, if some of these clergies don't know, Nigeria is on the path of total disintegration and chaos. Many things are going wrong in this country beyond possible imagination and only God can see us through.

Just last week, insurgents and terrorists again stuck in many cities across the county causing mayhem and calamity on vulnerable communities. As a result of these unfortunate incidences, many Nigerians had cause to conclude that the government is failing in its responsibility to protect the entire citizens. As it is; most of our rural areas are not safe and many of us cannot guarantee what can happen the next minute in this country.

Most of the tragic incidences of attacks and kidnapping have caught our security operatives unawares and not prepared for any kind of efficient and or effective response. While many security experts have opined that the number of our security operatives are grossly inadequate to protect our teeming population, me think that our security organizations lack contemporary security equipment to confront our present unspeakable challenges.

Beyond this, many of our security personnel have become discouraged with the politicization of the security framework of the nation. If you ask any of them about what they feel about serving this nation, they can boldly tell you that Nigeria is not a nation worth dying for.

Certainly, it is not worth dying for considering how frustrated our serving officers have become in most contemporary times. Unlike what was obtainable in the past, the welfare of our servicemen have been jettisoned with no hope for a better tomorrow.

The vivid picture of our military retirees in Nigeria today has continued to beat my imagination. There is no nation in the entire world where retired military personnel are treated in such a dehumanising and ruthless manner like in Nigeria.

Our educational sector has since crumbled and many universities are only providing ceremonial certificates which cannot be justified in all ramifications. Our educational infrastructures are completely dilapidated and unacceptance whereas, the health sector has since given way. It is quite outrageous that in a rich nation like Nigeria, some pupils in several villages study under trees and unroofed building in several villages across the country. This is the unfortunate situation, Nigeria our beloved nation has found itself in, a nasty situation which has forced us to carry our hands above our heads in total despair.

Instead of facing these challenges headlong, we are busy killing ourselves and further making the entire system very ungovernable. Thus, selfish political practice and the philosophy of 'It is our turn to chop, syndrome has further fuelled our excruciating precarious disposition. Yet, in spite of all these unending problems, most of our leaders and clergies are still not thinking straight. Most of them still think that by setting up us against each other, they will prove how popular they have become, what a fallacy of the highest order.

Our prayers this time around is for Nigeria to not only overcome some of these hurdles but emerge at the end of it much stronger than ever imagined. That is the more reason why I think this animosity must stop before things get out of hand.

View Point

Misconception of mentoring...

By **LUKA MUSA JR.**

THE term "mentor" is an experienced and trusted person who is advising someone less knowledgeable. According to Oxford English dictionary, a mentor is "an experienced and trusted adviser" while the concept "mentorship" is a professional, working alliance in which individuals work together over time to support the personal and professional growth, development, and success of the rational partners through the provision of career and psychological support.. The term mentor precedes the idea of mentorship, whose origin surfaced in the 1780s, while "Mentor" has been used since 1580s. A timeline that signifies the evolution of the role, before the formal recognition of the relationship.

The origin of "Mentor" can be traced back to Ancient Greece and come from Homer's epic, the Odyssey. While the legendary king Odysseus was away to lead his army in the 10-year Trojan War, Mentor, his trusted advisor, was left in charge of the household and to guide Telemachus, the king's son, toward adulthood. But Mentor failed to live up to his responsibilities. Several noblemen started lusting over Penelope, Odysseus's wife, and urged her to marry one of them during his 10-year absence. This meant that Telemachus would have been stripped of his birthright to rule. Across the years, Mentor failed to provide adequate mentorship and guidance to young Telemachus, who, frankly, grew up to be indecisive and cowardly. Fortunately, the goddess of wisdom, Athena, came to the rescue, took the form of a wise version of Mentor, and guided Telemachus to his father. After a series of trials and tribulations, they returned to Ithaca, and Telemachus killed all his mother's suitors.

Having this historical background of the term "Mentor" which was later conceptualized into "Mentorship" has given us an insight of what actually a mentor is and what mentorship encompasses and further spur us to knowing the perspective of the task saddled with mentorship. According to Kram's mentor theory (1985a) theorized that mentors may provide four psychological functions, helping the protégé develop a sense of professional self (acceptance and confirmation), providing problem-solving and a sounding board (Counselling), giving respect and support (Friendship), and providing identification and role modelling (role modelling). In this also, a mentor provide career function to help the protégé learn ropes and facilitate him to further organisational engagements,



which according to Kram (1985a) provide five career development functions, which are sponsorship, coaching, protection, challenging assignment and exposure. Which are attributes that interprets the inter-personal relationship in mentorship, which enhances the sense of competence of the protégé. In other words, mentorship entails a process of trust, care, love, advice, respect, attention, commitment and sacrifice of the experienced for the less knowledgeable. Its a mantra, evolving from close relationship aimed to building and developing the protégé into higher sight and future engagements.

Against this backdrop, what is common and has continue to be flagrantly use in the domain of our young men these days, is the misconceptualise and inappropriate application of the term "Mentor" and "Mentorship" having the social media like facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp and Instagram invoked with expression of love, loyalty and praises by these young men to people they call mentors, who they share no connection of whatever, no ties of any sort, no access to their audience, no support of any kind, no communication that could usher in advice, monitoring, feedback neither do their acclaimed mentors know or understand their vision and life pursuit nor do they know whether they exist. Yet, these young men kept acknowledging and addressing them as "mentors" based on their instinctual appeal

to them for having affluence interms of material possession and political positions, whilst the term "mentor" is contextually far from materialistic and political positions these young men wrongly assumed. A mentor supposed to be a person of experience, who believes in one's potentials and saw the need to groom those potentials, which is done through advice, support and monitoring, the very components that forms "Mentorship" as process embark by that experienced person known as (Mentor).

Lamentably, the gross application and inappropriate use of the term "mentor" has continued to limit the scope to which our young men need to know how a mentor should be viewed, who a mentor should be and what it takes for one to be a mentor them. A situation that has created gap between these young men and the actual people, supposed to be accorded the recognition as mentors in the society, as well make emphasis on the need to create a sense of appreciating those who were our first point of contact while learning the ropes from our childhood to adulthood. Overtime, we came across successful men and women in various fields of endeavour who narrated their choice of mentors from their primary and secondary school teachers, their lecturers in the Universities, their uncle's, their friends, their peers, their fathers and mothers, which are off course our first point of contact of our early experience as human beings. For instance, the

Nigerian popular rapper M.I Abaga (M.I) mentioned the gospel singer Bola Adebisi as his mentor for given him the platform first in his life to appear in the studio which today makes him who he is, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar former vice president and presidential candidate of people's Democratic Party (PDP) in the 2023 presidential election, identified Late Shehu Musa Yar'adua as his mentor, because of his constant advice, support and for encouraging him to contest political office, Christiano Ronaldo five times balloon d'or winner and former player Manchester United, Real Madrid and Juventus pointed his former coach Sir Alex Furgeson as his mentor because under his watch he grew, developed and won his first ballon d'or that makes him the whole house name CR7. This is how mentors are picked, against a prevalent wrong motion among young men of picking mentor on people they have nothing in common, neither do they know their strength, abilities and potentials nor do they have their audience. They're only drive by their popularity, wealth, political positions and fame, which is parallel to the contextual meaning of the term mentor since they're not in any way a source of strength, hope, guidance, support and development to them.

A mentor through mentorship should be one that listens, that wants you to succeed, that communicate to you hope and optimism, that provide guide and constructive feedback, that knows your strength and abilities, that has time and energy to

devote to you and has good reputation of developing others and also a person of high esteem and utmost integrity, these sets the elements that makes up a mentor in mentoring process. Therefore, it is expedient to make it a task in correcting the wrong impression that is stocked in minds and thoughts of our young men, in making them understand the value of a mentor and who supposedly deserved the recognition of a mentor. In order to restore to our society the modules of knowing value on personality, trust in commitment, believe in sacrifice and reward for handwork. So as to dissuade them from greed, aggrandisement and disrespect which are habits that are gradually derailing the society from it's good virtues. The need to change the narrative must be made paramount and crucial, to go back to those days where our teachers in primary and secondary schools are made mentors, where our uncle's on returning from school would ask you what you are taught, teach you how to read and write at home, sometimes with even the use of cane, our parents waking up as early as 4am to prepare us breakfast, iron our school uniforms and prepare us for school in the morning. Where did we threw away their sacrifice, commitment, advice and supervision in making us who we are today, that they don't deserve to be our mentors? **Luka Musa Jr is from Bogoro Local Government Area, Bauchi state.**

News

Gov Bala begins 34.2k road construction projects

From Abbas Gungura, Bauchi

In his determination to fulfill his campaign promises to the good people of Bauchi State, Governor Bala Mohammed has recently kicked off 34.2 kilometers road construction projects in Darazo, Misau and Katagum Local Government Areas of the state.

The beneficiaries of the projects in each of the three Local Government Areas are Gabchiyari with 22.2 kilometers road in Darazo LGA, dualization of 7 kilometers A.D Rufa'i College of Islamic and Legal Studies in Misau Local Government as well as dualization of 5.2 SECRACO roundabout to Emir's palace road in Azare town of Katagum Local Government Area.

The governor, while flagging off the project in the three local government areas, commended the benefitting communities for supporting his administration.

In a welcome address, the Caretaker Committee Chairman of Darazo, Alhaji Samaila Ya'u Sade, appreciated the efforts of Governor Bala Mohammed for the equitable distribution of infrastructure across the state.

According to him, the road construction, when completed, will have a positive impact on the economy and the wellbeing of the benefitting communities and by extension, Bauchi State.

Also speaking at the occasion, Managing Director of the contracting company for the Darazo/Gabchiyari road, Prudent Integrated Nigeria Limited, Alhaji Hussaini Harazumi, who thanked the state government under Bala Mohammed for giving the project to the company, pledged to ensure its timely completion.

The MD said Darazo-Gabchiyari road construction project is one among numerous



Bala

legacy projects of the governor, and assured that the project would be perfectly done in line with the contract specifications.

Commissioner raises alarm over EFCC charges against ex-governor

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

THE Kogi State Government has raised alarm over what it described as a desperate attempt by "criminals masquerading as politicians" to tarnish the image of the immediate past Governor of Kogi State, HE Yahaya Bello, for selfish reasons, through the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission.

The state government said, in its desperation, "which would leave Nigerians wondering who exactly is afraid of Yahaya Bello", the EFCC has, in an amended charge, accused the former Governor of diverting Kogi State Government funds in September 2015, four months before he assumed the position of a governor.

It said this was not only laughable but portrayed the EFCC as an agency infested with persons whose intents disagree with the noble intention of Mr. President to defeat corruption in Nigeria.

A statement signed by the Commissioner for Information in Kogi State, Kingsley Fanwo, said, "The fact that the

EFCC, in charge No. FHC/ABJ/CR/550/2022 : FRN V. 1. Ali Bello 2. Dauda Suleiman, currently pending before Honorable Justice J.K. Omotosho of the Federal High Court, Abuja Division further amended the 'Amended Charge' to include in the count, the name of H.E Yahaya Bello, describing him as being "at large", is ridiculous, laughable and portrays the EFCC as an agency infested with persons whose intents disagree with the noble intention of Mr. President to defeat corruption in Nigeria.

"Being 'at large' of course means that a person is evading arrest or is on the run and cannot be found after an attempt to arrest.

"For the sake of clarity, the original charge is against Ali Bello and Dauda Suleiman, Ali's associate. The offense which H.E Yahaya Bello is alleged to have committed upon which he has been named in the count is conspiracy to convert the total sum of N80,246,470,089.88 (eighty billion, two hundred and forty sixty million, four hundred and seventy thousand, eighty nine naira, eighty eight kobo) which offense is said to have

From Abbas Gungura, Bauchi

In continuation of his two day official working tour of Bauchi North and part of Bauchi Central, Governor Bala Mohammed was delighted with the progress made in the ongoing construction of a twenty five kilometers road linking the two major towns of Itas and Gadau in Itas-Gadau Local Government Area of the state.

The N8.5 billion Naira project that includes construction of the longest and most expensive bridge in the state, drainages, culverts and bridges, was inaugurated in

Bauchi Governor happy with progress of road construction

April 2021 by The Executive Governor Seyi Makinde of Oyo State. Inspecting the project when he paid a working visit, Governor Bala Mohammed said when completed, it would enhance transportation, agricultural and other economic activities of the benefitting communities.

According to him, the unscheduled inspection was out of his determination to ensure proper monitoring and evaluation of all the projects awarded by his administration.

The Executive Governor therefore commended the contractors handling the project for working according to the project specification despite the rising cost of construction materials. While conducting the governor round the project, Director of the contracting firm, Engineer Ahmad Al-Sadeeq, assured that the work would be completed between April to May this year. However, he promised to deliver the project according to the contractual agreement.

occurred on or about September 2015 in Abuja.

His co-conspirators according to the count are Abdulsalami Hudu (Kogi State Government House Cashier) described as being 'at large' too, Ali Bello and Dauda Suleiman.

"In the EFCC's desperation to nail H.E Yahaya Bello, they forgot their thinking hammer at home.

"The count of the offense is most laughable as the election that produced H.E Yahaya Bello, CON, as Governor of Kogi was only conducted in November 2015. Indeed, H.E. Captain Idris Wada of the PDP held sway as Governor of Kogi State at the material time until he handed over to H.E Yahaya Bello on the 27th day of January 2016.

"H.E Yahaya Bello could therefore not have as of September 2015 conspired with anyone, including Abdulsalami Hudu, a Kogi Government House Cashier to convert any money belonging to the Kogi State Government. It is to be noted that H.E Yahaya Bello before becoming the Governor

of Kogi State, had no financial dealings with the Kogi State Government which could have permitted him to convert monies belonging to the Kogi State Government, hence, one's dismay at the allegation."

The state government warned political actors to steer clear of Kogi State affairs and desist from their campaign of calumny "as the state government has not said its money is missing, and has been adjudged, both locally and internationally, as top in the area of transparency and accountability."

The state government asked: "Why should Nigerians trust the leadership of the agency that made such a ridiculous, shameless and indefensible allegation? The Chairman of the Commission should tender unreserved apologies to the Nigerian people for making us a laughing stock in the comity of nations."

It called on the president to step in to save the integrity of the EFCC from those "pushing the Commission into a fight that should be left to politicians."



Fanwo

Sports

Gunners gave Liverpool 'a taste of their medicine'



By **DANNY MURPHY**

That might be how some people view the performance by Jurgen Klopp's side in **Sunday's 3-1 defeat** at Emirates Stadium because, after the Reds were so wonderful in their win over Chelsea on Wednesday, you kind of expected similar this time too.

But football does not work like that. They were up against a really good side in Arsenal, who have got a great home record and had a lot to fight for on the day, but were also very clever about how they went about it.

Arsenal's intensity was far greater than Liverpool's in the first half, when they were totally dominant. The Gunners were the first to more loose balls, and they hunted in packs.

They were magnificent off the ball, but their superiority was not just down to how hard they worked physically.

That side of it was brilliant, but their intelligence of who did what, and when, was also part of the plan - and it was extremely impressive.

'Liverpool stopped by intelligence and athleticism'

When Liverpool got the ball, they wanted to get it into Alexis Mac Allister as quickly as possible, but Arsenal were ready for them.

Martin Odegaard was very effective at stopping the ball being fed to Mac Allister when he was pressing high up the pitch with Kai Havertz, but he also knew when to drop in deeper and stop the Argentine playing there too.

When Mac Allister did get on the ball, if Odegaard was not near him then Jorginho or Declan Rice would fly out of their position to close him down.

It was a high-risk approach because there was the chance of having the ball popped into the space behind them, especially against a team of Liverpool's quality, but it worked because Arsenal's organisation was so good.

You cannot press that well unless you are all on the page and you all have the same desire, and Arsenal had both. It was not just Mac Allister they stopped, either, because they jumped on all of Liverpool's midfielders really quickly.

As well as Odegaard and Havertz, Arsenal's two other midfielders were fantastic, especially Declan Rice. He was incredible - that was arguably his best performance in an Arsenal shirt.

And Jorginho was excellent too. Bringing him into the team looked, on paper, like a negative

move before kick-off - it looked like it was in fear of Liverpool - but it was respect, and it was part of the plan.

His intelligence, next to Rice's athleticism, meant it worked.

No Liverpool fightback this time. While I was watching the first half, I thought there was no way Arsenal could keep this intensity up, and they could not - Liverpool rallied and started really well after the break.

But probably the most impressive thing about Arsenal's afternoon was what they did when they went 2-1 up midway through the second half.

Yes, it took a bad mistake from Liverpool to let the Gunners retake the lead, but after that their game management helped them secure the points.

Arsenal dropped into a shape where, on many occasions, they were really deep - but because they did it as a team they were not just in two banks of four on the edge of their area.

Odegaard and Havertz both dropped together, and made it difficult for Liverpool to find any space.

We have seen Liverpool fight back after falling behind so many times this season but this time they just could not break Arsenal down.

In more than 30 minutes -

including stoppage time - after Gabriel Martinelli scored, they managed only three shots at goal, and none of them were on target.

Let's put things in perspective, though. Liverpool were chasing a game against a really good team and were without their best player. Mohamed Salah is a game-changer and he was not there.

Not being able to start with Darwin Nunez was a blow too. Yes, he came off the bench in the second half despite his foot injury, but he would have made a big difference before half-time, the way the game was going then.

His pace would have let Liverpool go longer, quicker, to get out from the back and get behind Arsenal. Cody Gakpo and Diogo Jota are quick as well, but they do not have the same power. They missed having Nunez as a target.

'No need for Klopp to panic'

Although Liverpool did not play as well against Arsenal as they did against Chelsea, I do not think they were that poor.

It was just a really dominant display by Arsenal and, sometimes, you have to walk off the pitch and go "you know what, the other team were better today".

It was a little kick up the

backside for Liverpool, because they have been playing superbly and rolling teams over in the past few weeks.

This was a taste of their own medicine, especially in the first half, when they were very lucky to equalise - they had not managed a shot on target before Gabriel's own goal.

But I would not be panicking if I were Klopp. This was his side's first Premier League defeat since September - they have to react, and I think they will.

They have got players coming back, we know that - Wataru Endo will be back from the Asian Cup to compete in midfield, and Salah should return from injury in a couple of weeks.

Trent Alexander-Arnold and Andy Robertson are getting back to full fitness, and Thiago Alcantara was on the bench on Sunday.

They have got good depth and great competition for places now - and are still top of the Premier League and trying to win four competitions, at the start of February.

So, there are plenty of positives still for Liverpool. I understand Arsenal's elation at the end because they are back in the race now, but the Reds are still in a great position, and this one defeat is not the end of the world.

Sports

Ajayi is doing a great work at the back - Oliseh



Ajayi

Former Nigeria coach and 1994 Africa Cup of Nations winner, Sunday Oliseh has insisted that Semi Ajayi has been a significant player for the Super Eagles from a tactical perspective at the ongoing Africa Cup of Nations although he has not earned enough plaudits for his performances in Ivory Coast.

Newsnow said that, the West Brom central defender is the only player in the Super Eagles squad to have played every single minute for the national team at the 2023 Africa Cup of Nations, helping them post four consecutive clean sheet.

Manager Jose Peseiro has utilized a back three in the last four matches with Ajayi partnered in defence by William Troost-Ekong and Calvin Bassey and it's the team's defensive solidity that has been key to reaching the semifinals of the AFCON.

At least seven players are committed to defensive work including Ola Aina, Zaidu Sanusi, Frank Onyeka and Alex Iwobi when the Super Eagles are out of possession.

Speaking to Channels Sports on Sunday, Oliseh said: "People are forgetting that Ajayi is doing a great work at the back. The man

is quiet but he's doing his job.

"What we are doing so well is the compactness and the players in the midfield, the central defensive midfielders that are winning the ball are making it impossible for the opponents to attack our central defence.

"These are players that are really helping Nigerians to excel."

Ajayi celebrated his first goal at the Africa Cup of Nations last weekend against Cameroon, only to see his poacher's strike chalked off for offside after a VAR check.

Plateau para power lifting set for games

THE Plateau State Para power weight lifting and Athletic are preparing for the forth coming National Sports Festival scheduled to take place in November, 2024, involving the 36 states of the Federation.

The head coach of the Plateau State Para Power Weight lifting Raul Ishaku, said that the team is preparing for various tournaments this year

He maintained that the team is preparing for All African games schedules to take place in Ghana, Para Olympic game schedule to take place in August and the National Support Festival to take place in November 2024.

While commenting on the athletes training, the head Coach confirmed that the athletes, of Para Power Weight lifting are putting their best in their daily training.

"Despite the festive break of about two weeks, the team is still coming and are seriously putting their best in the training he said.

Coach Ishaku further comment on the equipment for the training said.

Even though our training

equipment are not in good standard, so I am appealing to the state government to give us standard equipment to enable us meet the standard.

"Our management are serious towards supervision of both the coaches and athletes and they usually organized a meeting to encourage the coaches and the athletes and this motivating us to put in our best, he said.

While commenting on the forth coming competitions, the coach promise to give out his best towards training the athletes.

"Plateau State should be expecting an excellent result from my kan, as they are training for gold medal, which is something to present for the state he ended.

On his part, Daniel Christopher an athlete said are training so hard on the forth coming National Sports Festival.

"We won a lot of medals in different competitions in the past, which we hoping to get back home with many medal, though we are lacking equipment they training, but we are managing the one we

have for now, he maintained.

"Our management are really encouraging us in our training so far, because without their support we won't have been where we are now and we really appreciate them a lot.

He further promised that the state should be expecting a great performance from them, because they are really training hard for the championship.

Also, the head coach of athletes, Mr. Kumtong Wilfred Saleh commenting on the team preparation in the forth coming All African Games trails, coming up on the February 1st, 2024 in Abuja, saying the team is well prepared for it.

"My athletes are in a good shape, now and by God's grace they are going to slot it over there in Abuja."

He further lamented over the equipment available for the grooming of the athletes towards the All African Games trials.

Its been a long time that the team had good equipments sometimes we use our imitative in training these athletes so that they will be

SOUTH Africa head coach Hugo Broos has cautioned his charges ahead of their eagerly-anticipated clash against Nigeria.

The two former African champions will tussle it out in Wednesday's 2023 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) semi-final encounter in Bouake, Ivory Coast.

Broos led Bafana Bafana to a 2-1 win over Cape Verde on penalties after a 0-0 draw in a quarter-final encounter played in Yamoussoukro on Saturday.

"There was a lot of pressure in the match [against Cape Vere]. Everyone wanted to qualify," Broos said in the post-match conference according to Daily Post.

"This match was unlike the previous ones. We did not show the same performance as we had in

Broos cautions Bafana about Eagles threat



Broos

previous matches.

The Belgian tactician, who guided Cameroon to the 2017 AFCON title, pointed out that Bafana cannot afford to lose focus against Ademola Lookman and co.

"The semi-final match will

be different against Nigeria, which has good players like Lookman. We will not lose focus," he added.

"The players will be in good condition, so we need to rest and recover to start our preparation."

Onigbinde hails Nwabali's superb goalkeeping

THE Technical Adviser of Doma United, Coach Akinade Onigbinde, has lauded Super Eagles new number one goalkeeper, Stanley Nwabali on his brilliant goalkeeping at the ongoing Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) in Cote d'Ivoire.

Daily Trust said that, the Chippa United of South Africa keeper has so far kept four clean sheets at the championship to draw plaudits from Nigerian football fans.

Although he was injured in the Round of 16 victory against Cameroon, the former Lobi Stars and

Katsina United keeper returned to help the Super Eagles beat Angola 1-0 in the quarter-final clash last Friday.

Speaking to Daily Trust yesterday, Onigbinde said the player in the present Super Eagles squad that has impressed him the most is Nwabali, who has performed optimally even as he is new in the team.

The former FRSC FC Abuja coach said the bulky goaltender has won his heart with his calmness and agility in between the sticks.

"To be honest with you all the players have impressed me. They are playing what we call all men behind the ball. By this, all the players are attacking and defending at the same time.

"The defence has been watertight and that is why they have conceded only one goal in five matches.

That is high tactical discipline which I want them to maintain in their remaining matches.

"However, it is the goalkeeper, Nwabali who has won my heart completely. He is always very calm and dishing out instructions to his teammates. It is hard to believe that he is just coming into the team. I pray that he remains on top of his game," said Onigbinde.

The young gaffer, therefore, prayed for the Super Eagles to go all the way to the finals and return home with the coveted trophy.



Super Eagles

Sports



Super Eagles take on Bafana Bafana in semi

THE stage is set for a blockbuster clash at Stade de la Paix today.

South Africa will square off against Nigeria in a mouth-watering semi-final matchup in Bouake.

Read on as **Sports Brief** brings you a preview of this all-important AFCON showdown.

The Super Eagles will head into their clash against *Bafana Bafana* boasting a rich vein of form.

They have yet to lose in this year's AFCON, recording two wins and a draw in the group stage before beating Cameroon and Angola in the knockout rounds.

South Africa, on the other hand, have recorded upset wins in the knockout stage, beating Morocco 2-0 in the Round of 16 and defeating Cape Verde in a penalty shootout in the quarter-finals.

Nigeria have lost five of their last six semi-final games in the Africa Cup of Nations. South Africa last reached this stage of the tournament back in 2000, per The Standard.

The Super Eagles have won seven of their last 14 meetings with *Bafana Bafana*, recording five draws and two losses during that period.

They last faced each other in the Africa Cup of Nations back in 2019, with Nigeria recording a dramatic 2-1 victory in the quarter-finals. William Troost-Ekong broke South African hearts, netting a late match-winner in the 89th minute.

Ademola Lookman has flourished in Nigeria's 3-4-3 set-up, scoring all of their three goals in the knockout rounds.

There were some concerns about Victor Osimhen after he was substituted late against Angola due to injury.

The latest update hasn't been good for Nigeria fans as the striker failed to join the Super Eagles' trip to Bouake on Monday due to an abdominal issue.

Osimhen is now in a race against time to be fit for Wednesday's clash with South Africa.

Hugo Broos, on the other hand, has found the perfect formula when it comes to his side's defence. All of his defenders come from Mamelodi Sundowns, and that chemistry has worked wonders for *Bafana*

Bafana.

They have not allowed a goal since their opening loss against Mali, recording clean sheets against Namibia, Tunisia, Morocco, and Cape Verde.

South Africa will be missing the services of Thapelo Maseko in the game against Nigeria after he suffered a hamstring injury in the quarters, per Supersport.

Expect a low-scoring contest between these two great defensive sides. The *Super Eagles* record a 1-0 victory to advance to the AFCON final.

Sports Brief recently reported on Ronwen Williams embracing the challenge of Osimhen.

He starred in South Africa's win over Cape Verde, saving four of the five penalties he faced.

The *Bafana Bafana* goalkeeper also said they needed to prepare accordingly against Nigeria.

Meanwhile, African Footballer of the Year Victor Osimhen is a

doubt for Nigeria's Africa Cup of Nations semi-final against South Africa due to a stomach complaint, officials said.

The striker did not fly with the squad from Abidjan, where they beat Angola in the quarter-finals on Friday, to Bouake where the first of Wednesday's semi-finals will be played.

"Team medics confirmed that he has been placed under close watch with a member of the medical team staying behind in Abidjan with him. If cleared by tomorrow morning, he will join the rest of the squad before 5 p.m.," a Nigerian Football Federation statement said.

Osimhen's absence would be a major blow to Nigeria, for whom he has been their outstanding performer at the tournament with his endless running and phenomenal work rate.

The Bouake clash is followed on Wednesday by the second semi-final in Abidjan in which hosts Ivory Coast face Democratic Republic of Congo.

Eagles N3bn richer, squad arrives Bouake for Bafana clash

FOLLOWING the Super Eagles' progression to the semi-finals of the ongoing Africa Cup of Nations in Ivory Coast, *The PUNCH* reports that the team has earned a prize money of \$2.5m (N3bn).

Nigeria reached the semi-finals of the 34th edition of the AFCON after defeating Angola 1-0 at the Felix Houphouet Boigny Stadium in Abidjan on Friday.

As one of the remaining four teams in the competition, the Eagles, alongside South Africa, their semi-final opponents; DR Congo and hosts Ivory Coast, have already secured \$2.5m.

Before the start of the tournament, Confederation of Africa Football president, Dr Patrice Motsepe, announced a 40 per cent increase in prize monies.

According to the statement published on the website of the football governing body January 4, the winners of the tournament will receive \$7m, \$2m more than the reward doled out at the last edition in Cameroon.

The runners-up of the African showpiece event will now get \$4m, while each of the two semi-finalists will receive

\$2.5m, with each of the four quarter-finalists taking home \$1.3m.

"CAF has made significant progress over the past two years in increasing the prize money of the AFCON and all its other major competitions," he said.

"We have increased the prize money of the AFCON winner to USD 7 000 000 which is a 40% increase from the previous AFCON prize money.

"I am confident that a portion of the prize money will contribute to developing football and also benefit all the football stakeholders, as well as assist our Member Associations with their administrations," he added.

If Nigeria advanced to the final, they would have secured a minimum of \$4m (N5bn) in prize money.

Additionally, if they win the tournament, they will receive \$7m (N8.8bn).

Meanwhile, the Eagles arrived in Ivory Coast's second-largest city, Bouake, on Tuesday (today) ahead of their semi-final clash against South Africa on Wednesday.

Jose Peseiro's men have played all their matches in the

THE executive committee of the Cameroon Football Federation on Monday rejected the resignation tendered by its president, Samuel Eto'o.

Eto'o has been dogged by allegations of improper conduct, match-fixing and corruption.

The federation met to evaluate the Indomitable Lions' outing at the 2023 Africa Cup of Nations.

The meeting started with Eto'o offering to resign from the role and also invited the other members "to do likewise in good faith."

"At the end of discussions and subsequent deliberations, the members of the executive committee decided to maintain their current mandates and thus unanimously rejected the president's resignation thereby renewing their confidence in him to continue with the same spirit of reconstruction and development of Cameroon football at all levels as envisaged in his plan adopted by the elective general assembly of Dec. 11, 2021," the federation said in a statement, referring to the

Eto'o resigns after Cameroon's 2-0 defeat



Eto'o

date Eto'o took over as president.

There was no mention of head coach Rigobert Song's future.

Cameroon needed a win in its final group fixture to qualify from the group stage, only to be eliminated by Nigeria in the round of 16.

'Imagine going to the final'

Bafana Bafana striker Mhlali Mayambela is hoping South Africa can seal their spot in the final of the 2023 Africa Cup of Nations by beating tournament favourites Super Eagles on Wednesday, February 7.

South Africa defied the odds with a 2-0 win over 2022 World Cup semi-finals Morocco in the round of 16 and were forced to a goalless draw by Tunisia in the group stage.

After a poor start that saw them lose 2-0 to Mali in their opener, Bafana Bafana have improved as the tournament progressed and credit has to go to a solid defence that has kept four consecutive clean sheets.

Mhlali Mayambela - one of the three foreign-based players in the South Africa squad - has been an impact player for Hugo Broos team at the ongoing tournament, making three appearances off the bench.

Asked if South Africa can reach the final by beating Nigeria, Mayambela told Lorenz Kohler: "It will mean everything, already being here means everything. Imagine going to the final it will mean a lot to me and my family."

"God has been great for me and I believe also we have the ability to make something great for ourselves and I

-Bafana Bafana

believe we can do something great for the country and achieve even more. It's a big game."

Heading into the fixture, South Africa are at a disadvantage as they have one less day to recover than Nigeria, having defeated Cape Verde in a grueling contest on Saturday, a day after the Super Eagles advanced to the last four.

Bafana Bafana will be praying lightning does not strike twice as they were easily beaten by Nigeria the last time both countries faced off in the semifinals of the Africa Cup of Nations.

Cameroon 2-0 as well as the Antelopes of Angola 1-0 at the same venue.

According to the Nigeria Football Federation, the team will have one training session in Bouake on Tuesday afternoon, having had two sessions in Abidjan on Sunday and Monday.

Historically, when Ivory Coast hosted the AFCON in 1984, Nigeria also played their

semi-final match in the city of Bouake against Egypt - which they won 8-7 on penalties after regulation and extra time ended 2-2. Nigeria, however, lost the final 3-1 against Cameroon.

The winners of the Nigeria vs South Africa game face the winners between hosts Ivory Coast and DR Congo, who also faceoff in Yamoussoukro same day.





Quest



writer

DR. SHAAPERA UGBIDYE

FRAGMENT

"The lowest value was recorded in Ushongo and the highest in Logo in Washington, in Ibadan sweet, the lowest value is recorded in Konshisha and the highest value in Ushongo and in Valencia, the lowest value is recorded in Kwande and the highest value is reported in Katsina-Ala."

DR. SHAAPERA UGBIDYE

Mercury levels in agricultural soils

Continued from last edition

The mean value of organic carbon in some selected site in Abeokuta were reported to be 0.02 - 8.48% which is higher than the value recorded in work. The organic carbon in roadside soils in Makurdi metropolis in the range of 0.27 - 5.44% was reported which is higher than the values recorded in this research. The organic carbon of some agricultural farms were reported in Delta State in the range of 0.95 - 2.02% less than the value recorded in this work.

Organic Matter

The mean organic matter recorded is in the range of 6.17 - 7.37% with the lowest value reported in Logo and the highest in Konshisha as shown. The organic matter content of soil in automobile mechanic village in Apir and North bank were investigated and the values reported are in the range of 1.46 - 2.39% which is less than the values recorded in this research.

Proximate Parameters of the Citrus Varieties

Fat Content

The result of the analysis revealed the levels of fat in the orange varieties in the range of: Washington (0.200 - 0.310%); Ibadan sweet (0.210 - 0.330%) and Valencia (0.190 - 0.330%). Low level of fat in Washington was recorded in Logo and highest level was observed in Ushongo, in Ibadan sweet, low level of fat was observed in Ukum and the highest in Katsina-Ala and in Valencia, the lowest levels was observed in Logo and the highest levels in Kastina-Ala as presented in Table 3. The fat content of oranges from Benue State and Rivers State were reported to be 0.65% and 2.0% which are higher than the values recorded in this work probably due to time of collection of the samples. The fat content of *citrus sinensis* was reported to be 10.0% which is by far higher than the values reported in this work. Proximate composition of *citrus sinensis* in Northern Nigeria reported the fat content of 0.06% less than the values recorded in this work. The differences in the values of fat recorded in the citrus varieties could be due to species, the trend in the result showed that Valencia = Ibadan sweet > Washington.

Fibre Content

The result of the crude fibre of the three citrus varieties analyzed in this work are in the range of Washington (0.220 - 0.410%), Ibadan sweet (0.230 - 0.390%) and Valencia (0.200 - 0.490%). The lowest fibre content in Washington was recorded in Logo and Vandeikya and the highest in Kwande. In Ibadan sweet, the lowest value was observed in Vandeikya and the highest in Kwande and in Valencia, the lowest values



was recorded in Ukum and the highest in Ushongo as shown. The fibre content of oranges in Benue State and Rivers State revealed the mean values of 0.18 ± 0.06% and 0.41 ± 0.08% this values are less compared to the ones recorded in this research and may be as a result of mineral composition and variety. The nutritional potential of *citrus sinensis* revealed the fibre content value of 13.5% which is higher than the values obtained here may be as a result of time of sample collection and climate. The fibre content of *citrus sinensis* in Northern Nigeria was reported to be 2.82%. The result of the analysis shows the trend in the fibre composition of the citrus varieties in order of Valencia > Washington > Ibadan sweet.

Moisture Content

The moisture content reported in the three orange species ranges from: Washington (79.4 - 86.2%), Ibadan sweet (79.5 - 86.9%) and Valencia (80.4 - 87.4%). The lowest value of moisture content was observed in Konshisha and the highest in Ushongo in Washington, in Ibadan sweet, the lowest values were observed in Ukum and Vandeikya and the highest in Ushongo, in Valencia, the lowest value is recorded in Ukum and the highest in Ushongo as presented. The moisture content of oranges in Benue State and Rivers State were reported to be 88.8 ± 0.07% and 88.9 ± 0.06% respectively, the values are higher than what is reported in this analysis. The moisture content of fresh juice from three citrus species were; sweet orange (80.5%), lemon (85.1%) and lime (75.6%), which is within the range of the result of this analysis. The moisture content of *citrus sinensis* was reported to be 9.78% which is far less than the

values recorded in this work and other similar research works and this could be due to differences in species and season. The trend of the moisture content in the citrus varieties follows Valencia > Ibadan sweet > Washington.

Ash Content

The result of this analysis revealed that the ash content of the three citrus varieties are in the range of Washington (1.20 - 1.70%), Ibadan sweet (1.10 - 1.50%) and Valencia (1.30 - 1.80%). The lowest value was recorded in Ushongo and the highest in Logo in Washington, in Ibadan sweet, the lowest value is recorded in Konshisha and the highest value in Ushongo and in Valencia, the lowest value is recorded in Kwande and the highest value is reported in Katsina-Ala as shown in Table 4. The ash content of oranges in Benue State and Rivers State were reported to be 0.630% and 0.490% respectively. The ash content of *citrus sinensis* in Northern Nigeria was reported to be 0.62%. The proximate composition of fresh juice from three citrus species recorded the ash contents in sweet orange (0.60%), lemon (0.50%) and lime (0.15%), these values reported by these researchers are less than the values recorded in this work and may be due to species. The trend of the ash content in the citrus varieties are Valencia > Washington > Ibadan sweet.

Protein Content

The result of proteins analyzed revealed the protein content of the three orange varieties to be in the range of (0.63 - 0.86%) Washington, (0.73 - 0.84%) Ibadan sweet and (0.62 - 0.89%) Valencia. The lowest value in Washington was observed in

Kwande, the highest in Logo, in Ibadan sweet, the lowest value is in Ushongo, the highest in Konshisha and in Valencia, the lowest value is recorded in Ushongo and the highest in Konshisha as presented. The protein contents of oranges from Benue and Rivers States were investigated, the mean values are; 0.44 ± 0.06% and 0.44 ± 0.07%. The protein content of orange leave was reported in the range of 3.80 - 3.65%, which is high compared to the value obtained in this analysis and this could be due to the fact that the leaves are the organs for photosynthesis in the plant and may store sufficient carbohydrates temporarily. The protein content of orange juice was also reported, the mean value is 0.74 ± 0.03%, which is less than the value reported in this analysis. The trend is Valencia > Washington > Ibadan sweet.

Carbohydrate Content

The carbohydrate content of three orange varieties gave a range of 11.1 - 17.3% in Washington, 10.2 - 17.7% in Ibadan sweet and 9.39 - 16.4% in Valencia. The lowest carbohydrate content was observed in Ushongo and the highest values were recorded in Konshisha in Washington. In Ibadan sweet, the lowest value was in Ushongo and the highest in Vandeikya also in Valencia, the lowest value was in Ushongo and the highest value in Vandeikya as shown. The carbohydrate content of oranges from Benue State and Rivers State were reported to be 9.30% and 7.71% respectively which are less than the values reported in this analysis. The carbohydrate content of *citrus sinensis* in Nigeria was reported to be 18.6% which is in agreement with the values recorded in this research. The

carbohydrate content of *citrus sinensis* was reported to be 42.9% higher than the values recorded in this work. The low value of carbohydrate could be due to the unprocessed nature of the fruits.

Processed fruits are expected to have higher values of carbohydrates, also species type. The trend of carbohydrate content in this analysis is Ibadan sweet > Washington > Valencia.

4.3. Hg in Orange Juice and Soil

The result as represented in the range of Hg in the citrus varieties and soil as: Washington (0.770 - 6.35 µgkg⁻¹), Ibadan sweet (0.770 - 6.53 µgkg⁻¹), Valencia (0.770 - 5.22 µgkg⁻¹) and soil (20.5 - 21.2 µgkg⁻¹). The levels of Hg in Ukum in Washington were below detection limits. High levels of Hg were observed in in Katsina-Ala in Washington (6.35 µgkg⁻¹), Ibadan sweet (6.53 µgkg⁻¹) and Valencia (5.22 µgkg⁻¹). Hg values reported in soils are 2410 µgkg⁻¹ which is higher than the values reported in this work. The levels of Hg in soils of Anka area were recorded in the range of 2153 - 12924 µgkg⁻¹ which is higher than the values in this research. The levels of Hg in industrial soils in Kaduna State were recorded to be 28800 µgkg⁻¹ which is higher than the values reported in this research. The levels of Hg distribution in polluted soils in the range of 220 - 1880 µgkg⁻¹ were recorded which are higher than the values reported in this research. The trend of Hg accumulation in the orange species is Ibadan sweet > Washington > Valencia. The accumulation may be due to orange type, solubility in soil, age, and volume of agrochemicals and the use of substances containing mercury (soaps, creams and batteries). The results of all the samples analyzed for Hg are below WHO/FAO (100µgkg⁻¹) limits for Hg in foods. Also, the level of Hg analyzed in this research in all the soils is below WHO/FAO (1000 µgkg) limits in agricultural soils.

Conclusion

The result of the analysis show that the level of Hg in the different orange fruits and soil analyzed do not exceeded the prescribed WHO and FAO maximum permissible limit. Hg accumulation may lead to acute toxicity; metals enter into the food chain through polluted environment. The concentration of Hg in the orange varieties is in the order of Washington > Ibadan sweet > Valencia. Further studies should be carried out on other fruits since there is the probability of metal transfer from soil to fruits.

Concluded