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Fake news, misinformation, as damaging as terrorism -Minister P5

Humans killed annually



Mosquitoes
725,000

Other Humans
400,000

Snakes
138,000

Dogs*
59,000

Assassin Bugs*
10,000

Scorpions
3,300

Crocodiles
1,000

Elephants
600

Hippos
500

Lions
200

THE WORLD'S 10 DEADLIEST ANIMALS



*Spreads disease
"Homicides only"

Figures are estimates, and may vary by year. Source: BBC Science Focus

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News

Fake news, misinformation, as damaging as terrorism-Minister



Idris

Minister of Information and National Orientation, Mohammed Idris, has praised the media for its pivotal role in countering terrorism.

Speaking at the opening of a two-day training workshop on "Effective Reporting Towards Strengthening Alternatives to Terrorist Ideologies" for Defence Correspondents and Reporters, held at the Office of the National Security Adviser on yesterday, Idris highlighted the crucial influence of the media in shaping public perception and promoting peace.

"The media holds immense power to influence minds, shape narratives, and promote peace," Idris stated.

He emphasised the significant impact that media coverage has on public understanding of terrorism and national security issues, commending the

National Counter-Terrorism Centre and the Office of the National Security Adviser for their strategic engagement with the media.

Idris acknowledged the proactive efforts of these institutions in the fight against terrorism, noting their numerous successful rescue operations of kidnap victims.

"Thank you for your dedication and service to the nation," he said.

Addressing the ideological battle posed by terrorism, Idris stressed the need for the media to offer compelling, positive alternatives to extremist ideologies.

"Terrorism is not merely a physical threat; it is an ideological battle of the mind," he explained.

He urged journalists to work closely with security experts, sociologists,

psychologists, and community leaders to provide a comprehensive perspective on terrorism and its alternatives.

Idris called on the media to highlight successful initiatives and programs by the NCTC and ONSA that counter radicalization and support the rehabilitation and reintegration of repentant terrorists into the community.

He encouraged reporters to use data and research to enhance the credibility and depth of their stories.

The Minister also warned against sensationalism and the spread of misinformation. "Sensational reporting can inadvertently glorify terrorist acts and spread fear," he cautioned.

"Misinformation and fake news can be as damaging as the terrorist acts themselves."

Reiterating the government's support for free and responsible journalism, Idris said, "Let me also use this platform to reiterate the commitment of President Tinubu's administration to free and responsible journalism. We sincerely appreciate your work and we will continue to support you through access to accurate information, regular media briefings, and training opportunities such as this workshop."

While declaring the workshop open, Idris expressed hope for fruitful deliberations.

NCDC activates emergency centre amid cholera outbreak

The Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) has activated its National Cholera Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) in response to a cholera outbreak that has claimed 53 lives across 31 states.

This is according to a Monday update by the agency shared on its official X platform.

"Following a dynamic risk assessment of the #cholera epidemiological situation which placed the country at a very high risk of increased

cholera transmission, we have activated the National #Cholera Emergency Operations Centre (EOC)," the NCDC said.

"As of 24th June 2024, a total of 1,528 suspected cases and 53 deaths have been recorded across 31 states."

As of June 24, 2024, a total of 1,528 suspected cases have been reported. Following a dynamic risk assessment of the cholera epidemiological situation, which placed the country at a very

high risk of increased cholera transmission, the NCDC took this step to coordinate the response to the outbreak.

In Ogun, one person has died and 25 cases have been confirmed out of 35 suspected cases.

The state government has distributed cholera test kits and treatment materials to all local government areas and designated treatment centres, and treatment is free in all government facilities.

The NCDC is working closely with states to contain the outbreak and prevent further spread

Following the decision of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) to recapitalise commercial banks in the country, the Coalition of Civil Society Organisations in the country has thrown its weight behind the plan, saying that the decision is healthy for Nigeria's economy.

"At the last Recapitalisation, N25 billion was worth about \$200 million, but the said amount is not worth \$20 million today, hence the need for recapitalisation," according to them.

Addressing journalists at Ikeja, Lagos State, the spokesperson for the civil society organisations and former Chairman of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria (ICAN), Lagos and District Society, Mr. Alesta Wilcox, said banks in Nigeria are now weak, and its discourages investors.

He noted that recapitalisation will make banks healthy and stronger, arguing that when banks are healthy, they will be able to perform better and recruit more staff.

The coalition, which comprises Constitutional Rights Advocate Initiative, CadreII Advocacy Centre, Movement for Nigeria Restructuring, Centre for Social and Economic Rights, Committee for the Protection of People's Mandates, Coalition Against Corrupt Leaders CACOL and Commonwealth Institute of Advanced and Professional Studies, noted that it is political and is only interested in the political and economic

Civil societies support FG's recapitalisation, bank reforms

wellbeing of the country.

However, according to them, they are supporting the recapitalisation move because there are plans by some benefiting from the weakness in the banking sector to sabotage it.

"We are a coalition of civil society organisations. Our role is to act as watchdogs to the government in the overarching interest of the Nigerian people.

"Our gathering today is to alert the federal government, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN),

the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the Department of State Services (DSS), the Bankers Committee and the Nigerian media to an organised plot by some vested interest within the Nigerian banking system to begin to orchestrate a diversionary gas-

lighting campaign to stop the proposed banking sector reforms using some faceless civil society organisations who will begin to make preposterous claims and allegations against some Nigerians who critical to the success of the planned banking

recapitalisation programme.

"We also have credible intelligence that they intend to make some unsubstantiated allegations against the current CBN Governor, Mr. Olayemi Cardoso; the Mr. Olawale Edun, the Finance Minister and Coordinating Minister in charge of the economy," the coalition warned.

They further explained that some investors in the banking sector are planning to sabotage the recapitalisation, and their goal is to either delay or force the Central Bank of Nigeria to drop the ongoing reforms of the banking sector to elongate the stay of their Pay Masters at the helm of affairs at some of the sick banks which require the recapitalisation most.

"It is germane to say that some of the banks which require the recapitalisation most are the very ones in need of the injection of capital off the back of the recapitalization programme. But these vested interests would rather leave the banks in their sick state to prevent the truth from being unearthed," the civil society stated.



Tinubu

Kaduna moves to mitigate flooding

Kaduna State Governor, Senator Abubakar Buba Uba Sani, has directed stakeholders to come up with the best way to mitigate the potential impact of flooding in areas identified by the Nigerian Meteorological Agency (NiMet,) in the State.

The Commissioner Of Environment and

Natural Resources, Abubakar Buba disclosed this during a sensitization campaign held at the Lagos Garage Mando in Igabi Local Government Area.

According to him, Gov. Sani directed the Ministry and other stakeholders to look at all the proactive measures to be taken

to avert the flood, and part of it is sensitization, which all the MDAs of the State have started to work on for the past two to three months.

Buba reiterated that the team decided to kick start the Campaign at a center like Mando Motor Park, which is highly populated and the exercise is to distill all the drainage.



Hard drugs, the monster

In recent times, the attention of parents, governments and civil society organisations has been focused on the girl-child regarding home training, morals and good character. To an extent, it has paid off. But our nonchalance towards the grooming of the boy-child has turned out to be a bomb which has exploded in our faces. Is it any wonder that the boy-child has become a problem to our society today?

Moral decadence, spike in the numbers of school drop-outs, drugs addicts and substance abusers is very high among boys within the 11-25 age range. They constitute a nuisance to society as they engage in these vices to satisfy their appetites. In the process, society is deprived of peace and innocent people are robbed of their goods and possessions.

In recent times, large numbers of young boys have been infected with the get-rich-quick syndrome. As a result, they are into internet fraud, popularly referred to as 'yahoo-yahoo'. Some of them have gone a step further by engaging in yahoo+ which involves rituals and some forms of sacrifices which could be very diabolical. All of these are done under the influence of drugs.

Drugs abuse is still a lingering global problem which seems to be claiming more and more lives as it assumes a more dangerous dimension. It recruits more and more people on a daily basis. Yes, like Satan's mission, it goes around like a hungry lion looking for whom to devour. And like a wild fire, it is very destructive, leaving only waste, pain and death in its wake.

Some people become hooked on drugs due to youthful exuberance, peer pressure and, or, the quest to experiment. For Daniel, a young and promising undergraduate, drug addiction has cost him his education and good friends. On top of that, he has been blacklisted as an ex-convict.

Many vices are perpetrated under the influence of this monster. When it takes over somebody, it takes total control. No wonder, some of the addicts need drugs to boost their confidence, make them brave and courageous. And in that condition, they feel they can do anything good, or bad. They feel they are on top of the world. They can murder, steal, kill, rape, maim and commit unprintable crimes when the monster possesses them.

Narrating their ordeal in the hands of their younger brother, who is an addict, Halima said that he has become a monster. According to Halima, he has become a nocturnal person who keeps very late nights and wakes up at after 10:00am. He roams around the house with blood shot eyes and easily snaps at his younger ones. For that reason, they are all in dread of him.

She said her brother eats like he is eating for himself and the monster inside him. And no matter the hour he returns home, he heads straight to the kitchen where he eats anything he can lay his hands on.

"Because of him, we can't keep our soups in the kitchen but in our parents' room," Halima lamented. "We have learnt the hard way that at such times, we can do nothing about the monster that controls him," she explained.

Drugs turn good boys/girls into terrible

individuals. This does not only manifest itself when they are possessed by the monster. It showcases itself when they need the monster but lack the money to get it. A friend whose brother has been an addict for the past 10 years said, "We can't keep anything valuable in the open. My brother, who is a drug addict, would take anything he can lay his hands on and sell it at a give-away price to enable him have access to the monster."

She recounting how much the family had suffered in the hands of their brother: "He has sold our phones, new sets of food flasks, wall clocks and flower vases. That is, apart from his own belongings. His room is now bare. Unfortunately, he has started selling our own shoes, clothes even weave-on caps."

Their case is so bad that the doors to their own and their parents' rooms now have sophisticated locks, as if they are living with hardened criminals. But even then, "One can't go to the toilet or bathroom and leave one's door open, it may be one's undoing. Even something like a bedsheet could be taken and sold cheaply to give my brother access to drugs."

Most drugs abusers and addicts turn to stealing to maintain the habit because no responsible parent will continue giving his child money when they know he or she would use it for something that is self-destructive.

Another family is today licking its wounds because its addicted child has smeared the family name with shame. Their relative got married and kept most of their gifts in one of their rooms because they couldn't take everything to Lagos where her husband resides. When she recently came back to collect her things, she was shocked at what she saw. Nobody needed to tell her what had happened to her gifts. He was caught only twice. The family never knew that he had continued to steal his cousin's gifts. More than half of the gifts were gone. Sadly, the thief was unrepentant.

The problem is that we all know the root cause of this problem. It is weed, cannabis, cocaine, etc, which are sold on street corners. And members of the community know those involved. But we don't take it serious until our children or those very close to us become victims.

We often forget that if we don't do something, we will suffer the consequences. Our streets will be unsafe and thieves, rapists and armed robbers will abound and operate without remorse under the influence of drugs.

You may be a parent whose child is an addict and yet live in denial, refusing to take them to rehabilitation centres. Such parents refuse to take that bold step because they fear what other people would say.

You could be an onlooker who is nonchalant about this scourge. But whether you like it or not, we are all victims. One person's actions or inactions affect us all.

The ball is in the court of parents. We should draw our children close and lead them on godly paths. Spend quality time with them and pray together.

Government, on its part, should be proactive by making laws that will serve as deterrent against selling and using illicit drugs.

We must act fast to save our future generations.

News

Muslim Ummah pay Mutfwang Sallah homage

By PETER TITLE

THE Muslim Ummah in Plateau State, led by the Chairman of Jama'atu Nasril Islam (JNI), recently, paid the traditional Eid-el-Kabir Sallah homage on the Governor of Plateau State, Barrister Caleb Mutfwang at the New Government House, Little Rayfield, and Jos.

The congregation, comprising clerics, community leaders, women, youths, the elderly, and the physical challenged, expressed gratitude to Governor Mutfwang for his generosity, kindness, and support towards Muslims in the state.

Delivering the Sallah message, Alh. Haruna Muhammad Sambo, the JNI Chairman and Emir of Wase, expressed appreciation to the governor and the government for the developmental strides, which he said have benefited the Muslim community and the entire state.

The Emir commended the governor's initiatives, which he listed to include rehabilitation of road networks around Masallacin Juma'a, Zololo Junction, Mango Street, Dilimi Street, Bauchi road and Rikkos among several others, as well as the support rendered the 2024 Hajj logistics and mobilization.

Alh. Sambo praised Governor Mutfwang for introducing Metro Buses and revitalizing the railway, which he said has gone a long way to alleviate transportation challenges for citizens.

Expressing concern over the recent face-off involving enforcement of Executive Order 003 by a task force, he called for enhanced collaboration to ensure smooth implementation for sustainable peace and cleanliness under the Greater Jos - Bukuru Master Plan.

Responding, Governor Mutfwang thanked the Muslim Ummah for their support since the beginning of the administration and assured them of leading



Mutfwang

with justice and fairness for the good of all, irrespective of differences.

He noted, "I know many of you stood for justice when we were in the courts. The support gave me the strength and confidence to lead a government that prioritizes fairness, justice and equality, without any form of discrimination."

He emphasized, "Our policies were aimed to

benefit all citizens and create a conducive environment for visitors to the state. I appreciate the cooperation of Islamic clerics, particularly during our efforts in Terminus."

Governor Mutfwang assured of continuous openness and encouraged advice and collaboration from individuals and groups dedicated to Plateau State's growth and development.

We prepare youths for the future

From Musliudeen Adebayo

- Ibadan Poly

THE Ibadan Polytechnic, TPI, has declared that its intention is to mold the lives of young people in the country.

The Acting Rector of the polytechnic, Dr. Taiwo Abideen Lasisi, made this declaration while receiving a group of the institution's alumni under the aegis of 'Ibadan Polywood Connect Worldwide', led by Olanrewaju Ganiyu.

Lasisi thanked the ex-students for their kind gesture and pledged to support them.

He added that as a teacher, it was his responsibility to perpetually mold the lives of the younger ones.

Ganiyu disclosed that Lasisi taught all of them in the last 23

years, pointing out that he had shaped their lives positively.

He noted that the appointment of Lasisi as Acting Rector of TPI by Governor Abiodun Makinde lifted their spirits.

They pledged to lend their helping hands in his efforts to reposition the institution.

The Deputy Rector of the institution, Mrs. Olaide Salawu, and The Acting Registrar, Mr. Joseph Adewumi Ogunjimi, described the group as ambassadors of the institution.

They appreciated the old students for recognising the contributions of Dr. Lasisi to their live, stressing that their appreciation meant that the reward of teachers was no longer in heaven.

IMAGES

2024 INTERNATIONAL WIDOWS DAY

The wife of Governor Mutfwang of Plateau State, Barr. Helen Mutfwang recently held a meeting with Widows, marking the 2024 International Widows Day, at the Twin Theater Hall, New Government House, Little Rayfield, Jos where she promised to empower 200 widows



Helen Mutfwang, delivering her speech



One of the widows (standing), responding on behalf of the beneficiaries



Hon. Caroline Pangi, Commissioner for Women Affairs (left), discussing with Mrs. Ulan Samuel Jatau, wife of SGS



L-R Hajiya Fatima Isa, Mrs. Martina C Dakur, PDP State woman leader and Mrs Janet Satmark, wife of CoS



Mr. Alexander Anlong, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Women Affairs, (left) discussing with Mr. Sunday Dombian, a Director in the Ministry



Cross-section of dignitaries at the ceremony



Wives of commissioners and members of the State Assembly at the ceremony



Helen Mutfwang (middle), in a group photograph with the wives of top government officials and benefitting widows

PHOTOS: JOHN LAR

Politics

Is single tenure for president, governors feasible?



By **KENNETH DARENG**

THE proposal by 35 members of the House of Representatives to adopt a 6-year single term for the President and Governors has sparked intense debate across Nigeria. The proposed bill aims to promote equal representation, reduce agitation for new states, and amend the Constitution to recognize Nigeria's six geo-political zones. The bill also proposes the creation of two Vice Presidents, one from the southern and northern parts of Nigeria, and the rotation of executive powers among the six geo-political zones.

Hon. Ikenga Ugochinyere, the spokesman for the group, stated, "To amend the Constitution to provide for a single tenure of 6 years for the President and Governors of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, amend the Constitution to create the office of two Vice Presidents from the southern and northern parts of Nigeria. The 1st Vice President shall be a succession vice, while the second Vice President shall be a Minister in charge of the Economy and both shall be Ministers."

He further noted, "Constitutional amendment

to provide that, the President and the 1st Vice President shall come from the same part of the country [north or south], and the 1st Vice President shall become the President whenever the President becomes incapacitated, the V.P [succession], takes over."

However, concerns have been raised about the feasibility of the proposal, particularly the conduct of presidential, governorship, national and state houses of assembly elections on the same day. The different election cycles of various states, such as Anambra, Imo, Bayelsa, Edo, Ondo, Ekiti, and Osun, could create constitutional problems. For instance, some states have off-season elections, which would need to be harmonized with the proposed single election day.

Moreover, the proposal's focus on rotation of presidency and governance model may not have a significant impact on the average Nigerian struggling with poverty, hunger and disease. The country's political class needs a change of orientation, strong character, and selfless service to drive meaningful change. The proposal's emphasis on a single term for the president

and governors may not necessarily lead to better governance. A more comprehensive approach that tackles the root causes of Nigeria's challenges is necessary.

The nation has seen over the years since the return to democratic rule that those who have occupied the office of the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria have not brought any significant changes on the zones they came from. Former President Olusegun Obasanjo ruled for 8 years, the South West has remained where it was.

The same with the late Shehu Yar'Adua whose north is home to insecurity while Goodluck Jonathan's tenure did not change the status of the people of the South-South who are up till today crying over oil pollution over their land and water ways and marginalisation. Buhari's 8-year tenure ended without providing lasting solutions to the heightened kidnappings, banditry and terrorists attacks in the north east zone.

Furthermore, with the present administration under the watch of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, the same voices of agitations from the south west keeps re-echoing from the Afenifere and other

Yoruba ethnic groups seeking to address some fundamental issues affecting the zone. The big question is, can a single 6-year tenure for the president and the governors be the magic wand to solving the nation's current socio-economic woes? The answer is a resounding 'No'.

The proposal's emphasis on a single term for the president and governors may not necessarily lead to better governance. A more comprehensive approach that tackles the root causes of Nigeria's challenges, such as endemic/chronic corruption in the highest levels of government, is very necessary. The National Assembly should prioritize measures that promote good governance, reduce inequality and enhance the rule of law.

While the proposal by the 35 House of Representatives members is a step towards reform, it falls short of addressing the nation's pressing issues. A more concrete vision for the future of the country is needed, rather than an academic exercise that leads to one debate after another. The National Assembly members should take a serious look at themselves and propose

measures that can take the nation out of its current misery. Here, they must once again take a very deep and selfless look at their fat salaries and emoluments in the face of the suffering plaguing the country.

The country needs a comprehensive approach that addresses the root causes of its challenges. The proposal's focus on rotation of presidency and governance model may not have a significant impact on the average Nigerian struggling with poverty, hunger, and disease. The political class needs a change of orientation, strong character and selfless service to drive meaningful change.

The National Assembly members should prioritize measures that address the cost of governance, reduce inequality, and promote good governance. A part-time single legislature for the country could be a more effective solution.

What the country really needs is a more comprehensive approach that addresses the root causes of its challenges as bad governance, and nepotism have continued to hinder Nigeria's progress and development.



Editorial

This is our mission

TODAY, we join the growing family of the nation's news media. And we dedicate ourselves to the service of helping to build a strong and virile press that will enhance the enlightenment of our people, promote better understanding and ethnic harmony among the various groups that make up this great country and contribute to the economic advancement of and political stability of our country.

IN carrying out our sacred duty of moulding public opinion, we shall not allow selfish motives or sectional interest to becloud our sense of national duty. We are born at a momentous period in the history of our country, a time when the Federal and state governments have embarked on gigantic programmes aimed at building a solid foundation for economic take-off and political stability.

WE owe it a duty not only to support the effort of the governments in this regard, but also to create a favorable atmosphere in which the people will continue to cooperate with government in their task of nation-building. We can only do this if truth, objectivity and fair play form the cardinal principles of reports and comments.

FOR the benefit of the government and the governed, we will always offer constructive criticisms and maintain a virile editorial policy within the limits of the law. We will advise, implore, exhort, explain and criticize whenever necessary, without fear or favor.

AND as a vehicle of information, we will also undertake to interpret correctly government policies and measures to the people and relay the people's reactions and views on such measures back to the government for its guidance.

AS one of the national couriers of news and views, our principal political objective is to play up all the factors that contribute towards the promotion of unity and trample on those that tend to kindle narrow nationalism, parochialism, and selfish tribal interests which are not only the symbols of disunity, but are capable of frustrating a nation's hope for a more progressive endeavor.

OUR task to the nation is difficult. But our ability to perform it satisfactorily will depend entirely on the amount of co-operation which we receive from you. We therefore appeal to all of you not only to co-operate with us but to patronize us in order to make The Nigeria Standard a success.

This first editorial of THE NIGERIA STANDARD, published on July 8, 1972, is a special tribute to Iliya Galiya Audu, the first Editor of the newspaper. Born on January 1, 1940, he passed on to glory on June 17, 2024.



Like Nigeria, like Nigerian football

Nigeria missed the last World Cup held in Qatar. Now, it's about losing the ticket in a group that almost everyone thought would be a walkover. Even if a miracle happens and Nigeria qualifies, what will be judged as progress is getting past the second round of the competition, which has been Nigeria's best so far. Now, the qualification itself seems to be eluding us.

I know there are no more minnows in African football. There is no doubt that African teams are upping their game. But remember that while African teams have continued to progress, they still have not been able to match the progress reached by the top football-playing countries in the world. Much is then expected from one of Africa's football giants.

All the same, the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) and the Ministry of Sports Development are already putting heads together to find a "solution" to the quagmire. They have resolved to hire an expatriate technical adviser for the Super Eagles. There are also plans in place to scout for "outstanding Nigerian-eligible players from across the globe who can add tremendous value to the nation's flagship team".

But I am sorry to say there is more to Nigerian

football woes than meets the eye. Foreign football commentators continue to enthuse about the quality of talent Nigeria has. Now, this is an unbiased commentary. Some may argue that what we lack is a world-class coach. Finidi George is not a good coach. Is there any coach who has worked for Nigeria who has not been criticised? Even Alex Ferguson may struggle.

I am not a doomsayer. I am not being superstitious. From the age-grade competitions to the senior level, it has been the same. What is the missing link? Take it or leave it, the "Nigerian situation" is probably affecting our football. Perhaps Nigeria is jinxed. Some of the players themselves may have sensed this and are now dodging national duties. They may even feign injury to achieve this.

Going back in time, Nigeria won the AFCON three times. First time at home in 1980, then in Tunisia in 1994, which was the year Nigeria played in their first World Cup. Then we won the Nations Cup again in 2013. At the 1996 Olympics, Nigeria became the first African nation to win an Olympic gold medal.

Coming to the cadet level, Nigeria is the most successful nation in the Under-17 World Cup, having won the competition five times in 1985, 1993,

2007, 2013, and 2015. For the Under-20 men, they were runners-up in the 1989 and 2005 Under-20 World Cup. At the African level, the Flying Eagles won the Africa U-20 Cup of Nations in 1983, 1985, 1987, 1989, 2005, 2011, and 2015.

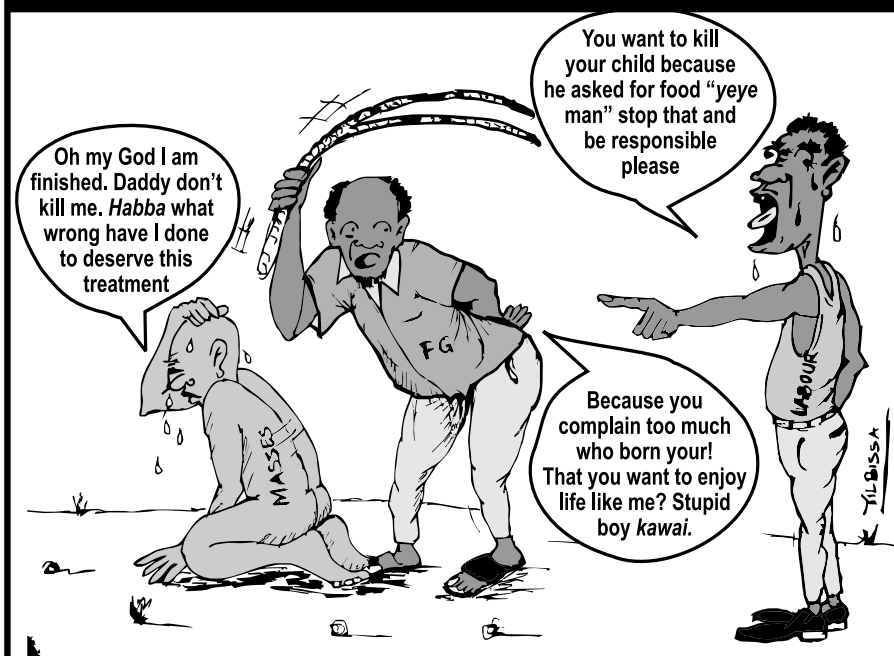
If you look closely, the last time Nigeria won any major tournament in football was in 2015, and that was by the Under-17 team, the Golden Eaglets. Now, it's not as if Nigeria has ever been a paradise for a nation. But counting back from 2015, Nigerians fared better as a people than they have since "2016," when they started experiencing hardship in the name of a "new government."

The crux of the matter is that Nigeria's football has been going down the drain since 2016, despite all the efforts being made to salvage it.

I cannot emphasise it more than by saying Nigeria's problem in football cannot be extricated from Nigeria as an entity. Virtually every sector in Nigeria is in bondage. In many homes, a square meal is a luxury. Added to this is heightened insecurity.

Dr Cosmas Odoemena, a consultant family physician, wrote from Lagos

Standard Cartoon



Politics

'Put your acts together'

By PETER TITLE

POLITICAL parties in Plateau State have been told to put their acts together preparatory to the forth coming local government elections, promising that the state government would not meddle in the affairs of the state electoral commission (PLASIEC), in conducting the elections.

Governor Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang stated this recently when the Executive Council of Inter-Party Advisory Committee (IPAC), Plateau State Chapter, paid him a solidarity visit at the Old Government House, Rayfield, Jos.

According to him, the era where a winner was announced in previous local government elections in the state before the arrival of results was over, just as he promised to be fair to all, irrespective of their party differences.

"As a democrat, believe in multi-party politics where people are allowed to choose who they want. Alternative platforms allows democracy to thrive and the people will see it in action in this dispensation," Mutfwang stressed.



Mutfwang

He noted that oppositions all over have a great role to play in shaping democracy for good, assuring that his government would welcome constructive criticism that would help move the state to enviable heights.

Governor Mutfwang note, "On no account will any party be sidelined as local government elections draw nearer. We will not announce results when counting is not concluded."

He therefore thanked IPAC in the state for agreeing to work with the government and assured them of maximum

cooperation and support so as to excel in their endeavors.

Earlier, the Chairman of IPAC, Honorable Chris A. Hassan, told the governor that they were in his office to express their solidarity as well as to commend him for his developmental strides on the Plateau.

Hon. Hassan who is also the state Chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), thanked Mutfwang for his fatherly role, saying that the state chairmen of other political parties have been giving him maximum cooperation.

Sign Media Enhancement Bill, NUJ tells Fintiri

From MUSLIUDEEN ADEBAYO, Ibadan

THE Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) has appealed to Governor Umaru Fintiri of Adamawa State to sign the Media Enhancement Bill without wasting more time.

Adamawa State House of Assembly had earlier passed the bill into law in 2022.

NUJ in its reaction, enjoined the governor to sign the bill into law without further delay.

The union made this declaration in a communique issued at the end of the quarterly National Executive Committee meeting of the union held in Ibadan, the Oyo State capital.

The meeting which was hosted by the Oyo State Council of NUJ was attended by national executive members and also NUJ chairmen and secretaries across the country.

The communique issued



Iziguzo

at the end of the meeting was read to journalists by the NUJ President, Chris Iziguzo at NUJ Oyo State Council Secretariat in Ibadan.

The communique, notes that the Bill when signed into law would help to improve the living standard of journalists in the state.

Iziguzo while speaking,

noted that NEC deliberated on various issues such as insecurity, Media Enhancement Bill passed by the Adamawa State House of Assembly, minimum wage and other issues.

The NEC in session also frowned at the incessant arrest and detention of journalists by security operatives.

From JIDAUNA YANUNG, Abuja

FIFTY members of the House of Representatives under the group 'Concerned lawmakers' have written a letter to President Bola Tinubu seeking the release of Nnamdi Kanu, the detained leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB).

Spokesman of the group, Hon. Mohammed Jajere, while briefing National Assembly correspondents explained that their letter to the president is aimed at bringing lasting peace to the South East and the country at large.

According to him, there were suggestions for negotiations with the federal government to achieve lasting peace.

They added that this was why the group called on the president to allow out of court settlement so that the matter will be resolved amicably.

The fifty lawmakers in the three page letter

50 legislators plead for Kanu's release



Abbas

dated June 19, 2024, They also requested the president to direct the Attorney General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Lateef Fagbemi (SAN), to use his power under these provisions to release Nnamdi Kanu.

PLASIEC pledges to conduct credible elections

By HOSEA NYAMLONG

CHAIRMAN of Plateau State Independent Electoral Commission (PLASIEC), Hon. Plangji Cishak, has assured citizens of Plateau State of

the commission's readiness to conduct credible elections in the 17 Local Government Councils of the state.

Cishak, who stated this in a press briefing at the Commission's headquarters in Jos, recently, said that as an "electoral umpire, our mandate is to fortify the electoral processes framework, starting from the ward level up to the local government."

He pointed out that the commission would foster collaboration among all stakeholders, and citizens of Plateau State in ensuring their votes count in the choice of leaders at the grassroots.

Cishak added that they would establish a level playing field that instills confidence across all practices.

The communique notes, that "Adamawa state House of Assembly has passed Media Enhancement Bill which will protect the interest of journalists in the state. It looks at the retirement age for journalists' and allowances in the state. We are appealing to the Adamawa State governor and Ahmadu Umaru Fintiri to sign the Bill.

"We urge other states to follow suit. Why we are desirous to ensure that this Bill is signed into law is that it will help ensure journalists are protected.

"We are going to meet with the governor of the state to ensure the Bill is passed into law.

"NEC frown at incessant arrest and detention of journalists by security agencies, as arbitrary arrest and detention of journalists will not help our democracy to grow".



Cishak

Change of Name

<p>KASIMU</p> <p>I, formerly known as YAHAYA HARUNA, now wish to be known and addressed as KASIMU HARUNA. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>SELYA</p> <p>I, formerly known as BOYI CECILIA LADAM, now wish to be known and addressed as SELYA BOYI LADAM. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>MUSTAPHA</p> <p>I, formerly known as SOLOMON RETSAT DANLADI, now wish to be known and addressed as MUSTAPHA RETSAT SOLOMON. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>ABUBAKAR</p> <p>I, formerly known as YAKUBU ABUBAKAR, now wish to be known and addressed as ABUBAKAR YAKUBU BAJE. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>UMERA</p> <p>I, formerly known as OKAFOR HAPPINESS OGECHUKWU, now wish to be known and addressed as MRS. UMERA HAPPINESS OGECHUKWU. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>DAKUP</p> <p>I, formerly known as DAKUP GODENNAAN DAKUP, now wish to be known and addressed as DAKUP GODENNAAN JOHN. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>
<p>ABBAAH</p> <p>I, formerly known as OWUBE FAVOUR EBERE, now wish to be known and addressed as ABBAAH FAVOUR ELEOJO. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>OMACHONU</p> <p>I, formerly known as IBRAHIM LAMI OJOCHENEMI, now wish to be known and addressed as OMACHONU LAMI JOSEPH. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public please take note.</p>	<p>AJIJI</p> <p>I, formerly known as AJIJI YOHANA MAGAJI, now wish to be known and addressed as AJIJI YOHANNA. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>ATTAHIRU</p> <p>I, formerly known as ATTAHIRU AMINU, now wish to be known and addressed as ATTAHIRU AMINU HALIRU. Correct date of birth is 1/1/1985 not 1/1/1982. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>IBRAHIM</p> <p>I, formerly known as ABRAHAM ADAMU LYOGIDI, now wish to be known and addressed as IBRAHIM LYOGIDI ADAMS. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>TIMIDISEGHE</p> <p>I, formerly known as KENNEDY T. STEPHEN and KENNEDY TIMIDISEGHE STEPHEN as captured on my account & BVN respectively, But now wish to be known and addressed as TIMIDISEGHE, KENNEDY STEPHEN. Correct date of birth is 12/02/1974 not 12/04/1976. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>
<p>VENKUR</p> <p>I, formerly known as NIMYEL NANSOH, now wish to be known and addressed as VENKUR NANSOH NIMYEL. Correct date of birth is 11/1/2006. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>NWACHUKWU</p> <p>I, formerly known as OGUELI VIVIAN CHINYERE, now wish to be known and addressed as NWACHUKWU VIVIAN CHINYERE. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>TERDOO</p> <p>I, formerly known as TERDOO ALICE SHANPEPE, now wish to be known and addressed as TERDOO ALICE MATAWAL. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>DIMKA</p> <p>I, formerly known as OLUWADAMILARE ESTHER OLUWASEYI, now wish to be known and addressed as DIMKA ESTHER OLUWASEYI. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>GONZWAK</p> <p>I, formerly known as BEDIMMA GOBAK GONZWAK, now wish to be known and addressed as GONZWAK JUDAH BEDIMMA. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>GURUMTET</p> <p>I, formerly known as GURUMTET LARABA CHINGPLANG, now wish to be known and addressed as GURUMTET LARABA ANDREW. Correct date of birth is 15/5/1987 not 16/5/1983. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>
<p>RITA</p> <p>I, formerly known as MISS RITA JOHNSON GOFOR, now wish to be known and addressed as MRS RITA JOHNSON DANIEL. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>PADA</p> <p>I, formerly known as FRIDAY ATEKA BITRUS as captured on my BVN, now wish to be known and addressed PADA, FRIDAY BITRUS. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>ROBINSON</p> <p>I, formerly known as GAPDAI NAAPIET EZRA, now wish to be known and addressed ROBINSON NAAPIET EZRA. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>MATHIAS</p> <p>I, formerly known as MATHIAS CHRISTIANA, now wish to be known and addressed MATHIAS CHRISTIANA EBGE. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>SAMBO</p> <p>I, formerly known as JOHN THANKGOD, now wish to be known and addressed SAMBO THANKGOD JOHN. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>YOHANNA</p> <p>I, formerly known as AUGUSTINA ZIRA, now wish to be known and addressed as YOHANNA AUGUSTINA ZIRA. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>
<p>FAITH</p> <p>I, formerly known as FAITH SUNDAY, now wish to be known and addressed as FAITH SUNDAY OLIVER. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>TIMLOH</p> <p>I, formerly known as NANKAP JOHN TIMLOK, now wish to be known and addressed as TIMLOH NANKAP JOHN. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>ABDULLAHI</p> <p>I, formerly known as ABDULLAHI MUSA, now wish to be known and addressed as ABDULLAHI, MUSA SULEIMAN. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>VOU</p> <p>I, formerly known as VOU VERONICA FRIDAY, now wish to be known and addressed as VOU FRIDAY PAM. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>USMAN</p> <p>I, formerly known as ADAMU AMINA ABDULMUMINI now wish to be known and addressed as USMAN AMINA YUSUF. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>VELSHIK</p> <p>I, formerly known as YOHANNA BEATRICE LADI, now wish to be known and addressed as VELSHIK BEATRICE YOHANA. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>
<p>APOLLOS</p> <p>I, formerly known as APOLLOS CHALFE STEPHANIE, APPOLOS CHALFE STEPHENIE, now wish to be known and addressed as APOLLOS, CHALFE STEPHENIE. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>AISHA</p> <p>I, formerly known as MISS AISHA NASIR SHEHU, now wish to be known and addressed as MRS. AISHA NASIRU SHEHU USMAN. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>GYES</p> <p>I, formerly known as JONAH MAHANAN PATRICK, now wish to be known and addressed as GYES JONAH MAHANAN. All former documents remain valid. UBA and all concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>VINCENT</p> <p>I, formerly known as ARINZE VINCENT EZE, now wish to be known and addressed as VINCENT KELVIN MARK. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>MILAHAM</p> <p>I, formerly known as FRANCIS DAMCHI, now wish to be known and addressed as MILAHAM, FRANCIS DAMCHI. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>DACHUNG</p> <p>I, formerly known as SUNDAY KANENG, now wish to be known and addressed as DACHUNG KANENG SUNDAY. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>
<p>JOB</p> <p>I, formerly known as DATENG HAPPINESS JONATHAN, now wish to be known and addressed as JOB HAPPINESS YAFET. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>YAFET</p> <p>I, formerly known as YAFET ELIZABETH JACOB, now wish to be known and addressed as YAFET ELISA JACOB. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>TITUS</p> <p>I, formerly known as PLANGKAT TITUS, now wish to be known and addressed as TITUS PLANGKAT KUTLE. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>DAGAMA</p> <p>I, formerly known as EMMANUEL SUNDAY UWENGNI, now wish to be known and addressed as DAGAMA EMMANUEL UWENGNI. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>DAVID</p> <p>I, formerly known as DAVID DABAN, now wish to be known and addressed as DABAN DAVID. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>KHADIJA</p> <p>I, formerly known as KHADIJA ABUBAKAR, now wish to be known and addressed as KHADIJA MUHAMMAD ABUBAKAR. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>
<p>ADAMU</p> <p>I, formerly known as ADAMU MUHAMMED, now wish to be known and addressed as ADAMU MUHAMMAD. Correct date of birth is 3/2/1991 not 25/2/1963. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>SADIQ</p> <p>I, formerly known as YAYA ABUBAKAR, now wish to be known and addressed as SADIQ YAYA ABUBAKAR. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>DANGWAM</p> <p>I, formerly known as DANGWAM PETER NAANDUK, now wish to be known and addressed as DANGWAM PETER MANDUK. Correct date of birth is 04/04/1997. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>SAMUEL</p> <p>I, formerly known as MISS RUTH KASUWA KEFAS, now wish to be known and addressed as MRS. SAMUEL RUTH DUNG. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>ESTHER</p> <p>I, formerly known as MISS ESTHER AKARININE JOHN, now wish to be known and addressed as MRS. ESTHER JOSEPH MICHAEL. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>SALIS</p> <p>I, formerly known as SALEH IBRAHIM IBRAHIM, now wish to be known and addressed as SALIS IMRAN ABUBAKAR. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>
<p>MAHMUD</p> <p>I, formerly known as MUHAMMAD BABA HAMZA, MAHMUD ALBASU HAMZA, now wish to be known and addressed as MAHMUD HAMZA. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>ZAMANI</p> <p>I, formerly known as KEMBO WUDEAMA JANE, now wish to be known and addressed as ZAMANI JANE WUDEAMA. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>KYELE</p> <p>I, formerly known as HASSAN SABINA KYELE, now wish to be known and addressed as KYELE SABINA HASSAN. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>GOLADI</p> <p>I, formerly known as TIMYIL GOBLESS DANJUMA, now wish to be known and addressed as GOLADI GOBLESS DABIN. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>HELEN</p> <p>I, formerly known as HELEN OLABANJO, now wish to be known and addressed as HELEN KITTA LAZARUS. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>SABASTINE</p> <p>I, formerly known as SABASTINE APOOLONIA, now wish to be known and addressed as SABASTINE, APPOLONIA MICAH. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>
<p>JULIANA</p> <p>I, formerly known as JULIANA OREMEYI BABALOLA, now wish to be known and addressed as JULIANA FELIX KATO. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>ADESHINA</p> <p>I, formerly known as DEBORAH ADESHINA, now wish to be known and addressed as ADESHINA ZAINAB. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>KUBGAK</p> <p>I, formerly known as JOEL EMMANUEL, now wish to be known and addressed as KUBGAK EMMANUEL JOEL. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>SAMBO</p> <p>I, formerly known as SAMBO CICILIYA, now wish to be known and addressed as SAMBO NANKO. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>ZAKKA</p> <p>I, formerly known as MALLAN EVELYN MASHING, now wish to be known and addressed as ZAKKA NANKLING YAKUBA. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>SALIU</p> <p>I, formerly known as SARATU SALIU, SALTU SARATU, now wish to be known and addressed as SALIU SARATU. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>

Change of Name

<p>FATSUMA I, formerly known as FATSUMA HUSSAINI, now wish to be known and addressed as FATSUMA HUSSAINI BOKAH. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>ADEWOLE I, formerly known as ADEWOLE OLATUNJI FELIX, now wish to be known and addressed as ADEWOLE OLATUNJI PETER. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>OLADIMEJI I, formerly known as OLA ADEWOLE, now wish to be known and addressed as OLADIMEJI ADEWOLE. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>SARAH I, formerly known as SARAH TEYA AMASA, now wish to be known and addressed as SARAH JOHN. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>JAMES I, formerly known as JAMES ISRAEL ANGOEME, now wish to be known and addressed as JAMES MANGBAR ANGOEME. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>MADAKI I, formerly known as MAICHIDI MADAKI, now wish to be known and addressed as MADAKI MAICHIBI GAIYA. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>
<p>YOHANA I, YOHANA SINGKAT, now wish to state that my date of birth is 5/5/1995 not 1/1/1992. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>GANA I, formerly known as JEMFA PONBIN, now wish to be known and addressed as GANA JEMFA PONBIN. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public please take note.</p>	<p>EKE I, formerly known as EKE IYKE, now wish to be known and addressed as EKE IYKE ONUGWU. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>VANGERYINA I, formerly known as VANGERYINA PHILIP, now wish to be known and addressed as VANGERYINA TERSEE PHILIP. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>YUNANA I, formerly known as BONIFACE PAUL, now wish to be known and addressed as YUNANA HABILA. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>ZAKARI I, formerly known as YARO YARO, now wish to be known and addressed as ZAKARI YARO. Correct date of birth is 4/4/1990 not 12/12/1998. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>
<p>WILLIAM I, formerly known as DAOK RIFKATU WILLIAM, now wish to be known and addressed as WILLIAM GRACE. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>MAKSO I, formerly known as MULAS TABITHA GUTAP, now wish to be known and addressed as MAKSO TABITHA PETER. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>DATUGUN I, formerly known as DANJUMA LAMI EUNICE, now wish to be known and addressed as DATUGUN EUNICE LAMI. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>DANLADI I, formerly known as DANLADI FLORENCE TILGUN, now wish to be known and addressed as DANLADI FLORENCE YELGONG. All former documents remain valid. Access Bank and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>PUBLIC NOTICE</p> <p>Late Mrs. Larai Kallamu has bought the property with C of O No. PL4952 SOME YEARS AGO.</p> <p>She could not process the change of title to her name until she died sometime in 2023.</p> <p>Late Mrs. Larai Kallamu has been in possession of the property for over 30 years before her demise.</p> <p>21 days is given to the general public for any objection to the processing of title documents.</p> <p>Habila Ezekiel Pekes Esq. is the Executor of the will.</p> <p>Signed: HABILA EZEKIEL PEKES ESQ (EXECUTOR)</p>	
<p>KUMWAR I, formerly known as YUSUF KUMWAR, now wish to be known and addressed as KUMWAR SHEDRACK YUSUF. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>SHEKARAU I, formerly known as SHEKARAU SUSAN YILZOOM, now wish to be known and addressed as SHEKARAU SUSAN SAMSON. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>KATLONG I, formerly known as MUSA DENNANTOM, now wish to be known and addressed as KATLONG DENNANTOM LEDEN. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>TABITHA I, formerly known as ANGELINA YOHANNA GOGWIM, now wish to be known and addressed as TABITHA YOHANNA GOGWIM. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>		

News

FG takes action against cholera outbreak

By DUMAH RANDONG

By DORCAS PANKYES

THE Federal Ministry of Environment has expressed deep concern over the ongoing cholera outbreak in some states of the country which has claimed many lives and affected numerous communities.

According to recent reports from the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), there have been a total of 1159 suspected cases, 65 confirmed cases and 30 deaths across 30 states including Bayelsa, Lagos, Zamfara, Abia, Bauchi, Cross River, Ebonyi, Delta and Katsina.

The ministry had been actively involved in efforts to break the transmission of the disease through

various measures such as water and food testing to identify sources of infection, environmental sanitation campaigns and household water chlorination.

They are also working to support the most affected states with chlorine solution/tablets, water and food testing resources, IEC materials and technical advisory.

The ministry urged Nigerians to be vigilant, practice good sanitation and hygiene and take preventive measures such as keeping the environment clean, using clean and safe water, avoiding contaminated drinks, washing hands regularly and avoiding

open defecation.

It also called on commissioners of environment and local government chairmen to support environmental health officers in stepping up sanitation and hygiene activities to prevent further transmission of the disease.

The NCDC further urged sub-national governments to strengthen environmental health surveillance in eating premises like markets, restaurants and mobile food vendors.

The ministry emphasized that cholera is preventable and called on all Nigerians to take preventive measures seriously and keep their environments clean.

APPARENTLY disturbed by the rising waves of hunger and hardship, the Emir of Wase, Muhammadu Sambo II, has advised governments at all levels to provide fertilizer and farm inputs to farmers to ensure food security in the country.

The emir stated this while conferring on the Special Adviser to Governor Caleb Mutfwang on Inter-Party Relations, John Akans, the title of Dan Amana Wase (a trust worthy person) in his palace in Wase, recently.

Monarch appeals for fertilizer, farm inputs to address hunger



Mutfwang

It was an exciting moment as traditional rulers, friends, relations and well-wishers gathered at the palace of the Emir of Wase, Muhammadu Sambo II, to witness the event.

The emir expressed dismay over the economic hardships in the country and called on government to address the security challenges to enable farmers go back to their farms.

He also appealed to government to empower the youth to be self-reliant.

The emir explained that the title was conferred on Akans because of his long time relationship with the emirate and his sincerity. Also speaking, the Wazirin Wase, Badamasi Muhammed, said that hard work, dedication and loyalty pay and advised the people to imbibe the attributes of respect and loyalty.

Responding, Akans appreciated the Wase Emirate Council for the honour bestowed on him and promised not to disappoint them.

He stressed that the honour was a mark of the peace, unity and peaceful coexistence Plateau people were known for.

Natural calamities: Ododo assures of effective management

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

KOGI State Governor, Ahmed Ododo, has assured of effective disaster management and protection against the impact of natural disasters in Nigeria.

He stated this while receiving the report of the Technical Working Group of the Ad-hoc Committee on Flood and Other Nature-Induced Disasters (Mitigation, Adaptation, Preparedness, and Response) of the National Economic Council (NEC) at the Kogi State Governor's Lodge in Asokoro, Abuja, over the weekend.

Governor Ododo noted that the report would boost the commitment of the Federal Government to address

challenges in the management of natural disasters in the country.

He pointed out that the report was a culmination of several weeks of dedicated work by the Technical Working Group, noting that "It is expected to serve as a foundation for the development of a national roadmap for proactive management of nature-induced disasters in Nigeria."

He expressed the nation's gratitude to the group, led by the Minister of State for Water Resources, Alhaji Bello Mohammed Goronyo, and commended their hard work and diligence.

While describing the report as timely in view of the rainy season, Governor Ododo



Ododo

emphasized the importance of the report and for its far-reaching recommendations aimed at finding lasting solutions to the challenges posed by climate change all over the country.

Focus

Nigeria: The regional option

By
CHUNG GYANG RAHWOL

NIGERIA'S political landscape has been marred by instability, corruption and ethnic tensions, despite its rich cultural heritage and vast natural resources. The current federal/presidential system has failed to address the country's diverse needs, perpetuating a cycle of underdevelopment and discontent.

Progressive political analysts and Nigerians, most of whom have been at the receiving end of the current arrangement, strongly believe that the panacea for Nigeria's political woes are the promotion of regional autonomy and a return to parliamentary democracy. These would not only enhance the country's progress but ensure justice and equity in the national development process.

Nigeria's political journey began with a parliamentary system at independence in 1960, but a military coup in 1966 led to a switch to a presidential system in 1979. The current federal/presidential system has been in place since 1999, with a centralized federal government and 36 states. However, this system has perpetuated ethnic and religious tensions, corruption and economic stagnation.

Indeed, the current system has been bedeviled by the over concentration of power at the federal level, leaving states and regions with limited autonomy. That is why the struggle for the control of the enormous powers at the centre is always fierce. This is because Nigerians know that any part of the country that controls the central government has at its disposal immense resources and power, most of which, sadly, ends up being controlled by very few individuals and interests.

For the above and many more reasons that the constraint of space would not permit us to marshal out, the current system has brought about ethnic and religious tensions between the country's diverse nationalities. This is because it has not been able to address the problems of these different ethnic groups as they engage each other in the struggle to gain prominence and dominance in the contention for power and resources. These tensions have often led to frequent conflicts.

Even as Nigeria continues to

struggle with economic development, despite its vast natural resources, corruption has become endemic, with the federal government often accused of mismanaging resources. Things at the sub-national levels are not much different. The results have been quite devastating for the overall progress of the country.

Consequently, citizens feel disconnected from their leaders, who are often more accountable to the federal government than to their constituents. One other major drawback of the current skewed federal structure is that regions that produce the largest chunks of the nation's resources are denied the right to maximally control or even enjoy them.

In most cases, because these same regions rarely have access to political power at the centre, they seldom have control of those resources. As a result, other parts of the country that control little to nothing to the country's Gross Domestic Product have more control over our commonwealth.

Devolution of power to the regions or outright adoption of the regional form of government would lead to the decentralization of power from the centre, thus giving regions more autonomy to manage

their own affairs. One of the most positive concomitants of this is these constituent units or regions would have more control over their resources, allowing for more effective management and allocation. Additionally, these regions could develop their own economies independently, without relying on the federal government. This will give room for them to focus on areas in which they have comparative advantage which would greatly boost the country's overall economic development.

Political representation and inclusion would be enhanced because regional governments would be relatively closer to their peoples compared with the current practice. As a result, decision-making would be faster and more effective because regions could address their unique challenges.

How would the regional system be implemented? The country could still turn the present six geo-political zones into regions with each having its own government, elected leader (who would be given an



Tinubu

appropriate nomenclature) and a cabinet. Each of the six regions would have its own parliament made up of elected members.

The Federal Government would be mainly concerned with national issues such as defence, foreign affairs and running issues that have to do with the national economy. The regions would get a larger share of the revenues accruing to the national coffers or they could have total control of the revenues that come from their regions and pay a percentage

to the central government.

This will allow them to fund their own development projects and, most significantly, give them a sense of belonging as they can have a say over the control and use of their own natural resources. As a result, these constituent units can create their own development plans tailored to meet their unique needs.

Rahwol, a public affairs analyst, writes from Bukuru, Jos South LGA Plateau State

Feature

Wole Soyinka, 'Obidients' and 'righteous incivility'

By JIDEFOR ADIBE

CERTAINLY anyone who does not want to be insulted by people online can simply block such people from sending messages to them or refrain from throwing the first punch.

Wole Soyinka, arguably Africa's best-known writer, has once again stirred the hornet's nest by his proclamation that Peter Obi, the 2023 presidential candidate of the Labour Party is not fit to be president of the country. He was quoted as saying that Obi's failure to rein in his supporters from attacking others with opposing views online was a pointer that he is unfit to lead a country like Nigeria.

Soyinka's intervention raises a number of interesting issues:

One, there are two heavy burdens most famous writers, activists and public intellectuals bear: the first is that they are expected to be permanently anti-establishment, even when they have friends and family members in the establishment. In fact, Camilo Cela, the 1989 Spanish Nobel Laureate in Literature, helped to popularise this notion when he declared that a writer should be a denunciation of the times in which he or she lives. The second burden is that there is often a failure by critics to take into consideration the fact that such activist writers and public intellectuals (like all living systems) evolve and may have consciously or unconsciously moved away from their earlier convictions.

The point is that critics often make the mistake of abstracting and freezing a period in a writer's or public intellectual's career trajectory and insist on using that to define such a person. For instance, is the Soyinka of *The Man Died* (1972), "The Telephone Conversation" (1963), *The Trial of Brother Jero* (1963), *Aké: The Years of Childhood* (1981) the same as the later Soyinka whose anti-establishment activism seemed to have stopped in 2015 when the APC came to power? One of Soyinka's harshest critics is Adamu Adamu, the immediate past minister of Education and one of Nigeria's finest prose writers (though I disagree with most of his views, which I find too conservative and hard-line). Adamu consistently accused Soyinka of paganism and nativism, even in his literary works.

Two, what people call an 'insult' is often subjectively determined. While no one wants to promote the use of rude language, the truth is that insult – defined as an offensive language that provokes one to anger – is protected speech in several jurisdictions including the USA. This is contrasted with what the US Constitution calls 'fighting words', defined as words "which by their very utterance inflict injury or tend to incite an immediate breach of the peace." While rude language is protected speech in several jurisdictions, fighting words are usually criminalised as they pose "real and immediate" danger of



Professor Wole Soyinka

triggering violence. Some have in fact argued that just as anger is an art form, rudeness is also an art form.

There is also the notion of 'righteous incivility', that is, rudeness motivated by moral concerns or the quest for justice by a weaker party in asymmetrical exchanges. Usually, if supporters of any candidate feel there is a deliberate attempt to de-market their candidate by a powerful person, some will invariably resort to 'righteous incivility', to also de-market the purveyor of such a hatchet job, hoping that through the aphorism of 'the messenger is the message', the impact of the attack on the person they support will be mitigated. This is probably one of the reasons why rudeness is never regarded as defamatory in any jurisdiction.

Three, most people who complain of being insulted by 'social media warriors' are 'powerful' people who throw the first punch and when their victims or their supporters respond, they turn around to play the victim. For instance, when the respected Soyinka called supporters of Peter Obi 'fascists' or declared that Peter Obi was not fit to rule the country, did he not realise that such were also insults? Certainly, anyone who does not want to be insulted by people online can simply block such people from sending messages to them or refrain from throwing the first punch.

In essence, most of the people claiming to have been insulted by social media activists want to use such allegations to achieve an ulterior end – usually to de-market a candidate through de-marketing the candidate's supporters – which I honestly believe was what

Soyinka set out to do, despite masking his intentions in Soyinkan obfuscations and demagoguery. Any honest political observer knows that the supporters of the three main political parties are equally guilty of whatever anyone can accuse one group of. Therefore, to isolate one group of supporters and pretend the others are saints is a clear give-away of the person's partisanship.

Four, during the 2023 elections, the likes of Bayo Onanuga and Femi Fani Kayode used fighting words, clearly criminalised in most jurisdictions, to weaponise ethnicity in Lagos State (of course, there are also people on the other side who did the same but they are not of interest here since their party is not in power). Yet, despite Onanuga openly proclaiming himself a Yoruba irredentist, the Tinubu government rewarded him with a frontline position in his government, suggesting an endorsement of his abominable actions during the elections.

Similarly, one Reno Omokri, who in the run-up to the 2023 presidential election constantly translated into Hausa language issues that he knew were capable of inciting Northern youths against the Igbo, and who recently seemed to have been commissioned to attack Peter Obi and by innuendo the Igbo race, appear to have been embraced by the Tinubu government. He not only had a photo-op with Nuhu Ribadu, the national security adviser, but the government also sent a congratulatory message to him on his birthday – even though his highest accomplishment in life seemed to be the minor role he played in the Jonathan

government. The well-respected Soyinka saw no evil and spoke no evil.

Five, from identity studies we learn that identities that are perceived to be under threat are the ones most vociferously defended. For this, when Wole Soyinka attacks Peter Obi in a barely concealed partisan manner, many people who share the same ethnic identity with Obi will feel also attacked by innuendo. The same also goes when Soyinka is attacked by the Igbos – several people who share the same Yoruba ancestry with him will similarly feel insulted by innuendo. The consequence will be an exacerbation of the already problematic relationship between the Igbos and the Yorubas. Soyinka ought to have been mindful of this fact.

Not surprising, whenever Soyinka or Achebe is dragged into the Igbo-Yoruba rivalry, a concomitant question of who ought to have won the Nobel Prize that Soyinka won in 1986 would also crop up. I think such a debate is irrelevant as Soyinka and Achebe play in different arenas of literature – Soyinka is primarily a playwright, while Achebe is primarily a novelist. JP Clarke and Christopher Okigbo were dominant in poetry. Again, while Soyinka is regarded as probably Africa's best known **writer** (a term broader than literature), Achebe is by far Africa's most read **novelist** (a term narrower than literature).

Six, many people are attracted to Soyinka not necessarily because of his literary works but more because of his activism, self-assuredness that borders on artistic mischief, originality of thought, defiance and even what some called his elevation of

rudeness as an art form. For instance, at a conference in Berlin in 1964, Soyinka famously dismissed the self-promotion of the Negritude movement with this inimitable quote: "A tiger does not proclaim its tigeritude; it pounces." In his prison notes, *The Man Died* (1972), he tells us that "in him who keeps silent in the face of tyranny, the man dies." Recently, I watched Soyinka in a TV interview warning the 'Obidients' that if he ever met them in a blind alley, they would feel the strength of his 90-year-old fist. It is difficult to resist chuckling as I imagined Soyinka, who would be 90 years old on 13 July, in a fisticuff with the youngsters that could be his grandchildren. But it is vintage Soyinka. Even at his age, he remains strong and intellectually alert – to the glory of God!

Between 2007 and 2010, my publishing firm, Adonis & Abbey Publishers, incubated and published the journal, *African Performance Review*, for the African Theatre Association, which listed Wole Soyinka as one of its patrons. Many members of the Association were ardent Soyinka 'disciples' and they regaled me with stories of Soyinka's reported 'artistic mischiefs'. Let me share just a few: Soyinka reportedly said that several women kept pestering him to have children with him in the hope that they would beget geniuses. He was said to have told them, "whenever I can, I help." In another story, he was reportedly asked why he did not try to get a PhD, given his obvious brilliance. He was said to have retorted, "But who would mark it?"

Let me mention that while my firm was publishing *African Performance Reviews for the African Theatre Association*, one of Soyinka's most ardent 'disciples', the late Esiaba Irobi, was pressuring me to start a journal, which he called the 'Soyinka Journal.' Apart from my discomfort in having to deal with Esiaba's famed 'artistic temperament', I pleaded with him that an academic journal built around the works of one scholar would not be sustainable. I favoured a journal of African literary studies, which would deal with the works of several African writers. We were still having the conversation when Esiaba transited on 3 May 2010, aged 50. Probably inspired by that conversation, several years later, precisely in 2020, I honoured that discussion by setting up the *Journal of African Languages and Literary Studies*, which in December 2024, was accepted for indexing by the highly regarded SCOPUS, one of the two dominant global benchmarks for measuring the standard and impact of academic journals.

Jidefor Adibe is a professor of Political Science and International Relations at Nasarawa State University and founder of Adonis & Abbey Publishers. He can be reached at: 0705 807 8841 (WhatsApp and text messages only).

Premium times

News

Natural calamities: Ododo assures of effective management

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

KOGI State Governor, Ahmed Ododo, has assured of effective disaster management and protection against the impact of natural disasters in Nigeria.

He stated this while receiving the report of the Technical Working Group of the Ad-hoc Committee on Flood and Other Nature-Induced Disasters (Mitigation, Adaptation, Preparedness, and Response) of the National Economic Council (NEC) at the Kogi State Governor's Lodge in Asokoro, Abuja, over the weekend.

Governor Ododo noted that the report would boost the commitment of the Federal Government to address challenges in the management of natural disasters in the country.



Ododo

He pointed out that the report was a culmination of several weeks of dedicated work by the Technical Working Group, noting that "It is expected to serve as a foundation for the development of a national roadmap for proactive management of nature-induced disasters in Nigeria."

He expressed the nation's gratitude to the group, led by the Minister of State for Water

Resources, Alhaji Bello Mohammed Goronyo, and commended their hard work and diligence.

While describing the report as timely in view of the rainy season, Governor Ododo emphasized the importance of the report and for its far-reaching recommendations aimed at finding lasting solutions to the challenges posed by climate change all over the country.

TWO persons have been confirmed dead after bandits struck recently in Chinkai, Wukari Local Government Area of Taraba State.

The latest attack occurred two days after an 18-year-old Point Of Sales (POS) operator was stabbed to death by a thief in the same Wukari LGA, the hometown of Taraba State Governor, Dr. Agbu Kefas.

The Chairman of the LGA, Ismaila Dauda, confirmed the incident to newsmen via WhatsApp.

According to him, "Two persons were killed in

Again, bandits invade Taraba community, kill 2

From VICTOR GAI, Jalingo

Chinkai town on June 19, 2024, by bandits who entered the town and started shooting sporadically.

"It is unfortunate that our young men are being targeted. However, soldiers were mobilized to Chinkai, but before they got there, the bandits had left the town."

The Village Head of

Chinkai, Ezekiel Musa, also called on the state governor to ensure the deployment of more security operatives to their community.

When contacted, the spokesperson of the Taraba State Police Command, DSP Gambo Kwache, confirmed the incident.

She added that security measures had already been put in place in the community to prevent further attacks.

Councilor, village head paraded for transformer theft

From WILLIE ATTAH, Gombe

AN All Progressives Congress (APC) Councilor representing Kumo East Ward, Hon. Abdullahi M. Panda, Village Head of Garin Majidadi village, Mohammed Majidadi and one Mohammed Sani of Sarkin Yaki Quarters, all in Kumo, Akko Local



Yahaya

Government Area of Gombe State, have been paraded for the alleged theft of a transformer worth millions of naira.

The suspects, who were paraded along with the alleged buyer of the transformer, one Bello Ardo Kumo, were said to have sold the transformer to the buyer at the cost of N1,500,000.00.

Parading the suspects before newsmen, the Gombe State Police Command's spokesman, ASP Buhari Abdullahi, explained that detectives from Akko Division intercepted the suspects with the transformer which was stolen from Garin Majidadi village.

According to the police image maker, though the transformer had been recovered, the suspects would be charged to court after the conclusion of investigations.

It would be recalled

that all the APC candidates, chairmen and councilors, with the support of Governor Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya, during the last 'purported' local government elections in April, were returned as winners.

However, while answering questions from journalists, the councilor said the transformer belonged to the community which agreed to sell it since it had not been working for the past ten years.

According to him, when he was approached with the issue after the community sat together with the District Head and the Village Head, he asked the people to bring the issue in writing.

He pointed out that even though their agreement was to meet on Monday, they instead went ahead and sold the transformer two days before their appointment.

Drug abuse: NDLEA harps on preventive measures

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

THE Commandant of the Kogi State Command of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), Umar Mustapha Yahuza, has declared that preventive measures against drug abuse is

the only solution to the scourge.

He also affirmed that the surest way to achieve the preventive measures is through aggressive sensitisation of citizens on the negative effects of illicit drugs.

Yahuza, at a press conference held in Lokoja on Monday,

disclosed that the Kogi NDLEA seized over 1.49 tones of illicit drugs within January to June, 2024, with 149 suspects arrested.

He said that a weeklong United Nations Day Against Drug Abuse and trafficking organized by the agency in collaboration with the Kogi State Government was targeted at ensuring adequate sensitization of citizens on the state on the menace of illicit drugs.

He disclosed that the drug situation in Nigeria and Kogi State was disturbing, lamenting that it had implications on security, economic and the general wellbeing of citizens.

According to him, series of arrests and seizures of assorted drugs such as codeine, methamphetamine, diazepam, tramadol, cannabis sativa and pentazocine, among

others, had been made in six months.

He further disclosed that out of the 149 suspects arrested, 29 had been convicted while other cases were still pending at the Federal High Court, Lokoja.

While expressing concern over the high rate of drug consumption and trafficking in the state, he disclosed that statistics and empirical facts from the agency's operations indicated that the drug problem was mutating into a huge social problem.

Yahuza who attributed armed robbery, kidnapping, banditry, rape and other violent crimes against humanity in the country to the use of illicit drugs, called on governments, corporate organizations and public spirited individuals to collaborate with NDLEA to eradicate the menace in the society.



Marwa

Research

Ethics, challenges of conserving archaeological sites in Nigeria

By **UDECHUKWU GERALD & ANYANECHI CHUKWUDI**

OVER the years archaeologist and conservators have had to answer the question of what conservation ethics and how they affect the practice of archaeology.

The cheering news is that quite a number of these experts and practitioners in the field agree that simply put it is the ethics of resource use, allocation, exploration and protection. Its primary focus they opined is maintaining the health of the natural and cultural remains of the environment. It is this idea that is no doubt behind the philosophy of conservation ethics.

It is important to note that in many areas of study on form of conservation emphasis is often placed on archaeological conservation ethics and how it is impacting on the conservation of archaeological sites in Nigeria.

The conservation and restoration of archaeological sites is the process of professionally protecting an archaeological site from further damage and restoring it to a previous state. Archaeological sites need extra care in regard to their conservation and restoration. Archaeology we should not forget, is a destructive force.

This is because once a site has been partially or fully excavated, it cannot be put back the way it was. So to keep getting information from the site, it must be conserved to current best practices and herein lies the challenge.

Conservation ethics in this sense therefore, is the moral issues raised through the study of the material past. Conservation ethics in archaeology should therefore ensure the protection of resources and work towards minimal impact on the environment and community (both human and eco-system) in using it. This applies to food resources, cultural and natural remains or monuments.

Archaeologists practicing in Nigeria are not only expected to unearth information of the past through materials remains left behind, they also have the duty and are bound to conduct their archaeological investigations to a high standard and observe intellectual property laws, health and safety regulations and other legal obligations. Archaeologists in



the field are in this sense required to work towards the preservation, conservation and management of archaeological resource, treat cultural/human remains encountered in the course of their field work and excavation with dignity and respect and encourage outreach activities. There should be sanctions in place for those archaeologists, institutions or individuals who do not observe these ethical codes. It is the adherence to this ethical codes of archaeological conservation that distinguishes professional archaeologists from ordinary grave diggers, cultural materials looters, and treasure hunters. Agreed the earliest archaeologists were typically amateurs comprising of army officers, colonial administrators, missionaries and so forth who would excavate a site with the purpose of collecting as many objects as they could find for display in museum or private use or for sale. This practice has not been completely eradicated due to low awareness in the communities about the importance of sustainable cultural development as well as its impact on the culture and social history of the people.

There are also professionals who lack the basic knowledge of conservation ethics in archaeology hence are not concerned about the negative effects of their non professional behavior on the culture history or importance

of the site or object they are working on. This abuse and non adherence to the ethical code according to professional archaeologist is as a result of the individual's potential for finding lucrative and fascinating objects, hence the place curiosity and fascination over professionalism.

In the light of this, some field works and excavations or even works or practices within the museum were carried out without recourse to any form of conservation ethics and respect for the material remains in site or in stores. Sadly, today in the 21st century, it can be said that the shift towards greater scientific archaeology practice and study have not persuaded many to refocus on conservation ethics of archaeological practices.

A common ethical issue in modern archaeology as observed over time has been the treatment of material and cultural remains found during field works or excavation, especially those that represent the indigenous groups in our communities or country.

Archaeological conservation which is devoted to the preservation of archaeological records including large scale features such as sites, structures and landscapes as well as artifacts is guided by ethical principles that derive from the understanding that these material remains are primary resources for "understanding and

interpreting the past" thus should be treated with the utmost care and respect with view to conservation.

Therefore, while archaeological excavation allows us to have a great deal about the past through studying archaeological remains and their context, exposing artifacts that have been buried can cause rapid and irreversible deterioration. This is more so in our nation where little resources are devoted for the science of conservation of archaeological materials in and out of site/context. This has been a perennial challenge for the National Commission for Museums and Monuments and the various institutions offering archaeology courses. Hence working with other archaeology professionals (e.g. bio-archaeologist, paleo botanist architects, archaeologist, art historians etc) as part of a team of archaeology conservators can contribute to better understanding of the past and hence limit the challenges and damages and deterioration witnessed in the practice of archaeology today in Nigeria.

Archaeologists (conservators) should be aware of deep literatures on political, historical and sociological ramification of archaeology practice. Today, most archaeological materials remain in the communities where they are excavated, in local storage depots or local or national museums. In the past

foreign archaeologists removed so many archaeological materials from sites and took to museums or university collection in their countries.

Thanks to the National Commissions for Museums and Monuments some of these legal and illegal acquisitions or transfers of antiquities have resulted in the return of some of these objects to their original contexts. Archaeological conservators are bound by professional ethics to preserve archaeological remains and evidence of their context but individual cases may raise additional ethical issues.

In conclusion therefore, it is the duty of the archaeologist that specialized in the practice of conservation to do everything necessary and possible to extend the life of an object. In other words, it means anything we can do to extend the life expectancy of an objects of antiquity by working on the object or its environment. Note that human factors are important in achieving a successful conservation program. Since prevention is better than cure every effort should be made to carry out a required task in line with the conservation ethics in archaeology.

Udechukwu Gerald and Anyanechi Chukwudi wrote from the Institute of Archaeology and Museum Studies, Jos.

ODD WORLD

Dolphins 'deliberately get high' on puffer fish nerve toxins

HUMANS aren't the only creatures that suffer from substance abuse problems. Horses eat hallucinogenic weeds, elephants get drunk on overripe fruit and big horn sheep love narcotic lichen. Monkeys' attraction to sugar-rich and ethanol-containing fruit, in fact, may explain our

own attraction to alcohol, some researchers think.

Now, dolphins may join that list. Footage from a new BBC documentary series, "Spy in the Pod," reveals what appears to be dolphins getting high off of pufferfish. Pufferfish produce a potent defensive chemical, which

they eject when threatened. In small enough doses, however, the toxin seems to induce "a trance-like state" in dolphins that come into contact with it, the Daily News reports:

The dolphins were filmed gently playing with the puffer, passing it between each other for 20 to 30 minutes at a time, unlike the fish they had caught as prey which were swiftly torn apart.

Zoologist and series producer Rob Pilley said that it was the first time dolphins had been filmed behaving this way.

At one point the dolphins are seen floating just underneath the water's surface, apparently mesmerised by their own reflections.

The dolphins' expert, deliberate handling of the terrorized puffer fish, Pilley told the Daily News, implies that this is not their first time at the hallucinogenic rodeo.

Daily News



A dolphin with its drug of choice

The woman who shares her home with 1,100 cats

IN 1992 Lynea Lattanzio's father asked for her help in finding a new cat. She came home with 15 kittens.

Since that day, 67-year-old Mrs Lattanzio has been surrounded by feline friends.

"I'm gonna say that I'm at the top of the list of the eccentric, crazy cat ladies," she tells Barcroft TV.

"I've taken in and lived with 28,000 cats. That's probably a record."

The Cat House On The Kings is currently home to 800 adult cats and 300 kittens, which have all been taken in as either feral or abandoned animals.

Based in California, the sanctuary allows its residents to roam freely around the 12 acre land.

I've taken in and lived with 28,000 cats. That's probably a record.

The sheer quantity of felines on the property forced Lynea to leave her five-bed house to the cats and set herself up in a mobile home.

"There wasn't room for me anymore. I ended up with 60 some cats in my bedroom with dogs and I just said that's it and I moved out," Mrs Lattanzio recalls.

The cost of housing so many moggies is substantial, even after having trained as a vet herself to keep bills down.

Including staffing, food,

litter, maintenance and medical fees, the sanctuary runs up a bill of roughly \$1.6 million a year.

"When I first started this endeavour I was out my own pocket for 7 years. I spent my retirement, I sold my car, I sold my wedding ring," she explains, as if nothing would be worth keeping over the

cats.

The premises boast a hospital, an intensive care unit and quarantines for both seniors and kittens.

Despite enjoying their company so, Mrs Lattanzio's chief aim remains to find the felines new homes, with 500 of the cats currently up for adoption.

Daily News



Man steals snake, stuffs it down pants



By KELLI BENDER

POLICE in Rockwood, Michigan, are trying to put the squeeze on a pet thief.

According to the Rockwood Police Department, officers are looking for help identifying a man who they believe stole a ball python from the I Love My Pets pet

store on March 20.

The man allegedly made off with the snake in an unusual way. Video obtained by the police department from an employee at the pet store appears to show the man taking the 4-foot snake out of its container and sticking the reptile down his pants, report Fox 8.

Pythons are constricting snakes, which means the reptiles kill other animals by quickly and tightly coiling their bodies around their prey. If the suspect did stick the snake down his pants, hopefully he didn't keep it there for long.

Emily Scheiwe, the employee who provided the video of the alleged snake theft, and her co-workers initially thought Pasta the "girthy" python escaped his tank, she told WDIV.

After checking the store's security footage, the staff realized that the shopper in the clip above, who did pay for a \$6 rat, likely stole the snake by shoving it down his pants.

According to WDIV, the snake was worth \$100

Anyone who recognizes the suspect in the video above should contact the Rockwood Police Department at 734-379-5323.

Foreign News

Wikileaks founder freed after five years in prison

By **Bernd Debusmann Jr & Vicky Wong**

After a years-long legal saga, Wikileaks says that founder Julian Assange has left the UK after reaching a deal with US authorities that will see him plead guilty to criminal charges and go free.

Mr Assange, 52, was charged with conspiracy to obtain and disclose national defence information.

For years, the US has argued that the Wikileaks files - which disclosed information about the Iraq and Afghanistan wars - endangered lives.

He spent the last five years in a British prison, from where he was fighting extradition to the US.

Mr Assange also faced separate charges of rape and sexual assault in Sweden, which he denied.

He spent seven years hiding in Ecuador's London embassy, claiming the Swedish case would lead him to be sent to the US.

Swedish authorities dropped the case in 2019 and said that too much time had passed since the original complaint, but UK authorities later took him into custody. He was tried for not surrendering to the courts to be extradited to Sweden.

According to CBS, the BBC's US partner, Mr Assange will spend no time in US custody and will receive credit for the time spent incarcerated in the UK.

Assange will return to Australia, according to a letter from the justice department.

On X, the platform formerly known as Twitter, Wikileaks said that Mr Assange left Belmarsh prison on Monday after 1,901 days in a small cell.

He was then "released at Stansted airport during the afternoon, where he boarded a plane and departed the UK" to return to Australia, the statement added.

Video shared online by Wikileaks appear to show Mr Assange, dressed in jeans and a blue shirt, being driven to Stansted before boarding an aircraft.

The BBC has been unable to independently verify the video.

His wife, Stella Assange, posted on X thanking his supporters "who have all mobilised for years and years to make this come true".

She later told the BBC's Today programme that the days running up to the US deal had been "touch-and-go" and "non-stop", and that she was feeling "a whirlwind



Assange

of emotions". The deal - which will see him plead guilty to one charge of the Espionage Act - is expected to be finalised in a court in the Northern Mariana Islands on Wednesday, 26 June.

The remote Pacific islands, a US commonwealth, are much closer to Australia than US federal courts in Hawaii

attempted distraction and it is not behind the disclosure of names.

The Met is not being drawn on how many of its officers are being investigated by the Gambling Commission, beyond the constable it acknowledged was being looked into last week, who was arrested and questioned.

The BBC understands there are a "handful" of other officers being looked at by the commission, but it is not yet known how many.



Sunak

The Metropolitan Police has denied being the source of leaks identifying the people being investigated by the Gambling Commission over alleged bets on the date of the general election.

The Daily Telegraph has reported what it calls "a source close to the Cabinet Office" claiming that Scotland Yard had told journalists about those being looked into by the betting regulator.

Police sources have told the BBC the force regards this as an

Age anxiety hangs over first Biden-Trump debate

By **Kayla Epstein,**

For Joe Biden and Donald Trump the two oldest candidates ever to seek the US presidency - age is an election issue neither can escape.

On Thursday, the current Democratic president, 81, and his Republican predecessor, 78, will face off in Atlanta, Georgia, for the first of two debates ahead of November's vote, offering Americans a rare, split-screen comparison of the two men's physical and mental strength.

For 90 minutes, under the glare of the high-

definition cameras, President Biden and former President Trump - who remain nearly tied in national opinion polls - will spar on issues ranging from the economy and foreign wars to immigration and the future of democracy. One slip-up, stumble or verbal miscue could cement concerns about their advanced age, with the potential for reshaping an already tight presidential race as voters begin to pay attention.

But delivering a vigorous performance

KENYAN police have fired tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse protesters in the capital, Nairobi, amid ongoing anti-tax demonstrations across the country.

Businesses have been shut and transport has been paralysed in the city, with the police engaging in running battles with demonstrators.

The youth-led protests are calling on MPs to reject proposed tax increases.

The government, which has rowed back on some of the most controversial measures, says new taxes are needed to fund spending programmes and lessen the debt burden.

An AFP journalist was quoted as hearing a police officer tell his colleagues to "get the rubber bullets from the box".

The police then reportedly started firing in the air and at the protesters.

Officers have been deployed to protect various key government installations including parliament.

Kenya police fire tear gas at anti-tax protests

By **Basillioh Rukanga**

From the morning the anti-riot police have been using teargas to disperse the protesters amid clashes with the security officers.

There have also been huge crowds in many other parts of the country, with local Kenya newspaper the Daily Nation reporting protests in about 30 of the country's 47 counties.

Ahead of the demonstrations, lawyers and human rights groups expressed concern about arbitrary arrests and the intimidation of activists during earlier protests.

It came amid reports of at least five prominent social media users being abducted at dawn, hours before the demonstrations.

The government has defended the taxes as necessary for raising additional revenue to reduce Kenya's significant debt, but last week conceded to some demands.

It scrapped some contentious taxes including proposed taxes on bread, cooking oil and motor vehicle ownership in the wake of a public outcry.

But the protesters have been saying that this is not enough, and have agitated for the complete withdrawal of the bill.

Despite that, majority MPs passed the controversial bill during its second reading and were on Tuesday debating on the various amendments, to remove some of the clauses that the government has considered contentious.

At least two people died in protests and hundreds others injured in last week's demonstrations, which were largely peaceful.

Mr Ruto acknowledged the protests and promised he will hold talks to address the concerns of the youth who are at the forefront of the protests.

Police said: "The allegations that the Met has leaked information are simply untrue."

A senior source added: "This is a poor distraction technique."

The Met said: "We continue to liaise with the Gambling Commission and are assessing information they have provided."

In a statement the Met

investigated by the Gambling Commission, beyond the constable it acknowledged was being looked into last week, who was arrested and questioned.

The BBC understands there are a "handful" of other officers being looked at by the commission, but it is not yet known how many.

The regulator has not said who it is investigating but so far the names of four Conservatives have emerged - including two who are standing for election.

In a statement the Met

may be more critical for Mr Biden, the nation's oldest president who has been dogged by questions about his stamina and mental fitness since he took office.

"There's no hiding the fact that Biden's 81, there's no hiding the fact that Trump's basically the same age," said Jim Messina, a Democratic strategist who managed Barack Obama's 2012 presidential campaign. "It's not a contest of age, it's a contest of policy and character."

"Part of what needs to happen on Thursday night is just to begin the

conversation about the differences between them," Mr Messina said.

Polling shows that voters are far more concerned about Mr Biden's age than his opponent's. But if Trump wins, he would break Mr Biden's record as the oldest president before the end of his term.

A March New York Times/Siena College poll suggested 73% of registered voters believed Mr Biden was "just too old to be an effective president". Voters of all age groups expressed these concerns about the president's fitness for

office, including those 65 and older, according to the survey.

Just 42% of registered voters said the same about Trump, despite a mere three-and-a-half-year age gap.

Source: **BBC News**



Biden

NIGERIA

in the Foreign Press



Women church groups helping people in Nigeria

By EROMO EGBEJULE

ON a warm Thursday afternoon in May, the ululation, drumming and singing of a choir of two-dozen women can be heard across Gan Gora, a village so small it barely appears on the Nigerian map.

"We are happy you arrived safely," they sing in Hausa welcoming the visitors to the community branch of the Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA), hidden in the hilly Zangon Kataf, an area of half a million residents in the state of Kaduna.

A congregation of about 100 women dance and sway alongside the choir, including Rifkatu Dauda Kigbu, 53, their spiritual adviser, hobbling on a fractured knee, a crutch in her left hand.

This is a weekly meeting of *Zumunta mata* (Hausa for "fellowship of married women"), a clan that has banded together for almost a century, sisters in times of surplus and of scarcity. Their visitors are *Zumunta mata* members of an ECWA, one of Nigeria's largest churches, in Gonin Gora, a suburb of Kaduna city.

The first *Zumunta mata* was formed in 1930 after a woman almost died during childbirth in Miango, a town more than 50 miles away in what is now the neighbouring Plateau state. Women in the ECWA Christian church contributed to buy a bicycle so future patients could be ferried to the nearest medical facility. It began a fellowship that now has millions of members in northern Nigeria, across a multitude of denominations both Christian and Muslim.

For years, outsiders have primarily known the *Zumunta mata* for their colourful abayas, singing, which has garnered millions of YouTube views, and provision of spiritual guidance to young women and mothers.

Godwin Ogli, head of theatre arts at the Federal University, Lokoja, has been researching the group in Plateau state and says the original motive was to "provide a space for women to learn more about the word of God" and to be "an outreach arm of the church" to bring more women in.

That role expanded as Nigeria's economy has stuttered and pastoralist violence has intensified across Kaduna and Plateau, and throughout the Sahel.



The Evangelical Church Winning All branch in Gan Gora village in Kaduna, Nigeria. The *Zumunta mata*, or fellowship of married women, are known for their singing. Photograph: Eromo Egbejule

The Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project estimates that at least 2,600 people were killed by conflict in Nigeria in 2021. Villagers and local researchers say the casualty count is higher, as some incidents in Zangon Kataf, one of the hotspots, were undocumented.

Tensions over land have led to conflict between nomadic herdsman and Indigenous farming communities. The herdsman, mostly Fulani Muslims, have said they are acting in self-defence, stemming from rustling and killing of their cows and kinsmen. The farmers, who are mostly Christian, say they are protecting themselves from ethnic cleansing and land grabbing rooted in British colonial excesses.

Analysts say the climate crisis and overpopulation have exacerbated religious and ethnic differences between neighbours who coexisted peacefully for decades. "The relationship is [now] sour," says Stella Amako, a local politician and elected chapter head of the visitors from Kaduna.

Conversely the bond within *Zumunta mata* has strengthened. The fellowship is the first responder during crises. They have sleepovers, cook, offer small cash gifts and when necessary, bathe new babies or bodies of the dearly departed. When gifts come from NGOs, distribution is managed by the *mama Zumunta*, who is elected every three years for a maximum of two tenures.

"We are even currently handling two cases of women on the brink of divorce," says Amako.

While WhatsApp groups have become an important self-help tool in some parts of the global south, in Gan Gora even £5 (10,000 naira) smartphones are a luxury. So women attend meetings in person to listen to gospel lessons and give testimonies.

After the dancing, Kigbu advises the women in a brief lesson. "Any woman with dignity is respected. Her husband is blessed because of her and always boasts about her. Her good habits are contagious," she says, her crutch resting next to her bible on the table.

Outside, her husband, Rev Luka Kasai Kigbu, shakes hands with local pastors who have come to thank the women for helping them out on a recent farming day. The couple are still recovering from a car jacking by the region's marauding herdsman that led to Kigbu's knee injury. They had been returning from a visit to family in a neighbouring state when they were attacked. The reverend managed to escape but the bandits dragged Kigbu out of the car and fractured her right knee. Eventually she was released, and is grateful, despite her injuries.

"I have to give thanks for every situation," she says.

The women are proud of their support system. Mary Bawa, 68, joined as a new bride in 1976. "What gives me peace of mind and joy is

knowing Christ and [having] these people around me," she says.

A widowed mother of seven, Bawa passes on to young widows what she knows about farming soya beans to make tofu to trade.

One is Magdalene Israel, 32. Halfway into recanting how her husband and mother-in-law were killed on the same day, caught up in a firefight between herdsman and farmers in September 2022, she stops to bend her head and weep.

She escaped from their farm that day by running non-stop to the next village, bullets whizzing past her ear. "I was just screaming holy ghost fire," says the mother of three.

"Life has not been easy but *Zumunta mata* and God Almighty have been behind me," says Israel, who is praying for the ability to let go of her abiding anger and forgive the killers.

For now, conflict has paused and Gan Gora is a picture of serenity. In front of the church, the long tarred road connecting the community to others is flanked on either side by mango, neem and baobab trees and small fields of maize.

Multiple checkpoints dotting the road are held by young soldiers in khaki sitting on sandbags. It is a departure from the scarce government presence for years in an area where people remember other violent episodes, including a 1992 communal clash and a 2011 election crisis that both left hundreds dead.

The checkpoints were introduced after an army general from the region, Christopher Musa, was appointed a service chief last year. A barracks is being built to reinforce security around the hills. At state level, the new governor, Uba Sani, is seen as less divisive than his predecessor, Nasir El-Rufai, who proscribed a community association in Zangon Kataf for being an "unlawful group".

Still, some are afraid to return to fields and villages.

In the relatively safer Gonin Gora suburb of Kaduna, the women enjoy regular sessions like learning how to make homemade liquid detergents to help cushion their households from the effects of Nigeria's cost-of-living crisis. The choir rehearses songs about subjects such as forgiveness and heaven.

"They look out for one another, supporting one another, sometimes financially or emotionally, psychologically ... this goes beyond the church," says Ogli.

One such session helped Grace Friday, 33, with the art of food presentation that her husband now loves. Afterwards, he overheard her chatting with a friend about a forthcoming wedding as he ate and later told Israel he would buy her an outfit to the ceremony, to show his appreciation for the benefits the fellowship had brought to his family. She was overjoyed.

Eunice Shola, a 47-year-old civil servant who runs the cooperative union's low-interest loan system, says the fellowship has helped her to try public speaking.

"When I started this, I couldn't even stand and pray in the presence of two or three people ... but this fellowship has really built my self-confidence," she says.

Those in the city remember their sisters in the countryside. For the past 13 years Lucy Stephen, 48, has led Gonin Gora's 57-woman choir, whose music helps members to show solidarity with their Zangon Kataf sisters and "build their faith".

One song references the cry of a prophet in the Bible's book of Habakkuk. "Oh Lord, how long must I call for help?" the first verse goes. "There is pathos everywhere."

Source: The Guardian UK

THE NIGERIA STANDARD'S WORLD

With **Palang Kasmi**

Health

On NCDC's tips for cholera prevention

By **PALANG KASMI**

THE Nigeria Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (NCDC) has issued a public health advisory on the increasing trend of cholera cases across the country, particularly with the onset of the rainy season. The agency has warned against unsafe hygienic practices like open defecation, indiscriminate refuse dumping, and eating fruits and vegetables that are not properly washed.

Cholera is a food and water-borne disease caused by the ingestion of the organism *Vibrio Cholerae* in contaminated water and food. The disease is a significant public health concern in Nigeria, where it outbreaks frequently, especially in areas with poor sanitation and hygiene.

According to the NCDC, cholera is a highly infectious disease that can spread rapidly in areas with inadequate water and sanitation facilities. The agency has reported 1,141 suspected and 65 confirmed cases of cholera with 30 deaths from 96 Local Government Areas in 30 States between January 1 and June 11, 2024.

The NCDC has advised the public to take the following precautions to prevent cholera:

- Ensure access to safe, potable drinking water
- Practice proper sanitation and waste disposal
- Ensure appropriate hygiene, including handwashing
- Avoid raw fruits and vegetables, food from street vendors, and raw or undercooked seafood
- Ensure that water is boiled and stored in a clean and covered container before drinking
- Practice good personal hand hygiene by washing hands frequently with soap under clean running water

The agency has also advised healthcare workers to practice standard safety precautions like wearing gloves while handling patients or providing care to an ill patient or relative. State Governments have been urged to prioritize action for solutions that ensure access to and use of safe water, basic sanitation, and proper hygiene practices in communities.

The NCDC has provided toll-free numbers, SMS, and WhatsApp lines for reporting suspected cases of cholera. The agency has also emphasized the importance of adequate financial resources to support sanitation initiatives at all levels of governance.

Cholera is a preventable disease, and the NCDC's public health advisory aims to sensitize the public on the dangers of cholera and the importance of proper



hygiene and sanitation practices to prevent the spread of the disease.

In addition to the precautions listed above, the NCDC has also recommended the following measures to prevent cholera:

- Avoid drinking untreated water from wells, rivers, or lakes
- Avoid eating food from street vendors or stalls that may not have been prepared hygienically
- Avoid close contact with people who have diarrhea or are vomiting
- Avoid swimming in contaminated water
- Avoid eating raw or undercooked seafood
- Avoid eating fruits and vegetables that may have been contaminated with sewage or other pollutants

The NCDC has also advised the public to be aware of the signs and symptoms of cholera, which include:

- Acute profuse, painless watery diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Nausea
- Fever
- Abdominal cramps
- Blood in stool

If you or someone you know is experiencing any of these symptoms, it is essential to seek medical attention immediately.

Cholera can lead to severe dehydration and even death if left untreated.

The NCDC's public health advisory is a timely reminder of the importance of proper hygiene and sanitation practices in preventing the spread of cholera. The agency's efforts to sensitize the public on the dangers of cholera and the importance of proper hygiene and sanitation practices are commendable.

However, more needs to be done to address the root causes of cholera outbreaks in Nigeria. The country's poor sanitation and hygiene infrastructure, inadequate access to safe water, and lack of proper waste disposal facilities are some of the underlying factors that contribute to the frequent outbreaks of cholera.

To address these challenges, the government at all levels must demonstrate a commitment to prioritizing sanitation and hygiene as fundamental to national development objectives. Adequate financial resources must be allocated to support sanitation initiatives at all levels of governance.

Furthermore, the government must work to improve access to safe water, proper sanitation, and



NCDC Boss Idris

hygiene facilities in all communities. This can be achieved through the construction of modern sanitation facilities, the provision of safe water sources, and the promotion of proper hygiene practices.

The private sector also has a role to play in addressing the challenges of cholera in Nigeria. Companies and organizations can support sanitation initiatives by providing financial resources, expertise, and other forms of support.

It is worthy of note that the

NCDC's public health advisory on cholera is a timely reminder of the importance of proper hygiene and sanitation practices in preventing the spread of cholera. While the agency's efforts to sensitize the public on the dangers of cholera are commendable, more needs to be done to address the root causes of cholera outbreaks in Nigeria. The government, private sector, and individuals must work together to prioritize sanitation and hygiene as fundamental to national development objectives.

Opinion

What future for the Nigerian child?

By VICTORIALI

On May 27, 2024, state capitals across Nigeria were agog with the celebration of Children's Day. In what has become an annual ritual, it is a date set aside to celebrate our children, particularly those in primary and secondary schools.

In the days of yore, it was a fun-filled, carnival-like event which featured march pass and the subsequent awards of trophies and certificates for their excellent performance. There was also the children's day party where assorted gifts were presented to children by the First Lady at Government House.

Yours sincerely was privileged to be an active participant in such events in the late 70s. As we celebrated this year's Children's Day, I vividly recall those days with nostalgia. The beautiful memories continue to linger. But are Children's Day celebrations still being celebrated this way? If not, why not?

To start with, the Nigerian child is today an endangered species. Education, which is an essential component for the growth and development of any society, is at its lowest ebb at the moment. Apart from lack of qualified manpower (teachers) to handle this all-important sector of

societal development, the infrastructure is an eyesore.

It is very sad that a secondary school leaver aiming to go to a tertiary institution can hardly speak flaunt and simple English, yes, our borrowed language. Ditto for writing. What really went wrong? From the abysmal performance of school children these days, it is obvious that the teachers also need to be taught. The basic teaching skills and principles seem to have taken flight. Even teachers themselves have alluded to the fact that, because of the lack of alternate job openings, they resort to teaching as a last resort. No passion, no skills!

Even while the few teachers are putting in their best, the children themselves are embroiled in social vices. It is no longer news that primary and secondary schools are now breeding grounds for cultists. It no longer a secret that tertiary institutions have become open arena for cultists.

Needless to say, other social vices like prostitution, lesbianism, homosexuality, murder, theft and armed robbery, amongst others, have become the new normal in campuses of tertiary institutions, even secondary schools. How did we get to this stage? How did a

country so blessed with human potentials suddenly slip into such a shameful state? Certainly, Nigeria of the 1960s is not the Nigeria of today. Virtually everything has gone awry!

Nigerians have thrown morals to the winds. Greed, avarice, covetousness and the hydra-headed monster, corruption, have taken the centre-stage. Conversely, merit, honesty, transparency and the fear of God no longer matter. We are now in a Hobbesian state of nature where life is brutish and short. Survival of the fittest is the rule of the game, while primitive accumulation is the ultimate goal.

A country enmeshed in such a mess cannot aspire for, nor aim at, development. Sadly, Nigerian children, dubiously dubbed as leaders of tomorrow, are watching and learning the infamous antics of present-day Nigerian leaders. One is tempted to agree to a reasonable extent with that literary icon, the late Professor Chinua Achebe, who asserted in his book, *THE TROUBLE WITH NIGERIA*, that Nigeria's problem is chiefly that of leadership.

And what about the pervasive corruption, kleptomania, ineptitude, nepotism and the relegation of merit, honesty and integrity to the background which

are plaguing Nigeria? Can a country achieve its desired goals with such a farrago of social vices? Expectedly, the Nigerian child is following in the footsteps of the present leaders. With technology at their finger-tips, Nigerian children are adapting to such negative tendencies with the rapidity of 'bullets'.

The unbridled activities of con-artists and 'yahoo boys' who have occupied the Nigerian space is yet another cause for concern. It is often said in Nigerian Pidgin English: "Goat no de born sheep." Translated, it simply means that the Nigerian children feel that the corruption of the present crop of leaders is normal. Soo sad. And what is to be done? Or is it a hopeless and helpless case? Is there going to be light at the end of the tunnel?

Nigerians are worried by the current trend of events. The youth can no longer be trusted, particularly with power. Take the case of Yahaya Bello, the erstwhile Governor of Kogi State, North-Central Nigeria, who is now in hiding. He became governor of the "Confluence State" when he was less than fifty. With his budding talent, much was expected of him in terms of the development. Alas, when he vacated office, it was discovered that he allegedly fleeced the state of billions of

naira, the poor people's common patrimony. Can the Nigerian youth be trusted with power or leadership? Or is it a case of like father, like son?

Indeed, Nigeria needs redemption at the moment. More than ever before, the need for moral reorientation is very imperative. The rot in our society is stinking to the high heavens. Something must be done. The much advocated national orientation should be a top-bottom thing, yes, leadership by example. To exhibit the sincerity of purpose in the much mouthed anti-corruption crusade by successive administration, the present leaders should match words with empirical action.

Nigerians have been inundated with news of billions of naira and dollars stolen by government officials. Yet, they often go scot-free. At best, when they are found guilty, they get the least sentences. Obviously, fighting corruption is not a tea party. In her book, *Fighting Corruption is Dangerous*, Nigeria's former Minister of Finance, who now heads the World Trade Organization (WTO), Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, alluded to the fact that fighting corruption, with particular reference to the oil sector, is a Herculean task.

Parents, we have failed our children. We have been too busy chasing wealth and status to notice the void in our children's lives. We have neglected their emotional and spiritual needs, and now they are seeking validation and belonging in all the wrong places - P.L.O Lumumba.

Cultism has spread like cancer in many communities, leaving a trail of devastation, fear, and hopelessness in its wake. The impact of cultism on communities is multifaceted and far-reaching, affecting not only the individuals involved but also the broader society. Although this writer examines the destructive effects of cultism on Nigeria as a whole, he particularly focuses on Kabong, Gada Biyu, Jenta Adamu and Jenta Mangoro as case study - all in Jos North Local Government Area of Plateau State.

The cultism menace in these communities started in 2019, and every citizen is culpable for their inaction. The victims are mostly vulnerable children between 12 and 14 years old, from broken homes and single-parent families, who have been left exposed to cultism due to a lack of guidance and parental support. These communities have lost almost 40 young men to cultism between 2019 and 2022, with many more still entrapped in this destructive activity that is a recipe for disaster.

The sale of Gokolo and other hard drugs such as marijuana and many others has contributed to the spread of cultism, as some cult groups use drugs to recruit and manipulate their members. The use of drugs can also lead to addiction, which can further entrench an individual's involvement in cult activities. Additionally, some unscrupulous individuals who act as societal mafias, criminal organizations, political leaders and religious leaders may use cultism to exploit and manipulate vulnerable youth.

This solidarity call to all well-meaning

The scourge of cultism

By ISHAYA RANGU

citizens to take action against cultism is a reminder of P.L.O Lumumba's words: "The greatest tragedy of our time is to see young people, full of life and promise, surrender their future to the false promises of cultism, which is a Trojan horse." He urges young people not to be deceived by the trappings of power and prestige, emphasizing that cultism is a death sentence, a slow and painful march to the grave that will leave them with a lifetime of regret.

Lumumba's words highlight the importance of parents playing a more active and responsible role in guiding and nurturing their children, providing them with the tools and values necessary to make positive choices and avoid harmful behaviors like cultism. He emphasizes the fact that young people have so much to offer the world and should not squander their potential on a destructive ideology that will only bring both them and society so much pain and sorrow.

The economic impact of cultism is substantial, with many businesses forced to shut down and investors hesitant to invest in the areas, most of which have become ghost areas, so to say. The lack of economic opportunities has led to increased poverty and unemployment, further exacerbating the cycle of violence and despair, making it a vicious cycle.

To mitigate the impact of cultism on these communities, urgent action is required. This includes community engagement and education, law enforcement and policy interventions and economic empowerment and development programs. Skill acquisition programs, such as vocational training and apprenticeships, should be

introduced to empower young people with profitable skills, giving them a leg up in life.

As Niya Adesanya aptly stated, "We must also address the root causes of cultism, such as poverty, lack of education, and unemployment. We need to create opportunities and provide support systems for our young people."

Members of the affected communities must come together to condemn cultism and support law enforcement agencies in their efforts to combat this menace. The release of suspected cultists back into the community without proper rehabilitation is counterproductive and must be addressed. This is a clarion call to well-meaning individuals to take action against cultism, which is a thorn in our flesh.

Nigeria has enacted several laws and regulations to combat cultism, including the Cultism (Prohibition) Act of 2004, Anti-Cultism Law of 2011, Lagos State Anti-Cultism Law of 2019, Edo State Anti-Cultism Law of 2019 and Rivers State Anti-Cultism Law of 2020. These laws aim to prohibit cult societies, punish cult-related offences, provide for the rehabilitation of cult members, establish task forces to combat cultism and empower law enforcement agencies to investigate and prosecute cult-related cases. In addition, the government has established a national task force on cultism, launched public awareness campaigns, provided support for victims of cultism and collaborated with international organizations to share best practices in combating cultism.

Sadly, the scourge of cultism has resulted in the loss of many young lives. Some examples will suffice: Precious Owolabi, a 23-year-old Nigerian youth corps member, was killed during a cult clash in 2020. Umaru Balolo, a 25-year-old Nigerian student, was stabbed to

death by suspected cultists in 2019. Olaleye Oguniyi, a 27-year-old Nigerian man, was shot dead by cultists in 2018. Kelvin Chinedu, a 22-year-old Nigerian student, was killed by suspected cultists in 2017. Seun Olorunfemi, a 24-year-old Nigerian man, was murdered by cultists in 2016. And last, but not the least, another promising youth was brutally murdered in Kabong on June 12, 2024, by suspected cult members.

These cases illustrate the tragic consequences of cultism and the importance of addressing this menace to prevent further loss of young lives.

It's important to note that these examples are just a few among many cases of cult-related violence and deaths in Nigeria and that cultism is a widespread predicament that affects many communities and families.

The impact of cultism on communities is far-reaching and devastating. Therefore, urgent action is required to address this menace and build safer, more resilient communities where our children can grow and thrive without fear of being led astray.

We must acknowledge our collective failure as parents and community members and take immediate action to address this menace. Through community engagement, education, law enforcement, and economic empowerment, we can build resilient communities where our children can thrive without fear of cultism. The time for action is now; let us come together to protect our children and our future. We owe it to ourselves, our children and future generations, to take a stand against cultism and build a safer, more compassionate world for all. We must strike while the iron is hot and tackle this menace head-on before it's too late.

Comrade Rangu, a political analyst, writes from Bassa Local Government Area, Plateau State

NEWS

Plateau, first to partner UNDP on development - UNDP

By PETER TITLE

PLATEAU State will be the first sub-national body in Nigeria to partner the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on an integrated approach to development, covering all spheres of governance.

The Country Director (UNDP), Elsie Attafua, disclosed this while receiving Governor Caleb Mutfwang during a courtesy visit in her office in Abuja recently.

According to Mutfwang, the visit was part of efforts by his administration to expand the frontiers of governance.

While interacting with the management of the UNDP, the governor itemized areas of intervention for economic revival to include agriculture, mining and tourism which, he pointed out, were key drivers of the economy.

He highlighted efforts so far made to create a conducive environment through roads rehabilitation, revamping the transport system and the inclusion of young people and women in decision making.

Mutfwang, however, decried challenges of insecurity and the difficulties faced by Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), pledging his commitment to transparency, accountability and capacity building in promoting peaceful coexistence.

Responding, Elsie Attafua commended the governor for opening the space for partnership in the state, saying it would help the state in different facets.

She intimated Governor Mutfwang of an integrated rather than ad-hoc approach to development birthed by the organization to cover inclusive economic growth, governance and peace



Mutfwang

building, energy and climate change as well as deliberate attention to enablers to development.

The Country Director

highlighted the organization's efforts towards establishing an innovation hub for which the governor promised to provide the enabling environment in the state.

Plateau First Lady empowers 200 widows

By JIDAUNA DARING

OVER 200 widows across the 17 local government areas of Plateau State have been selected to participate in a two-day training workshop on production of household items that will put food on their tables.

Plateau State First Lady, Barrister Helen Mutfwang, stated this during press briefing to mark this year's International Widows

Day, held at Government House, Little Rayfield, Jos, recently.

The First Lady disclosed that the day was launched by the United Nations (UN) to raise awareness on the violation of widow's rights in many countries following the death of their spouses, the discrimination and poverty suffered by widows and develop policies and programmes tailored towards addressing

From JIDAUNA YANUNG, Abuja

PRESIDENT Bola Tinubu has directed that all civil servants drawing salaries from the government after relocating abroad be sanctioned and made to refund the money.

He also directed that the supervisors and department heads of the culprits must also be sanctioned for aiding and abetting the fraud under their watch.

The president gave the directives recently at the awards night organised by the Office of the Head of Civil Service of the Federation to mark this year's Service Week.

Represented by the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, SGF, Senator George Akume, Tinubu expressed dismay over the attitude of the ghost workers and ordered for

FG sanctions workers taking salaries after relocating abroad



Tinubu

their immediate sanction.

He noted that while measures were being taken to address the problem, he called for collective efforts to ensure that the culprits are brought to book.

President Tinubu insisted that the government would take appropriate measures

to ensure that they are punished and the money refunded to the government treasury.

He, however, acknowledged the challenges in the civil service sector and stressed his determination to address them for optimal performance.

Suspected bandit's corpse discovered in uncompleted building

From JOHN FWAH, Kaduna

THE dead body of an alleged bandit has been discovered in an unfinished building at Kurutu village in Kaduna State's Kachia Local Government Area.

Troops had raided the bandits' hideout at Kurutu forest which led to the killing of three of them while several others fled in different directions following a heavy gun battle, recently.

A community leader who pleaded

anonymity told reporters that the corpse was found on Tuesday at an uncompleted building at the back of the village.

He said, "It was one of the villagers who discovered the corpse that came to inform me, and I personally joined some residents in the uncompleted building, where the corpse was found."

The community leader disclosed that the suspected bandit's corpse was later set

their problems.

"We will continue to work assiduously to initiate programmes that will improve the wellbeing of widows in particular and women generally," Helen Mutfwang emphasized.

She maintained that Governor Mutfwang had demonstrated his passion and commitment to the well-being of widows in the state by empowering widows of legionnaires across the 17 LGAs with financial



Helen

grants to boost their micro and small businesses.

She added that it was also imperative to note that some widows have been trained in financial literacy, business management and marketing skills, sensitization on land ownership and property rights.

Mutfwang called on governments at all levels, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), religious groups, community leaders and all citizens to work together to protect widows from harmful cultural practices.

Commissioner for Women Affairs and Social Development,

Plateau State, Hon. Caroline Dafur, expressed delight about the event and appreciated the governor and the First Lady for embracing widows in the state.

Speaking on behalf of the widows, Mrs. Na'omi Elisha thanked the governor's wife for ameliorating their plight and assured of the widows support to the present administration in the state.

Our correspondent reports that the theme for this year's celebration was 'Accelerating the achievements of gender equality'.

News

PLSG bans blocking of roads

By HOSEA NYAMLONG

THE Plateau State Government has banned the blocking of access roads in line with the implementation of the Executive Order 003 signed by Governor Mutfwang on March 1, 2024, for the control of buildings and vehicular traffic.

This was contained in a press statement signed by the General Manager, Jos Metropolitan Development Board (JMDB), Arc. Hart Bankat and made available to THE NIGERIA STANDARD, Monday.

The statement added that the Chairman, Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Plateau State Chapter, and Chairman, Jama'atu



Mutfwang

Nasril Islam (JNI), Plateau State Chapter, should comply by the order.

Bankat urged worship centres to provide appropriate parking spaces off main roads during worship periods for their congregants and ensure strict adherence.

He warned, "All worship centers should provide building approvals issued by JMDB to avoid penalties."

The GM admonished religious leaders to advise their members to be law-abiding and fully comply with the directive.

Kogi bans processions in Koton-Karfe

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

THE Kogi State Government has announced the ban on all forms of traditional processions in Kotonkarfe, headquarters of Kogi Local Government

Area, and neighbouring communities.

The ban, according to the Commissioner for Information and Communications, Kingsley Fanwo, followed security reports and

efforts to maintain peace in Koton-Karfe and environs.

The commissioner, in a statement made available to journalists in Lokoja recently, disclosed that the proactive ban was aimed at curbing plans by some bad elements in the area to disrupt the peace of the ancient town.

The statement added: "Governor Ahmed Ododo reiterates his administration's commitment to peaceful co-existence among all Kotonkarfe people and will always leave his doors open to listen to complaints and grievances to discourage resorting to violence.

"We urge all concerned to strictly abide by the ban as violators will be treated as enemies of peace and the state. The decision of the state government is aimed at protecting the rights of the Kotonkarfe people, and indeed, all Kogites, to peace and security.

"We urge law enforcement agents to enforce the ban in accordance with the laws of the land. Kotonkarfe people should also be committed to peace and harmony as the government is prepared to protect them from violence."

Mutfwang hosts IFC representatives

By PETER TITLE

Governor Caleb Mutfwang of Plateau State recently hosted representatives from the International Finance Corporation (IFC) of the World Bank Group, aimed at attracting investments to revitalise the state's industrial sector.

The meeting was coordinated by Dan Croft, Regional Industry Manager for Infrastructure in Central Africa and Anglophone West Africa.

He emphasized the need for partnership to revive several legacy projects abandoned in the state to put them to productive use for the benefit of the people.

Governor Mutfwang called for investments in the power sector, agricultural value chain, storage, irrigation systems, the revitalization of Jos Wildlife Park to boost

tourism and generate revenue and the reconstruction of the Jos Abattoir for meat processing and export.

The governor explained that the clement weather of the state, the hospitable nature of the people and the institutional framework his administration had put in place would support massive investments in the state and assured potential investors of a secure and conducive environment.

The Regional Industry Manager, Dan Croft, expressed the IFC's interest in investing in the state, noting that they would implement a proven investment model to ensure the state receives optimal and appropriate investments.

Both parties agreed to form a technical team to develop a framework and work out the modalities for the smooth commencement of investments in the state.



What subsidy?

I want to start by making a confession. I have difficulty in understanding basic Economics. I didn't do very well in the subject when I wrote GCE back then. Came out with a C6. Since then, I have deliberately steered clear of anything that has to do with figures and Economics. And each time there is a discourse in that area I simply apply my native intelligence to make my point.

Since the Babangida era, Nigerians have been told that unless subsidy on fuel is removed, our country, Nigeria, will continue to stagnate. Indeed, for the Babangida government to access a World Bank facility at that time, one of the conditionalities was for it to stop paying subsidy on fuel. As a result, fuel prices were jacked up and motorists were forced to pay more for it. Abacha too removed subsidy. Obasanjo, Yar'adua, Jonathan and Buhari followed in the footsteps of their predecessors. This led the Bretton Woods institutions to forgive Nigeria some of its debts and monies were returned to help the states develop their infrastructure.

Over time, different administrations have added to the cost of fuel in the name of subsidy removal. Since the Tinubu administration came on board, the sufferings of the citizens have been multiplied. He, without consultation, used executive fiat to remove whatever was left of the amorphous subsidy. This has led to the skyrocketing of the prices of goods and services and the citizenry exposed to hardships. Only God knows when things will stabilize. We have been told that subsidy removal will allow market forces to determine the cost of the commodity and grow the economy. Yet, there are no indications that there is a glimmer of hope at the end of the tunnel. Poor Nigerians are told to keep sacrificing for a tomorrow that is bleak and far off.

In fact, for some of us who do not understand the dynamics of economics, is the subsidy endless and amorphous? After several claims were made with regards to its removal, the thing keeps reoccurring. Can't it be dealt with once and for all?

Certainly, something is

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Can our leaders come clean when they are asked to account for their deeds while in the driver's seat? Can they in all sincerity tell the people and God that they did their best in running the country? Can the followership also sincerely say they have held the leadership to account? It is no wonder then that Okonjo Iweala, Jonathan's Finance Minister, alluded to the fact that fighting corruption is dangerous in Nigeria in her book, Fighting Corruption is Dangerous.”

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 wrong somewhere. I think that the more you look at this thing, the less you understand it. If over the years, subsidies have been removed, for how long will we have to contend with it? Is somebody not playing games with the lives of the people? Maybe someone is not being sincere and it is being buried in some subsidy that we cannot understand?

Over the years, we have been told that subsidy removal will make allowance for rebuilding decaying critical infrastructure. But what do we have on ground? Are our leaders, who have been mandated by us to run our country on our behalf, been completely sincere? Have they been honest? Have we as a people not been tossed around as if we are in a game of football or chess?

Can our leaders come clean when they are asked to account for their deeds while in the driver's seat? Can they in all sincerity tell the people and God that they did their best in running the country? Can the followership also sincerely say they have held the leadership to account? It is no wonder then that Okonjo Iweala, Jonathan's Finance Minister, alluded to

the fact that fighting corruption is dangerous in Nigeria in her book, *Fighting Corruption is Dangerous*.

Our refineries have suffered neglect over time. Turn around maintenance has become a veritable route to stupendous wealth for those lucky to be saddled with the responsibility of running them. Nepotism has become our greatest undoing. Competence has thus suffered. If you are not my brother you are not qualified. We destroy our institutions. We put deliberate clogs on their ways and refuse to allow them function and grow. We delight in growing other economies rather than our own. Imagine Abacha servicing the country even in death. Several million dollars have been returned as stolen monies kept in bank vaults in other climes.

Once you are appointed into public office, you become the rallying point of your locality. Everybody gathers in your house to pay homage. This in itself kills initiative. People become lazy and dependent.

Nigerians lack character. We are not a nation that punishes wrong doers. We celebrate thieves. We own them. If someone from my locality steals, I should not frown at it. He is my own. He has just taken a bit from the national cake on behalf of his community and, therefore, should not be punished. How can there not be subsidies that cannot be explained? When we finish eating our common patrimony and keep sacrificing on the altar of nepotism, ethnicity and regionalism we will one day wake up to a country that can offer us nothing.

The time to wake up from our long slumber is now. We have all that it takes to be a great nation. What we lack is good leadership and followership. We, therefore, need to change. Character is fundamental and central to this process of national transformation. You disobey the law; you must get punished. That way, we might start being accountable. Leaders must be elected based on competence and not sentiments. That should be the bottom line.

Tribute

Iliya Audu: Tribute to a gentleman editor

By CLEM OLUWOLE

THE shocking news of the passing of Senator Iliya Galiya Audu on June 17, 2024, sent me careering down the memory lane. On a Friday evening in the month of July, 1972, a call came to my uncle in Zaria where I was reporting for the influential New Nigerian Newspapers. The caller was my Zaria City Editor, Mr. Francis Talabi, one of the funniest men south of the Sahara.

The message was loud and clear: "Tell Clem to proceed to Jos (immediately); he is needed by **The Nigeria Standard** newspaper."

On the Sunday that followed, I packed some clothes and headed for Jos. The journey lasted a whole day. The road, largely untarred, was bumpy and riddled with potholes. The bus I boarded transferred to its occupants the battering it received from the potholes and trenches because the shock absorbers and the suspension had all collapsed.

I arrived at the Tin City to the warm embrace of its salubrious weather a contrast to the punishing Zaria climate. I navigated my way to a hotel located near the Kwararafa Cinema. It was past midnight when I checked into the hotel, with a revolt building up in my tummy. I had not had any meal after the light breakfast I took in Zaria. A drama unfolded immediately I took possession of the room. I sighted the strange figure of a dirty-looking man that could pass as a lunatic.

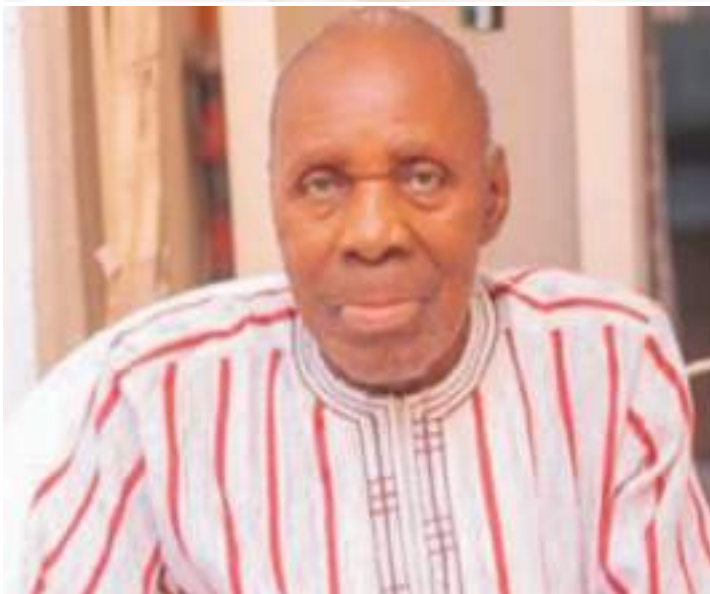
I backpedaled to the door in fright. Why should they allocate to me a room already occupied by a lunatic? I wondered aloud. What actually happened was that I had passed by a standing mirror in the poorly illuminated room. The image in the mirror was mine! The layers of dust I gathered in the course of the journey had transformed my appearance.

I managed to clean up my face and beat the dust off my clothes, and stepped out to look for some victuals to quell the revolt in my tummy, instigated by the god of throat. The hotel restaurant had since closed for the night. There was no way I could have been able to sleep despite the fatigue I suffered for more than 16 hours that the trip lasted - from 7 am to past 11 pm.

Fortunately, I found a roadside meal provider. I got fried beans cakes, plantain, yam, complete with fish, to quell the tummy rebellion. After the meal, I dragged my tired body to bed, catching about eight hours of sound, uninterrupted sleep. Still feeling fagged out, I had a warm bath, dressed up and headed for the premises of the Government Printer situated along the Murtala Mohammed Way, Jos that served as the operational base of the paper.

I met Mr. Simon Shango, my colleague in **The New Nigerian** who was instrumental to my invitation to Jos. Ahead of the establishment of the paper, the secretary of Benue-Plateau Football Association had appealed to the new management of the paper to get a strong hand for the sports desk for the simple reason that Jos (is) the nation's Bethlehem of football.

A few months before the birth of the paper, I had single-handedly covered the NUGA Games hosted by the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. That coverage exposed my talent as a sports maestro. Mr. Shango, who was the arrowhead for the recruitment of the editorial staff for the paper, was so impressed with my coverage of the games, hence he penciled down my name for the



sports desk.

Mr. Shango led me to the office of the pioneer Editor, Mr. Iliya Audu, for introduction. The editor could not believe I was the guy they were waiting for. He was expecting a Goliath of a man, but standing before him was a David, wondering if I was not too young to man the desk. He shrugged his broad shoulders and said: "Well, let us see how it goes."

Reacting, I said, "Sir, do not judge a book by its cover."

We all had a good laugh. Mr. Shango then ushered me to an adjacent office and no sooner had I taken my seat than a bulky file was dumped on the table. In the file were raw sports stories for my attention, which I did justice to.

My first impression of Mr. Audu was a pleasant one. Calm and amiable, he had a way of getting things done despite the teething problems that came with pioneering a newspaper with no printing equipment on ground. The paper had to be packaged in Jos and the materials ferried to faraway Benin to be printed by **The Nigerian Observer** press.

By the close of my second day at work, I requested for a relocation allowance. It was at that point that everyone realised that I had not even written an application for the job I was wanted for. A file was opened for me, my application letter filed, an appointment letter issued and an application for a relocation allowance followed - which the editor promptly approved. He even added some extra cash from his pocket.

I departed Jos back to Zaria and by the following Sunday, I was on my way again to Jos. Making two round trips on that punishing, government-forsaken Zaria-Jos road within one week was a nasty experience. And I wished I had a magic carpet to fly me

back to Zaria! However, the warm reception Mr. Audu and my colleagues gave me served as a salve to ease my body ache.

Mr. Audu was a Senior Information Officer at the time he was deployed from the Ministry of Information to pioneer the paper. He was given a blank cheque by the Military Governor, Police Commissioner Joseph Dechi Gomwalk, to comb the length and breadth of the Nigerian media space with an order to recruit the best hands for the paper.

Assisted by Mr. Shango, who was already in the media industry, he had a successful poaching. Although there were few newspapers in circulation at the time, Mr. Audu was able to attract some of the best brains around who were ready to venture into the unknown. You just had to encounter Mr. Audu and all your worries about leaping from certainty for uncertainty would just vanish. He was a thoroughbred professional and an excellent manager of men. He was a likable and exceptionally brilliant personality, with attention to detail.

The paper started as a weekly publication in July but turned daily after three years during which a complex had been built and equipped with a high velocity Goss Community printing press and all necessary auxiliary equipment. Before the paper assumed a daily status, it had announced itself as a force to be reckoned with in the country as the voice of the minorities, especially the Middle Belters.

Among the pioneer professionals, irrespective of their ethnic and religious persuasions, that made the paper a household name even as a weekly, besides Mr. Shango, were George Ohemu, Lekan Akinola, Victor Ude, Patrick Onyekachukwu, David Osunde, Joseph Angulu, Chris

Anana, Usman Adam, Yahuza Makongiji, Goke Awoyode, Tanko Kangiwa, Obiora Okeke, Niya Adekeye, Kunle Ajagunna, Isyaku Iliyasa (chief photographer), Danladi Audu (chief cartoonist) to mention those I can remember. It was a fantastic mix of high calibre professionals.

The flamboyant Arthur Hart headed the Lagos Office to drive business for the paper. Pwajok Adamu Nyam headed the advertisement department, complemented by Mr. Shango. Both of them were raking in advertisements for the new outfit, while Mr. A.O. Ojulari was the Company Secretary/Chief Accountant. Mr. Ezekiel Yesufu sat on the board of directors as the chairman. Mr. Charles Sharp, who midwived **The New Nigerian** Newspapers, was asked to recruit a general manager for the new media house. Mr. Sharp got a dashing Irish young man named Ian Relf to do the job.

If Mr. Audu had any hesitations about my ability to handle the sports desk, it did not take a long for me to (completely) put his doubts to flight. The sports pages of the paper became the main selling points for the paper. This was largely due to the new dimension I introduced to sports journalism, garnishing my reportage with CHIM, an acronym for Creativity, Humour, Idioms and Metaphors.

I remember this headline I cast for one sports story that got Mr. Audu screaming in excitement: "Day of massacre! Mighty Jets Bomb Police Machines in Benue-Plateau FA Cup clash!" The match ended 5 - 0 in favour of the Jets.

Despite the constitution of the board of directors and the appointment of a general manager, Mr. Audu remained the main driver

of the paper and he gave a good account of himself; he laid a solid foundation for paper. Three years into his editorship, he was removed and sent back to the Ministry of Information. I cannot remember his offence, if there was any at all. By that time, Mr. Dan Agbese had joined the paper as the Chief Sub-Editor after his Youth Service in 1975.

There was a near solidarity revolt by the editorial team following the editor's removal. I am not insinuating that Agbese was the instigator of the revolt. We all disliked a non-professional in the person of George Baba Hoomkwap coming to lead the paper. But Mr. Audu demonstrated an unusual calmness; he appealed to us not to sink the ship that he and the rest of us (the rebels) had laboured over the years to build.

Mr. Audu was to become a Senator representing Taraba South Senatorial District in the Second Republic from 1979 to 1983. My last contact with him was in Jos when a team of former management staff of the paper, appointed by the Jang administration to revamp the paper, paid him a visit in his residence in Jos in 2007 or thereabouts. Mr. Audu was the INEC's Resident Electoral Commissioner for Plateau State and the purpose of the visit was to tap into the rich reservoir of a man who held the key to what made the paper a howling success during his short tenure. And he was still looking his old self and sharp. He chose Jos, where his journalism career blossomed in the 70s, to breathe his last at the age of 86 after a protracted illness.

I join **The Nigeria Standard** family in mourning the passing of this gentleman editor. May the good Lord grant his gentle soul eternal rest and his family the fortitude to bear the painful loss? Amen.

VOX POP

'New anthem evokes a sense of pride'

Recently, President Bola Tinubu reintroduced the old national anthem, "Nigeria we hail thee" composed by our colonial masters. This has generated heated debate among citizens. Some have been against while others are for it. Our correspondents, Hosea Nyamlong and Jidauna Daring, went to town to find out how people feel about the anthem. Excerpts:



Haruna Bulus Majak, retired principal Government College Jos

The Nigeria anthem is a pledge that citizens should understand and embrace it as our own, with love and sense of patriotism when reciting it.

I remember in 1958 when I was in primary two, I could recite the anthem off heart, because of our teachers' commitment to ensure that we recited the anthem with dignity and pride.

Well, the re-introduced national anthem, to me, is a welcomed development, because it is meaningful. But what will make the difference is that we have to live exemplary lives as demanded by the anthem of the country.

I am in love with the re-introduced

national anthem more than the "Arise O compatriots" Today, I believe there are many students that are not aware that our first national anthem "Nigeria we hail thee" was written by our colonial masters (Lillian Jean William).

To sustain the re-introduced national anthem, it behooves on our leaders to, as a matter of respecting our country, live and lead by example. From the President down to councilors, they must be able to recite the anthem individually, not in unison, without any mistakes.

When we respect our national anthem and abide by what it demands, Nigeria will change.

However, I hope after the tenure of this administration, the next government will not come and change the anthem again. Our country should be respected when it comes to anything that is of national importance to citizens, not only our leaders while in office.

In view of this, the love of our country should be above anything other consideration. This love should be the love for our national anthem.

My final words to Nigerians is that we should look at the national anthem based on its wordings and not just mere recitation, the earlier we do, the better for our country.

The anthems lyrics evoke a sense of national pride, unity, and hope for a brighter future. This anthem also symbolises honouring the labour of our heroes past, their sacrifices and contributions to Nigeria's growth and also expressing determination to build a better future as we strive to make a commitment to work towards a united and prosperous Nigeria. Our flag, our pride, our hope symbolising national unity and aspirations. Overall, the Nigerian national anthem represents a call to unity, service, and collective progress, reflecting the country's history, values, and aspirations.

The re-introduction of the old national anthem is indeed, be a powerful symbol of unity and national pride. The lyrics emphasize

the importance of coming together as a nation, promoting justice, and celebrating national identity. By restoring the original anthem, Nigerians can reconnect with their rich cultural heritage and history, fostering a sense of shared values and traditions.

This move can be seen as a step towards healing and reconciliation, acknowledging the country's past and its journey towards a more united and prosperous future. The symbolic gesture of reintroducing the original anthem can help to bridge divides and promote a sense of belonging among all Nigerians, regardless of their ethnic, religious, or cultural backgrounds.

As our national anthem is reintroduced, remember that unity,

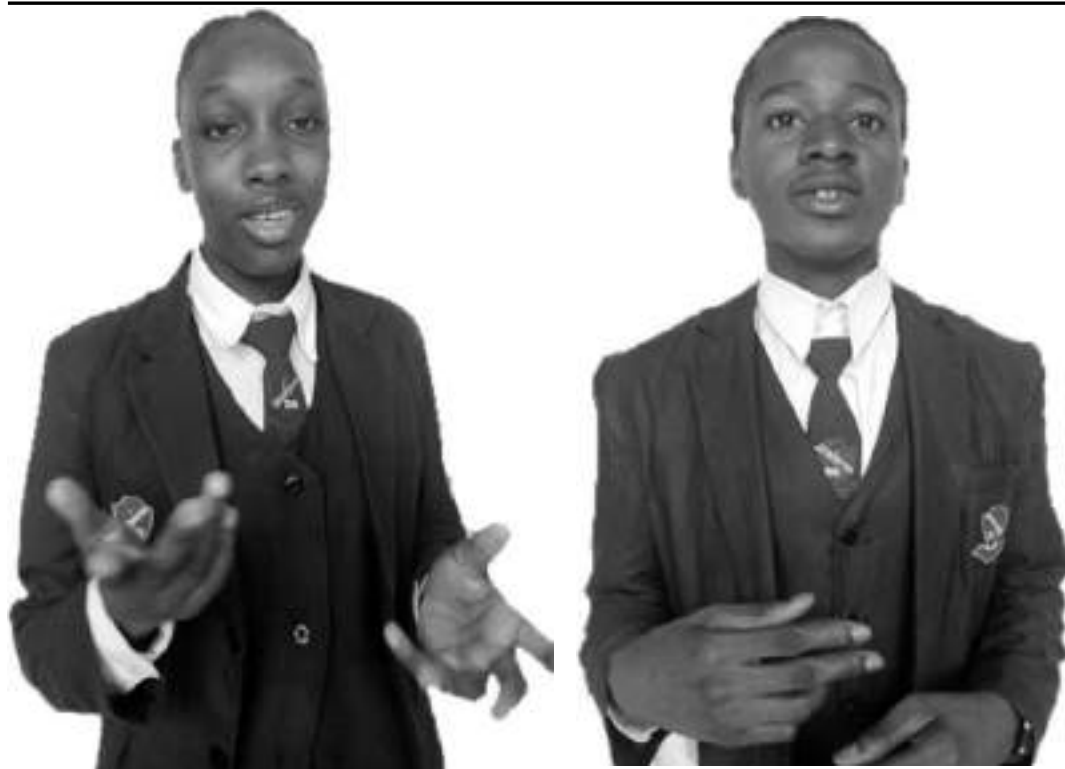
justice, and national pride are the foundation upon which our great nation is built. Let this iconic song be a rallying cry for togetherness, a celebration of our rich heritage, and a beacon of hope for a brighter future as a nation.

To embrace this symbol of national identity and let it inspire us to work towards a more united, prosperous, and just society for all. I want Nigerians to sing our anthem with pride, honour our history, and strive for a Nigeria where every citizen has a voice and a chance to thrive.

I believe that this anthem will be a reminder to us that together, we can achieve greatness and build a Nigeria that is a shining example for generations to come.



Jimoh Muyideen Lawal, resident of Abuja FCT, Diamond Court Estate



Fatima Mohammed and Anumba Ekene, students of St. Paul's Academy Jos

Well, in our opinion, as students, the recently abolished national anthem and the re-introduction of the first national anthem, was not necessary. This is because there are many other issues that needs to be addressed. However, we are not in any way condemning such development. The abolished anthem for us it was more inspirational, as it was

also a call on Nigerian citizen. With this call, citizens are expected to obey the national call to service of building our nation.

Our differences does not matter, but what matters most is our unity as we work towards contributing to the progress of our country.

We want a better and peaceful Nigeria, the government on its part should work on how to better the economy of the country, where citizens would enjoy the dividends of democracy. As for the re-introduced anthem, it is also laden with meaning to us as a nation "where we hail".

"Let this iconic song be a rallying cry for togetherness, a celebration of our rich heritage, and a beacon of hope for a brighter future as a nation."

Sports

Rangers crowned League champions in Jos

By **ANDRE D. BISYIT**

THE new Jos Zaria Road Stadium, Plateau State, was agog with dignitaries, football administrators and enthusiasts who gathered to witness an epoch-making event as Enugu Rangers Football Club was crowned as the champions of Nigeria's Premier Football League for the 8th time.

Rangers won the league with a game to spare after beating Bendel Insurance 2-0 in the match-day 37 and their last game 2-1 against relegated Gombe United, which added to their points to finish the league with 70 points.

Plateau State had witnessed this same historic event when Plateau United clinched the NPFL 2016/2017 season title with a 2-0 victory over then Enugu Rangers (now Rangers International of Enugu) when Plateau United needed a point to lay their hands on the title, then led by Coach Kennedy Boboye, at the Rwang Pam Township Stadium.

On this occasion, Governor Mutfwang, amidst cheers, presented Nigeria's prestigious league title to the winners alongside Enugu State governor and other dignitaries.

In an interview with journalists after the thrilling encounter, an obviously excited Governor of Enugu State, Peter Mbah, said that they built on the successes recorded in the past and worked harder in order to make them fly the country's flag at the Confederation of Africa Football (CAF) Champions League. He promised that the team would replicate the feat at the continental level since sports is a veritable economic catalyst aside being a unifying factor. He assured of the necessary support to enable the team remain at the top.

"We are not going to be complacent because of the success we recorded here. We are going to replicate this feat at the continental level," he assured.

Fidelis Ilechukwu, Technical Adviser of Enugu Rangers, disclosed that the secret behind his team's success was their hard work and determination, adding that they also prepared well for the league and put aside the away and home matches dichotomy which mentality which helped them a lot.

"We prepared well for the season and knew we can win or lose as well. That's why we remove the home and away matches mentality as we see all games as the same which helped us in the second round of the League," he said.

The soccer tactician, who is the immediate past Plateau United coach, disclosed that he was familiar with the intrigues of the



CAF Champions League, adding that plans were already in top gear to recruit more experienced players to add to the ones on

ground to enable them perform creditably in the league.

He assured that, with the necessary support from

management, the sky would be their limit.

"Plateau State is one of the best states in Nigeria. I have said

that before. They are good people in attitude, disciplined in character and accommodate everyone, irrespective of where you come from. So, today they've shown that they love and miss me and I want to commend GTI for partnering with the NFF, which has given the league wide coverage," he noted.

Earlier, in their separate remarks, Ibrahim Gusau, NFF President, and Abubkar Lawal, General Manager, GTI Asset Management and Trust Limited, commended the developmental strides of Governor Mutfwang and quest for promoting sports and assured of their support.

They also promised to provide quality schemes aimed at enhancing the value of the elite league using internationally accepted best practices.

Taming the monster of football hooliganism in Nigerian

By **IBRAHIM T. LOT**

So many problems are bedeviling the Nigeria Premier Football League (NFL). But one nagging issue that has become an incurable disease is insecurity and crowd violence or encroachment ravaging the league.

Incidents of crowd violence were recorded in the just concluded 2023/2024 league season, leaving lovers of the beautiful game worried and asking questions.

Enyimba International of Aba were recently slammed with a N10m fine in addition to forfeiting the abandoned match-day 35 in Enugu to eventual League winners, Rangers International FC. Also, three Enyimba players Akanni Elijah, Eze Ekwutoziam and Chibuke Nwaiwu were also sanctioned.

Over 35,000 fans crammed into the 20,000 capacity Nnamdi Azikiwe Stadium to witness which of the two teams would pick the three points. A late penalty awarded to

Rangers during extra time led to Enyimba fans trooping into the main bowl to hold up proceedings. The match was subsequently abandoned. As a result, cost Enyimba the game and the league title.

In Kano, Kano Pillars FC supporters were found guilty of encroaching on the field of play in their exuberance to celebrate a 93rd minute goal during their week 4 match against Rivers United.

In a separate incident involving Heartland of Owerri, the NPFL expressed serious concerns over the behavior of the club's supporters. The fans were accused of holding back players and officials at the stadium after a match, thereby creating a situation that required the intervention of security personnel.

In Yengoa, Bayelsa United were charged for breaching the NPFL 24 framework and rules in their match-day 37 against 3SC for

failing to provide adequate security and effective crowd control which resulted in the assault on an opposing player.

They were also charged for failing to restrict access to authorized persons to all restricted areas, resulting in the assault on 3SC goalkeeper, Okiemute Odah, leading to N1m and N3m fines respectively. They were also directed to pay Odah a compensation of N250,000. identify and prosecute The culprit of the assault would be identified and prosecuted.

Lately, hooliganism has become very common among NPFL home fans. But it is actually sad that the League Management Commission (LMC) didn't see this matter of violence as a significant issue.

The fact that this monster is still waxing stronger, and may continue to do so, is obviously because the LMC seems to be at a loss as to how to tame this the menace of this

monster. And as long as this persists, it paints a very bad picture of Nigeria in the eyes of the sporting world.

Playing matches behind closed doors, points deduction and player's suspension will not be a lasting solution to the problem. Until stiffer punishment are matted out to those elements giving Nigerian football a bad name, the league will forever be tagged as being 'underdeveloped'.

Football should be enjoyed by fans and not get them killed. Perhaps by picking positive notes from other African leagues such as the Bataloa League of Morocco or the PSL in South Africa, we can also boast of a standard league in Nigeria. But until then, violence will continue casting a dark shadow over our league's development.

Crowd encroachment and violence have always dented the image of the Nigerian League which has adversely affected its development.



"I want to use our father, His Eminence, the Sultan of Sokoto, who is a permanent picture in all developmental issues in this country, as my point of reference to recognise and appreciate all our royal fathers present here". "And I have a simple message for the deputy governor of Sokoto. Yes, His Eminence is the Sultan of Sokoto, but he is more than that; he represents an idea. He is an institution that all of us in this country need to guard, protect, promote, preserve and project for the good of our nation."

Kashim Shettima at the opening of the North West Peace and Security Summit holding in Katsina

Quest



writer

SANII IBN SALIHU

Post-Eid Al Kabir lessons

IN the Name of Allah Most Gracious Most Merciful. All praise and gratitude are due to Allah Ta'ala Lord of the Universe. May the peace, blessings and benediction of Allah the Most High Be upon our beloved Prophet Muhammad Sallallahu Alaihi wa Sallam His household, companions and those who follow their footsteps till the day of judgement. Aameen.

Activities marking this year's Eid Al Kabir officially ended last week with the observance of the last day of the Days of Tashriq (the days of sacrifice and praises to Allah Ta'ala) by both pilgrims and non-pilgrims alike.

One underlining lesson on the Day of Arafat for both pilgrims and non-pilgrims alike is remembering the Day of Judgement wherein all creations of Allah Most High will be called to account for their deeds. Another essential denominator is the reminder throughout the Hajj rites of the universality of the Muslim brotherhood in which the universality of Muhammad Sallallahu Alaihi wa Sallam's message is well established beyond any iota of doubt.

It also serves as a constant reminder of Prophet Muhammad Sallallahu Alaihi wa Sallam's farewell pilgrimage where he reiterated the basic premise of Islam - universality of human kind without any form of racial discrimination or differentiation among mankind. Perhaps the most important single reminder from the Arafat gathering is the sanction by Allah of Islam as the complete way of life and Allah's last chosen path.

Be that as it may, what lessons do we derive from the Eid Al Kabir and sundry rites that commenced with the Hajj rites? First, the Hajj is a leveler of people which demolishes any form of stratification of human kind as it brings both the high and the low to



the same level as servants of Allah the Most High whose standing or, if you like, position before Allah is judged by their level of piety. It also teaches self-discipline and self-control as well as assisting one another in doing good deeds.

The underlining essence of the entire Hajj rites is acquiring Allah's utmost pleasure, gaining His forgiveness and reward with paradise as Prophet

Muhammad Sallallahu Alaihi wa Sallam admonished: "Hajji Al Mabru (Hajj that is Acceptable to Allah) has no reward than Aljannah, and "Whoever performs Hajj (correctly) without indecency, nor foul language becomes (clean) as the day his/her mother gave birth to him/her."

Second, it teaches balancing between worldly materialistic acquisition with engaging in performance of religious duties. The allurements of

engaging in trade while at the same time synergising with the performance of Hajj rites as and when due bring far reaching balancing of priorities in one's life, even after the pilgrimage.

Furthermore, the most important lesson that needs to be carried over in our lives after the Hajj and Eid Al Kabir is drawing from the faith, sacrifice and obedience of Prophet Ibrahim Alaihi Salaam, his son Prophet

Isma'il Alaihi Salaam, who both submitted to Allah without question, defeated satanic machinations to distract them from their total obedience to their Creator in the manner both son and father underwent their trials and excellently passed are attributes that today's Muslims need to imbibe for a better society.

In conclusion, it could be seen that the as the entire Hajj and Eid Al Kabir mark the end of the year in the Islamic calendar Muslims are encouraged to undertake soul-searching and personal evaluation with the aim of being better in the worship of Allah.

Uztaz Salihu is the Director-General, Media and Publicity, Fityanul Islam of Nigeria

"The underlining essence of the entire Hajj rites is acquiring Allah's utmost pleasure, gaining His forgiveness and reward with paradise as Prophet Muhammad Sallallahu Alaihi wa Sallam admonished: "Hajji Al Mabru (Hajj that is Acceptable to Allah) has no reward than Aljannah, and "Whoever performs Hajj (correctly) without indecency, nor foul language becomes (clean) as the day his/her mother gave birth to him/her."