

Tolls: FG Targets N814.08bn From Makurdi Lafia-Keffi-Abuja Highway
 >>>page 06



Benue APC Leadership Crisis Resurfaces
 >>>page 10

Thirteen Benue Assembly Members Reject Removal of Chief Judge

...NBA Condemns Assembly's Move
 >>>page 07



Next Tor Sankera Must Be Of Worthy Character, Ready To Lay Down Life For Own People-Alia
 >>>page 09

gateNews

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Groups In Kwande, Sankera Fault Alia's Position On Insecurity



Gov. Alia

Mr. Tiza

Mr. Iorkyaa

Groups in Kwande and Sankera areas of Benue State have faulted Governor Hyacinth Alia on his recent speech concerning the state of insecurity in the state. The Turan Development Association (TUDA) urged Alia to take urgent action to address the worsening security situation in Turan communities, which have suffered significant attacks and displacement. TUDA in a press statement

signed by President General, Mr. Festus Terkura Iorkyaa and Secretary-General, Mr. Emmanuel Ijever said contrary to the Governor's recent statement that peace has returned to Kwande, the reality on the ground tells a different story. The group said the Turan community has witnessed relentless violence, with at least 50 persons killed between December 2024 and February 2025. TUDA also said homes, farms, and properties were destroyed, leaving the Turan people displaced with many living in fear, hunger, and despair. The group said the Governor's assertion points to the fact that he has not been adequately briefed by security agencies and his aides on the true state of affairs in Turan. "As the Chief Security Officer of the state, the Governor has a fundamental responsibility to ensure the safety and security of all communities.

"The ongoing violence

Army Chief Directs Troops To Stamp Out Security Threats In Benue

The Chief of Army Staff (COAS), Lieutenant General, Olufemi Oluyede, has directed troops of Operation WHIRL STROKE, operating in Benue and neighboring states to decisively

tackle all security threats within their area of responsibility to restore peace and stability in the region and the nation at large. The Army Chief gave the directive during his maiden

operational visit to the Headquarters of the Joint Task Force Operation WHIRL STROKE in Makurdi. During the visit, the Commander of Operation WHIRL STROKE, Major General Lewis

Lepdung, briefed the COAS on the achievements recorded so far in the ongoing operations, as well as some of the challenges confronting the troops.

In response, General

cont. on page 02



Gen. Oluyede

cont. on page 02

Dualization Of Makurdi- Enugu Road: FG Urges Benue To Hasten Up Compensation >>>page 08

Groups In Kwande, Sankera Fault Alia's...

cont. from front page
demands immediate intervention, enhanced security presence, and a concrete plan to restore stability and allow displaced persons to return safely to their ancestral homes.

"We urge the Governor to take urgent and decisive action to prevent further loss of lives and destruction in Turan land," the group said.

TUDA also expressed deep concern over recent remarks made by the Governor, accusing former Secretary to the Government of Benue state, Prof. Joseph Alakali, of fraudulent activities, describing it as unjust and damaging to the elder statesman's reputation, as well as Turan people.

In a related development, the Movement for Turan Liberation (MTL), in collaboration with Turan Youth Volunteers, also carried out a peaceful protest in Jato-Aka, Kwande local government area to express their deep concerns over the persistent killings of innocent Turan people by Fulani herdsmen.

The protesters who were joined by numerous Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), said there is no peace in Turan, that killings have continued unabated.

They also called on both federal and state governments to intervene in the humanitarian situation. Meanwhile, another group, the Coalition of Sankera Elites, CSE, has raised the alarm over the activities of armed herdsmen in the Sankera axis of Benue
cont. on page 05

Benue Monarch Decries Attack on Subjects

By Matthew Adah

The 3rd - Class Chief of Otukpo -Akpa intermediate Area, Chief Rigas Assam, has condemned in strong terms, the recent invasion of Okpomaju and other neighboring communities in Otukpo Local Government Area of Benue State, by suspected herdsmen. Chief Assam, who made the condemnation while reacting to the recent invasion and killing of several residents of Okpomaju community by suspected Fulani militia, described the invasion "as unprovoked, cowardly and beastly. According to him his people deserve the rights to live in their homes without fear of attacks, warning that such unprovoked assaults on his subjects would no longer be tolerated.

The royal father maintained that despite all positive and non kinetic approaches by his community to ensure that peace reigns in the land, the Fulani herders have chosen the path of war over a land that is not theirs. While commiserating



Assam

with the families of those who lost their loved ones, the

monarch said the loss is personal to him and wished the slain a

place in the bosom of God.

He called on the

security agencies and government at all levels to immediately rise up to the occasion, by arresting and prosecuting the assailants to stop further bloodletting in his domain even as he called for relief materials for the victims.

Chief Assam, asserted that this moment demands serious efforts towards defending the chiefdom rather than making unfounded allegation of selling of land to the Fulani against one another.

He however, called on his people not to embark on reprisal attacks, no matter the level of the provocation to allow the security agents carryout diligent investigations.

Recall that, recently, Okpomaju and its neighboring villages were attacked by suspected Fulani militia which resulted in the death of several persons with scores injured and displaced.

Water Resources Minister Vows To Make Benue Open Defecation Free By 2025

The Minister of Water Resources and Sanitation, Professor Joseph Terlumun Utsev, has vowed to make Benue State open defecation free before the end of 2025. Professor Utsev made this vow at a National

Retreat on the Clean Nigeria Use the Toilet Campaign and the unveiling of the National WASH Information, Education, and Communication Material in Abuja. Professor Utsev urged all state governments

present at the retreat to develop a clear, time-bound ODF Action Plan that aligns with the revised Clean Nigeria Campaign Implementation Strategy 2025-2030.

According to the minister, in order to bridge the gap in

access to WASH facilities in federal government institutions, the ministry is currently implementing the SchoolWASH and Health WASH programmes in

cont. on page 09

Army Chief Directs Troops To Stamp...

cont. from front page

Oluyede assured the troops of his unwavering support to ensure they meet their operational objectives.

The COAS further emphasized his

commitment to prioritizing the welfare of the troops and their families. He also pledged to provide necessary combat enablers to boost operational effectiveness and

facilitate the swift achievement of their mission.

As part of his operational tour, the Army Chief visited the Nigerian Army School of Military Engineering and the

401 Special Forces Brigade in Makurdi.

He inspected ongoing projects aimed at addressing the acute accommodation shortage and improving living conditions within the

barracks community.

This visit underscores the COAS's resolve to enhance troop welfare and bolster their capacity to tackle security challenges effectively.



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Social Media And Benue Politics

Social media refers to the online platforms where users share information and connect each other through text, photos, and other contents. The widely used social media platforms in Benue State are Facebook, You Tube, Whatsap, Instagram, Tik Tok, Facebook Massager amongst others.

However, the usage in the state is mostly meant to fuel crisis in the state. For quite some time now, social media especially the Facebook platform has been a viable political weapon to fight political opponents in Benue State.

Every politician in Benue State has a social media team not just to sell his potentials to the society but to harm the reputation of opponents and fabricate lies to overheat Benue Polity. Every political mess in Benue State forms content of the social media, therefore, disparaging the state politically before the community of nations.

The Benue social media saga on the events of the burials of Wantaregh Paul Unongo and Kpamor JT Orkar are the most recent pitiable incidents where social media users in Benue State displayed utmost sense of immaturity. Rather than mourn the demise of the two political heroes of the state, the uncensored contents of Benue State social media users exaggerated the political turmoil at the respective burials, putting Benue politics to bad light.

According to Ana Vasileva, the vice President at Translational Research, Inc. United States and a social media activist; "the more social media we have, the more we think we are connecting, yet we are really disconnecting from each other. Most often, if social media users in the state are not disintegrating Benue politicians, they are fuelling a crisis or demeaning the reputation of famous political actors in the state.

It is high time we stopped this ugly trend. Major political players in Benue State should disengage in recruiting unsubstantiated Social media users to either manage their image or batter the image of political opponents as that alone can reduce the political tension in the state.

We are therefore, of the opinion that Benue State House of Assembly should enact a law that would bring the misuse of the social media (social media thuggery) to its knees. Apart from other punitive measures, convicts of social media crimes should be ban from subsequent participation in the area found culpable. If convicted for a political cybercrime, the person in question should be ban from political participation in the state likewise economic and other areas. The law should create special courts to trial social media offences in the state.

Also, we appeal to the state government to meaningfully engage the Benue youths as that is the major way to dissuade them from looking at the social media as avenue to exhibit patent crudity for either political favours or financial gains.

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To stimulate sustainable development and progress through dissemination of balanced and truthful information.

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We are positioned to become a leading national daily newspaper that sets agenda for national development by upholding best journalistic ethics so as to be objective in our reportage and accommodation of diverse views; also being fair to all so as to provide balanced and truthful information that will stimulate sustainable development.

Groups In Kwande, Sankera Fault Alia's...

cont. from page 02
state, lamenting that over 1,000 individuals have so far lost their lives to the marauders who also ravaged over 2,000 villages with properties worth billions of naira destroyed.

Sankera axis comprises of Ukum, Logo and Katsina-Ala Local Government Areas, LGAs, of the state.

Addressing the media weekend in Makurdi, leader of the Coalition, Mr. Job Tiza who decried the security situation in Sankera, the food hub of Benue, pointed out that armed herdsmen have forced the people to flee their homes and farms and taking refuge in Internally Displaced Persons, IDPs, camps and homes of loved ones in other communities.

He insisted that the government was not doing enough to tackle insecurity in that part of the state in order to protect the lives and property of the huge farming populace which had since become a threat to the food security of the state and the country at large.

He stated that since July 2023 "the people of Ugbaam, Kundav, Borikyo, Mbatian, Mbazum, and parts of Uyam Council Wards in Ukum Local Government have been forcibly displaced from their ancestral homes for the first time in recorded history. These homes are now permanently occupied by the marauding herdsmen. They are grazing freely as we make this press statement.

"Statistically, these six council wards account for 50 percent of Ukum's population. Thus, it is not an exaggeration to state that about half of the local government's population is displaced

and currently seeking refuge either in IDPs camps or with relatives in Sankera and Zaki Biam.

"Over two thousand villages in Sankera have been devastated, with more than one thousand individuals killed by the invaders and properties worth billions of naira destroyed. Our communities are helpless, for it appears the government has surrendered our land to these invaders and criminals.

"Sankera is predominantly an agrarian society, and the intermediate area is vital to Benue's status as the Food Basket of Nigeria. However, we can no longer access our farmlands as Sankera is now facing serious starvation and unable to provide food for the nation. This is a food security crisis that should worry every person of goodwill." Recalling some of the attacks and killings perpetrated by the armed herdsmen in the area, the Coalition noted that "on Saturday March 9, 2024, armed herdsmen invaded Gbagir, a settlement in Tyuluv Council Ward of Ukum

LGA and killed 68 persons. Also, on August 11, 2024, over 80 persons were killed by herdsmen in Ayati and other parts of Borikyo Council Ward of Ukum. They were accorded a mass burial just to mention but a few.

"In Logo LGA, on July 28, 2024 armed

Abeda – Ayilamo road. They also proceeded to Ayilamo town where they killed in cold blood, Mr. Aza Dooior and his son at about 8:30 pm and injured three others

"On October 11, 2024 at about 8:30pm they attacked Uzer settlement in Tombo Council Ward and

killer herdsmen murdered Orseer Iorzua Gbam at Fofi village on Ayilamo-Abeda road. Also on the same date at about 5pm they attacked Tse- Vir, Tse- Akombo and Tse- Agule villages in Mbaniange community, Mbagber Council Ward, Logo LGA and murdered 11

Tswarev/Ukeremberg ya Council Wards and



herdsmen attacked and murdered Mr. Terdoo Hembraor on Anyiin-Awashua road when he was conveying a passenger to Fanu crossing point at River Benue. On October 9, 2024 at about 8:30pm, in multiple attacks, the herdsmen also murdered the late Solomon Kwanta of Tse Kwanta in Tomatar Iwendyer, a 300 level student of University of Calabar. He was murdered on

murdered Mrs. Ulagh Isaac and her son. Also on October 19, 2024 at about 8pm they attacked Anyiin town and murdered 14 persons. On Friday October 18, 2024 they attacked the locals in the farm at Kurungu village in Iwendyer community, Tombo Council Ward and murdered two persons: Igba Mtswenen and Ioryina Adinya.

"On October 29, 2024 at about 4:30pm, the

persons. On November 4, 2024 they invaded Anyiin, Ayilamo and environs and killed 17 people leaving several others injured and destroying properties worth millions of naira. And on November 24, 2024 at about 6:30am they invaded Azege settlement in Tombo Council Ward and murdered 17 persons. "The records are there for anyone to verify that the whole of T o m b o ,

cont. on page 06

We Have Not Suspended Bursar ICT Director - BSU

Benue State University, Makurdi has refuted the claims by an online newspaper; "Nation Pride" that the university suspended its Bursar and ICT Director over allegations of fraud amounting to more than N2b naira. A press statement signed by the Registrar and Secretary to the council, Barnabas

Hemba and made available to journalists said the decision for the Bursar, Dr. Amos Egwurube and the Director of ICT, Mr. Terna Abuul to step aside was taken by the University Governing Council to facilitate certification exercise not as a result of fraud as reported by the newspaper. According to the

statement, the publication claims that Aondona Tor-Anyiin is the Registrar and Secretary to the University Governing Council is factually incorrect. The statement added that the allegations of financial misstatement and a supposed conspiracy to crash the university portal is unfounded,

scandalous, malicious, character assassination, baseless and defamatory, reiterating that accusations were presented without verified facts. The university called on the staff, students of the university and the general public to disregard the unfounded claims by the author of the story, Mr. Henry

Ibya, as the university is committed to transparency, accountability and due process in all its operations. The release urged Mr. Henry Ibya to withdraw in writing, the write up in the Nation Pride within 48 hours in two national dailies of The Nation and This Day newspapers or risk court action.

Tolls: FG Targets N814.08bn From Makurdi-Lafia-Keffi-Abuja Highway

The Federal government in partnership with the Exim Bank of China is targeting a toll collection of N814.08 billion on the Makurdi-Lafia-Keffi-Abuja Highway to repay the \$542 million loan for the construction of the road. This amount was calculated using the prevailing official exchange rate of N1,502 = \$1 USD. The contract which was executed using the EPC+F a financing

model where Engineering, Procurement, and Construction (EPC) services are combined with financing (the "+F" part). This model allows for the provision of financing solutions, such as export loans and credit insurance, to support the project's implementation. In the context of the Nigeria-China Exim bank loan for roads, the EPC+F model is used to finance the construction of several roads the total

number which was not readily available as at the time of filing this report. The Keffi-Abuja-Makurdi Expressway is one of such projects which involves the expansion and dualization of the existing carriageway and has been used to flag off the exercise. The project is valued at \$542 million, with the China Exim bank providing 85 percent of the funding and the Nigerian government contributing 15 percent.

The minister of works, Engr. David Umahi while inspecting the Kaduna section of the Abuja-Kaduna-Kano carriageway which is currently under construction and is expected to come on stream by March, explained that only completed roads within the geopolitical zones that fall to the economic corridors will be tolled. Umahi said, "Before we toll any road we would have 100 percent completed the road, but where we have done



roads, completed, maybe in the past 10 years and it is failing and we are still working in some sections, we reach an agreement with the stakeholders because one of the key problems of our roads is lack of maintenance. "We have to involve the

private sector in this maintenance. So if you have a road that is 200 kilometers and you have concluded maybe 150, we can discuss with the public, because if we leave that 150 without maintenance, then the problem is that it can go bad".

He further said, "for now, we are not tolling any road we have not completed."

Recall, the Federal government announced a plan to build toll gates on only 5,050 kilometers of dual carriageways it owns out of the 35,000 kilometers of federal roads nationwide.

This decision was taken after the Federal Executive Council approved the reintroduction of toll gates on federal highways as far back as 2021.

The toll gates are expected to also generate revenue for road maintenance and repayment of investors who have invested in building or completing roads under the Highway Development Management Initiative. Special Adviser (Media) to the Minister of Works, Barr Orji Uchenna Orji, told Sunday Vanguard in a telephone interview that, "Sections of the Keffi-Akwaha-Makurdi road was done on EPC+F and funded up to 85 percent by the China Exim Bank and the Federal Government paid 15 percent counterpart funding.

"And the job was executed satisfactorily by the China Harbour Ltd. Part of the agreement is that they will toll the road and then recoup the money

cont. on page 7

Prioritise Power Sector, PPP To Avert Neocolonialism, Envoys warn Nigeria

Serving and retired Nigerian diplomats, under the aegis of the Association of Foreign Relations Professionals of Nigeria (AFRPN), have warned that if Nigeria and the rest of Africa must be liberated economically, its power sector must be prioritised. It also said that to avert neocolonialism, a Public, Private Partnership (PPP) approach must be adopted towards economic emancipation. Speaking, yesterday, in Abuja through its leadership, the body said its seventh yearly lectures, scheduled for Thursday, would explore the theme of Economic Liberation

Through PPP: A Catalyst Against Neocolonialism in Africa. Describing electricity as crucial to driving industries, the body expressed worries that the Nigerian industrial sector was on the verge of collapse due to shutting down of several industries over power instability. It held that it had become imperative now, more than ever before, for the country to focus attention on the power sector so that its citizens could seamlessly engage in agro and other industrial activities capable of boosting the economy. He said: "Small and medium enterprises ought to be encouraged within the context of policy, fiscal arrangements and the

provision of incentives such as the ease of doing business. "China is a socialist country, but today, President Xi Jinping is meeting with private sector operators in China. Currently, the country has about 55 million registered private sector operators. "Dangote refinery is already changing the dynamics in the oil and gas industry in Nigeria. So, it is very significant that the government pays attention to PPP towards encouraging the expansion in West Africa and the rest of Africa to enable them to compete favourably with other countries of the world." The group wondered what successive governments had done to encourage small and

medium-scale enterprises to become resilient enough to drive the economy. The President of the association, Ambassador Gani A. Lawal, while addressing the media, stated that the body aimed to make Nigeria and Africa, a great player and respected voice within the international arena. Stressing that foreign policy was an extension of internal policy, dictated by the notions of the external environment, Lawal added that impactful foreign policy could not be conducted in an atmosphere of poor internal political and economic dynamics. "While acknowledging that democratic governance offers the best approach to

populist foreign policy goals, nurturing democracy, however, requires the creation of a robust and elaborate educationally informed population that will act as the vanguard of democracy. "For Nigeria to continue to maintain a leadership position, it must increase its weight of military-industrial capability, economic prosperity at home, and the readiness to assist its neighbours and lesser third world democracies. It must also invest abundantly in regional integration and cooperation, silencing the guns, support for less developed neighbours and conflict resolution through dialogue," Lawal said.

Groups In Kwande, Sankera Fault Alia's...

cont. from page 02

Benue Group Protests Over Sale Of Dangote Cement Shares, Others

A civic group, Benue Good Governance Crusaders, has called on the Benue State House of Assembly to prevent Governor Hyacinth Alia from selling the state's shares in Dangote Cement.

The group also urged lawmakers to investigate previous sales of Benue's shares in Zenith Bank Plc and other state-owned enterprises.

In a statement signed by its President, Felix Atetan, and Secretary, Peter Ameh, the group accused the Governor of engaging in economic sabotage by allegedly disposing of key state assets without due process.

"As a group dedicated to defending democracy and promoting transparency, we have a duty to raise the alarm whenever we observe wrongdoing," the statement read.

"We wish to draw the attention of well-meaning Benue citizens and Nigerians to the economic atrocities being committed by the state government."

The group further alleged that Governor Alia is planning to privatise Benue Links Limited, the only viable state-owned transport company, by selling it to a Lagos-based businessman.

It also claimed that proxies are being used to take control of Dangote Cement under the guise of reclaiming the state's investment.

"Last year, Governor Alia, through BIPC, sold the state's shares in Zenith Bank and other enterprises worth N12 billion. To divert attention from the huge proceeds, new companies are being established to create the illusion of fresh investments," the statement added.

The group condemned the sale of state assets, citing the recent sale of Benue Printing and Publishing Company (BPPC) without due process.



It called on the House of Assembly to summon Governor Alia and the BIPC Managing Director to explain the alleged asset disposals. Additionally, the group demanded full public disclosure of all sales conducted under Alia's administration and called on the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) to investigate the matter.

"We expect these demands to be met promptly to ensure accountability and transparency in Benue State," the group stated. However, Benue State Government had earlier vowed to take action against those behind the sale of Benue Cement Company, BCC, Gboko, who also took deliberate steps to shortchange the state of its statutory right, entitlements and privileges in Dangote

Cement, the new majority shareholder.

Addressing the media weekend in Makurdi, the Managing Director of Benue Investment and Property Company, BIPC, Dr. Raymond Asemakaha cautioned that those behind the alleged under table transaction have seven days to take steps to prevail on Dangote Industries to ensure that the rights and privileges of the state were restored.

The Managing Director said: "we would make their names available if they would not call Dangote to settle with us in the next seven days.

"If that is not done we would avail their names and do everything possible to prosecute them. We know what happened and we have documented evidence

to ensure that the Benue people have justice."

Dr. Asemakaha reeled out the terms of settlement as ordered by the court to include "that BCC ensure that Benue State/BIPC retains at least 10 percent equity holding in the company.

"That apart from the two Board seats in BCC Plc, Benue State be given the position of the Deputy Managing Director as well as two slots out of the five top management positions. There should also be a company policy to engage young qualified Benue State indigenes in the services of the Company.

"That the Cement Sale and Distribution Policy of the Company shall be structured so as to promote and encourage entrepreneurship in Benue State and the catchment area; and in this regard, special emphasis be laid on the immediate community to attract participation in the business of cement distribution.

"That the Company shall also evolve a policy to encourage our state's teaming entrepreneurs to participate in other ancillary commercial activities of the

Company like cement transportation/haulage and supply services.

"That a definite corporate policy on environmental hazard management and control be articulated by the Company in line with the industrial standard and practice.

"That Dangote undertakes to preserve the present corporate name of the Company (Benue Cement Company Plc) and its logo shall not be changed now or in the future, for whatever reason, except with proper consultation with the Government should the need arise."

He noted that as a management and organization that placed high premium on processes and procedures, "we briefed one of our External Solicitors; to write to the Management of Dangote Industries and demand for the allotment of 111,438,493 units of shares in satisfaction of the Terms of Settlement that was entered into as Judgment of the Court at the instance of Dangote Industries and in addition, the payment of BIPC's accrued dividend and other

entitlements since the takeover of the Company amounting to N65,871,293, 212.30 as at August 1, 2024.

"In furtherance of our instruction, the firm wrote the said letter and caused same to be served on Dangote Industries Headquarters in satisfaction of administrative requirements and corporate governance principles in addition to the exchange of other correspondences on the above subject matter.

"However and as at this day, Dangote Industries Plc has neither responded to the letters nor settled the outstanding entitlements. The various letters written to Dangote Industries on the above subject matter are also available for sighting and confirmation.

"It is on the basis of the foregoing that we are obliged to brief the good people of Benue State and the concerned members of the public of these developments and our efforts towards remedying the situation through legal and judicial processes."

Thirteen Benue Assembly Members Reject Removal of Chief Judge

...NBA Condemns Assembly's Move

Thirteen members of the Benue State House of Assembly have distanced themselves from what they described as the purported resolution to remove the state Chief Judge, Justice Maurice Ikpambese.

Honourable Douglas Akya of Makurdi South Constituency announced the dissociation while addressing journalists at the residence of Hon

Beckie Orpin, in Makurdi.

Twelve other members of the House, including Mrs Orpin were present at the briefing.

"This action is not only unconstitutional, it violates the principles of separation of powers and fair hearing which is necessary for the sustenance of democracy," Honourable Akya stated.

"The provisions of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of

Nigeria 1999, as amended, clearly states a Chief Judge of a state can only be removed on recommendation of the National Judicial Council which is responsible for disciplinary actions against judicial officers on an address supported by two-third majority of members of the House of Assembly of a state praying for the removal of the state Chief Judge."

"The attendance at

today's sitting was 31 members, the Speaker did not vote, and 13 members did not vote, therefore, it is unimaginable that in an Assembly of 32 members where 31 were in attendance and 13 members did not vote, the voting produced 23 votes," he stressed.

Honourable Akya and his colleagues submitted that since none of the requirements for the removal of the Chief Judge had been they decided to distance

themselves from the action as disciples of democracy and constitutionality.

BELOW IS THE FULL TEXT OF THE PRESS BRIEFING

DISCLAIMER ON THE PURPORTED REMOVAL OF THE CHIEF JUDGE OF BENUE STATE, JUSTICE MAURICE IKPAMBESSE

We the undersigned members of the Benue State House of Assembly distance ourselves from the purported removal or any action at the Assembly against the

cont. on page 8

Tolls: FG Targets N814.08bn On Makurdi-Lafia...

cont. from page 6

for the Federal Government to pay back the loan segment of the project. "

He also explained that the decision on roads toll was an ongoing process.

Orji said, "The issue of tolling is ongoing. There are several ongoing projects and as

we speak, we are with the minister in Benue State inspecting some of these projects.

"I cannot tell you off the cuff which one is next

Dualization Of Makurdi- Enugu Road: FG Urges Benue To Hasten Up Compensation

The Federal Ministry of Works has urged Benue State government to hasten up the compensation of those whose properties were affected by the dualization exercise of the 250km Makurdi – Enugu federal highway to pave way for the completion of the project in record time. The Permanent Secretary of the ministry, Olufunshon Adebisi stated that they were in the state to monitor the pace of the ongoing work which started last year and

requested that the state government intervened in the areas of traffic control at the Wurukum roundabout and the compensation of people whose property would be affected by the ongoing work. Meanwhile, the Governor of Benue State, Hyacinth Alia said Benue State would complement the efforts of federal government to fast-track the completion of the ongoing dualization of the 250km Makurdi-Otukpo-Enugu road. Governor Alia made the commitment Thursday

when he received in courtesy, a delegation from the Federal Ministry of Works led by the Permanent Secretary, Mr. Olufunsho Adebisi. He said the state government would compensate those whose property would be affected by the ongoing construction, assist in providing logistics and also divert traffic to ensure smooth and speedy execution of the work. He said: "we are quite excited as a state for the speedy execution of this project and I want to

thank you for the reassurance you have given us. "Again, I am quite pleased that you have witnessed traffic at the Wurukum roundabout which has been quite busy, so what the federal government pledged to do would be of tremendous support and of good to all of us here in the state." The Governor thanked the Federal Ministry of Works for granting Benue State government the



permission to rehabilitate the

While appealing to the Federal Government to stick to the initial agreement of creating a bypass at Otukpo to help in the planned expansion of the town and avoid the massive destruction of both public and private property in the town, the Governor lauded President Bola Tinubu for his desire to ensure motorable roads across the country. Earlier, the Permanent Secretary explained that the project which was awarded in 2018 had phase one and two with the phase one from Akwanga, Lafia to Makurdi almost completed, while "the second phase starts from Makurdi to Ninth Mile with Benue axis having 178km out of the total number of 250km of the entire project."

Thirteen Benue Assembly Members Reject...

cont. from page 7

office and person of the office of the Chief Judge of Benue State, Justice Maurice A Ikpambese. This action is not only unconstitutional, it violates the principles of separation of powers and fair hearing which is necessary for the sustenance of democracy. The provisions of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999, as amended, clearly states that the procedure of removing a Chief Judge of a state. Section 292 of the Constitution states that a Chief Judge of a State can only be removed only under specific circumstances and with certain requirements stated below: Recommendation of the NJC which is responsible for disciplinary actions against judicial officers

on an address supported by two-third majority of members of the House of Assembly of a state praying for the removal of the state Chief Judge. The attendance at today's sitting was 31 members. The Speaker did not vote, and 13 members did not vote, therefore, it is unimaginable that in an Assembly of 32 members where 31 were in attendance and 13 members did not vote, the voting produced 23 votes. None of the above requirements had been fulfilled in the circumstances and we as great disciples of democracy and constitutionality distance ourselves from this action. Find attached the undersigned members:
Rt. Hon William Ortyom - Agasha
Hon Jonathan Agbidye – Katsina-Ala East
Hon Samuel Anyor Matu–Kwande East
Hon Pastor Onah Blessed – Oju 1
Orpin Beckie – Gboko East
Hon Elias Terumbur Audu – Gwer East
Hon Nyiyongo Ezra – Ukum
Hon Abraham Zahemen Jabi – Buruku
Hon Gabo Simon – Mata
Hon Samuel Agada – Ogbadibo
Hon Gyila Solomon T – Gwer West
Hon Manger M Manger – Tarka
Hon Douglas Terkume Akya – Makurdi

South
Meanwhile, the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) has expressed strong disapproval of yesterday's resolution passed by the Benue State House of Assembly, calling for the removal of Chief Judge of the state, Justice Maurice Ikpambese. The NBA criticized the resolution as unjustifiable and unconstitutional, emphasizing that any removal of a judicial officer must strictly adhere to due process as outlined in the Nigerian Constitution. In a statement signed by the NBA President, Mazi Afam Osigwe, SAN, and the General Secretary, Dr. Mobolaji Ojibara the umbrella body of legal practitioners highlighted that the action of the Benue State House of Assembly represents a significant threat to the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary. The statement emphasized the importance of the judiciary operating free from external pressures to maintain its effectiveness and impartiality. The NBA reiterated that the Constitution of Nigeria clearly defines the processes for appointing and removing judicial officers, specifically through the National Judicial Council (NJC).

unconstitutional," the statement read. The NBA further criticized the Benue State House of Assembly for attempting to address allegations of financial impropriety without following the lawful procedures established in Section 292 of the Constitution. The NBA called upon all elected officials to refrain from actions that undermine judicial independence and urged law enforcement agencies to protect Justice Ikpambese from any harassment or intimidation that could obstruct his duties. In addition, the association warned judges in the Benue State High Court against accepting any offers to act as the state Chief Judge in the absence of a legitimate vacancy. It also called for a boycott of courts presided over by any judge who accepts such an appointment, while urging the NJC to sanction any judges involved in this matter. The NBA said it remains steadfast in its commitment to upholding the integrity of the Nigerian judiciary and demanded that the Benue State House of Assembly rescinds its resolution.



Th 13 members of the Benue House Assembly who Rejected the Removal of the Chief Judge

Next Tor Sankera Must Be Of Worthy Character, Ready To Lay Down Life For Own People-Alia



Benue State Governor, Hyacinth Alia, has outlined the key qualities required for

the next Tor Sankera, emphasising that the new traditional ruler must be a person of integrity, charisma,

truthful, and willing to sacrifice everything, even his life for his people.

Speaking on Sunday at the one-year Memorial Thanksgiving Mass and Reception for the late Tor Sankera I, HRH Chief Abu King Shuluwa, and the disrobing of HRH Lady Elizabeth-Mary Shuluwa, Alia declared that the time had come to find a worthy successor.

"It is very clear to me that the next Tor Sankera must be a man of integrity, a man of the people, someone who is

truthful, friendly and someone who is willing to take a bullet for the people of Sankera," Alia stated.

He revealed that he had already urged the Tiv paramount ruler, Tor Tiv, Prof. James Ayatse, to expedite the process of selecting a new Tor Sankera to replace the late Chief Abu King Shuluwa.

"I know your children are vying for this position. Again, it must be someone with integrity," the Governor stressed.

Reflecting on the legacy

of the late Tor Sankera I, Alia highlighted Chief Shuluwa's tireless efforts to restore peace in Sankera despite ongoing security challenges.

"My uncle had a number of causes he was championing, primarily peace in his own domain—his kingdom in Sankera," he noted.

While acknowledging the persistence of violent attacks in the area, the Governor reaffirmed his administration's commitment to

achieving lasting peace. He also urged traditional rulers to be vigilant and actively discourage crime within their communities, warning that those aiding and abetting criminal activities risk dethronement.

Alia extended his gratitude to the Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Katsina-Ala, Most Rev'd Isaac Dugu, and the Tor Tiv, HRM Orchivirigh Prof. James Ortese Iorzua Ayatse, for their relentless efforts in fostering peace in Sankera.

Fraudsters Forfeit N232m, Hotel, Luxury Cars In Benue

Seven convicted fraudsters in Makurdi, Benue State, have forfeited a total of N232.3 million, a hotel, luxury cars, and \$4,977 to the federal government following their sentencing by Justice M.S. Abubakar of the Federal High Court.

The convicts—Tamaradeinyefa Shadrack Brakekebebe, Godday Brakekebebe, Terhamba Josiah Asagh, Nyiter Avalumun Elijah, Ahmed Alabi Akindele, Kennedy Torbem Ayanger, and Hwande

Aondooungwa James were prosecuted by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) for offences including cyber fraud, money laundering, and obtaining by false pretense.

Among the assets

forfeited was Century Crip Inn Hotel in Gboko, allegedly built with fraud proceeds.

Also, luxury cars, including a Mercedes-Benz E350 4Matic and a Mercedes-Benz GLE, were seized. The convicts received

sentences ranging from one to three years, with the option of fines and restitution to their victims.

The EFCC's Special Task Force had tracked and arrested the fraudsters based on intelligence reports on their illicit activities.

Justice Abubakar convicted the suspects on Thursday in Makurdi after they pleaded guilty to the offence.



Water Resources Minister Vows To Make Benue...



collaboration with the Federal Ministries of Education and Health. Minister of Water Resources and Sanitation Professor Joseph Terlumun Utsev

"We are looking at

strengthening the role of the private sector to drive market-based solutions and create business opportunities for sanitation entrepreneurs such as Toilet Business Owners," he stressed.

In his welcome address, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Water Resources and Sanitation, Mr. Richard Pheelangwah, said achieving open defecation-free status

is possible if backed by strong political will.

Pheelangwah, who was represented by the Director of Reforms Coordination, Moses Jo-Madugu, added that the federal and state governments have achieved a lot, but more still needs to be done.

He reiterated the government's commitment to achieving a clean Nigeria by 2030.

In her presentation, the National Coordinator of the Clean Nigeria Use the Toilet Campaign, Mrs. Chizom Opara, explained that the aim of the retreat was to evaluate the five years of the campaign. She stressed that only 142 local government areas across 20 states are now open defecation free.

FRSC Charges Passengers To Report Reckless Driving

By Matthew Adah

The Unit Commander, Federal Road Safety Corps, Otukpo, Benue State, Chief Route Commander (CRC) Taofeek Adegoke, has called on passengers in the area to report erring drivers to FRSC officials.

Commander Adegoke, speaking with newsmen in Otukpo, on Friday.

The Unit Commander, observed that

recklessness driving has resulted in many avoidable deaths stressing that there must be attitudinal change.

He maintained that reckless driving which involves overspending, tailgating, wrongful overtaking, driving under the influence of drugs and alcohol as well as overloading needs to be stopped and charged the public to rise against it to avert further calamities.

Adegoke, furthermore, seized the opportunity

to advise motorists, travellers and other road users to be careful while on the road.

"As a driver, always have enough sleep before embarking on any journey.

"Don't drink alcohol and drive and don't smoke.

"Road users should always obey traffic rules and if they don't you passengers should help call them to order," he explained.

"Reckless driving is a growing concern on our roads, contributing to thousands of crashes, injuries and



fatalities every year.

This behaviour not only endangers the reckless driver, but, kills more passengers, pedestrians and other motorists.

FRSC has been addressing this issue through public education/enlightenment,

enforcement and community

Benue APC Leadership Crisis Resurfaces

The leadership crisis rocking the All Progressives Congress in Benue State has resurfaced, following the viral circulation of images showing Austin Agada at the party's recent national meeting in Abuja.

The APC Caretaker Committee Chairman in Benue, Benjamin Omale, has dismissed Agada's presence at the meeting as a publicity stunt, describing him as an imposter attempting to gain public recognition.

The party in Benue has been deeply divided due to a power struggle between Governor Hyacinth Alia and Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Senator George Akume.

In response to the crisis, the APC national leadership dissolved Agada's State Working Committee and installed a caretaker committee led by Omale.

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Omale

Agada

crisis, the APC national leadership dissolved Agada's State Working Committee and installed a caretaker committee led by Omale.

In a statement released in Makurdi on Thursday, Omale insisted that Agada no longer holds any official position within the party.

"Agada has continued to parade himself as APC Chairman despite being removed. His latest antic is the false claim that he attended a strategic meeting with APC's national leadership and North Central governors on February 11, 2025. He was neither invited nor was there a meeting that warranted his presence."

Omale further stated that state party chairmen typically accompany their governors to such meetings, but due to an unavoidable engagement, he was unable to attend and had duly informed Governor Alia.

"Agada got into the venue, took photographs, and is now using them to deceive the public. Such acts should not be tolerated."

He assured APC members that the

national leadership had been notified of the situation and that

measures were being taken to prevent such incidents in the future.

Lawyer Petitions IGP Over Unresolved 2018 Police Killings In Benue

A legal practitioner and human rights activist, Orchardson Umoh, has urged the Inspector General of Police (IGP), Kayode Egbetokun, to revisit the 2018 Ayilamo attack in Benue State, where over 12 police officers were ambushed and killed during an operation.

In a petition dated February 11 and made available to journalists in Calabar, Umoh expressed concern that seven years after the incident, justice has not been served for the families of the deceased officers and the surviving victims. He called for the recovery and proper burial of the fallen officers and support for the survivors.

The petition revealed that 23 officers from Mopol Unit 33 in Ado Ekiti and the Imo Safer Highway Unit were deployed to the Ayilamo to protect lives and property but were ambushed by suspected militias or

bandits. Over 12 officers were killed or taken captive, and their remains are yet to be recovered.

Umoh lamented the lack of attention given to the case, questioning the circumstances surrounding the attack and the actions taken by authorities. "What exactly happened? How did it happen? Who was involved? What actions were taken in response?" he queried in the petition.

He stressed the need for a thorough investigation to uncover potential operational lapses or policy violations that may have contributed to the attack. Such an inquiry, he said, would not only bring closure to the affected families but also enhance

However, in a swift response, Agada

Benue State, claiming his name is missing from the Onyagede-Ihaje Ward register in Ohimini Local Government.

"The so-called Office of Unity Committee Chairman, which Omale claims to lead, does not exist in the APC Constitution (2022 as amended). His position is illegitimate."

burial, as well as ensuring the protection and care of the survivors.

"Sadly, it appears that not enough attention has been given to this incident. The scale of the tragedy demands critical questions be asked and answered. In other words, a proper investigation ought to have been conducted to provide more insight into the incident, determine if there were any lapses, and identify any safety or operational policies that may have been violated.

"In this manner, the police would have more information to prevent or manage similar incidents in the future," the activist stated.



IGP Egbetokun,

Barr. Umoh



AGATE NUTRITION

with Theresa Aunde-Tsetim

Email: tessyronald91@gmail.com

The Nutritional Benefits of Banana and Ginger

BANANAS and ginger are two of the most widely consumed foods globally, and for good reason. Both are packed with nutrients, fibre, and antioxidants that provide numerous health benefits. In this article, we'll delve into the nutritional benefits of bananas and ginger and explore how combining them can unleash a powerhouse of health benefits.

Nutritional Benefits of Bananas

Bananas are an excellent source of essential nutrients, including:

Potassium: Bananas are rich in potassium, an essential mineral that helps maintain healthy blood pressure, promotes bone health, and supports muscle function.

Fibre: Bananas are a good source of dietary fibre, which can help regulate bowel movements, promote digestive health, and support healthy blood sugar levels.

Vitamins and Minerals: Bananas are a good source of vitamins C and B6, as well as minerals like manganese and copper.

Antioxidants: Bananas contain antioxidants that help protect the body against free radicals, which can damage cells and contribute to chronic diseases.

Nutritional Benefits of Ginger
Ginger is a nutrient-dense food that



offers numerous health benefits, including:

Antioxidants: Ginger contains antioxidants that help protect the body against free radicals and oxidative stress.

Anti-Inflammatory Compounds: Ginger contains anti-inflammatory compounds like gingerol and shogaol, which can help reduce inflammation and alleviate pain.

Digestive Health: Ginger has natural anti-inflammatory properties that can

help soothe digestive issues like nausea, bloating, and cramps.

Immune System Support: Ginger contains compounds that can help boost the immune system and reduce the severity of colds and flu.

Combining Banana and Ginger for Enhanced Benefits
Combining bananas and ginger can unleash a powerhouse of health benefits, including:

Improved Digestion: The fibre

and antioxidants in bananas can help regulate bowel movements and promote digestive health, while the anti-inflammatory compounds in ginger can help soothe digestive issues.

Boosted Immune System: The antioxidants and anti-inflammatory compounds in both bananas and ginger can help boost the immune system and reduce the severity of illnesses.

Reduced Inflammation: The anti-inflammatory

compounds in ginger can help reduce inflammation and alleviate pain, while the antioxidants in bananas can help protect against oxidative stress.

Increased Energy: The potassium and fibre in bananas can help regulate energy levels, while the anti-inflammatory compounds in ginger can help reduce fatigue and promote mental clarity.

Eating bananas and ginger together may provide even

greater benefits for soothing ulcer pain. The potassium and fibre in bananas can help reduce inflammation and protect the stomach lining, while the anti-inflammatory compounds in ginger can help reduce pain and inflammation.

Recipes and Tips

Here are some delicious and easy-to-make recipes that combine bananas and ginger:

Banana-Ginger Smoothie: Blend frozen bananas, fresh ginger, and almond milk for a delicious and refreshing smoothie.

Ginger-Banana Tea: Steep fresh ginger and banana slices in hot water for a soothing and comforting tea.

Banana-Ginger Oatmeal: Add sliced bananas and fresh ginger to your oatmeal for a nutritious and filling breakfast.

Bananas and ginger are two nutrient-dense foods that offer numerous health benefits when consumed separately. However, combining them can unleash a powerhouse of health benefits that can improve digestion, boost the immune system, reduce inflammation, and increase energy levels.

Always remember to consult a certified dietician before changing your diet. Stay hydrated and healthy, I care.

Drone Strike Hits Chevron, Exxon Oil Exports Via Russia

A drone strike has hit a pumping station on a oil pipeline in Russia, reducing flows from Kazakhstan to world markets pumped by Western firms including Chevron and Exxon Mobil, its operator said on Monday.

The strike comes a day before U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio is scheduled to meet Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov in Saudi Arabia for talks on ending the war in Ukraine.

The operator, the Caspian Pipeline Consortium (CPC), said drones struck the Kropotkinskaya station in the southern Krasnodar region, where work was halted to investigate the damage.

It said seven drones were involved in the strike, which it called an act of terrorism. It did not specify that the drones had come from Ukraine.

However, an official at Ukraine's SBU security service said that Kyiv had hit the pumping station and nearby Ilsky oil refinery using drones.

At least 20 explosions were heard in the vicinity of the refinery, the official said, asking not to be named, adding that the oil facilities were being used to supply Russia's military in its three-year war in Ukraine.

Ukrainian drones have repeatedly targeted Russian energy infrastructure in recent months, including in the Krasnodar region, but Monday's attack would be the first on facilities involving Western oil majors.

The CPC pipeline is the main export route for Kazakhstan, which supplies about 1% of the world's oil.

Shell and Italy's Eni are also among its shareholders, as is the Russian state.

14-Year-Old Indian "Human Calculator" Sets Six Math World Records



Tanker at a CPC single-point loading buoy

In Single Day

Aaryan Shukla, a 14-year-old from Maharashtra, India, has stunned the world with his extraordinary mental math skills, breaking six world records in a single day.

Recognised by Guinness World Records, his lightning-fast calculations have earned him the title of "Human Calculator."

Shukla's records include the fastest mental addition of 100 four-digit numbers (30.9 seconds) and 200 four-digit numbers (1 minute, 9.68 seconds). He also set records for the fastest multiplication of two five-digit numbers (51.69 seconds) and two eight-digit numbers (2 minutes, 35.41 seconds).

He completed the mental division of a 20-digit number by a 10-digit number set of 10 in 5 minutes and 42 seconds and added 50 five-digit numbers in 18.71 seconds.

A video of his record-breaking performance shows him computing answers at a speed faster than a man using a calculator. As numbers flash on the screen, Shukla swiftly processes them in his mind, entering each answer with precise accuracy.

He attributes his success to dedicated practice, spending five to six hours daily on calculations and Sahaja Yoga meditation, which he says helps him maintain focus and composure.

His mother recalls that his

talent became evident when he was just six years old. "Since childhood, he

was very good with numbers. He enjoyed studying and playing with

numbers," she said.

"At the age of six, he started the practice of mental calculation, and he was very good, so we started doing some research on this," she added. By eight, he was winning medals and trophies in international competitions.

Despite his exceptional abilities, his father insists the family doesn't share his mathematical gift. "We are a normal family," he said. "Aaryan is truly one in a billion, but we are not a family of mental calculators."

China Builds World's First Oil Ship That Captures Carbon

China has built a new type of oil production ship that can capture carbon emissions as part of major efforts to reduce pollution. The ship, which is 330 metres long, is the first of its kind in the world.

It was developed by China's state-owned Cosco Ocean Shipping Heavy Industry Company and will be delivered by the end of the month, according to state media.

This floating production storage and offloading unit, known as an FPSO,

can produce up to 120,000 barrels of oil per day.

It has the ability to trap the carbon dioxide it emits instead of releasing it into the air and also uses the heat from its exhaust gases to generate electricity, making it more energy-efficient.

China has been working to reduce its carbon footprint. In 2023, its largest offshore oil company, CNOOC, launched the country's first carbon capture and storage project at an oilfield in Guangdong province. That facility can store 300,000

tonnes of carbon dioxide per year.

Other oil and gas companies around the world are also exploring similar technology.

In January, an American agency approved a design for a carbon-capturing ammonia production unit, while a Dutch company is working on its own version of a carbon-capture FPSO. China, the world's largest polluter, has pledged to reach peak carbon emissions by 2030 and achieve net zero by 2060.

South Korean Actress Kim Sae-ron Found Dead

South Korean actress Kim Sae-ron has been found dead at her home, a police official with knowledge of the case said on Sunday.

Kim, 24, was one of most promising actresses in South Korea, but her career took hit after a drunk driving incident in 2022.

A friend who was going to meet Kim visited her home and discovered her and called the police, Yonhap News Agency said.

Police found no foul play, according to Yonhap.

The police official said police are investigating the cause of death but did not provide further details.



Kim Sae-ron

Delta Plane Flips On Landing At Toronto Airport, Injuring 8

A plane crashed at Toronto Pearson International Airport on Monday, officials said, with CBC television reporting the plane flipped on landing.

CBC and CP24 television both reported eight people were injured.

Toronto's Pearson Airport said it was aware of an incident involving a Delta Air Lines plane arriving from Minneapolis and that emergency teams were responding.

All passengers and crew were accounted for, the airport said in a statement on X.

Representatives for Delta did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

"There is a plane crash. However, we don't know the circumstances surrounding it at this point," said Constable Sarah Patten of the Peel Regional Police in Ontario.

"It is my understanding that most of the passengers are out and unharmed but we're still trying to make sure so we're still on scene investigating," Patten said.

This article was produced by Reuters news agency. It has not been edited by Global South World.

Congo Rebels Promise Security In Bukavu After Looting

Residents of eastern Congo's second-largest city on Monday surveyed the aftermath of widespread looting that accompanied the arrival of Rwandan-backed M23 rebels who have pledged to restore order.

The M23 fighters

moved into the centre of Bukavu on Sunday, marking the Tutsi-led group's most significant advance since seizing east Congo's biggest city of Goma in late January.

The capture of Bukavu, a commercial hub, and of the strategic airport that services the city in the nearby town of Kavumu dealt a further blow to Kinshasa's authority and escalated a conflict that has fanned fears of an all-out regional war.

Congo's government has so far stopped short of saying Bukavu was fully under M23 control. Congolese and allied Burundian troops withdrew from the city to avoid fighting in densely populated areas, creating a power vacuum that gave rise

to looting and a prison break.

In a statement read on local radio on Monday, a rebel alliance that includes M23 said it would assist the population of Bukavu who were "abandoned" by the army and allied combatants.

"Our forces have been working to restore the security for the people and their property, much to the satisfaction of the entire population," it said.

Standing before his looted shop, Pascal Zulu said he did not know how he could repay the loan he took out to buy merchandise.

"The thugs arrived, they took everything, and nothing remains. I'm really upset. I don't know how I'm going to



Pearson International Airport firefighters work on an upside down Delta Air Lines plane, which was heading from Minneapolis to Toronto when it crashed on the runway, in Toronto, Monday, Feb. 17, 2025

repay the money I borrowed," he said. The well-equipped M23 is the latest in a long line of ethnic Tutsi-led rebel movements to emerge in Congo's volatile east.

Rwanda rejects allegations from Congo, the United Nations, and Western powers that it supports the group with arms and troops. It says it is defending itself against the threat from

a Hutu militia, which it says is fighting with the Congolese military.

Congo rejects Rwanda's complaints and says Rwanda has used its proxy militias to loot its minerals.

M23 have now captured more territory than all other rebellions since the end of two major wars that ran from 1996 to 2003. These advances have also handed them control of some of the

region's vast and valuable mineral deposits.

Congo is the world's top producer of tantalum and cobalt, a key component in batteries for electric vehicles and mobile phones. It is also the third largest global copper producer and home to significant coltan, lithium, tin, tungsten and gold deposits. The east is rich in tin, tantalum and gold.

Argentina Inmates Play Rugby In Bid To Ditch Life Of Crime

Argentine criminal clerk and former rugby player Eduardo "Coco" Oderigo wanted to find a way to help inmates rehabilitate and stay out of jail once released, so he combined his two passions: the law and his knowledge of the sport.

The plan faced challenges including convincing skeptical prison directors to let hardened criminals scrum and tackle in a physical contact game, but it worked. Prisoners who played in the teams had a re-offending rate of 5%, far below the average in the Argentine prison system of 65%. Fewer



Actors stand during the filming of a scene of the series "Spartans", in the Penal Unit No. 48, in San Martin, on the outskirts of Buenos Aires, Argentina

returned to jail. "In reality, it's not just that the re-offending rate comes down to 5%, but also you have a countless number of people who don't become victims when these people are released," Oderigo told Reuters. His journey has been

turned into "Spartans: A True Story," a Disney+ series premiering on Wednesday, a reference to the name of the first prison team he put together, the Espartanos.

The first match took place 16 years ago in Penal Unit number 48

of San Martin, on the outskirts of Buenos Aires. Today rugby is played in 44 prisons in Argentina.

Oderigo also helps link prisoners

up with education tools and potential jobs.

"In prison, every obstacle is there from the first locked door," Oderigo said. "The truth is that I had something that I was passionate about, which was sport." Oderigo, who also

founded a women's prison rugby team and later the Espartanos Foundation, discovered that the controlled aggression and team-focused nature of rugby helped reduce the levels of violence in prisons after matches. The scheme also helped prisoners later reintegrate into society.

The Spartans received visits from the England and New Zealand rugby teams, who wanted to learn about the project. The "All Blacks" even did their traditional haka, the dance they perform before each match, in the prison.

FG Seeks Fair Visa Policies To Boost Nigeria's Global Trade

The Minister of Information and National Orientation, Mohammed Idris, has called for a more

liberal visa regime for Nigerian companies planning to establish businesses in foreign countries. The Minister made the

call in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on Sunday when he represented President Bola Tinubu at a meeting with the executive members of

the Nigerian Community in Ethiopia, on the sidelines of the 38th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union (AU) Heads of State and Government.

Idris explained that as Nigeria continues to provide an enabling environment for foreign companies to invest and operate within its borders, it is only fair and mutually beneficial for other nations to reciprocate such gestures to support Nigerian

businesses looking to expand internationally.

"Last year, I was representing Nigeria in Indonesia and found out that about 50 big Indonesian companies are operating in Nigeria but we do not have five Nigerian companies operating in Indonesia. If they want to come to our country to trade because of our population and ability to purchase their goods and services, then there should also be that reciprocal arrangement where Nigerians are also

given the rightful place; and the visa issue is the same problem you find in Ethiopia and Indonesia. It becomes very complex for people to give Nigerians visas," the Minister said.

In response to concerns regarding the Ethiopian government's cancellation of the e-visa and Visa-on-Arrival options for Nigerian travellers, Idris assured that the matter will be escalated to the Minister of Foreign Affairs for appropriate

cont. on page 16

IPOB Warns Enugu Govt. Over Plot To Allocate Eha-Amufu Community Land For Fulani Settlement



Gov. Mbah

The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) has accused Governor Peter Mbah of Enugu State of moves to buy off some ancestral lands of Eha-Amufu community in the Isi Uzo Local Government Area of the state and hand it over to Fulani residents for settlement.

IPOB alleged that Governor Mbah paid the sum of N30 billion to some leaders of Eha-Amufu community for them to release their communal lands for Fulani settlement.

IPOB, which made the allegation in a statement issued to press men by its Media and Publicity Secretary, Emma Powerful, warned against the alleged move.

"It is obvious that Dr. Peter Mbah and the

Fulani Emirates are in agreement to hand over the ancestral lands of Eha-Amufu to Fulanis for settlement."

The IPOB spokesperson claimed, "IPOB was informed that the Enugu State Governor Peter Mbah through his proxy offered a huge sum of N30 billion to some Community leaders in Eha-Amufu for them to release their communal lands for Fulani settlement.

"When the people rejected the offer, the Governor in connivance with the Nigerian Security Forces, mostly the military, called on the Fulanis to strategically invade the community.

"Presently, some of the communities in Eha-Amufu are under constant Fulani attacks which includes

countless women gangraped, killing of farmers, illegal harvesting of the farm products, forceful occupying of peoples' houses they were forced to flee etc.

"These Fulanis and invaders are presently occupying some deserted communities in Eha-Amufu while Governor Peter Mbah and the Nigerian Army and Police remain mute."

He warned, "IPOB will not allow the selfish politician to mortgage the Igbo future generations just to remain in power for eight years or more.

"ESN operatives will continue to make Alaigbo (South-East) uncomfortable for the Fulani terrorists until they leave.

"We have maintained that we do not want Fulani settlement anywhere in the South-East."

Body Of Drowned Benue Varsity Student Recovered

The body of a 100 level student of Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Markudi, Felix Nyikyaa, who was reported to have drowned in the River Niger was recovered dead on Tuesday.

It was learnt in a telephone conversation with the President of the National Association of Benue State Students, Ashar Lubem, on Tuesday that the students went missing on Sunday.

Lubem noted that after several searches by rescuers, the student's body was found floating by the river bank.

"We are still looking into the situation to know maybe it was a case of drowning or he was killed because his body was seen floating by the river bank."

He disclosed that even though the circumstances that led to his drowning could not be ascertained, the student association

was working on contacting the family.

He expressed condolences to the family of the students while urging the students to be mindful of their well-being.

"We extend our heartfelt condolences to the loved ones of the student, and we mourn the loss of a young and promising life. The student's passing is a tragic reminder of the fragility of life, and we are reminded to cherish every moment we have with our loved ones.

"We also urge all students to be mindful of their well-being and to seek help if they are struggling with their emotions or if they need support. The university is here to support you, and we want to ensure that everyone has access to the resources they need to thrive," Lubem said.

Meanwhile, colleagues of the late student took to social media to express their sorrow for the

unfortunate incident. A student, Tsekaa Amos, noted that the deceased was supposed to be among the matriculated students on Monday before the unfortunate incident.

He expressed condolences to the family of the late student.

"We are deeply saddened by the loss of our beloved brother, who was supposed to be matriculated yesterday.

"We extend our heartfelt condolences to the loved ones of the student, and we mourn the loss of our very fellow great Makurdian who was admitted to the Department of Agribusiness College of Management Sciences."

When contacted, the Benue Police Public Relations Officer, Anene Sewuese, said she was yet to be briefed on the incident.



AGATE HEALTH

with Blessing Yakubu
08068904441

Lassa virus is transmitted by the Natal multimammate mouse (*Mastomys natalensis*), a small rodent commonly found in West Africa. The virus is found in the rodent's urine or feces and can infect humans by direct contact, ingestion of contaminated food or inhalation of contaminated dust particles.

It can be transmitted in many ways through contact with the excrement or urine of infected *Mastomys* rodents; many of these rodents live near or inside houses, and their rate of infection can be as high as 80% and because of consuming contaminated food. Human-to-human transmission is also possible but is less frequent, occurring mainly in healthcare environment without adequate infection control measures, where the virus may be spread through contaminated medical equipment. Sexual transmission and direct contact with contaminated bodily fluids or secretions are also possible.

Lassa virus was named after the Nigerian town where it was first isolated in 1969, in a nurse who fell ill after treating patients and who died from the disease after contaminating two other healthcare workers.

The clinical profile of Lassa fever is variable. The majority of cases are asymptomatic. The incubation period is

Lassa Fever And Its Control

2 to 21 days after infection.

If the disease is symptomatic, it gives rise to unspecific clinical signs such as fever, vomiting, nausea, abdominal pain, headache, aching muscles (myalgia), aching joints (arthralgia) and extreme fatigue (asthenia).

In severe cases, the symptoms then get worse, with the emergence of edema, hemorrhagic signs, pericardial and pleural effusion, and more rarely encephalitis.

Death occurs as a result of hypotensive shock (very low blood pressure) and hypovolemic shock

(lack of blood or fluid in blood vessels) and kidney and liver failure around 14 days after symptom onset.

Lassa fever is more severe for pregnant women, resulting in frequent maternal death and very often fetal loss.

In patients who survive Lassa fever infection, fever disappears around 10 days after symptom onset, but extreme fatigue, malaise and dizziness can continue for several weeks. Some of these patients develop severe sequelae: temporary or permanent hearing loss in one or both ears, and

myocarditis (inflammation and lesions in the heart muscle).

It is difficult to distinguish Lassa fever from other viral hemorrhagic fevers such as Ebola and yellow fever, or from malaria and leptospirosis.

Because the virus is so contagious, tests need to be performed in strict biosafety conditions. The disease is diagnosed in reference laboratories using one of the following methods: serological assays to identify specific antibodies, RT-PCR, which detects the genetic material of

the virus, or virus isolation by cell culture.

There is currently only one drug used to treat Lassa fever: ribavirin, a broad-spectrum antiviral drug that is active against RNA viruses and particularly used to treat hepatitis C.

Unfortunately, this treatment is not a satisfactory solution to the problem of Lassa fever in endemic countries: its effectiveness has not been widely demonstrated and it needs to be administered very soon after infection. The problem is that the early clinical signs of the illness are similar to those

observed for other diseases such as malaria and dysentery, which are widespread in these regions. Lassa virus is therefore often only considered as a possible diagnosis several days after symptom onset, and in the rare cases where ribavirin is available, it is usually administered too late to be effective.

Symptomatic treatment includes rehydration, treatment for pain and management of hemorrhagic complications. Rapid, effective treatment is crucial to improve the patient's chances of survival.

There is currently no vaccine.

Prevention of Lassa fever involves good hygiene practices, such as storing food in rodent-proof containers and maintaining a clean household. Care should be taken to avoid contact with rodent excreta.

Raising community awareness of modes of transmission and the adoption of safe food preparation practices are also essential.

In healthcare settings, staff should observe hygiene and infection prevention precautions, including use of personal protective equipment such as masks, gloves, gowns and full-body suits.

Travelers returning from West Africa with fever must be tested for Lassa fever if they have spent time in endemic regions.

85 Nigerian Deportees Arrive Lagos From US

The United States has commenced deportation proceedings for Nigerian nationals, with 85 individuals set to arrive in Lagos, while 116 others remain in detention. The Federal Government, through the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Bianca Odumegwu-Ojukwu, has expressed concerns over the process, calling for a more humane approach.



Odumegwu-Ojukwu, in a statement signed by her media aide, Magnus Eze, on Sunday, disclosed that “with about 201 Nigerians currently detained in US immigration centres and about 85 cleared for deportation,” the government is advocating for adherence to internationally prescribed guidelines. Similarly, she reiterated the government's stance in a post on her official X account on Monday, titled “US Deportations Begin.” The United States also confirmed that deported Nigerians will be flown directly to Lagos. Mills emphasised that individuals serving prison sentences in the US would be among the first group of deportees. “Those to be repatriated would be dropped in Lagos. There would not be room for whether it should be in Port Harcourt or Abuja. “The first group will be convicted prisoners—those who

Amb. Bianca committed crimes and are in US prisons. Some of them are those who have clearly violated US immigration laws. “They appealed but were denied yet they are still in the US.

They have committed immigration crimes, people who have been ordered to leave,” Mills stated. Bianca expressed concerns over the emotional and financial impact of

deportations on Nigerians in the US and their families, emphasising the need for humane and compliant processes. “With the new administration in the US, we want a situation where there will be commitments. If there will be repatriation, we want a dignified return. “At the moment, we're told that about 201 Nigerian nationals are in US immigration camps, and about 85 have been cleared for deportation. “Will there be any way of ameliorating their pains? This has been of great concern to not

just Nigerian nationals in the US but family members in Nigeria who depend on them for survival, children whose school fees are paid for by these diasporans. “We are asking as a country whether they will be given ample time to handle their assets or will they just be bundled into planes and repatriated? It will really be traumatic, especially for those who had not committed any violent crime,” she asked. The deportation process comes as part of a broader immigration crackdown by the Donald Trump Administration. On his first day in office as the 47th President

of the United States, Donald Trump signed several executive orders aimed at tightening immigration policies. These include ending birthright citizenship for children of undocumented immigrants and declaring a national emergency at the US-Mexico border. He also announced the deployment of more troops to the southern border and reiterated his pledge to deport millions of undocumented immigrants. These policy shifts, according to multiple media reports, have heightened concerns among immigrant communities.

FG Seeks Fair Visa Policies To Boost...

cont. from page 14
diplomatic engagement. While acknowledging the concerns raised by Nigerians in Ethiopia, the Minister emphasized that visa policies among nations are typically based on the principle of reciprocity. He noted that governments often implement visa regulations in response to the policies extended to their citizens, highlighting the need for balanced and mutually beneficial agreements in international travel and diplomacy. “Every relationship with other countries is reciprocal. So if we give them Visa-on-Arrival, there is no reason why they should not give us Visa-on-Arrival,” he said.

The Minister therefore urged Nigerians living abroad to consistently demonstrate good conduct and responsible citizenship in order to promote the image of the country to the outside world. “We don't allow bad people to represent us and that's where you come in. You are the ones who are here and if you don't represent us well, there is no way we will look good. The visit of the President to Ethiopia from time to time or the visit of any minister here cannot do it. It is those who are here and living with them that can change whatever perception they have about our country,” he said. The Minister used the occasion to inform the

Nigerian community about the policy direction of the Tinubu Administration, stressing that a lot has been achieved in revamping the economy, provision of infrastructure, curbing insecurity, and the restoration of investor confidence in Nigeria. Idris said Nigeria has recently secured approximately \$1.07 billion in Foreign Direct Investment for the establishment of drug and pharmaceutical manufacturing industries. He emphasized that this significant investment marks the beginning of Nigeria's medical industrialization by positioning the country as a key player in pharmaceutical

production to enhance local drug intra-African trade.

By Adayilo D.M_ Esq.

Social Media Law: A Case Study of Nigeria

Nigeria is one of the Africa's largest and fastest-growing digital economies, experiencing rapid growth in the use of social media. While this has opened up new opportunities for communication, business, and activism, it has also raised significant legal challenges. Nigerian law, while gradually evolving to address these challenges, faces unique issues in balancing freedom of expression with regulation.

Key Legal and Regulatory Frameworks in Nigeria

1. The Nigerian Cybercrime Act (2015).

The Cybercrime Act is Nigeria's primary law for regulating online activities, including cybercrime, data protection, and content regulation. It criminalizes activities such as hacking, identity theft, cyberstalking, and the use of social media to incite violence or spread false information. Section 24 of the Act prohibits the use of social media for defamatory content, threats, or hate speech.

2. The National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) Code.

The NBC, which regulates broadcasting in

Nigeria, also extends its authority to social media platforms that produce and distribute content. Under the NBC Code, social media platforms are required to ensure that content does not violate the country's standards for decency and morality. This includes monitoring user-generated content and preventing the spread of hate speech and fake news.

3. Data Protection Act (2023).

Nigerian Data Protection Act, aims to address data privacy concerns. The Act regulates how organizations collect, process, and store personal data, including the use of data by social media platforms. The Act closely aligns with international data privacy regulations like the General Data Protection Regulation

(GDPR) and which establish an independent Data Protection Commission to oversee its implementation.

4. Social Media Bill (2019)

In 2019, Nigeria proposed a Social Media Bill, also known as the Hate Speech Bill, in response to growing concerns over the spread of fake news and hate speech on social media. The Bill proposed harsh penalties, including the death penalty for individuals found guilty of spreading harmful content. While the Bill faced backlash for threatening freedom of speech, it underscores the government's concerns about regulating social media to curb disinformation and hate speech. The Bill was subsequently rejected by the law makers.

Challenges in Nigerian Social

Media Law

1. Freedom of

expression, misinformation, and privacy, while addressing the growing influence of social media on the political and social landscape. The challenges of regulating social media are immense, but as digital platforms continue to shape global and local dynamics, the importance of legal frameworks in this space cannot be overstated.

Conclusion

Social media law, both globally and in Nigeria, is an evolving field that attempts to balance the benefits of free speech and innovation with the need to protect individuals, communities, and governments from the negative impacts of digital platforms. Globally, countries like the EU and U.S. have taken varying approaches, with the EU focusing heavily on data protection and the U.S. maintaining a more lenient approach to free speech. In Nigeria, the government continues to navigate complex issues related to freedom of

The spread of misinformation and fake news is a significant problem in Nigeria, especially during elections and times of national crisis. Social media platforms have been used to disseminate false information that can incite violence and unrest. The Nigerian government has been working on legislation to combat this issue, though critics argue that these efforts may be used to target political opponents rather than protect the public.

FG To Explore Non-Oil Revenue Sources – Edun

The Federal Government has reaffirmed its commitment to aggressively exploring non-oil revenue sources to reduce reliance on crude oil earnings and stabilise the economy. The Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Wale Edun, stated this at the 5th National Treasury Workshop in Abuja on Monday.

Edun, who was represented by the Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Finance, Lydia Jafiya-Shehu, said the government would intensify efforts to harness revenue from alternative sources. He noted that recent shifts in global energy policies, declining crude oil demand, and fluctuating prices had made it clear that



Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Wale Edun

Nigeria could no longer afford to depend solely on oil revenues. He said the government was now focused on expanding revenue generation from sectors such as agriculture, solid minerals, manufacturing, tourism, the digital economy, and creative industries.

Edun described the theme of the workshop, "Nigeria's Revenue Challenges and the Way Forward: Exploring Non-Oil Alternatives", as timely, stressing the need for urgent action. He said that while several non-oil sectors had shown strong potential for revenue generation, job creation, and

economic transformation, they

improvements in public financial management, digitalisation of revenue collection, and strengthening of tax administration. "The government is already taking bold steps to tackle these issues through reforms in public financial management, digitalisation of revenue collection, and strengthening of tax administration," he said.

Edun also stressed the importance of collaboration between the public and private sectors in achieving sustainable revenue growth. He said that accountability and transparency in public financial management remained critical in building trust and attracting investments into the country.

"To ensure the success of these initiatives, collaboration among all stakeholders is essential. The role of the private sector in complementing government efforts cannot be overemphasised," he noted.

The two-day workshop, organised by the Office of the Accountant-General of the Federation, brought together key financial and economic experts to discuss strategies for improving Nigeria's revenue performance. Edun expressed confidence that insights from the workshop would inform future policies and reposition Nigeria's revenue framework in line with global best practices.

He urged participants to engage actively in discussions and contribute innovative solutions to enhance revenue generation and efficient resource

allocation across all sectors.

Also speaking, the Accountant-General of the Federation, Dr Oluwatoyin Madein, emphasised the urgency of addressing Nigeria's revenue challenges, stating that economic diversification remains critical to achieving fiscal stability.

She noted that factors such as exchange rate volatility, low revenue performance, and rising costs have complicated fiscal operations in recent years.

She outlined the workshop's structure, which includes five key presentations focused on economic diversification, tax reform, budget efficiency, fiscal federalism, and public financial management reforms.

According to her, the discussions will involve experts from the public and private sectors, as well as academia, to ensure well-rounded policy recommendations.

She charged participants to actively engage in deliberations, stressing that the outcome of the workshop must lead to actionable policies that would strengthen Nigeria's revenue framework at both federal and sub-national levels.

Disregard Malicious Allegations On Canada Visa Denial, DHQ Tells Nigerians

The Defence Headquarters has urged Nigerians to disregard "the malicious allegations" and support the efforts of the armed forces to enhance national security and promote the welfare of servicemen and women.

The Director of Defence Information, Brig.-Gen. Tukur Gusau, in a statement on Monday, faulted the allegations regarding Nigerian Military's request for visas to attend the Invictus Games in Vancouver, Canada. He urged Nigerians to support the officers, men and women who sustained various degree of injuries while protecting the nation.

According to him, the need for accurate

information at this time can not be overemphasised.

Gusau said the Nigerian military received an invitation to participate in the Invictus Games with its team that comprised of three officers and 21 players, including the team's physiotherapist.

He explained that the Invictus Games Foundation catered for the team's accommodation and feeding needs, along with those of other participating nations. He said, "However, inspite of our best efforts, only 14 members of the team, excluding the team leader, captain, and physiotherapist, were granted visas.

"Regrettably, seven of our athletes who had the potential to excel

were denied visas, preventing them from participating in the games.

"Notwithstanding this setback, our team's outstanding performance earned Nigeria gold, silver and bronze medals, proudly placing our nation and Africa on the global map of Invictus Games.

"Furthermore, the participation of the Chief of Defence Staff, Gen. Christopher Musa, would have added

mental strength to our troops.

"It is on record that the Chief of Defence Staff has initiated laudable efforts to boost morale of our service personnel who risk their lives to protect our nation and its people.

"The Invictus Foundation Centre, which is the first in Africa and currently under construction, is part of this initiative to provide care and mental healing for our wounded personnel."



General Christopher Musa.

Tariff Hike: Communication Service Providers Raise Data, Call Rates

Following the recent hike in tariff, service providers in the communication industry have raised data and call rates. For instance, Airtel Nigeria, the country's second-largest telecom operator, has revised its data pricing structure, implementing a tariff adjustment of up to 50 per cent, according to details published on its website on Monday. The price revision, which affects various data bundles, aligns with ongoing industry concerns over escalating operational costs. While the company has yet to issue an official statement, the move underscores the broader push among telecom operators for a tariff review to cushion the impact of inflation and forex volatility. Beyond data

adjustments, the operator with over 56 million subscribers had also increased voice call tariffs over the weekend. A senior Airtel official, speaking with journalists on Monday, confirmed the development, emphasising that the adjustments were necessitated by rising costs. "Yes, we have updated data prices today, and they are available on our website. However, the increase is not up to 50 percent," the official clarified. In its revised price list, Airtel assured customers of continued affordability, stating, "Whatever your data needs are, we have a plan for you. Our fast, affordable, and



reliable internet experience will keep you connected anytime, anywhere. To get started, Dial *312#." The revised daily and weekly data plans include N50 for 40MB valid for 1 day, N100 for 100MB valid for 1 day, N200 for 200MB valid for 3 days, N350 for 1GB valid for 1 day, N350 for 350MB valid for 7 days, N500 for 750MB plus 1GB YouTube Night and 200MB YouTube

Music/Spotify valid for 7 days, N500 for

1GB plus 1GB YouTube Night and 50MB Socials valid for 7 days, N500 for 2GB valid for 2 days, and N1500 for 5GB valid for 7 days. Similarly, MTN, Nigeria's largest telecom provider, has also adjusted its data and call tariffs in line with the NCC's approval. The revised pricing, implemented over the past week, has seen customers paying

more for calls, SMS, and internet usage. The latest increases come as telecom operators grapple with inflation, foreign exchange volatility, and the rising cost of network expansion. While the adjustments aim to support long-term service improvements, subscribers may face increased financial pressure as communication costs rise.

Police Arrest 2 Suspected Robbers In Benue

The Benue State Police Command has arrested two suspected armed robbers in Yogbo village, Guma Local Government Area of Benue State. Spokesperson for the command, CSP Catherine Anene, said

the arrests were made following a raid on Yogbo village by the police. Anene stated that acting on credible intelligence, officers from Daudu Police Division, carried out an operation around 8:30am on February 7,

2025, leading to the arrest of Yakubu Kantoma (32) and Abu Ishaku (25) both residents of Sekereke, Yogbo village. She added that one of their victims had already identified the suspects, and investigations were ongoing to uncover further details about their activities.

Osun LG Crisis: Adeleke Orders Lockdown Of Secretariats, Mourns Victims

...As Davido Criticises Osun Police Commissioner Over Incidence

The Osun State Governor, Ademola Adeleke has issued a directive urging all residents, including politicians, to stay away from local government secretariats to prevent further bloodshed and protect public assets. This, he said, is in response to the violent clashes triggered by an alleged illegal takeover attempt by sacked APC chairmen and councillors. Adeleke disclosed this in a message he posted on his official X account on Monday evening. "Following reports of a failed illegal takeover bid of local government councils in Osun by the sacked APC Chairmen and councillors, I hereby direct all Osun residents, including politicians across all political divides, to stay away from the local government secretariats to protect public

properties and avoid further bloodshed," the governor stated. So This Happened (E) The directive comes as tensions remain high, with workers under the Nigerian Union of Local Government Employees withdrawing their services across the state, effectively leaving the council secretariats under lock and key. "This has become necessary, especially as the council secretariats are expected to be under lock and key due to the withdrawal of service announced by workers of the Nigerian Union of Local Government Employees (NULGE) across the state," he added. Expressing grief over the casualties resulting from the crisis, the governor extended his condolences to the families of those affected.

"I equally condole families of victims of the APC illegal takeover bid and chaos unleashed across the state by the APC and their hired thugs. "The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) lost five members, with several others wounded. Two of those members are from Iragbiji, Boriipe local government. "Another two were killed at Ola Oluwa Local Government. Another one was lost at Ikire. We must stop further bloodshed," his statement further noted. According to the governor, in his bid to restore order and ensure safety, the governor directed security agencies to take full control of all local government secretariats. "I have directed security



Gov. Adeleke

Davido

agencies to take charge of all local government secretariats, and I hereby assure residents of Osun of their safety and protection of lives and properties," he affirmed. Meanwhile, Nigerian music star, David Adedeji Adeleke, popularly known as Davido, has publicly criticized the Osun State Commissioner of Police, Mohammed Umar Abba, accusing him of disregarding the rule of law. The accusation follows the violence that greeted

Osun State on Monday, resulting in the death of the sacked chairman of Irewole Local Government, Osun State, Remi Abass, and two others who were shot dead by unknown gunmen at the local government secretariat in Ikire. Taking to his Instagram page on Monday, Davido vowed to post the police commissioner's photo "every day and everywhere" until he is removed from office if he fails to uphold the law.

"Mr. Commissione

Katsina United Deny Lobi Stars Maximum Points in 1-1 Draw

Lobi Stars were left to rue missed opportunities as they settled for a 1-1 draw against Katsina United on matchday 24 of the Nigeria Premier Football League yesterday at the Abubakar Tafawa Balewa Stadium. The first half ended goalless, despite Alexander Oche, Segun Olorintoba, and Jimmy Iteji coming close to breaking the deadlock. Their efforts, however,

failed to yield the desired result. Head Coach Daniel Amokachi's tactical adjustments in the second half paid dividends. The introduction of David Tyavkase, Chikeluba Ofoedu, John Akende, and Martins Ossy injected new life into the team, as Lobi Stars dominated possession with renewed intent. The breakthrough came in the 68th minute when John Akende tapped in from close range, following a well-

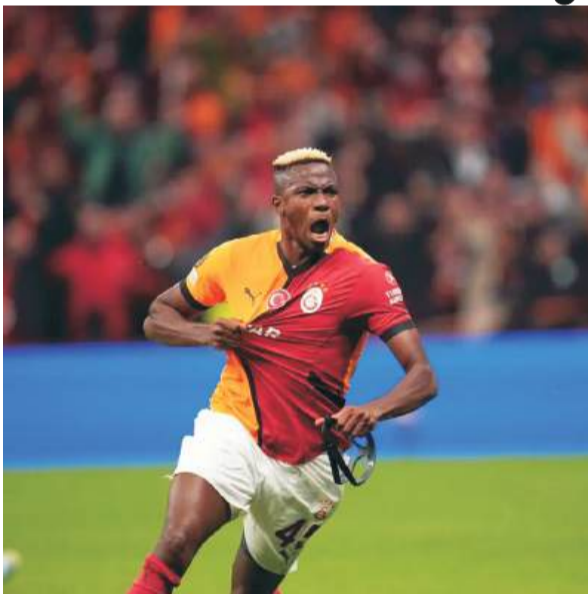
orchestrated attack from Chikeluba Ofoedu. David Tyavkase, Martins Ossy and John Akende all came close to doubling the lead, but goalkeeper Kolimba Alladoun made some crucial saves. Just as Lobi Stars seemed poised to claim all three points, Katsina United substitute Promise Damala nodded home the equalizer in the 86th minute, changing the scoreline to 1-1. Despite a late surge,

Pos	Club	P	GD	Pts
1	Remo Stars FC	23	15	48
2	Shooting Stars Sports Club (SSC)	23	6	40
3	Rivers United FC	24	5	38
4	Abia Warriors	24	0	36
5	Rangers International FC	23	7	35
6	Ikorodu City FC	24	6	35
7	Kwara United FC	24	6	35
8	Kano Pillars FC	24	-1	35
9	El-Kanemi Warriors FC	24	-2	35
10	Enyimba FC	24	2	34
11	Bendel Insurance FC	23	1	31
12	Niger Tornadoes FC	23	-1	31
13	Katsina United FC	24	-2	30
14	Heartland FC	23	-1	29
15	Bayelsa United FC	24	-3	29
16	Plateau United FC	24	-1	28
17	Sunshine Stars FC	24	-14	27
18	Nasarawa United FC	24	-7	26
19	Akwa United FC	24	-8	23
20	Lobi Stars FC	24	-11	22

Plateau United deducted 3 points, 3 goals for infraction.

Lobi Stars' efforts proved abortive as the

Victor Osimhen Hits Brace For Galatasaray In Tough Win At Rizespor



Super Eagles striker Victor Osimhen scored a brace for Galatasaray in their hard-fought 2-1 win over Rizespor at the Caykur Didi Stadyumu. Osimhen missed Galatasaray's 4-1 loss to AZ Alkmaar in the UEFA Europa League playoffs last weekend, but he returned to the lineup when they squared off against Rizespor on Monday.

The Super Eagles star had a silent first half, as Rizespor dominated the play and created more chances in the final third. However, Osimhen got into the game in the second half. It took Osimhen just two minutes into the second half to register his name on the scoresheet. The former Napoli man jumped highest to

head in a cross from Przemyslaw Frankowski to make it 1-0 after 47 minutes. Two Rizespor defenders heavily marked Osimhen before the cross, but he still managed to climb high and plant the header into the net. Unfortunately for Galatasaray, their lead did not last as Ali Sowe scored the equaliser for Rizespor. Nigerian forward Babajide Akintola was the supplier, as he did most of the job before laying it off for Sowe, who finished with aplomb from close range.

Lemina changed the ball's direction, and Osimhen, who was lurking, was in the right place to send the ball nestling in the net. That goal was enough to give Galatasaray all three points at Rizespor to maintain their six-point lead over Fenerbahce at the summit of the Super Lig. Victor Osimhen's next assignment is to lead Galatasaray's comeback against AZ Alkmaar at Rams Park. The Lions must win the second leg by three goals after losing 4-1 in the first leg. Osimhen was suspended for the first leg but is eligible for the second.

Building Wealth Beyond Track:

Olympic Medallist Kenny Bednarek Shares Strategy

Two-time Olympian and silver medallist Kenny Bednarek is already building his wealth beyond track after revealing his third real estate investment property. In a post shared on his Instagram page, the sprint star shared his strategy for maximizing wealth, one of which is investing in the real estate business. "They say the best

investment on earth is in the earth itself...I'm standing in front of my third investment property, which is a milestone of my investment journey...I didn't have much growing up and I had no knowledge of real estate, but once I started earning a little bit of money, I did some research and made that calculated risk and I found myself a real estate agent and now we're here."

At the Paris Olympic Games, Bednarek was one of Team USA's medallists, after powering to the 200m silver medal behind Letsile Tebogo, and ahead of Noah Lyles. It was his second consecutive medal at the Games, having won the same colour at the Tokyo Olympics in his first international outing and major championship. He will later cap off his 2024 season by defeating

Tebogo in the Diamond League final to win his

The second half was end-to-end, with chances flying at both ends. But they failed to convert until Osimhen took the initiative in the 86th minute. A corner was played in from the right side of Galatasaray's attack. A header from Mario

Galatasaray have a sharp forward line, and if they all click, it could be a rout for their Dutch opponents.

Real Madrid Consider Leaving LaLiga After Bellingham Red Card

Real Madrid are reportedly exploring the possibility of leaving LaLiga amid growing frustrations over refereeing standards, with Jude Bellingham's controversial red card against Osasuna adding fuel to their ongoing dispute with the league. The English midfielder was sent off for alleged foul and abusive language towards referee José Luis Munuera Montero, a decision that Madrid firmly disputes. Now, reports suggest that Los Blancos could attempt to join another top European league, with options including Serie A, Ligue 1, or the Bundesliga. However, such a move would require approval from FIFA, UEFA, and the league they wish to join. The controversy came to a head in Madrid's recent 1-1 draw with Osasuna, where Bellingham was shown a straight red card in the 39th minute. The referee's report claims that the 21-year-old shouted "f*** you" in his direction, prompting the dismissal. However, Bellingham insists that he actually said "f*** off" in frustration towards himself, rather than at the match official. Despite this, he now faces a potential ban of up to 12 matches, under Spanish FA disciplinary rules that sanction players for insulting or offending referees. Madrid have repeatedly voiced concerns over refereeing standards, and Bellingham's case is just the latest in a series of decisions that

have left the club feeling targeted. Madrid's dissatisfaction with LaLiga's officiating has been building for months. Earlier this month, the club filed a formal complaint against the Royal Spanish Football Federation (RFEF), citing "serious refereeing behaviour". Their statement read, "What happened at the RCDE Stadium

represents the culmination of a completely discredited refereeing system, in which the decisions against Real Madrid have reached a level of manipulation and adulteration of the competition that can no longer be ignored." The club demanded the release of VAR audio recordings related to decisions, including, the controversial tackle by

Espanyol defender Carlos Romero on Kylian Mbappe, which many felt should have resulted in a red card and the disallowed goal for Vinicius Jr., which Madrid believes was incorrectly ruled out. Following their complaint, LaLiga president Javier Tebas hit back, accusing Madrid of failing to offer solutions and dismissing their



Jude Bellingham of Real Madrid CF after receiving a red card

concerns as repetitive complaints from their club-owned media. With tensions reaching a boiling point, Real Madrid's reported consideration of leaving LaLiga is

unprecedented. While such a move would be logistically complex, the club's global brand and stature could make them an attractive addition for another league.

I Have To Improve The Quality Of My Praying' -Wenger Goes Spiritual



I pray, but I have to improve the quality of my praying' – Arsène Wenger on Arsenal title chances

Legendary former Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger has jokingly admitted that he may need to pray harder if the Gunners are to end their two-decade-long Premier League title drought this season. The Frenchman subtly acknowledged that Mikel Arteta's side faces an uphill battle, with Liverpool still holding a seven-point lead at the top of the table. The 75-year-old, who led Arsenal to their last league triumph in 2004's Invincible season, knows just how difficult it will be for his former club to reclaim the title. However, he hasn't lost hope—turning to faith as a last resort. Wenger broke down Arsenal's title chances, highlighting how dominant Liverpool have been this season, saying, "Look, it's simple. They

[Liverpool] need to lose games. But now we have played 25 games and Liverpool have lost one. They will have to lose at

least three in the next thirteen games." He continued, acknowledging the odds are heavily stacked in Liverpool's favour, adding, "At this moment, it looks unlikely unless they collapse. But until now, they have lost only one game. So they are the super favourites. "On top of that, Arsenal have to make another perfect run. So I pray, but I have to

improve the quality of my praying," he added with a smile. Despite Wenger's doubts, Arsenal are still in the fight, with key games on the horizon. The Gunners face West Ham at the Emirates next, before a challenging trip to the City Ground to take on Nottingham Forest. With 13 games left to play, Arteta's side will need to be faultless and hope for a Liverpool collapse to have any

realistic shot at the title. They are currently seven points behind Liverpool and will need several things to go their way to get back into the title race. Wenger will be hoping that his improved prayers can help Arsenal finally reclaim English football's biggest prize and fans will be hoping for divine intervention as the season reaches its climax.

NBA To Donate 55 Basketball Courts In Honor Of Dikembe Mutombo

NBA Commissioner Adam Silver has announced the creation of the NBA Africa Dikembe Mutombo Humanitarian Award, a new annual honor that will recognize a person or an organization that works to advance health, education or economic opportunity across the continent of Africa. The award is named after the late four-time NBA Defensive Player of the Year and Naismith Basketball Hall of Famer who served as the NBA's first global ambassador following his retirement from the league in 2009. Silver also announced that

NBA Africa will donate 55 courts to local communities on the continent in honor of Mutombo and his iconic jersey number, beginning in his native Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo where he first discovered his love for the game. The courts will feature a distinct design inspired by Mutombo and contribute to NBA Africa's commitment of building 1,000 courts on the continent over the next decade. The announcement was made at the 10th annual NBA Africa All-Star Luncheon in San Francisco, Calif. as part of

NBA All-Star 2025. The award will be presented annually beginning at next year's luncheon, with the recipient receiving a financial grant to further their humanitarian efforts and a donation from NBA Africa to a charity of their choice. Selected fourth overall in the 1991 NBA Draft, Mutombo spent 18 years in the NBA during which time he was an eight-time NBA All-Star and four-time Defensive Player of the Year, leading the league in blocked shots three times and becoming the second-leading shot blocker in NBA history. He was inducted into the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame in 2015.

Recognized for his philanthropic and humanitarian work, Mutombo was a recipient of many awards, including the Congressional Humanitarian Award (2013), John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health's Gooderme Humanitarian Award (2011), Laureus World Sports Award (2010), John Thompson Jr. Legacy of a Dream Award (2010) and the U.S. President's Service Award (2000). A general hospital he built in Kinshasa and named in memory of his late mother, the Biamba Marie Mutombo Hospital, opened its doors to the public in 2007.

Building Wealth Beyond Track: Olympic Medallist Kenny...

cont. from page 20

Akume Pledges Support For Tinubu's Laudable Programs ...As Movement For Tinubu 2027 Crowns Him Patron

Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Sen. George Akume has pledged continued support to the policies of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu in his quest to make Nigeria safe and economically viable again.

The former Benue State Governor stated this Friday, in Abuja when he was crowned Grand Patron of the Nationwide Tinubu Connect Associates (NTCA), a pro-Tinubu movement,

While decorating Sen. Akume as "Star Associate of President Tinubu", National Co-ordinator/President



of the Group, Hon. Henry Nwabueze, who led the delegation to the SGF's office said Sen. Akume has given so

much in service to Nigeria and the Tinubu's administration hence the need to crown he patron of the

movement. The former President of the National Youth Council of Nigeria (NYCN) and distinguished

Delegate at the 2014 Nigerian National Conference initiated by the Jonathan administration said,

Sen. Akume represents the Tinubu administration's efforts aimed at injecting competence, maturity as well as discipline and hard work in public governance, and thanked the SGF for accepting the honour, revealing that in the weeks ahead Nigerians would see the advocacy campaigns of the Movement in support of President Tinubu's efforts at repositioning the country.

He told Nigerian politicians willing to contest for the Office of the President in 2027 to shelve the plans as there is no vacancy in Aso Rock.

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AGATE LITERATURE

With Msenhamba Nyiyongu Yonguhime

1. Ozymandias

by Percy Bysshe Shelley

“My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!”
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

Related: How Mary Shelley's Frankenstein Came to Life

2. If—

by Rudyard Kipling

If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too;
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or being hated, don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise:

[...]

If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And—which is more—you'll be a Man, my son!

3. We Wear the Mask

by Paul Laurence Dunbar

We wear the mask that grins and lies,
It hides our cheeks and shades our eyes,—
This debt we pay to human guile;
With torn and bleeding hearts we smile,
And mouth with myriad subtleties.

4. Still I Rise

by Maya Angelou

Does my haughtiness offend you?
Don't you take it awful hard
'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines
Diggin' in my own backyard.
You may shoot me with your words,
You may cut me with your eyes,
You may kill me with your hatefulness,
But still, like air, I'll rise.

Related: Must-Read Books by Black Authors

5. Jabberwocky

by Lewis Carroll

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.
“Beware the Jabberwock, my son!
The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!
Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun
The frumious Bandersnatch!”

6. Unnamed

by Rupri Kaur

“i stand
on the sacrifices
of a million women before me
thinking

what can i do
to make this mountain taller
so the women after me
can see farther
- legacy”

7. How Do I Love Thee?

by Elizabeth Barrett Browning

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of being and ideal grace.

8. Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds

by Kristina Louisa Carr

A kaleidoscopic mirage is born from the light
While words spoken in whispers calmly excite
Snowflakes of feathers are refreshing in July
A dragon is crowned visiting from Shanghai
Strawberries become mountains to explore
A room without doors I'm trying to ignore
From the corner the North Wind is blowing
Green marbles in a vase are brightly glowing

9. A Lesson for This Sunday

by Derek Walcott

The mind swings inward on itself in fear
Swayed towards nausea from each normal sign.
Hereditry of cruelty everywhere,
And everywhere the frocks of summer torn,
The long look back to see where choice is born,
As summer grass sways to the scythe's design.

10. Once Upon a Time

by Gabriel Okara

And I have learned too
to laugh with only my teeth
and shake hands without my heart.
I have also learned to say, 'Goodbye',
when I mean 'Good-riddance':
to say 'Glad to meet you',
without being glad; and to say 'It's been
nice talking to you', after being bored.

11. Who Said It Was Simple

by Audre Lord

There are so many roots to the tree of anger
that sometimes the branches shatter
before they bear.
Sitting in Nedicks
the women rally before they march
discussing the problematic girls
they hire to make them free.
An almost white counterman passes
a waiting brother to serve them first
and the ladies neither notice nor reject
the slighter pleasures of their slavery.
But I who am bound by my mirror
as well as my bed
see causes in colour
as well as sex
and sit here wondering
which me will survive
all these liberations.

It appears as if the Organised Labour in Nigeria is becoming overwhelmed by its mandate or responsibilities. I dare say that there is no bite in its roars anymore. It appears as if the fangs that defined its effectiveness in the past have been yanked out. Some would argue, and rightly so, that it is gradually turning into a toothless bulldog. What exactly is happening to the *Aluta* spirit? I don't know what you think but the situation is worrisome.

A time was when the Organised Labour was the pride of majority of citizens. Yes, workers' welfare was and remains the primary focus of Labour, but the entire citizenry benefitted from its activities in huge measures. It was actually the last hope of the common man. History is replete with the battles Labour fought on behalf of workers and the masses. Though it lost some of those battles, such loss was overshadowed by the many victories won. It was a veteran in the nation's democratic struggles and attainments. It was the leading voice in the civil society space.

Names like Pa. Michael Imoudu, Alhaji Ali Ciroma, Mallam Aminu Kano, Comrades Hassan Sunmonu, Frank Kokori and Adams Oshiomhole remind one of how commanding the voice of labour unionism was then. In those days, the Labour Movement had so much clout that it could easily attract the support of different other groups and organisations in the citizens-action space to execute collective, broad based actions in the interest of the country.

Apart from roundtable negotiations, strikes, picketing, demonstrations and boycotts were effectively deployed as



KANDID SENTIMENTS

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THE ORGANISED LABOUR: LOSING STEAM?

veritable civil tools in the struggle for the good of the country and its people.

However, for a while now, Organised Labour has engaged in a dawdling dance that is difficult to interpret. What happens now is that when there is a problem, labour leaders will shout themselves hoarse from the rooftop. They will then go into negotiations. Thereafter, silence. Sometimes they declare strike, but it is called off even before it commences. If they manage to record any victory at all, it is usually negligible compared to their original demand. A review of the processes that led to the declaration of the latest national minimum wage can attest to this. The Nigerian Labour Congress, NLC, and

meaningless ab initio.

There is also the painful way the spoil of battle is shared. When NLC and TUC are mobilising for nationwide strike for salary increase for instance, they insist that workers at the federal, states and local governments must join. Sometimes, traders, commercial drivers, etc are equally mobilised to participate. However, when the benefits of such strike materialise in the form of an incentive, no matter how small, only federal workers will enjoy it properly. The branches of the unions in the states would be abandoned to start renegotiating with their governments all over. The recent N70,000 new minimum wage has been implemented by the federal government while some

telecommunications service providers commenced the implementation of the 50% tariff increase. When the increase was approved by the Nigerian Communications Commission in January this year, the President of the NLC, Comrade Joe Ajaero called on workers to reject it and asked citizens to prepare for collective action against it. Labour and government went into negotiation to review the propriety or otherwise of the increase. While the negotiation is said to be still on, the service providers went to work, rolling out the new tariffs, beginning with data plans. Ajaero immediately called for the boycott of MTN, Airtel and Glo from 11.00 a.m. to 2 p.m. effective

shutdown of operations start immediately the service

Somebody should let leaders of the Organised Labour understand that the tea they are serving the workers and citizens of this country has progressively become too tepid for comfort.

the Trade Union, TUC (the arrow heads of the Labour Movement), had at the beginning demanded N497,000 as the appropriate minimum wage. In the end, N70,000 was arrived at. Labour was at peace with it! Yet, the worker continues to be weighed down by taxations in various sizes and shapes, so much so that the minimum wage was

state governments are yet to do so. Even those who have implemented did so in a haphazard manner that makes nonsense of the increment to some categories of workers. Yet, there is no concerted effort from the centre to demand and insist that the right thing be done for every member. Last week, some

February 13, to the end of the month. He then issued a deadline that if the 50% increase was not reversed, there would be total shut down of operations effective March 1.

No matter how well intentioned the NLC President's reaction to the tariff increase may sound, some things are unclear. First, why didn't the