

# New NIGERIAN

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## Demands Appropriate Sanction Against "Coupists"

\*Salutes president on birthday

# High Cost Of Diesel Forces Railway To Suspend Operations In Northern District

By; SANIALIYU, Zaria  
High cost of diesel may have forced the Nigeria Railway Corporation (NRC) to suspend operating the Lagos-Kano Route and Kano-Nguru routes among other routes in the northern district. The Northern District comprises of Kaduna, Kano Jigawa, Yobe, Katsina and Zamfara states; all the lines within the district are believed to be perfect at the moment. Checks by our reporter at the regional district office reveal that as at November 2023, the repairs of the Zaria-Kano-Minna-Lagos route were completed. However, our reporter

learnt that there is no date to scheduled to resume Lagos-Kano rail service, Kaduna-Kano, Kaduna-Kafanchan rail mass transit programmes, due to the high cost of diesel. It was also learnt that as at July, the NRC lost one million Naira each time it ran the Kano-Nguru route. The train operation before suspension of the services, the Kano to Nguru train departed Kano in the evening of Monday and arrives at Nguru on Tuesday morning; the train leaves Nguru on Tuesday night and arrives Kano on Wednesday morning. The train also goes back to Nguru on Thursday night and returns to Kano on

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We'll Work With Development Partners To Align Governance With Local Needs - Gombe Governor **P.5**

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## Emir Of Zazzau Advises AFAN To Enlighten Members On All Year Farming

By: SANIALIYU, Zaria

The Emir of Zazzau, Malam Ahmed Nuhu Bamalli has advised All Farmers Association of Nigeria (AFAN) Kaduna State Branch to organize a sensitization workshop to enlighten farmers on how to go about all year round farming.

Emir Bamalli gave the advise in his Palace, when State AFAN Chairman, Alhaji Nuhu Aminu led members to present farm inputs to the emir as a grand patron of the association.

He said, farming is the only way that remains for the people to sustain themselves as industries have failed because of power shortage in the country.

The traditional ruler emphasized that if farmers are enlightened on the new technologies, definitely people will be engaged throughout the year.

According to him, when youth are engaged fully, the issues of drug abuse



Emir of Zazzau

and other social vices will be history and the society itself will be free from any kind of wrong doing.

Bamalli assured AFAN that he is going back into farming as he loves farming and urged those that benefited to use the

inputs judiciously as a compliment to the government's gesture.

He said he will ensure that all his traditional title holders participate in farming activities with full force.

Earlier in his remarks, the

Kaduna State AFAN Chairman, Alhaji Nuhu Aminu told the emir that they were at the palace to present farm inputs to him as their Grand Patron as directed by the National President, Arc. Kabiru Ibrahim.

Aminu said, the programme has been flagged off at Benue State by the Honourable Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, The chairman said, the farm inputs given are 50% per cent free, a farmer will only pay half before collecting them.

He said AFAN has succeeded in reaching Birnin Gwari and farmers have been part of beneficiaries of the government's intervention.

"AFAN will continue to support government policies on agricultural programmes for the benefit of Nigerian farmers," he assured.

## New Ohinoyi Of Ebiraland Emerges As Kogi Govt Deposes Ohimege Igu Of Koto, Others



New Ohinoyi

By: ADAMA JOHN, Lokoja

A new Ohinoyi of Ebiraland has emerged.

He is the current Ohi of Okenwe, Alhaji Ahmed Tijani Anaje as the Ohinoyi designate of Ebiraland, just as the Ohimege Igu of Koto-Karfe,

His Royal Highness, Alhaji Abdulrazaq Isah Koto has been stripped of his traditional title.

Alhaji Abdulrazaq Isah Koto who doubled as the Chairman, Lokoja/ Kogi Local Government Area Traditional Council was replaced by Saidu Akawu Salihu as the Ohimege-Igu of Koto who is to be turbaned immediately to avoid a prolonged vacuum.

Abdulahman Isah Koto is to be deposed to Rijau Local Government Area of Niger State in a gale of removal and deposition spree of Governor Yahaba Bello's valedictory gifts to the monarchs as Niger State hosts them.

Recall that recently, government had queried the Ohimege-Igu of Koto for his alleged role and participation in partisan politics that endangered the security of his domain,

which culminated in the death of a young lady, while others suffered various degrees of injuries at a political rally in his domain.

Also ferried by the same boat, is the Olu Magongo of Magongo, His Royal Highness, Sam Bola Ojoa who was removed and

deposed to Salka, Magama Local Government Area of Niger State.

His Royal Highness, Samuel Adayi Onimisi, the Obobanyi of Emani is also removed and to be deposed to Doko, Lavun Local Government Area of Niger State.

Nevertheless, because of the legal chicanery bedeviling the title of Obobanyi of Ihima which reads on the promotion letter, upgrading the stool to first class status without recourse to the case in court the stool was reverted to "Obobanyi of Emani" just as the present occupant remains deposed. However, His Royal Highness, Boniface Musa, the Onu-Ife in Omala Local Government in Kogi East has been suspended indefinitely.

Other appointments include, Alhaji Ibrahim Gambo Kabir, as the Maigari of Lokoja and Alhaji Dauda Isah as the Maiyaki of Kupa.

Finally, going by the high court judgment of 1998 which gives full recognition to Ododo as bonafide child of Ita'azi the father of Ebiraland and Uhuodo as a distinct district in Ebira land with equal rights as others, "the stool of Ohi of Uhuodo is hereby created", the governor said.

The governor therefore, ordered an immediate process for and the occupation of the stool to commence with immediate effect.

## Ranking: LAUTECH Emerges Best State University In Nigeria

By: BAYO AKAMO, Ibadan

The Ladoké Akintola University of Technology (LAUTECH) Ogbomosho, has emerged the best state university in Nigeria.

This was contained in the latest ranking published by the Times Higher Education (THE) World

University Rankings in its latest publication, January 2024.

The publication also named Covenant University, Otta and the University of Ibadan as the two other topmost Nigerian universities.

According to a statement from the office of Oyo State Commissioner for Information and Civic

Orientation, Prince Dotun Oyelade, LAUTECH has held on tenaciously to its number one position as the best state university in Nigeria for the past two years.

Prince Oyelade recalled that for 11 years, LAUTECH lost its past glory and was compromised for political gains but since Governor

Seyi Makinde came on board, the fortunes of the university changed radically.

"LAUTECH's turnaround was further consolidated by the success of Gov. Makinde to make Oyo state the sole owner of the institution by negotiating an eight billion naira severance agreement with Osun state, which has now enabled him to consolidate on his ambition for the institution and expand its horizon with the establishment of the Faculty of Agriculture and Renewal Science in Iseyin last year."

Oyo State Commissioner for Education, Science and Technology, Prof Saliu Adelabu in his comment said LAUTECH deserves this ranking because of the determination of the state government to invest on its future and make the institution the pride of Nigeria and indeed Africa.



## IEDs Kill Eight, Injure Dozens In Borno

By: SADIQ ABUBAKAR, Maiduguri

At least eight people have been feared killed by another Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) landmine explosion in Kinewba village along Ngala-Dikwa road in Ngala Local Government Area of Borno State has occurred. It was also reported that dozens of other people were said to have sustained various degrees of injuries as a result of the explosion which occurred yesterday. Our correspondent reports that the Improvised attack happened about 15 kilometers away from

Maiduguri, the state capital.

A security source said that the two vehicles involved in the incident were damaged beyond repairs. "The vehicles left Ngala around 900:am while the incident occurred about 15 kilometers away. Eight civilians were feared dead, including two children, and several others, who were critically wounded in the landmines blast," he said.

A senior civilian JTF source said the two vehicles, an Isuzu van and a lorry, stepped on the bomb and nearly all the passengers were feared dead.

## High Cost Of Diesel Forces Railway To Suspend Operations In Northern District



Zaria Train Station

Saturday morning. The Kano-Lagos train service is very important for conveyance of cargo to the Kaduna, Kano and Funtua dry ports. Besides this, Kauran

Namoda train services which usually ran on Fridays, has not resumed, years after an accident involving the coaches. According to our source, the accident was as a result

of the activities of saboteurs who vandalised and tempered with the rail tracks and the locomotive involved in the accident was seriously damaged. However, the Regional District Manager, Northern

District Engr. Habib Alaka declined comments on the issue on the grounds that he doesn't have the authority of the Managing Director of NRC to speak to the press on the matter

## Ibadan Residents Groan Over Deplorable Roads Conditions, Months After Gov Makinde Gave Approval For Repairs

By: BAYO AKAMO, Ibadan

Residents of Ibadan are worried about many deplorable roads in the city, months after the Oyo State Governor, Engineer Seyi Makinde promised to restore normalcy on a number of major and access roads in Ibadan, the state capital.

Some observers had recently pointed out that inner roads were in a parlous state across Ibadan under the watch of the state governor, whose second term electoral victory was unprecedented in terms of the votes given to him by the people and residents of Ibadanland.

While the governor delivered five roads in Ido Local Government Area, latest being the recently commissioned reconstruction of 9.23km Omi Adio -Ido Road, residents believed the contractors handling some other major roads have not done enough to meet the deadline set for the completion of such roads.

Amongst the roads cited by residents are the Olorunsogo-Akanran road in Ona Ara Local Government; Iyaganku GRA access roads in Ibadan Southwest local government; some access roads at Bodija in Ibadan North local government and several others in Oluyole, Egbeda, Akinyele and Lagelu local governments to mention but a few.

Also, the roads cited by residents as

ongoing but too slow and far from completion stages were the Reconstruction of 37.41km Beere-Olorunsogo-Amuloko-Akanran-Dagbolu Road; Dualization of the 12.5km Challenge-Odo Ona Elewe-Apata Road; Reconstruction of 12km Apete-Awotan-Akufo Road into a rigid pavement road and Reconstruction of 12km Apete-Awotan-Akufo Road into a rigid pavement road.

In Ona Ara for instance, the road from Olorunsogo along Akanran being dualised by the State Government has suffered neglect in recent time fueling speculations that the contractor, Peculiar Ultimate Concerns Ltd may have lost control of the construction works therein.

A resident, Bola Adegoke said the works on the road as too slow and far from meeting the standard and the deadline set by the State Government, saying the construction works opposite Bovas trailer park; FF gas in Aba Eku community Ona ara amongst other locations on the main roads have left many residents to wonder when the roads would be restored for free vehicular movements.

Another resident, Prince Musliudeen Adekoya recalled that the Governor in May 6, 2022 as saying that, "These are some of the projects that we thought, by our third year anniversary, would have

been completed. Yes, we are pushing and the contractor is also pushing.

"In terms of quality, we are okay but in terms of the pace, I think they can do better. In three or four months, I believe they should be done with it. The major hold-up on the Ajia-Airport Road was the bridge we visited. They already have concrete over it and are waiting for it to keel. The contractors gave us the end of May but we won't allow them to rest", Governor Makinde added in response to the people of Akanran's appeal to him to hasten the project to ease the challenges they are facing, as a result of the ongoing constructions.

A community leader in Ona Ara, Fola Aderibigbe said the road which the Governor said would be ready for completion since year 2022 has dragged till the year 2024 now, with no hope in sight that the project would be completed in this new fiscal year.

Appealing to the governor on behalf of the residents of Ona Ara to either terminate the contract and give it to another contractor or read the riot act to the Ministry of Public Works and the contractor handling the project.

The state Commissioner for Public Works and Transportation, Professor Dahud Shangodoyin, had during a press briefing, said while the Oyo State Road

Maintenance Agency (OYSROMA) would handle some of the projects, others would be handled by contractors.

"OYSROMA will work on roads like U.I junction to Agbowo linking Ojoo-Iwo road expressway with a spur to Preboye's world, which is 2.3km; Sango-Eleyele road, which is 10.6km; Zion Plaza, Olusoji Avenue linking Alao Akala expressway, which is 1.25km; a culvert at Eleyele/Ologuneru road junction; Eleyele roundabout, Water Corporation, Eruwa Garage road, which is 0.63km.", he said

Shangodoyin added, "Also, we considered the brief on the asphaltic improvement/ rehabilitation of selected roads in Ibadan. The brief is in two parts – Lot 1 and Lot 2, which have a cumulative of 12 roads. Lot 1, which is 70.45km, consists of 10 roads and the council approved the award to Messrs KOPEC Ltd at a contract sum of N24.8bn for 12 months

"Lot 2 of this road is awarded to RATCON Construction Company. It has 12 roads of 14.30km at a contract sum of N1.88bn for a duration of six months. The summary is that we approved Lot 1 and Lot 2 of 12 roads with a total of 84.75km for Ibadan feeder roads.

Lot 1 for Ibadan feeder roads has 10 roads

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# Zulum Laments Overloading Of Goods By Articulated Trucks Along Maiduguri-Gamboru Ngala Road

\*Frowns at condition of border bridge at a near collapse

\*Describes heavy long vehicles carrying overload goods as economic sabotage



By; SADIQ ABUBAKAR, Maiduguri

Borno State Governor, Prof. Babagana Umara Zulum, has described the manner some traders and owners of articulated trucks (heavy-duty long vehicles) plying Maiduguri - Gamboru Ngala border town road with excessive load exceeding 100 tonnes per truck as economic sabotage against the federal government.

Zulum stated this on Sunday in Gamboru Ngala border town, the headquarters of Ngala Local Government Council of Borno State, which shares international

boundary with the Republic of Chad.

The governor also highlighted the excessive strength that heavy trucks place on the road on daily basis, leading to accelerated deterioration of the road.

He further stressed the need for strict enforcement of heavy vehicles weight regulations to protect both the road infrastructure and human lives (accidents) on the road.

The governor however, expressed concerns over the long-term consequences of the practice, stressing that, it undermines the federal

government's efforts towards improving and expanding state's basic infrastructures that have been hindering economic progress and development.

"It is sad to note what has been happening here. You can see trailers loaded with over 2,000 bags of cement or sugar. That entails more than 100 tonnes of commodities.

"This trend is only seen on this road and as a result, the road leading to Gamboru Ngala has been destroyed due to overload," Zulum said.

Zulum further lamented the series of threats to public safety posed by overloaded trucks,

citing the increased risk of accidents, especially, along the Maiduguri-Gamboru Ngala road.

The governor also frowned at the effects of overloading along the bridge linking the Nigerian side of the border and other neighbouring countries of Chad, SUDAN, Central Africa, etc as the activities have affected the border bridge to a near collapse. To address these concerns, Governor Zulum announced his administration's plans to collaborate with relevant agencies of the federal government to address the issues properly and effectively.

The governor also outlined a multifaceted approach, including increased enforcement of weight restrictions, strict implementation of penalties for violators and the establishment of weigh stations at strategic points along major transportation routes.

He also noted that despite the government's commitment to enhancing trans-border trade, appropriate measures will be implemented to maintain road infrastructure.

However, Zulum lauded the efforts of the federal government for its commitment to revitalizing federal roads in Borno State.



# We'll Work With Development Partners To Align Governance With Local Needs - Gombe Governor

By; JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON

Gombe State Governor, Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya, CON has restated his administration's commitment to working with development partners to align governance with the needs and aspirations of the people.

A statement signed by the Director-General (Press Affairs) Government House Gombe, Ismaila Uba Misilli, said that the governor gave this indication during a meeting with the Country Representative of PROPCOM Plus, A UK- funded project, Dr. Adiya Ode at the Gombe State Governor's Lodge in Abuja.

While highlighting on the state's 10- year development plan, tagged DEVAGOM with the background from pre-office needs assessments in 2019, the Governor stressed the urgency of forging strategic collaboration to ensure a sustainable development and lasting legacy.

"In Gombe State we have a clear vision. We are working with our Development Agenda which encapsulates our mission and vision borne out of the Needs Assessment that we carried out even before coming into office in 2019.

"We have no option than to partner with organisations like yours in line with the needs of our people. We must do it fast and do it well in order to leave a lasting legacy".

The Governor noted that some of the focus areas of PROPCOM Plus are in line with his administration's agenda, especially the climate-related ones and the livestock development aspect.

He said with its strategic location in the North East and its environmental restoration project, the Gombe Goes Green (3G) and the Wawa-Zange grazing reserve, there is no better place for PROPCOM Plus to forge partnership than Gombe.

"In Gombe we have a project called, Gombe Goes Green (3G) under which we are planting at least one million trees annually in our efforts towards environmental restoration.

We're also working with the World Bank on some similar projects such as the Livestock Productivity and Resilience Project (L-PRES) towards developing and transforming our livestock subsector and the Agro-Climate Resilience in Semi-Arid Landscapes (ACReSAL) Project to step up our implementation of sustainable landscape management. So with yours coming on board, there must be a synergy in order to reap the benefits".

Governor Inuwa Yahaya stressed the imperative for Nigeria to harness its natural resources for self-sustenance, citing successful models like China, Singapore, and Rwanda.

He advocated for a shift from a consumer-oriented nation to a productive force leveraging Nigeria's vast resources, population, and talent pool.

"I am an advocate of Nigeria utilizing its God's given endowment to develop itself rather than depending on handouts from the so called developed countries or donor agencies. We are blessed with resources, the numbers and the talents. For instance China, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia,

India and even Rwanda utilized these endowments and they have now achieved tremendous progress; Nigeria must follow suit".

Earlier, Dr. Adiya Ode informed Governor Inuwa Yahaya that Propcom+ is UKAid's new flagship rural and agricultural market development programme aimed at supporting economic growth in conflict and climate affected regions in Nigeria by addressing environmental, social, and economic challenges in the country's food and land-use system.

She sought for partnership with Gombe State Government in the areas of sustainable agriculture and forestry that will benefit people, climate, and nature.

"The programme aims to support the people, to adopt and scale sustainable agricultural practices that increase productivity and climate resilience while reducing emissions and protecting natural ecosystems".

"We'll be working in Kaduna Gombe, Adamawa, focusing on Animal health, supporting both the public and private sectors to facilitate investment in Agricultural value chains, smallholder farmers on rice production and irrigation infrastructure to facilitate core investment in these sectors.

She noted that the partnership between PROPCOM Plus and Gombe State will seek to stimulate investments in agricultural value chains, bridging the public and private sectors for impactful growth with a promising trajectory for sustainable growth and advancement in Gombe State.



# Och'Idoma Shocks All With New Declarations In Idomaland

\*Wives to be buried in husband's ancestral homes

\*Bride price pegged at N50k

\*Expensive rites associated with burials abolished

By; ARCHIBONG ESUENE, Makurdi

In a bold move that is receiving accolades, the paramount ruler of Idoma Kingdom Worldwide, the Och'Idoma, HRM Agaba -Idu, Dr Elaigwu Odobo Odogbo Obagaji John CON, has shocked all with pronouncements that have outlawed age long traditions in the land.

Speaking to New Nigerian yesterday, Mr Onuminya Samuel Odoaba, Media Aide to the HRM Agaba -Idu, confirmed that the decisions were taken after proper and wider consultations with critical stakeholders including the traditional rulers across the entire Idoma traditional council. According to the Mr Odoaba who doubles as the Palace Chief Scribe, his royal majesty after listening to the lamentations of his subjects on the issues embarked on consultations with

critical stakeholders before coming up openly to make the announcement during his address to the people of Idoma land in his New Year broadcast on January,1, 2024.

Part of the declarations includes, "Wives' dead bodies are to henceforth be buried in their husbands' ancestral homes throughout Idoma kingdom.

"Wives are to henceforth share in their late husbands' properties alongside the husbands' children (male and female) throughout Idoma Kingdom," the Och'Idoma declared.

According to the paramount ruler, bride price is henceforth benchmarked at N50,000 maximum throughout Idoma kingdom.

He added, "All expensive rites associated with marriages are henceforth prohibited.

"All extensive and expensive rites associated with burials are henceforth prohibited.

"All communities within Idoma Kingdom are to establish community cemetery forthwith to receive dead bodies of community members. No more burying of dead bodies within the living homes," he declared.

Furthermore, he said that an umbrella body for Idoma socio cultural and economic development known as Opiatoha Gayigene GIdoma has been incorporated in Nigeria to drive the agenda of Idoma cultural, political and economic development.

It would be recalled that for ages before the pronouncements, corpses of wives of Idoma men were returned back to their father's families, a tradition many frowned at, describing it as archaic.

The development also discouraged several non Idomas from marrying Idoma men.



Och'Idoma, HRM Agaba -Idu, Dr Elaigwu Odobo Odogbo Obagaji John

## Plateau Attack: Police Arrests 3 Suspects, 64 Others, Recovers 68 Firearms

By; RAYMOND TEDUNJAYE, Lagos

No fewer than 67 suspected criminals have been arrested by Police operatives across the country, amongst them three persons said to be members of a gunrunning syndicate in connection with the Christmas Eve attack on some villages in Plateau State.

The suspects, apprehended by operatives attached to the Nigeria Police Force Intelligence Department Tactical Team- DFI-IRT and DFI-STs, were said to have been nabbed for various crimes ranging from kidnapping, gunrunning, one-chance, armed robbery, banditry across the country.

A total of 68 rifles, 5,454 rounds of live ammunition of different calibre, 300 live cartridges, 50 empty shells of ammunition, and 33 different ATM cards amongst others were recovered from the suspects.

The Force Public Relations Officer ACP Olumuyiwa Adejobi who made the disclosure in a statement yesterday, said the arrest was in



Arms and ammunition recovered from the suspects being displayed by the Force Public Relations Officer, ACP Olumuyiwa Adejobi, flanked by others.

furtherance to sustain the efforts of the Inspector-General of

Police, IGP Kayode Adeolu Egbetokun, Ph.D, NPM in

curbing crimes and criminality across the country.

It reads, " In furtherance to the sustained efforts of the Inspector-General of Police, IGP Kayode Adeolu Egbetokun, Ph.D, NPM, to curb crimes and criminality across the country, the Nigeria Police Force Intelligence Department Tactical Team- DFI-IRT and DFI-STs have successfully arrested 67 suspects for various crimes ranging from kidnapping, gunrunning, one-chance, armed robbery, banditry across the country.

" Similarly the Police has recovered 5,454 rounds of live ammunitions of different calibre, 300 live cartridges, 50 empty shells of ammunition, 68 rifles, and 33 different ATM cards amongst others.

" Prominent amongst these achievements, is the arrest of three (3) suspects who are members of a gunrunning syndicate in connection with the Christmas Eve attack on some villages in Plateau State, they are currently in police custody and assisting with investigation.

" The suspects are (1) Ahmed

Sulaimon (2) Balikisu Aliyu (3) Aboki Samuel. Upon their arrest, 1 AK-47 rifle, 1 AK-49 rifle, 1000 rounds of live ammunition and 5 magazines were recovered from them.

" Also, 4 suspects were arrested in connection with the bank robbery at Otukpo where Nine (9) AK-47 rifles were recovered from the said suspects while five (5) suspects fell to the superior fire power of Police operatives during a fierce gun duel at their hideout in Taraku village, Buruku LGA of Benue State. They all confessed to committing the heinous act and linked other gang members who are at large and have also named Terzungwe Shionda a.k.a '3-star general' (now late), Terlulum Pila and one Ayuko both at large, to be the ones supplying them arms on loan for their operations. " The IGP reiterates the commitment of the Police to ensuring the safety and security of our citizens by relentlessly cracking down on criminals and criminally related activities and will continue to work tirelessly to ensure Nigeria is a safe space for everyone".

# Dr. Umar Hashidu Resumes As Kaduna Electric CEO

By; JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON

Dr. Umar Abubakar Hashidu has taken over the reigns as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Kaduna Electric.

He took over from Engr. Yusuf Usman Yahaya who exited last week.

A statement issued by the Head of Corporate Communication, Abdulazeed Abdullahi, Monday morning, said a brief handover ceremony presided over by Mr. Dafe Okpaneye, the NERC

Commissioner for Legal Licensing and Compliance, was conducted at the company's corporate headquarters in Kaduna.

At the ceremony which was followed by a short interaction with staff, Mr. Okpaneye thanked the former MD for the work he had put in in the past 18 months to move the company forward. He charged Dr. Hashidu to harness the talent and resources available to him to take Kaduna Electric to greater heights.

In his address to the Executive Management Committee members and staff, Dr. Hashidu urged every staff to look in the mirror and challenge themselves to do better. He stressed his belief in the ability of the management and staff to change the negative narrative about Kaduna Electric to a positive one.

In his farewell remarks, Engr. Yusuf also appreciated all staff for the support he got during his time and urged everyone to extend the same support

to the new helmsman.

Management and staff took turns to welcome the new CEO with a promise of extending their full cooperation to him for the success of Kaduna Electric and wished the former MD the best in his future endeavours.

Before his appointment, Dr. Hashidu was the erstwhile Managing Director of North East Development Commission (NEDC) and also of Yola Electricity Distribution Company.



Tsoken

## Tinubu's War Against Corruption Is Real - Tsoken

By; JABIRU A. HASSAN, Kano

The national president, All Progressives Congress (APC) Initiative For Good Governance (APC-IGG) Ambassador Musa Mohammed Tsoken has opined that the fight against corruption by the President Bola Ahmed Tinubu-led administration would be successful, especially when the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) is given full mandate to discharge duties effectively.

He expressed this in a statement he signed and issued to newsmen, where he announced that, "I am of the opinion that the present administration is making advancement on the war against corruption in Nigeria by giving all the required chance to the Economic and Financial Crimes

Commission to ensure sanity in our governance and from our own knowledge, Nigeria would be an exemplary domain with corruption free record".

He reassured that the APC Initiative For Good Governance will continue to promote good governance, especially at present when Nigeria is getting more recognition in a democratic process.

He commended the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF), Dr. George Akume for his efforts towards the successful implementation of the Tinubu administration's policies.

Tsoken tasked Nigerians to be more courageous with the present situation as in the near future, Nigeria would become an exemplary domain with better economic system.



## Gov Alia Dedicates Supreme Court Victory To Benue People

By; ARCHIBONG ESUENE, Makurdi

Governor of Benue State, Rev. Fr. Hyacinth Alia has congratulated the Benue people for voting massively for All Progress Congress (APC), which against all odds, has seen him through at the Supreme Court.

Reacting to the judgement which quashed the case of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and its candidate, Engr. Titus Uba, the Governor, said the Supreme Court's decision only reaffirms the time-honoured mantra

that power belongs to the people.

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

The governor who spoke through his Chief Press Secretary, Mr Tersoo Kulas, noted that the Supreme Court while affirming the victory of the governor, berated the counsel for the PDP and described the matter brought against the governor as frivolous and abuse of court process.

The apex court further asked the PDP's lead counsel S. T. Hom SAN to withdraw the matter or risk the wrath of the court by the award of substantial cost, an order to which he immediately complied with.

Governor Alia who hailed the judiciary, saying they have proven once more that they are truly the last hope of the common man dedicates his victory to the ordinary Benue person on the street, farmers, teachers, market women, pensioners, IDPs, youth, and civil servants previously depressed and

demotivated.

According to the statement, the governor maintained that he will continue to prioritize needs and interests of Benue people over that of those of people who do not mean well for the state and called on total to support the government of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu to provide dividends of democracy to the Nigerian people.

The governor reiterated his resolve to remain focused, despite distractions until the fortunes of the state are turned around for good.

# Inuwa Yahaya Wins Sun Governor Of Year 2023 Award

*\*Says recognition is a morale booster to do more*

*\*Dedicates award to team members, Gombe people*



By: **JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON**

Gombe State Governor, Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya, CON has been nominated as the Sun Governor of the year, 2023 by the Sun Publishing Limited, publishers of Daily Sun, Saturday Sun, Sunday Sun and Sporting Sun. A statement signed by the Director-General (Press Affairs) Government House Gombe, Ismaila Uba Misilli, made available on Monday January 8, said that the notice of the nomination was conveyed to the Governor by the Managing Director of the media outfit, Mr. Onuoha Ukey who led other members of his management team, including the Editor,

Ihenacho Nwonsu, and the head of Northern Operations, Folashade Adetotu on a visit to the Governor at the Gombe State Governor's Lodge in Abuja on Friday.

"We are here to notify you that the Board of Editors of The Sun Publishing Limited, after a rigorous selection process, has picked you as the winner of The Sun Governor of the Year Award 2023.

The MD informed the Governor that the decision of the Board of Editors to confer on him the award of Governor of the Year was in recognition of his visionary leadership and remarkable strides in infrastructure, healthcare, education, environment, water

supply and human capital development among others.

He said Governor Inuwa's performance was scaled against those of others and found to stand out.

Mr. Ukey disclosed that the Sun Award is reserved for that Governor who has performed exceptionally well in office; one whose administration has made a verifiable and positive impact on the lives of the people.

"Your selection for this award was based on merit because of your achievements within the period you have been Governor of Gombe State.

Many people refer to you as a visionary Governor, and this disposition has shown clearly in the years you have been the head

government in Gombe State", the letter of notification reads.

The MD congratulated the Governor on his nomination as the Sun Governor of the Year 2023 and formally invited him to the award ceremony and formal conferment on February 17, 2024 at Eko Hotel and Suites, Victoria Island, Lagos.

While accepting the nomination, Governor Inuwa Yahaya thanked the media outfit for recognising his government's modest achievements, describing the award as an honour done not only to him but his working team and the entire people of Gombe State. "The award will inspire us to do more for the betterment of the people Gombe of State, and we will succeed in changing the

narratives to make Gombe a better place, better than we met it", he said.

The Governor stated that his administration is providing quality governance to the people through a well thought-out Gombe State Development Plan (2021-2030) aimed at transforming the state within the next 10 years and placing it on the path of sustainable development.

"We came in with a clear vision and we were able to organise a mission that is to working for us, and we are happy that our modest achievements are being appreciated", Governor Inuwa remarked.





**Executive Governor of Katsina State, Malam Dikko Umaru Radda visited the Executive Secretary of the Nigeria Investment Promotion Commission (NIPC), Aisha Rimi to felicitate her on recent appointment as ES/CEO of the NIPC in Abuja. Photos: BASHIR BELLO DOLLARS**



# Exploring The Natural Wonders Of Kogi State: From Confluence To Caves

By ; E M M A N U E L  
EMMANUELLAIYE

**C**rested in the heart of Nigeria, Kogi State is a hidden gem waiting to be discovered.

With its breathtaking landscapes, vibrant culture, and unique attractions, this Confluence State offers a captivating experience for adventurers and nature enthusiasts alike.

At the heart of Kogi State, lies the mesmerizing confluence of the Niger and Benue rivers.

This awe-inspiring meeting point not only showcases the power of nature, but also symbolizes the unity and diversity of the Nigerian people.

Visitors can witness this majestic sight and even take a boat ride to fully immerse themselves in the beauty of the confluence.

Kogi State is blessed with an abundance of natural resources, making it a haven for nature lovers.

The state is home to picturesque hills, lush forests, and cascading waterfalls that offer a serene escape from the hustle and bustle of city life.

From the enchanting Ajaokuta Hills to the breathtaking Oworo Waterfalls, there is no shortage of natural wonders to explore and admire.

Immerse yourself in the rich history and vibrant culture of Kogi State.

The state is inhabited by various

ethnic groups, each with its own unique traditions and festivals.

The Igala people, known for their colourful attires and traditional dances, celebrate the popular Igala New Yam Festival, a grand event that showcases their rich cultural heritage.

Visitors can also explore ancient artifacts and antiquities at the National Museum in Lokoja, the state capital.

For the adventurous souls, Kogi State offers a chance to explore its mysterious caves.

The Ososo Cave, with its stunning rock formations and hidden chambers, provides an exhilarating experience for spelunking enthusiasts.

The cave's cool and tranquil atmosphere is perfect for escaping the heat of the sun and discovering the secrets held within its depths.

Kogi State is a treasure trove of natural wonders, cultural heritage, and thrilling adventures.

Whether you're seeking tranquility in the midst of nature or a deeper understanding of Nigeria's rich history, this Confluence State has something for everyone.

So pack your bags, embark on a journey, and let Kogi State captivate your senses like never before.

Emmanuel Emmanuella Iye, a student, sent in this piece



Ohinoyi Palace



Lord Lugard Residence



Mount Patti



Confluence of Rivers Niger and Benue in Lokoja

# TGNEWS Award: Fintiri, Bindow, Others Honoured

By: TINAPHINEAS, Yola

Yola, the Adamawa State capital hosted great men and women, who had distinguish themselves in the country as the state governor, Ahmadu Fintiri, his predecessor, Muhammad Jibirilla Bindow and other personalities were honoured with merit awards on Saturday by an online newspaper, TGNews.

Immediate past Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF), Barr. Boss Mustapha and the first Nigerian female admiral, Admiral Jamila

Sadiq Malafa (rtd) were also conferred with awards.

Others included, the House of Representatives member for Song/Fufore Federal constituency, Hon. Wakili Boya; the Vice Chancellor of Federal University Kashere, Professor Umar Pate; and the Archbishop of the LCCN, Dr. Panti Filibus. The awards were also extended to royal fathers, including Emir of Mubi, HRH. Abubakar Isa Ahmadu, Gangwari Ganye, HRH Adamu Sanda, Hama Bachama, HRH. Homun Ismaila Daniel Shaga and Kwandi Nunguriya, HRH. Kuruhaye

Dishon Dansanda.

Other personalities similarly given awards included TVC News Director, Stella Din-Peters, former Adamawa House of Assembly Majority Leader, Hon Hassan Mamman Barguma, among many others.

Governor Ahmadu Fintiri who received his award through his deputy, Professor Kaletapwa Farauta, thanked the TG News for recognising the resourcefulness of his administration.

He said such award make him want to do

more for the people.

Another of the awardees, the Vice Chancellor of Federal University Kashere, Umar Pate who was also the guest lecturer on the occasion, advised journalists to seek always to be accurate and give out information that builds the society.

In his welcome address, the Editor -in-Chief/Publisher of the TG News, Tom Garba, expressed gratitude to all who contributed in making the event a success.



# Zulum Shares N221.7m Cash, Food Items, Others To 67,454 Households In Gamboru Ngala

By; SADIQ ABUBAKAR, Maiduguri

Borno State Governor, Babagana Umara Zulum, supervised the disbursement of N221,760,000 in cash, distribution of food items and wrappers to over 67,454 vulnerable residents of Ngala Local Government Area. Zulum was in Ngala on Saturday, where he spent two nights, coordinating humanitarian and

developmental activities in the local government area.

The distribution took place at five centres in Gamboru, Wulgo and Ngala, the major communities housing thousands of internally displaced persons from two local government areas that fled due to activities of Boko Haram insurgents.

The exercise started on Sunday with 44,352 women beneficiaries, each receiving

N5,000 in cash and a wrapper, while 23,102 male heads of households each got one bag of rice and one bag of maize on Monday.

"Yesterday (Sunday), we distributed non-food items to about 44,352 women in Ngala Local Government Area. Each of them received N5,000 and a wrapper. This morning (Monday), we are distributing food items to 23,103 male heads

of households. Each of them will receive one bag of rice and one bag of maize to cushion their hardship," Zulum said.

The governor expressed gratitude to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu for supporting Borno State Government with donation of about 10,000 bags of rice through the Nigerian Customs Service.

The governor was accompanied by the senator representing Borno Central, Barrister Kaka

Shehu Lawan, a member House of Representatives, Engr Bukar Talba and a member of the House of Assembly representing Ngala Constituency, Hon Bukar Abatcha.

Others on the governor's entourage include commissioners, special advisers and special advisers designated, heads of agencies in charge of humanitarian activities and some top officials of the government.



# Zulum Shares N221.7m Cash, Food Items, Others To 67,454 Households In Gamboru Ngala



# Baptist Convention President Urges Christians To Return To Christ

By; FUNMI ADERINTO, Kaduna

The President of Nigerian Baptist Convention, Reverend Dr. Israel Akanji, FAR, on Monday, charged Christians to return to Jesus Christ, the teacher.

He gave the charge during the two days Kaduna Baptist Conference 2024 International General Workers' Conference (North 2 Zone) Southern Kaduna, Plateau South and North West held at Albarka Baptist Church in Kaduna.

"We must deliberately bring back our discipleship, we need to add various dimension of discipleship and be disciplined". He said.

The Reverend was speaking on the theme, "Entering into Newness through Discipleship and Apostleship" taken from Mark 3:14.

He explained that a disciple is a learner under a teacher and to the teacher, he pledges his allegiance, "hence we are

perpetual learner under Jesus Christ."

According to him, "demons are real, they come in witches and wizards. Christians should not relent from casting them out as they are diverse form who operate in the lives of people physically and spiritually."

He said, "according to mark 3:14 that Jesus invites everyone to come to Him, the master has called on everyone to come and follow Him."

The clergyman read from John 15:4 that Christians should abide in Christ, they are to make more disciples and focus on Him to have power over authority and demonic activities.

"In addition for Christian to be able to achieve this, you must first be with Christ before you can be able to cast them out, hence you must take your authority and drive them out."

"However, Jesus is a provider who provided for the crowd and fed them, therefore, Jesus wants us to be like Him in character and

our lifestyles should display Godly character," he advised.

He further said, "you must use what you have as a disciple, Jesus taught many, He was an instructor, he was a teacher."

"A learner or student has to grow to be like his teacher, you must have good relationship with people to make discipleship of others by living a Godly character because it is Christ that lives in us."

"A disciple embraces good of others, we should not allow the devil to steal our time. Believers should create time to study the Bible, hence they are to apply the Word to their lives on daily basis. "Christians are on an errand, we are saints therefore, we need to be courageous as messengers of God, we must maintain the value and lifestyles of Jesus Christ."

"Consequently, discipleship is a privilege that Christians learn from Jesus Christ, it is a privilege that comes with responsibility to go and make disciples," he said.



*Baptist Convention President*

He concluded that Christians shall be new life that bring in disciples to Christ through

discipleship and Apostleship, insisting that learning is a continuous process.

## N3.4bn Debt: Accountant-General Didn't Contradict Gov Makinde On Payment To Ex-LG Chairmen – Oyo Govt

By; BAYOAKAMO, Ibadan

Oyo State Government on Monday, said that the Accountant-General of the State, Mrs Kikelomo Adegoke, did not contradict the position of Gov Seyi Makinde, on the payment of judgment debt to former local government chairmen and councillors.

The government in a statement by the Chief Press Secretary to Gov Makinde, Mr Sulaimon Olanrewaju stressed that the letter, which was sent to the banks in respect of the garnishee order placed on the state's

account in 10 commercial banks by the Federal Capital Territory High Court in December 2023, was consistent with Governor Makinde's position.

According to the government, "in the letter, the Accountant-General informed the affected banks that the Oyo State Joint Local Government Allocation Account domiciled with First Bank of Nigeria, had already been put on lien to the tune of N3,425,300,000, being the total amount of the judgment debt."

"Having adequately provisioned for the debt, it is therefore both

unconscionable and inequitable for nine other banks to do the same in the circumstances. This is in fact, consistent with Governor Makinde's position", it said.

Oyo State Government added, "While speaking on the Broadcasting Corporation of Oyo State (BCOS) on 23 December 2023, Makinde said although the state had already made provision for the judgment debt, the money would not be paid until the Supreme Court responded on the clarification,

which the Oyo State Government had sought from the apex court.

"It is unfortunate that some misguided individuals intent on creating an imaginary division within the Oyo State Government have coloured the contents of the letter to make it seem like Makinde lied."

Oyo State Government stressed "the governor has neither said the state will not pay the debt nor that the state had no money to pay, but that the process of the law would be followed to a logical

conclusion to avoid paying Oyo State's money to wrong people.

"For the avoidance of doubts, Governor Makinde has not said that the state will not pay the judgment debt nor did he say the state does not have the funds to pay".

Oyo State Government noted, "Rather, the position of the governor is that the whole process of the law must be pursued to a logical conclusion before the money is paid to avoid the state's fund getting into the wrong hands,"

## Ibadan Residents Groan Over Deplorable Roads Conditions, Months After Gov Makinde Gave Approval For Repairs

on that axis; Oshuntokun – Housing Corporation – Elewure – Awolowo junction and it is 2.99km. The second road on that Lot 1 is Aare junction-Ashi, along Bodija road, which is 3.48km; Bodija-Oju-Irin-Ashi-Basorun with a spur to Ojoo, which is 3.45km; reconstruction of U.I (Preboye junction)-Bodija market-Secretariat road-Beere roundabout dual carriageway, 15.53km; Government

House-NTA junction-Ikolaba-JAMB office-Officers Mess-Federal Secretariat-Custom office dual carriageway, 6.13km; Queens Cinema-Dugbe-Sango-Trans Amusement park junction and 11.74km dual carriageway.

"Others are the construction of Molete (under bridge)-Oke Ado-Oke Bola-Queens Cinema-Dugbe dual carriageway,

9.3km; Iyaganku-7th Day Adventist Church-Oke Bola junction-Olubadan stadium junction-Vale College-NUJ PRESS Centre junction with spur to Total filling station-Radio Nigeria-Kobiowu Estate-Akinyemi Junction-Ring Road, 3.85km; dualisation of Mile 10-Ring road-Mobil-Challenge car park, 8.5km; General Gas junction-Kolapo Ishola-

Iyana Church with spur to Dizzengorf, 5.48km. The total length of Lot 1 is 70.45km.

"For Lot 2, we have two roads, which are the reconstruction of Bus Stop-Gate-One-Ber-Jabba-Molete (under bridge) dual carriageway, 10.8km and Oke Adu-Ode Aje- Aremo-Orita Aperin, 3.5km. The total length of Lot 2 is 14.3km."

# Sadiya: I Applied To EFCC For Extension Of Time For My Client To Appear For Interview - SAN

**\*Says she did not shun commission's invitation**

By: IMRANA MUSTAPHA,  
Kaduna

Counsel to former Minister of Humanitarian Services, Disaster Management and Social Development, Hajiya Sadiya Umar-Farouq, Sir Oladipo Okpese (SAN) has clarified the erroneous media report doing the rounds about his client, saying that she did not shun the invitation extended to her by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC).

Okpese said that on the contrary, she was eager to make herself available to offer clarifications to operatives of the anti-graft agency who were looking into the books of two financially independent agencies under the ministry, including the National Social Investment Programme Agency (NSIPA).

"I was at the headquarters of the Commission on Tuesday to submit a letter to that effect and to seek extension of time (a shift in date) to enable my client, Hajiya Sadiya Umar Farouq, to make herself available at another opportune time to offer clarifications about activities of some agencies under the ministry she superintended in the immediate past administration.

"Although, the EFCC has yet to send me a formal reply, the leadership availed us of its understanding, which resulted in parties amicably agreeing to have the interview originally scheduled for Wednesday (January 3, 2024) postponed to a time that the Commission would subsequently fix after looking through its schedules," Sir Okpese said in a chat with the media.

He said that once the coast was clear and a new date was fixed by the Commission, his client would be available to answer questions and offer clarifications on the areas of her stewardship that are not clear to the Commission.

The Senior Advocate of Nigeria took the opportunity of the chat to attack the impression being created in a section of the media that his client was being invited for alleged misappropriation of funds.

According to him: "That is not



*Sadiya*

the case in this circumstance. She has been invited to offer clarifications into certain expenditures by some agencies under her ministry."

Recall that the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) had earlier said it would not arrest the immediate past Minister of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management, for the alleged N37.1 billion fraud in agencies under the ministry.

The EFCC had also said that the former minister did not shun its invitation.

The EFCC spokesperson, Dele Oyewale, said this on Thursday, January 4, 2024.

Oyewale noted that the former minister sent a letter that she couldn't honour the invitation because she was indisposed [due to health challenges].

"It is true that she didn't show up, but she sent a letter pleading for more time explaining that she had some health challenges.

"She didn't shun EFCC invitation; she actually gave reasons why she couldn't meet up

"Her lawyer was also at the commission to brief the anti-graft agency of why she couldn't come or honour the invitation,"

he told NAN.

Oyewale said the EFCC had considered her plea and expected that she would honour the invitation without further delay.

The EFCC spokesperson said there might not be any reason for her arrest as she had done the needful through her lawyer.

"The position of the commission is that she should turn herself in without further delay," he added.

Oyewale further stated that the N37.1 billion being branded might not be a correct figure of the money misappropriated under the ministry.

He said: "On the figure that is being branded, I cannot categorically confirm the figure because it is an ongoing thing. We are still tracing all the transactions here and there; it may be more than that.

"We can't publish a figure now until we finish the tracking, and it may be more than what is being brandished now."

The EFCC spokesperson added that the National Coordinator and Chief Executive Officer of the National Social Investment Programme Agency (NSIPA), Halima Shehu, had been released.

Shehu, who was arrested on Tuesday, was, however, directed

to be coming to the EFCC office for interrogation until the end of the investigation.

She was arrested in connection with the ongoing probe of the humanitarian affairs ministry.

"She was the National Coordinator in charge of the Conditional Cash Transfer Programme under the ministry during Buhari's tenure, and she has been queried over some of the money that left the ministry's coffers through her," Oyewale said.

It would also be recalled that the former minister had, through her media aide, Alexander Udeh, issued an initial response to the media report that insinuated her into business relationship with a contractor.

Read her: "My attention has been drawn to publications in some online media outlets trying to link my name with the activities of one Mr. James Okwete who is reportedly being investigated by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) over alleged financial improprieties.

"Ordinarily I would have ignored such publications, which at best could be seen and regarded as speculative but doing so will give energy to the

adventure of those who take delight in mudslinging, especially against those who are, or have been privileged to hold public offices.

"In this age of digital media when unverified materials are easily dumped and recalled from the cyber space, it would be inappropriate to ignore such a malicious linkage.

"I wish to state categorically that I neither know the said Mr. Okwete nor has ever had him represent me in any way whatsoever. Therefore, linking me with him in whatever guise is bogus and ill-intentioned.

"I remain proud to have served my country as Minister of the Federal Republic of Nigeria with every sense of responsibility and would defend my actions, stewardship and programmes during my tenure whenever I am called upon to do so.

"While I resist the urge to engage in any media banter whatsoever on this issue since my name was never expressly mentioned by the agency reportedly investigating Mr. Okwete, I am nonetheless prepared to seek redress legally and clear my name if there is any such defamatory reference to my person from any source."

Meanwhile, sundry reports said that the agencies, which financial activities caught the interest of and scrutiny by the anti-graft agency had their budgets independently and exclusively administered by them as long as spending did not go above a certain threshold.

It was learnt that if proposed expenditures went above the threshold, the agencies would have to revert upstairs for ministerial approval.

But the agencies, as learnt, ensured that expenditures for contracts were below ministerial approval.

These, as gathered, are some of the areas the former minister would be expected to clarify or shed light on in her rescheduled interview with operatives of the EFCC to enable it [the Commission] track the "expended" funds being investigated.

## Education Remains Free In Oyo State - Commissioner

**\*Warns principals, teachers against illegal fees collection**

By; BAYO AKAMO, Ibadan

As schools in Oyo State resumed on Monday for second term academic calendar, the state Commissioner of Education, Science and Technology, Prof. Salihu Adelabu has insisted that education is free in the state

The commissioner who said this while monitoring the resumption of schools for the second term academic activities in Ibadan metropolis warned principals and teachers in public schools across the state against collecting illegal fees.

Describing the level of compliance of teachers and students in resumption for the second term school calendar in the state as impressive, Professor Adelabu tasked parents

who are yet to release their wards to quickly release them as academic activities have begun in earnest, saying that keeping them back home will put them at a disadvantage position among their colleagues.

"I want to warn the teachers that never must they charge the students and parents because Education is free in Oyo State, also to the parents whose their Children are yet to come, should allow them to come to school as teachings and learnings have commenced in the Schools", he said.



Prof. Adelabu during his visit to schools on Monday

The commissioner added, "Today is the first day of resumption in our public Primary and Secondary Schools in Oyo State. The enthusiasm of the teachers and students are very okay; luckily enough, based on what I have seen, not less than 70% of our students resumed and almost 97% of the staff are in the schools.

"With the morale of Teachers and Students, the second term will be a fruitful section for both the students and the Teachers. I will encourage the Students to sit tight and face their study squarely, and the Teachers should act professionally by bringing creativity and innovation into their teaching methods".

## Kogi Poly Confers Fellowship Awards On Seven Nigerians At Combined Convocation.

By; ADAMA JOHN, Lokoja

As Kogi State Polytechnic confers fellowship awards on seven distinguished Nigerians, Kogi State Governor, Alhaji Yahaya Bello has scored self high, saying he will be leaving the state better than he met it some eight years ago.

The Rector of the Polytechnic, Dr. Salisu Usman Ogbo and six others bagged a fellowship award by the polytechnic for outstanding performance on infrastructure and human capital development.

Others who bagged fellowship of the institution include, Alh. Ozi Salami for sinking several boreholes and for granting scholarship to several students of the polytechnic.

Similarly, Barr. Umoru Jimoh of IHS, Prof. Idris M. Bugaji of NBTE and Barr. Moses Azubuike Okafor were also conferred with fellowship

of the institution.

Speaking at the Combined Convocation Ceremony for 2013/2014-2022/2023 set of the State Polytechnic, Lokoja, Gov. Bello said that an outstanding achievement of his administration is evidenced in the repositioning of the state polytechnic to challenges of 21st century.

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

"We have taken time to look into the education sector of our people. We made education a top priority in our thematic agenda.

"We not only improved on the infrastructure and learning in our tertiary institutions, but also expanded our educational institution so that our children will not travel far to seek knowledge within four years of our second term administration". He said.

He appreciated the people

of Kogi State for his modest contribution by voting for Alhaji Usman Ahmed Ododo as his successor, assuring them that he will consolidate on the gains made by his administration.

The governor commended the chairman of the governing council, staff and students of the polytechnic for their unwavering cooperation that his administration enjoyed.

"I'm indeed very proud of you. I will forever be proud of you", commended TETFUND and other donor and financial agencies for their contributions to the repositioning of the Polytechnic.

In his remarks, the Rector, Dr. Salisu Usman Ogbo, congratulated Alhaji Usman Ododo for emerging victorious at the polls, saying that his emergence is for the unity and development of the state.

The Rector described his appointment by Gov. Bello as an uncommon

privilege and thanked him for finding him worthy to serve.

He said he was able to use his three points agenda of Reform, Restore and Repair to return the lost glory of the polytechnic to one of envy.

The polytechnic, he said, now prides itself as an institution committed to graduating students who are employers of labour in the country.

Prof. Yakubu Isa, Chairman Governing Council said that the polytechnic will continue to prioritize academic and personal development of students and promised that the polytechnic will strive to provide the needed tools and resources for students to continue to succeed.

The governing council chairman praised the state government and the Tertiary Education Trust Fund.

Meanwhile 249 obtained distinctions while 11,080 had Upper, Lower credit and pass.

## Be Patient, Arewa College Of Health Science, Technology Charges Matriculating, Graduating Students

By; SANIALIYU, Zaria

Graduating students of Arewa Ambassador International College of Health Science and Technology Zaria, have been advised to be patient with their patients so that they receive the best care from them.

Dr. Ukashatu Hamza Musa, Librarian, Federal University Dutsin Ma, Katsina gave the advise at the graduation and matriculation of the college at the weekend.

He said no matter how much they know about a disease or condition, patients know their own bodies better than they ever will and to ensure they pay attention to what they tell them.

Dr. Ukashatu also tasked the outgoing students to continue searching for seminars, workshops, and conferences to update their knowledge and skills, "Also to find experienced mentors who can guide them on your professional journey.

"You need to stay more and more informed in your profession, because when you are informed, you are not ignorant, you are enlightened.

"When you are enlightened, you are educated. When you are educated, you are knowledgeable. When you are knowledgeable, you are experienced.

"When the nation and the world advances further, you are better for it, when you are better for it, the entire nation and the world becomes peaceful to live. So when you are living peacefully, you will need to stay more informed". He said.

In his remarks, the Grand Patron of the college, Justice Ishaq Bello commended the management for sustaining the excellent

academic performance since its inception.

Justice Bello advised the college management not to relent on efforts towards achieving the aims of establishment the institution.

The chairman of the occasion, Comrade Abdul Aziz Suleiman, said the college will continue to excel.

Comrade Suleiman urged the school management to maintain academic excellence it is known with.

In his welcome address, the Director of the College, Malam Murtala Iliyasu expressed deepest appreciation to the College's Chief Patron, Justice Ishaq Bello for his unwavering support and instrumental in shaping the growth and progress of the college.

Murtala Iliyasu said, Justice Ishaq's dedication to the advancement of education and his tireless efforts to provide opportunities for their students have been truly inspiring.

He acknowledged that the guidance and wisdom they enjoy from the Justice have been invaluable.

The director also acknowledged Comrade Abdul aziz Sulaiman, the spokesperson of Arewa Elders Forum's leadership and strategic vision which is instrumental in steering the college towards excellence.

"Comrade Suleiman's commitment to 'excellence and passion for education have been instrumental in the success of college," he added.

Malam Murtala Iliyasu expressed heartfelt gratitude to all those that contributed to the development and success of Arewa Ambassador International College of Health Science and Technology.



## N585m Fraud Allegation: AYCF Commend Tinubu Over Suspension Of Beta Edu

By; JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON

The leadership of the Arewa Youth Consultative Forum (AYCF) has commended President Bola Ahmed Tinubu over the suspension of Beta Edu from office with immediate effect as Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Alleviation, while tasking the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) to immediately investigate her over an alleged financial misappropriation of N585 million.

A statement issued on Monday, signed by the presidential spokesman, Ajuri Ngelale, said Tinubu's decision was in line with his avowed commitment to uphold the highest standards of integrity, transparency, and accountability in the management of the commonwealth of Nigerians.

President Bola Tinubu had earlier directed a thorough and comprehensive inquiry into the alleged misappropriation of N585 million in the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and

Poverty Alleviation, led by Beta Edu.

Reports have it that Edu came under strong criticism after a leaked memo on December 20, revealed that she directed the Accountant-General of the Federation, Oluwatoyin Madein, to transfer N585m to a private account owned by one Oniyelu Bridget, who the ministry claimed, currently serves as the Project Accountant, Grants for Vulnerable Groups.

Meanwhile, statement from the presidency, said, "The President further directs the Executive Chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) to conduct a thorough investigation into all aspects of the financial transactions involving the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Alleviation, as well as one or more agencies there under.

AYCF in its statement by its President General, Alhaji Yerima Shettima, said the suspension of the minister is a vindication of the State Minister of



Betta Edu

Defence, Bello Matawalle who earlier said, the Tinubu administration is going to be different from what was obtainable under the Buhari Muhammadu's regime.

He said, "with the suspension of the Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Alleviation is an indication that President Bola Ahmed Tinubu has zero tolerance for any form of corruption. He has equally demonstrated capacity to run an administration that will not give room for anything that is capable of tarnishing his administration and this

should be a signal to other ministers to take redress.

"We as a youth body is hereby reiterating our support to the Tinubu's administration and urge him to throw more search light on other of his cabinet members to ensure that they do not engage in any activities that will undermine his administration".

He stated with emphasis that, "with the present development, our eyes will be on all the serving ministers with the view to exposing any of them with any corruption tendencies.

## Corruption Allegation: Tinubu Bows To Pressure, Suspends Beta Edu

By; SADIQ ABUBAKAR, Maiduguri

Following pressures from several quarters, coupled with his avowed commitment to uphold the highest standards of integrity, transparency, and accountability in the management of the commonwealth of Nigerians, President Bola Tinubu has suspended Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Alleviation, Dr. Beta Edu, from office with immediate effect.

A statement issued and signed by Chief Ajuri Ngelale, the Special Adviser to the President on Media & Publicity on Monday, made available to newsmen, said the President further directed the Executive Chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) to conduct a thorough investigation into all aspects of the financial transactions involving the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Alleviation, as well as one or more agencies there under.

The statement added that the suspended minister is hereby directed to hand over to the Permanent Secretary of the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Alleviation, and she is further directed by the President to fully cooperate with the investigating authorities as they conduct their investigation.

It further said that the President has tasked a panel that is headed by the Coordinating Minister of the Economy and Minister of Finance to, among other functions, conduct a comprehensive diagnostic on the financial architecture and framework of the social investment programmes with a view to conclusively reforming the relevant institutions and programmes in a determined bid to eliminate all institutional frailties for the exclusive benefit of disadvantaged households and win back lost public confidence in the initiative.

The statement said the directives of the President take immediate effect from Monday, January 8, 2024.

## Ibom Community Watch Apprehends 18 Suspected Burglars In Uyo

By; PATRICK TITUS, Uyo

Ibom Community Watch (ICW), the newly launched security outfit in Akwa Ibom State, has said that it has apprehended over 18 suspects in Uyo, who allegedly burgled peoples shops and stalls during the Yuletide.

The Commander of ICW, Isantim Kenneth Okon told journalists at the weekend while receiving the leadership of Center for Human Rights & Accountability Network (CHRAN) on behalf of the Commissioner, Ministry of Internal Security and Waterways, Akwa Ibom State, Gen. Koko Essien (rtd) at his office in Uyo.

He noted that the suspects having known that most shop owners lock their shops and move to to the Christmas Village to sell their wares during the Yuletide burgled those shops when the owners were away and attempted to loot the goods there in.

Okon explained that through the efforts of the ICW who mounted surveillance around some spots in Uyo, the suspects

were nabbed and immediately handed over to the police for investigations.

He further explained that in 2023, unlike other years, the cases of rape and theft around the Christmas village were highly reduced as men of Ibom Community Watch took over the security of the area and ensured that some of these crimes and criminality were averted noting that the agency is working in synergy with other security agencies especially in intelligence sharing.

According to him, "during the yuletide we used to have cases of rape car theft etc especially at the Christmas village. We heard stories of how some boys will drag some girls to the banking layout to take them.

"In order to stem the tide, we told our recruits to take over the security of that place and it has worked tremendously, now we did not hear much stories on that. Also ICW apprehended over 18 suspects that went to break peoples stall because people moved to the Christmas village so

they started breaking their stalls, we apprehended them and handed them to the police for further investigation but this is not a political affair, when arm robbers strike they don't consider party affiliations so security is everyone business."

While noting that all the recruits of ICW would be profiled, Okon urged people to disabuse their minds that the outfit has political undertone and the recruits are cultists saying that it is purely a security outfit and everyone should be involved in security matters.

Speaking earlier, the Akwa Ibom State Director of CHRAN, Otuekong Franklyn Isong commended the Governor and the House of Assembly for enacting the law establishing the Ibom Community Watch to address the issues of internal security in the state.

He charged the agency to be diligent in its duties by ensuring that issues of vandalism, cultism, trafficking especially within the Ibom plaza, kidnapping and other forms of security threats are

addressed even as he thanked Governor Umo Eno for providing 14 gunboats to the Navy to tackle Maritime insecurity.

Isong also urged the governor to provide more gunboats and other logistics saying that the 14 gunboats already provided will not be enough to go round the waterways in the state.

The CHRAN Director also called for continuous training of the Recruits and the establishment of human rights desk for complaints from the public in order to give the agency a human right face.

He also tasked them on moving towards the University campuses as well as checking the activities of scavengers and the rearers whose cows have continuously destroyed the crops of farmers even as he urged governor Umo Eno to provide a cattle ranch for them to stop the issues of open grazing in the state.

Isong, however, noted that CHRAN would police the activities of the security agency urging them to always be up and doing.

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FULL PAGE	395,176.32	29,638.22	424,814.54	323,433.00	24,257.48	347,690.48
HALF PAGE	248,970.00	18,672.75	267,642.75	203,175.00	15,238.13	218,413.13
QUARTER PAGE	164,670.00	12,350.25	177,020.25	94,724.44	7,104.33	101,828.77
10" x 6 Col	364,320.00	27,324.00	391,644.00	245,005.20	18,375.39	263,380.59
10" x 5 Col	333,960.00	25,047.00	359,007.00	224,588.11	16,844.11	241,432.22
10" x 4 Col	242,880.00	18,216.00	261,096.00	163,336.80	12,250.26	175,587.06
10" x 3 Col	182,160.00	13,662.00	195,822.00	122,502.60	9,187.70	131,690.30
9" x 6 Col	327,888.00	24,591.60	352,479.60	220,504.68	16,537.85	237,042.53
9" x 5 Col	273,240.00	20,493.00	293,733.00	183,753.90	13,781.54	197,535.44
9" x 4 Col	218,592.00	16,394.40	234,986.40	147,003.12	11,025.23	158,028.35
9" x 3 Col	163,944.00	12,295.80	176,239.80	110,252.34	8,268.93	118,521.27
8" x 6 Col	291,456.00	21,859.20	313,315.20	196,004.16	14,700.31	210,704.47
8" x 5 Col	242,880.00	18,216.00	261,096.00	163,336.80	12,250.26	175,587.06
8" x 4 Col	194,304.00	14,572.80	208,876.80	130,669.44	9,800.21	140,469.65
8" x 3 Col	145,728.00	10,929.60	156,657.60	98,002.08	7,350.16	105,352.24
7" x 6 Col	255,024.00	19,126.80	274,150.80	171,503.64	12,862.77	184,366.41
7" x 5 Col	212,520.00	15,939.00	228,459.00	142,919.70	10,718.98	153,638.68
7" x 4 Col	170,016.00	12,751.20	182,767.20	114,335.76	8,575.18	122,910.94
6" x 6 Col	218,592.00	16,394.40	234,986.40	147,003.12	11,025.23	158,028.35
6" x 5 Col	182,160.00	13,662.00	195,822.00	122,502.60	9,187.70	131,690.30
6" x 4 Col	145,728.00	10,929.60	156,657.60	98,002.08	7,350.16	105,352.24
6" x 3 Col	109,296.00	8,197.20	117,493.20	73,501.56	5,512.62	79,014.18
6" x 2 Col	72,864.00	5,464.80	78,328.80	49,001.04	3,675.08	52,676.12
5" x 5 Col	151,800.00	11,385.00	163,185.00	102,085.50	7,656.41	109,741.91
5" x 4 Col	121,440.00	9,108.00	130,548.00	81,668.40	6,125.13	87,793.53
5" x 3 Col	91,080.00	6,831.00	97,911.00	61,251.30	4,593.85	65,845.15
5" x 2 Col	60,720.00	4,554.00	65,274.00	40,834.20	3,062.57	43,896.77
4" x 6 Col	145,728.00	10,929.60	156,657.60	98,002.08	7,350.16	105,352.24
4" x 5 Col	121,440.00	9,108.00	130,548.00	81,668.40	6,125.13	87,793.53
4" x 4 Col	97,152.00	7,286.40	104,438.40	65,334.72	4,900.10	70,234.82
4" x 3 Col	72,864.00	5,464.80	78,328.80	49,001.04	3,675.08	52,676.12
4" x 2 Col	48,576.00	3,643.20	52,219.20	32,667.36	2,450.05	35,117.41
3" x 3 Col	54,648.00	4,098.60	58,746.60	36,750.78	2,756.31	39,507.09
3" x 2 Col	36,432.00	2,732.40	39,164.40	24,500.52	1,837.54	26,338.06
2" x 2 Col	24,288.00	1,821.60	26,109.60	16,333.68	1,225.03	17,558.71
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<b>6 COLUMNS</b>			
Depth	38.1 (CM)	Depth -	15 (Inches)
Width	25.4 (CM)	Width -	10 (Inches)

### POLITICAL RATE

SPACE	RATE	VAT	TOTAL
FRONT PAGE MAST HEAD EAR PIECE	461,622.86	34,621.71	496,244.57
FRONT PAGE SOLUS	787,474.29	59,060.57	846,534.86
FRONT PAGE STRIP	787,474.29	59,060.57	846,534.86
BACK PAGE EAR PIECE	420,889.54	31,566.72	452,456.26
FULL PAGE (COLOUR)	465,967.54	34,947.57	500,915.11
FULL PAGE (BLACK AND WHITE)	364,037.14	27,302.79	391,339.93
HALF PAGE (COLOUR)	303,285.71	22,746.43	326,032.14
HALF PAGE (BLACK AND WHITE)	247,500.00	18,562.50	266,062.50
QUARTER PAGE (COLOUR)	203,877.14	15,290.79	219,167.93
QUARTER PAGE (BLACK AND WHITE)	111,692.74	8,376.96	120,069.70

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1	Handling for the first 40 copies	120,000.00	9,000.00	129,000.00
2	Per 1000 Copies (1 Page)	28,000.00	2,100.00	30,100.00
3	Per 1000 Copies (Magazine)	50,000.00	3,750.00	53,750.00
4	Per 1000 Copies (Magazine)	80,000.00	6,000.00	86,000.00

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3	Change of Name	Per Box	2,000.00	-	2,000.00

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HALF WRAP AROUND	4,500,000.00	337,500.00	4,837,500.00
PAGE 2 OR 3	400,000.00	30,000.00	430,000.00
PAGE 4 OR 5	375,000.00	28,125.00	403,125.00
PAGE 6 OR 7	325,000.00	24,375.00	349,375.00
FRONT PAGE MAST HEAD EAR PIECE	461,622.86	34,621.71	496,244.57
FRONT PAGE SOLUS	787,474.29	59,060.57	846,534.86
FRONT PAGE STRIP	787,474.29	59,060.57	846,534.86
BACK PAGE EAR PIECE	420,889.54	31,566.72	452,456.26
BACK PAGE STRIP	420,889.54	31,566.72	452,456.26
CENTRES PR EA D (COLOUR)	837,500.00	62,812.50	900,312.50
DOUBLE PR EA D (COLOUR)	700,000.00	52,500.00	752,500.00
CENTRES PR EA D (BLACK & WHITE)	575,000.00	43,125.00	618,125.00
DOUBLE PR EA D (BLACK & WHITE)	500,000.00	37,500.00	537,500.00
FRONT PAGE (10" X 6)	3,250,000.00	243,750.00	3,493,750.00
ROPS TRIP (COLOUR)	125,000.00	9,375.00	134,375.00
ROPS TRIP (BLACK & WHITE)	85,000.00	6,375.00	91,375.00

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SPACE	COLOUR			BLACK AND WHITE		
	RATE	VAT	TOTAL	RATE	VAT	TOTAL
7 X 3	108,571.43	8,142.86	116,714.29	62,857.14	4,714.29	67,571.43
6 X 3	102,857.14	7,714.29	110,571.43	57,142.86	4,285.71	61,428.57
6 X 2	45,428.57	3,407.14	48,835.71	32,285.71	2,421.43	34,707.14
5 X 3	53,428.57	4,007.14	57,435.71	37,428.57	2,807.14	40,235.71
5 X 2	42,571.43	3,192.86	45,764.29	24,857.14	1,864.29	26,721.43
4 X 3	47,714.29	3,578.57	51,292.86	30,571.43	2,292.86	32,864.29
4 X 2	33,142.86	2,485.71	35,628.57	21,714.29	1,628.57	23,342.86
3 X 3	34,571.43	2,592.86	37,164.29	23,142.86	1,735.71	24,878.57
3 X 2	22,857.14	1,714.29	24,571.43	14,285.71	1,071.43	15,357.14
2 X 2	16,000.00	1,200.00	17,200.00	9,142.86	685.71	9,828.57
2 X 1	7,714.28	578.57	8,292.85	4,975.71	373.18	5,348.89

# Late TB Joshua: BBC's Report And Matters Arising: Fight Against Christianity?

By: DANIEL KARLMAX

It's a known fact that, BBC is one of the media organizations that is highly respected by the elites, and some media organizations across the globe, reason being that, it's considered to be ethically inclined, with the most trusted content following its establishment which is designed to promote a sane society, as well as global peace and unity.

Though not a fan of TB Joshua, but when given a closer look at the recent BBC investigated report on his person, some missing links were discovered which put the credibility of the media organization to doubt.

This is because in every investigative report, there must be a place for fairness, objectivity and balanced which are simply referred to as "media ethics" and or critical journalism to ensure facts are rightly presented, with authentication especially when dealing with issues bordering on National interest.

Similarly, in as much as one is not in support of evil, knowing fully that, there's no right way of doing what is wrong, since a spade ought to be called by its name. It's therefore crucial for BBC to note that, the investigated report will have less impact on the citizens, hence the key player, or major character, Prophet TB Joshua is dead and gone, and cannot be resurrected and confronted for confirmation to authenticate whether or not the allegations levelled against him is true.

No doubt, media has been identified as one of the tools for investigation, mediation and dialogue, as well as propagating justice and equity, hence the saying that "what is worth doing, is worth doing well" and "investigation without proper investigation is not investigation" this is because, it lacks the potency to arrived at the truth which is considered the cornerstone of journalism (BBC Ethical issues)

This is not to wholesomely challenge the credibility of the apex media organization on the issue, but to put the fact straight by noting that, the investigated report is faced with impediment due to its inability to have input from the man in question, Mr. TB Joshua who's life is been short-lived by the inevitable death. And with that, the media findings have been considered lope sided and lack the credibility to convince the public on the allegations levelled against the late "man of God" who's at this point considered innocent until proven guilty by the competent court of jurisprudence.

Given a critical look at the documentary by the BBC and VOA, I was made to realize that, there was no place of fairness and other ethical issues, hence I



*Late Prophet TB Joshua*

noticed some areas of interest, first, there was a consistent mention of TB Joshua that he'll make the whites his slaves, as they enslaved Africans.

Another is the account of British women that the Synagogue Ministry has a lot of investment outside the country and I believed, with such unbalanced, subjective and unfair submissions could lead to forfeiture. However, there is no evidence that showed he was interviewed while alive, and to me, the interest is targeted at the downfall of the ministry and the hard earned investment of the church from within and without.

To this end, it's no longer news that a lot of black people have equally experienced such issues which is evident even without the mention of names. And most prominent to this is the story of Jesus Christ being the standard where we all know that, his uprightness did not pave the way for him not to be accused, or being treated in an unfair manner. But unfortunately for them, his charitable works will never be forgotten in a hurry, as he would always be remembered as a man that said: "the beauty of life does not depend on how happy you are, but how people are

happy because of you".

Worthy of note, is the fact that none of the things levelled against the late man of God is being verified, and the unanswered question remains thus "why make the documentary when the man is not even here to defend himself" or are you going to wake him up for a confirmation?.(ethical journalism).

This, however, is considered by some concerned thinkers as the fight against the church, and the general body of Christ which is unacceptable. And that, it's a deliberate move, orchestrated by evil men to weaken the faith of many believers, knowing fully that, the whites have always predicted that Africa is a black race, and that nothing good would come out of it, as pointed out by Walter Rodney, on how Europe Under developed Africa. And they are ready to do everything possible to maintain that dogmatic analogy.

Furthermore, it's expected that the most cherished media organization should deploy its expertise to look at pressing national issues, and social problems affecting the people especially within the African region that ranges from insecurity to election rigging, mismanagement and bad governance amongst others, which the resultant effects have been abject poverty, unemployment and hunger that may lead to anarchy in no distant time if not checked.

*Daniel Karlmax, a Kaduna based Radio reporter sent in this piece*

**"This is not to wholesomely challenge the credibility of the apex media organization on the issue, but to put the fact straight by noting that, the investigated report is faced with impediment due to its inability to have input from the man in question, Mr. TB Joshua who's life is been short-lived by the inevitable death."**

# A Peep Into 2024 Nigeria

By Owei Lakemfa

**T**HE YEAR 2023 held a lot of hope for Nigerians as the Buhari administration which had put the country on autopilot was programmed to end its tenure by mid-year. Indeed, the past year had begun as a traumatic one with a currency change which impoverished the people as they could not readily access their bank accounts or money.

In 2024, unless the administration changes direction from its neo-liberal policies, introduces more creative economic initiatives and brings in people with alternative thoughts, the economy may become worse.

The naira, rather than be a means of exchange became a commodity traded in the streets. The local currency was so scarce that people paid as high as 15-20 per cent as commission for naira notes. Unfortunately, in the first seven months of the Tinubu administration, governance has not changed in a fundamental way. If anything, the economy for the people got worse with the ill-advised and ruinous increases in PMS prices and the water-boarding of the of the naira. These are the major factors that pushed inflation to 28.2 per cent. Also, in 2023, the Tinubu government was unable to end the scarcity of the naira leading to it being traded in the streets, sometimes at rates as high as 10 per cent.

The general elections were also rancorous and so contentious that nine months later, it continues to dominate discussions. A peep into 2024 does not show fundamental changes unless the vision and the constellation of ideas shift from the constructs of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) to a pro-people one that puts Nigeria first and takes advantage of various initiatives such as currency swap and the mutually beneficial offers of the Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) countries.

## INSECURITY

Insecurity is the most fundamental challenge to Nigerians as it speaks directly to the right to life, movement and other rights. Unfortunately, there are no structures in place to guarantee security whether of the farmer or worker, manufacturer or trader. Unless the economy improves and measures such as establishing Community and State police, and empowering the people for self-defence are put in place, insecurity may worsen in 2024 in comparison with the previous year.

In 2023, there were monthly raids by marauders against the people of Plateau State culminating in the Christmas attacks which took over 200 lives. Unless the Tinubu administration correctly sees the attackers as criminals rather than alleged

herders looking for grazing routes, the situation in 2024 will not improve, it might actually get worse.

A positive turnaround of the economy is impossible with so called market forces, but is possible by state-driven initiatives which have been lacking since 1986. No serious country submits its economy, currency and people to the vagaries of market forces over which, in the first place, it has no control. All industrialised countries developed with the public sector as engine-room.

Also, tension in the country can be reduced in the new year if the administration dialogues with people and groups like the Ohaneze, Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), Afenifere, Arewa Consultative Forum, the Ijaw National Congress (INC) the Middle Belt Forum and major groups that represent various ethnic nationalities in the country. As a first step, it should set IPOB leader, Nnamdi Kanu, free and initiate discussions with him. We should learn from contemporary history which has shown that the more the country clamps down on self-actualisation groups, the more strident are their replacements. For instance, government clamped down on the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), led by Ralph Uwazurike, only for the Benjamin Onwuka-led Biafra Zionist Federation (BZF) to rise. The BZF tried to seize the Enugu Broadcasting Service and march on the Enugu Government House. IPOB led by Nnamdi Kanu was much more militant than the older groups, and when Kanu was abducted in Nairobi and detained in Nigeria, a far more fiery leader, Simon Ekpa, arose.

Also, religious tension can be reduced in 2024, if the leader of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria, Ibrahim Zakzaky, is released after eight years in detention. Since 2015, the courts have granted himself and his wife bail which the Buhari government refused to obey. There is no reason whatsoever for the Tinubu government to inherit the enemies of the Buhari administration.

## ECONOMY

Fuel price may rise again in 2024 given the pressures of the World Bank and its dictation to the Tinubu administration. The five main factors that can stop this are if local refining is restored in the public refineries; the Dangote Refinery begins production and the company is willing to sell its products to Nigerians at



reasonable prices; the prices of crude oil drops significantly or the Tinubu government rejects the dictation of the Western-controlled international finance organisations and their mother countries. The fifth factor that can stop the fuel price increases is if we the people reject it and stand up in a united struggle against the further impoverishment of the Nigerian people.

The country is witnessing de-industrialisation with more manufacturers like the GlaxSmithKline (GSK), most of Unilever, and Procter and Gamble leaving the country in 2023.

In the same year, the Small Scale Industrialists reported that Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises were shutting down daily. The estimate is that in the seven months of the Tinubu administration, about four million such businesses have shut down due to the increases in the price of PMS and unfavourable business climate. These translate to massive job losses.

In 2024, unless the administration changes direction from its neo-liberal policies, introduces more creative economic initiatives and brings in people with alternative thoughts, the economy may become worse.

A positive turnaround of the economy is impossible with so called market forces, but is possible by state-driven initiatives which have been lacking since 1986.

No serious country submits its economy, currency and people to the vagaries of market forces over which, in the first place, it has no control. All industrialised countries developed with the public sector as engine-room.

The sluggish democratic system would continue to rumble in 2024. However, the Federal and State Governments must realise that democracy is not a theology or belief. Rather, it is a collective investment by the people who expect dividends and good governance.

## INFLATION

The rate of inflation which soared in 2023 to 28.2 per-cent is likely to be brought down. If West African countries like Burkina Faso, Niger, Mali and Benin can have inflation rates at less than 4 per-cent, there is no reason why that of Nigeria can also not be single digit.

## FUEL PRICES

The astronomical increases in the price of petrol (PMS) from May 29, 2023 has been the most damaging to the people and the economy. Transporting food stuff has become so prohibitive that the cost of production is far lower than the cost of transportation.

Fuel price may rise again in 2024 given the pressures of the World Bank and its dictation to the Tinubu administration. The five main factors that can stop this are if local refining is restored in the public refineries; the Dangote Refinery begins production and the company is willing to sell its products to Nigerians at reasonable prices; the prices of crude oil drops significantly or the Tinubu government rejects the dictation of the Western-controlled international finance organisations and their mother countries. The fifth factor that can stop the fuel price increases is if we the people reject it and stand up in a united struggle against the further impoverishment of the Nigerian people.

## DEMOCRACY

The sluggish democratic system would continue to rumble in 2024. However, the Federal and State Governments must realise that democracy is not a theology or belief. Rather, it is a collective investment by the people who expect dividends and good governance.

But if the people conclude that it is not a productive venture, they will neither protect nor defend it if it comes under attack. Therefore, governments at all levels should in 2024, strive to serve the people. Otherwise, they will endanger themselves, the system, democrats and the people.

# NYG: Borno Govt Disburses Cash To Gold, Silver, Bronze Medalists

*\*Optimistic Elkanemi will be promoted to premier league*

By; SADIQ ABUBAKAR, Maiduguri

The Borno State Government has shown its appreciation to young athletes from the state, who achieved gold, silver, and bronze medals at the National Youth Games (NYG) held in Asaba, Delta State last year.

The Commissioner of Youth and Sports, Sainna Buba, disbursed cash to the deserving winners at his office on Monday.

It would be recalled that last year, Borno State participated in the U-15 festival and emerged earned gold, silver, and bronze medals in some events.

Governor Babagana Umara Zulum deemed their achievements worthy of recognition and decided to motivate and encourage the players by rewarding them with cash.

The gold medalists received one hundred and fifty thousand Naira each, silver, received one hundred thousand Naira, and bronze medalists received fifty thousand Naira each.

Additionally, the government also recognized the efforts of the coaches and other staff involved. During the cash presentation ceremony, the commissioner commended the players for bringing pride to the state and announced that Borno State had fully paid all the entitlements of Elkanemi players, including some outstanding debts.

He also assured football enthusiasts in the state that the team will be promoted to the premier league stage this year while disclosing efforts being made by the ministry to refurbish the old sports council bus along with a new bus that will be provided soon.

According to him, the Sports Council has decided that there will no longer be free entry into the stadium, while reiterating state government's plans to recruit more athletes and players from the Borno State community across the 27 LGAs of the state to represent in various sporting events nationwide.

The young players expressed gratitude to the state government and pledged to maintain the tempo, while rededicating their commitment and performance in future.



# Stakeholders Hail Sports Tourism: As Lagos SWAN Unveils Cultural Sports, Traditional Fashion Initiative

By: AYO OJEDOKUN, Lagos

The maiden official launch of the Lagos Sports Writers Association of Nigeria (SWAN) cultural Initiative which was unveiled recently in Lagos at the Summer Glass House of the Golfview Suites and Conference Center, Ikeja GRA, has added another dynamic attributes to "SPORTS", as an entity that depicts and serve as an "unconditional religion of sincere acceptance which brings the community closer to the cultural benefits and values and also enhancing the relevance/ importance of culture in tourism and travels in the global space.

According to the convener of the event, Chairman SWAN Lagos State Chapter, Olatutu Oladunni, sports on the uniqueness of the ideal, saying, its indeed a glorious era of excellence for our amiable professional body, Lagos SWAN.

"It is a good thing that this laudable ideal is coming to a fulfillment under my leadership. And at this critical period of our economy and this I believe, will not just stop in Lagos, but rather extend to the national body," she said.

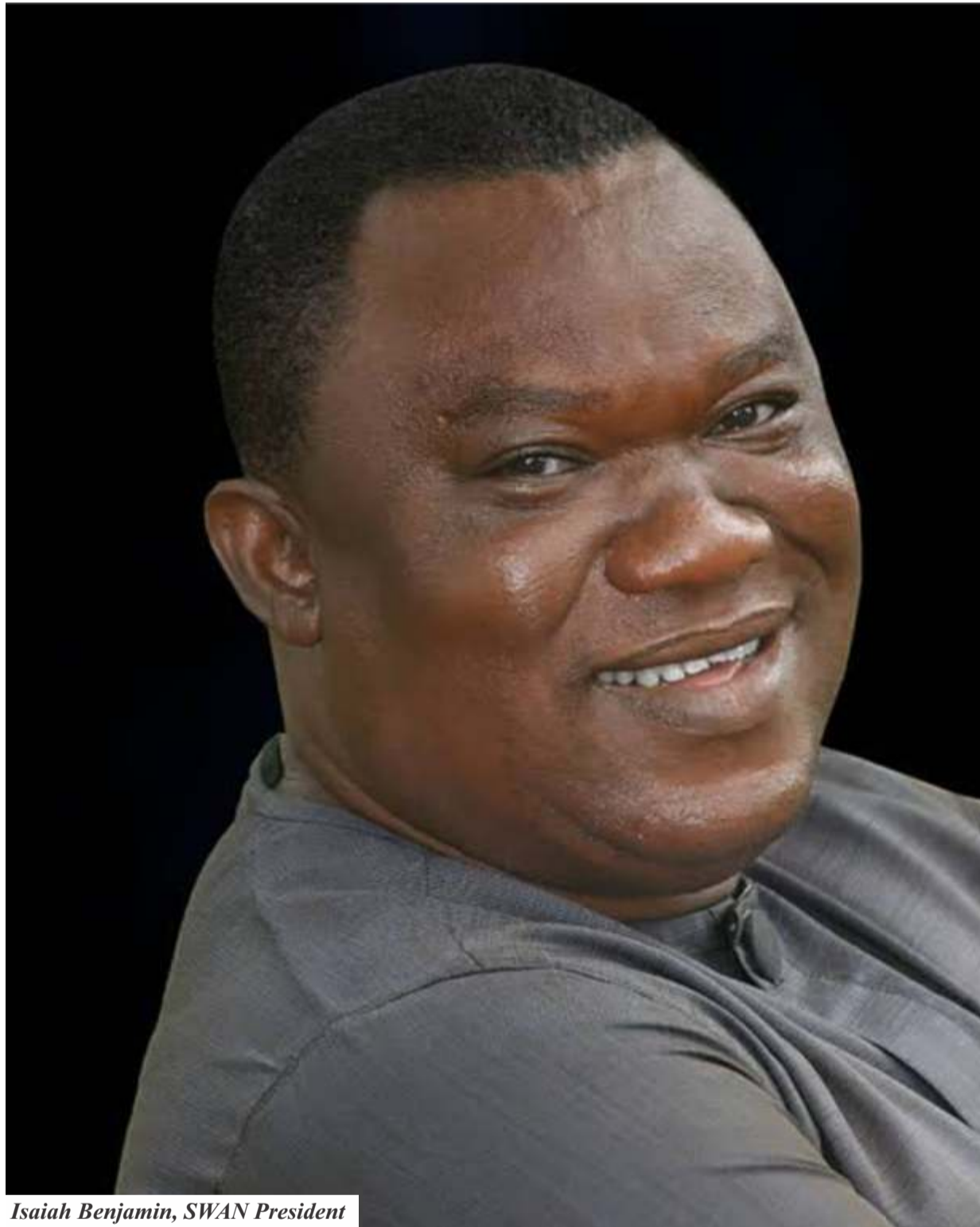
"It was event that has attracted several personalities of high repute from different spheres of professionalism and corporate institutions, ranging from aviation, health, arts and culture, tourism, immigration etc. to grace the event". She explained.

She said that sports has become a dignified religion of humanity, an entity of socio-economic building and an integrative force of sustainability in community building and character building of any progressive nation when we sincerely embrace the arts of culture in sports.

But for the Chairman of the event, Dr Olowo, who officially declared the grand finale open, he described the initiative as a unique template one needs to embrace with sincere hearts as it is another clarion call to invigorate sports tourism and sports culture.

Also hailing the gesture, was the chairman of Sabré West Africa and Central Africa Region, who noted the idea to be an incredible concept.

"It is indeed incredible because, one of the best ways to boost national economy is investing and initiating a productive



Isaiah Benjamin, SWAN President

partnership with institutions that will support and promote culture arts and tourism as this attracts bigger commercialisation and bilateral trades in diplomatic engagements".

Olowo who is also an international aviator, said, "this amazing initiative unveiled officially is not just an event, but it has come to stay and it will stand the test of time as I can see a great fortune ahead of this impressive concept."

He said, tourism arts and culture, when harnessed well with sports, boosts IGR better than crude oil. He said nations with bigger commitment and dedication towards tourism, arts and culture create better sustainability for the well-being of its citizens alongside a reassured hope for

flourishing future.

Having collaborated with reputable institutions like Coca-Cola, Amber Energy Drink, Lagos State Ministry of Arts, Tourism and Culture,, Traditional Sports Association, Golfview Suites and Conference Center, Newpost Magazine and ARISE TV, the event came out dignified as the diversity and importance of cultural heritage was well displayed and presented via traditional sports unveiling alongside cultural entertainment.

In the same vein, one of the special guests of honour, Professor Anthony Kila, a first-class product of the prestigious Cambridge University London, an International Director of Studies at the European Center

of Advance and Professional Studies, A BBC London Commentator and Analyst, described the initiative by Lagos SWAN as another vacuum of creative exploration for sports, as sports is not just a recreational element to ease stress or create rejuvenation, but a multi-dimensional piece that reputable institutions both local and international alongside serious minded visionary individuals tap into ambiguously.

Professor Kila who is also a global expert of internationalisation and joint ventures with remarkable records on various international projects across the European Union and Commonwealth Nations, expressed utmost happiness towards the unique

concept of Olatutu ,on cultural sports and traditional fashion entertainment as this will definitely attract better bilateral trades and foreign relations .

The policy analyst and advisor to European nations, said there are unquantifiable benefits in the integration of sports with culture arts and tourism and hopes agencies in Nigeria tap into this opportunity to boost sports relevance and give performing athletes a promising future of dynamism.

"The event which showcased the cultural diversity, beauty and uniqueness in Nigeria's heritage as Africans, black race and of course as Nigerian is what we should continue to promote," said SWAN Lagos chairman, Olatutu Oladunni.

She therefore, commended Nigeria Bottling Company Coca-Cola, Golfview Suites and Conference Center, Amber Energy Drink Ltd, Interguide Air and Wisefare Ticketing company, Traditional Sports Association, Lagos State House of Assembly, Lagos State Ministry of Tourism Arts and Culture, Arise Television, Newpost Magazine , Sabré Central West Africa Region and Lagos State Government, for the continuous support towards the success of the project....

The National Officer of SWAN and a former vice president South West Zone, Oluwaseun Ajayi-Obe, expressed full joy towards the success of the event.

He said this is another major record of stability that has come to stay in sports and Tourism.

He commended Lagos SWAN for the initiative and also appreciated Nigerian Bottling Company, Amber Energy Drink Golfview Hotel and Conference Center and other personalities who supported the project.

"Coca-Cola has indeed played a major role as the official cultural drink of the event and Golfview Suites and Conference Center as the major host venue for the grand finale.

"Special credit goes to Traditional Sports Association of Lagos State Sports Commission via the supervision of the Mrs Bunmi Ojo and reputable personalities who contributed towards the success of the project launch, which include, Deputy Comptroller Nigerian

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## Stakeholders Hail Sports Tourism: As Lagos SWAN Unveils Cultural Sports, Traditional Fashion Initiative

Immigration Service (Rtd) Segun Adegoke, Chief (Dr) Mrs. Oluremi Faderera Johnson, a Culture and Tourism Global Ambassador and a legendary international golfer, a UK certified international sports and event planner, who has continued to place cultural heritage on the global pedestrian via diplomatic influence.

"Also is Dr Funlola Williams-Daudu, an Harvard University graduate and licensed medical professional in General medical with Canadian Medical/Health Government Chief medical director Of Miteda Wellness Initiative, Miteda Hospital and CEO of Mitelo Farms who has promoted culture, sports, health safety at global stage.

"Another special credit goes to Dr. (Barrister) Adesola Falae, Managing Director of Afkar Print and Doctor in Corporate Law, who also doubled as Special Guest of Honour and Chief Guest Speaker, has in no doubt promoted sports, culture arts and tourism via her charity foundation For The Love of Golf, Mr Oluwaseun Ajayi-Obe, Senior Editor, Media Consultant and a national officer of Sports Writers Association of Nigeria (SWAN) National Headquarters Abuja and The international certified Wellness Expert and skin therapist, Folake Lawal who analysed the essence of well-being as a cultural habit we all need to imbibe to sustain a good tradition and heritage.

"Traditional classic fabrics designed as costumes were displayed like aso-oke in the Yoruba ethnic group

which featured (Sanyan, Alaari, Etu of various ranges and pattern), also is adire of various designs, which was worn by both male and female personalities who graced the occasion. Igbo traditional costumes and the ankara fabric and of course the indigenous animal costumes of Boron Foron people of Plateau Jos came exceptional as it all depicts pure tradition.

"Men from the Yoruba region came out in their agbada, kembe, sorority and buba, iro and buba for women and mixture of ankara fabric with English tops was also displayed.

"Traditional royalty items like Irukere I.e horse tail, was given prominence alongside, obi a bata I.e kolanut, orogbo I.e bitter kolanut, atare, aadun, schinapp, and musical instruments like sakara, gangan, bata, sekere, Northern drum, eastern drum etc took prominence. "While the colourful cultural heritage was displayed accordingly," she said.

Oladunni noted further that, "there is strength of flourishing and abundant procession in our diversity as a country with various ethnic groups in their own uniqueness.

"Major traditional sports took prominence as Langa, Dambe, kokowa and ayoolopon were hugely displayed and well presented as their respective professional athletes came enmass to participate in the maiden edition of the tournament.

"Diary Farm School Agege played host to the event as several athletes participated at various categories of traditional sports and games on the

## Disregard Concocted Notes, Isaiah Benjamin Remains SWAN President, NEC Tells Members

By: JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON

The National Executive Committee (NEC) of the Sports Writers Association of Nigeria (SWAN) has called on teeming members and indeed Nigerians to disregard write-ups making rounds, while affirming that Mr. Isaiah Benjamin remains the President.

A statement issued on Tuesday in Abuja by the SWAN Secretary-General, Amb. Ikenna Okonkwo, described a certain circulating communicate as unfounded and unknown to the leadership of the Professional Association.

While calling on respected Nigeria sporting media to remain calm, resolute and focused, the SWAN leadership said, "Ordinarily, we wouldn't bother reacting to any conjured content aimed at smearing the image of the Association but for clarity sake, we want to put on record that there hasn't been any NEC meeting in January, 2024, just as we rightly informed few days ago that any meeting of

National SWAN composition including NEC and Full Council will be after the upcoming Africa Cup of Nations.

"So, disregard any communicate in circulation laying claims to any form of resolution from the NEC of SWAN.

"SWAN President together with NEC since assumption in office five months ago has been embarking on fruitful steps to write the wrongs of the immediate past leadership which had bastardised the laid down structure of how the Association operates in the past years with uttermost disregard to SWAN statutory standards.

"Be rest assured that no distraction will deter or truncate the ongoing efforts to unite and keep the Association as one in every state of the Federation.

"Also, be informed that all decisions made by SWAN NEC during its last meeting on December 7, 2023 including statutory indefinite suspension of Muhammad Ibrahim Mansur from all SWAN activities over gross misconducts, and the appointment of Alhaji



Rilwanu Idris Malikawa as National Ex-Officio as well as his supervisory role for North-West remain.

"By this, as SWAN members, we are enjoined to remain professional in the discharge our duties both at AFCON and anywhere, as the SWAN

leadership is always determined to guarantee everybody's welfare.

"Also, we urge SWAN members to remain much on alert and trash any further move to smear our integrity as Members of Fourth Estate Of the Realm."

## Kaduna SWAN Demands Appropriate Sanction Against "Coupists"

### \*Salutes president on birthday

Following a failed coup by some five members of the National Executive Committee (NEC) members of the Sports Writers Association of Nigeria (SWAN), against its lawfully elected president, Isaiah Kemje Benjamin, the Kaduna State Chapter has called for sanctioning of those involved.

This was contained in a statement jointly signed by its chairman and secretary, Shehu Abdullahi and Okpani Jacob Onjewu Dickson, made available to newsmen on Tuesday January 9, 2024.

"We were shocked to wake up today to a coup attempt by four members of SWAN NEC, purportedly suspending our lawfully elected president, Isaiah

Benjamin from office.

"The jokers, four in number, went for a jamboree in Uyo, remotely sponsored by the Akwa Ibom FA Normalisation Committee chairman, to claim leadership of our great association. This is unacceptable and the weightiest sanction should be metted on those bent on rubbing SWAN," the statement said.

Kaduna SWAN wondered how the statutes of the association would be taken into disrepute, warning that if they are allowed unpunished, same could reoccur in future.

They advised all well meaning Nigerians and sports lovers to

disregard those they described as "jokers" stressing that Isaiah Benjamin who has wasted no time since assuming office, should be allowed to continue his good works, which includes uniting the divided association he inherited from his predecessor.

It therefore, demanded that, Augustine Ajayi, Azuka Chiemeka, Ijeoma Peter Nwante, Olalekan Ige and Otuekong Bonny Nyong be sanctioned accordingly, in line with the statutes.

"We also use this opportunity to wish our president Isaiah Benjamin a happy birthday as marked on January 8.

Stakeholders Hail Sports Tourism:  
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## Customs Boss Laments Africa's Low Trade Volume

\*To partner AfCFTA secretariat for better trade initiatives

By; RAYMOND  
TEDUNJAYE, Lagos

The Comptroller-General of the Nigeria Customs Service, Bashir Adewale Adeniyi MFR, has expressed readiness to partner with the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Secretariat for enhanced trade facilitation in the African continent.

Lamenting the low trade volume in Africa, CGC Adeniyi said the NCS fully understands the importance of balancing trade facilitation and revenue while pointing out that Africa's share in global trade is around 3-4 percent.

The CGC made this known on Monday January 8, 2024, when he received members of AfCFTA at the Customs Corporate Headquarters in Abuja.

He expressed concerns about how the African trade system refuses to grow beyond 14 to 15 per cent, estimated over the last three to four years.

He said, "We are not unmindful of the benefits that trade presents — economic growth, job creation, and poverty alleviation because Customs trade plays a role in fostering regional and international bonds."

He expressed immense joy when AfCFTA started over 10 years ago and the positive projections

many international organizations have given about the Continental Free Trade Area. The Customs' Boss described the Guide Trade Initiative as 'important for the administration of countries' focusing on ways to grow their trade market, adding, "There is a need for collaboration in the verification of goods origin at the port as NCS has been designated the appropriate authority and also collaborate with other government agencies."

He said, "I talk to you about the fact that we are projecting a 2 percent increase in the shower of rejecting over 1 million people out of poverty. And you know, more importantly, N450 billion GDP. So, this all sounds extremely promising."

Speaking further, the CGC said his Administration has taken several measures aimed at generally improving trade facilitation in Nigeria, adding, "We are planning the implementation of a time-release study in the first quarter of this year working with other agencies of government."

Corroborating on the importance of data analytics, the CGC said, "We must invest in data analytics, and we must bring all our officers up to speed on the basic elements or requirements

for data analysis. Last December, we made this the subject of our Comptroller General's conference — it was a very big occasion that attracted all our stakeholders, and they were all in accord with us that we need to do a bit more in data analysis."

Addressing the CGC earlier, the Secretary-General of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA),

Wamkele Mene, the CGC on his appointment and confirmation — expressing excitement to proffer solutions to the issues bedeviling trade in Africa.

He highlighted the importance of cooperation between AfCFTA and the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) in tackling trade impediments. He conveyed his excitement about jointly finding solutions to the issues affecting trade in Nigeria, emphasizing that AfCFTA is committed to



Secretary-General African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), His Excellency Wamkele Mene being presented souvenir by CGC Wale Adeniyi.

African continent.

Speaking about the potential impact of their collaboration, Mr. Mene expressed optimism that the synergy between AfCFTA and NCS would significantly improve trade and revenue generation in various African countries, including but not limited to Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Mali, and Kenya. He underscored the strategic role that effective trade facilitation plays in fostering economic growth and development across

economic integration, sees its partnership with NCS as a crucial step towards realizing its objectives. The collaboration aims to streamline customs procedures, reduce trade barriers, and enhance the efficiency of cross-border trade. The Secretary-General's visit marks a milestone in the ongoing efforts to harness the economic potential of the African continent through improved trade practices.

## Zamfara NSCDC Pledges Support To FFS

By; ADAM MUHAMMAD, Gusau

The Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) Zamfara State Command under the state Commandant, Sani Mustapha yesterday, received Zone P Commander of the Federal Fire Service, pledging to have more unwavering synergy to curb fire infernos in the state.

Commandant Sani Mustapha ascribed the visit to a home coming of a brother from same parents.

The NSCDC Boss in Zamfara State, Sani Mustapha, extolled the doggedness of the Federal Fire Service in fighting fire in the state.

He therefore, assured the Zonal Commander of the Sister agency FFS of



Gov Lawal

the unwavering support of the Corps to the Federal Fire Service in Zamfara State.

Commandant Sani Mustapha averred that, NSCDC under his watch in Zamfara State is poised to accord the FFS a maximum collaboration in extinguishing incidents of inferno and the provision of optimum security coverage during their operations in Zamfara State.

The State Commandant, Sani Mustapha lauds the already existing synergies amongst the two sister agencies right from the top. He therefore pledged to sustain the

tempo in the state.

Earlier, the Zone P Commander of the Federal Fire Service, Comptroller Mustapha B Kibiya, who led the visit, eulogized the Corps for the brotherly role it has played hitherto in the course of fire fighting in the State.

The Zonal Commander, MB Kibiya who also said he was in Zamfara on a working visit, opined that, by the nature of the two agencies and their parental backgrounds, there is therefore a need to compliment each other in official duties.

CFS Mustapha B Kibiya therefore solicited for more working relationship with the Corps during fire emergencies.