

Customs FOU  
Zone 'B' Seizes  
Items Worth Almost  
N2bn In One Month

Story on Page 12

**Katsina Governor Goes After Foodstuff Hoarders, Warns Of Consequences** **PAGE 2**

**Lassa Fever Outbreak: 10 Feared Dead, 25 Others Infected In Ebonyi** **PAGE 7**  
*\*7 LGAs affected*

**Plateau APC Publicity Secretary Shot Dead** **PAGE 10**

## Hold Emeziele Responsible For Current Economic Hardship, Akpabio Says

- Blames hunger in Nigeria on ex CBN Governor
- Reveals FG confused on charges to level against Emeziele



APC Stakeholders Forum led by Hon. Emmanuel Godwin declared support for Hon. Dekeri, adding that the APC Edo State needs his (Danco) statewide popularity, competence and capacity to win Edo State gubernatorial election.

By: BASHIR BELLO DOLLARS, Abuja

As Nigeria grapples under the current economic hardship making life unbearable for most of its citizens, the President of Nigeria's Senate and Chairman of the National Assembly (NASS), Godswill Akpabio, has pointed causing fingers towards the embattled immediate past central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Governor, Godwin Emeziele.

Akpabio, a former governor of oil rich Akwa Ibom State, expressed this while speaking yesterday at a Thanksgiving Service organized by Senator Barry Mpigi, attended by notable dignitaries.

According to the former Minister of Niger Delta Ministry, the government is presently deliberating which allegations to prosecute

Emezele for, considering his numerous misconducts during his tenure as CBN governor.

According to him, "The kind of debts and economic mess that we are in, a lot of people do not understand. President Obama said you cannot know Washington until you get to Washington, so by the time we went in to look at the economic situation of the country, it was terrible.

"So you know the former Governor of Central Bank, we don't even know what to charge him with."

Speaking further, he said, "The hunger in the land is because of the kind of policies and actions that they took.

"We are battling to make sure that Nigerians can sleep with their eyes closed. We are battling to ensure that Nigerians can afford three square meals in a day," he said.

Story on Page 21

**Edo: APC Stakeholders Congratulate Danco, Urge Ganduje To Disregard Idahosa**

**Family Business: NDLEA Arrests Female Lawyer, Spouse, Mother, Herbalist, Others Over Inherited Illicit Drug Cartel** **P.3**

**Nigerian Military Will End War In North East Soon - Theatre Commander** **P.3**

\*Theater Command, 7 Div organize 2023 annual WASA/NASA in Borno

## Gunmen Kill Man, Abduct Wife In Plateau

By; AMOS TAUNA, Kaduna

Gunmen, attacked and killed a middle-aged man, Sule Gwamnati, in his family house in the early hours of Friday in the Bokkos Local Government Area of Plateau State.

A source said that after shooting Gwamnati in the Mai Katato community where his family house is located, the attackers, suspected to be kidnappers, abducted his wife, Blessing, and took her to an unknown destination.

He explained that Gwamnati was immediately rushed to a hospital in Jos and died a few hours after arrival.

Kefas Mallai, the Chairman of Community Peace Observers in Bokkos, confirmed the attack on Gwamnati's resident on Friday.

He explained that, "in the early hours of Friday, one Sule Gwamnati (native) was shot twice by some criminals who kidnapped his wife, Blessing Sule. The victim later died at JUTH after treatment started."

According to the chairman, the incident was reported to security agents in Bokkos who assured them that an investigation into the incident was ongoing.

The spokesman for the Police, Alabo Alfred, said the command is aware of the incident in Bokkos.



L-R: Stephen Awoyale; Dr. Lawal Olohunbebe; Dr. Saudat Salah Abdulbaqi (NIPR); Chairman Palliative Distribution Committee and Former Commissioner of Police Egunoluwarotimi Adelesi; Kwara State Governor AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq (CON); Secretary of the Committee AbdulRahman Babatunde; Bolaji Grace Funke; CAN Representative, Apostle Barr. Shina Ibiyemi; and Comrade Yusuf Bashir; during the presentation of palliative distribution report to the Governor at Government House, Ilorin, on Saturday. Photo: AKINOLAARIYO

## Crisis Tears Enugu IPAC Apart, As Two State Exco Emerge

By; KELVIN OKPARA, Enugu

Enugu State Inter-Party Advisory Council (IPAC), on Thursday, held its election amid crisis, leading to the emergence of a parallel executive committee enthroned by one of the factions.

The parallel exco was controversially elected at the state headquarters of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), in Enugu, after majority of the members from various political parties staged a walkout during the exercise.

The process commenced peacefully until it got to the process of accreditation for voting.

However, a sharp division among members of the group regarding the IPAC electoral guidelines led to hot exchanges among members despite appeals by the electoral committee chairman, Uchechukwu Ogbonna for the exercise to continue.

The development, led to a standoff, which lasted for more than three hours, prompting the electoral committee chairman to announce a suspension of the exercise until 3 pm.

When the members reconvened, the group led by the incumbent chairman, Hon. Godwin Alor who were in the majority, staged a walkout, while the group led by Hon Innocent Ezeoha participated in the

controversial exercise.

Explaining to newsmen why he and his group decided to boycott the election, Alor said that the IPAC electoral guidelines was not followed by the electoral committee, saying, Article G, stipulated that only the state chairmen can vote but in a situation where the chairman is not available, he should give an authorisation letter to his representative.

According to him, the guideline for the election was violated by the PDP delegate, who came to represent the party chairman without the required letter, adding that he remains the chairman of IPAC in the state, pending when a proper election is conducted.

The state IPAC chairman, accused the electoral officials from the IPAC headquarters, Abuja, of compromise.

"They have not followed the guidelines for IPAC election which said that apart from the state chairman who has power to vote, if anybody should represent him, he has to provide a covering letter from the chairman.

"I have been a member of IPAC for more than 10 years and we know our members. If the PDP chairman, Augustine Nnamani wants anybody to represent him, he has to give the person a letter.

"I called him three days before the election and he

told me that he is not a lawyer and can't be IPAC legal adviser. He said anybody that wants to use his name should inform him before signing any form.

"Other chairmen, like Ugo Agballa of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Omeje of the ADP and many others submitted their letters one week before the previous date and the election was shifted to accommodate everyone, but the PDP didn't submit any letter.

"They just went to cyber cafe this afternoon and printed a letter. I know Nnamani's signature and that's why they refused to show me the letter.

"Secondly, there is a court order restricting IPAC from holding the election nationwide. The national chairman has just called us that no election should be held. We also submitted the court order to EPM, the police, the electoral committee and press.

"I am still the substantive chairman of IPAC Enugu State because they are just acting as a script and when they are ready to conduct elections we will know.

"They are supposed to be three electoral officers, not two. Two people just cornered themselves and came here to deceive us," he said.

Meanwhile, at the end of the day, the group that held the election, produced Mr. Obioma Nnamani of BOOT Party, as its new

chairman of IPAC in the state.

Other exco members of the group included, Elvis Cajethan China-Zamugwoke of ZLP who emerged as the Deputy Chairman; Afeamefuna Samuel of the APP Secretary, while Aliyu Adamu Muhammad of NNPP got the position of Deputy Secretary.

Also elected by the group are, Chukwuma Stella Nneamaka of ADC, Financial Secretary; Ezeah Magnus of SDP, Treasurer; Ikeh Kenneth Odoh of APM, Organising Secretary; Ugwu Chiedozie Louis of NRM, Publicity Secretary and Augustine Nnamani of PDP as the Legal Adviser.

Speaking with newsmen, Nnamani described the election as free, fair and credible, saying he would carry everyone along, promising to run a transparent administration.

Addressing journalists at the end of the exercise, the electoral committee chairman, Uchechukwu Ogbonna, said that the disagreements which threatened the conduct of the state IPAC polls was a practical demonstration of democracy, where everyone was allowed to air his or her views.

He said that the electoral committee held the election in compliance with the organization's electoral guidelines.

## Katsina Governor Goes After Foodstuff Hoarders, Warns Of Consequences

By; SULAIMAN AHMED MISAU, Katsina

Governor Dikko Umaru Radda of Katsina State has issued Food Security (Promotion) Order, effectively prohibiting illegal hoarding of food and essential commodities within the state.

The order according to his Chief Press Secretary, Mohammed Kaula sends a clear message that, the State Government would not tolerate practices that, threaten the well-being of residents in the State.

The order, however, defines food commodities as including staple grains like rice, millet, maize, sorghum, cowpeas, and groundnuts. "Hoarding these items will now be punishable," the governor said.

Governor Dikko Radda explained that, the contravention of this Order by any person shall render :- "(i) The person and/or corporate entity in such contravention is liable for prosecution under Section 114 of the Penal Code Law of the State.

(ii) The place used for the hoarding of the commodity shall, by warrant issued by the Court, be liable to be broken into, and the commodity be sold to the public at a controlled price.

(iii) The proceeds of such sale shall be subject to determination in accordance with the prevailing laws on proceeds of crime."

Consequently, the governor said to ensure effective enforcement, the order establishes a dedicated "Task Force" consisting diverse group of individuals who would be responsible for:- (I) Identify food commodity hoarders within the State; (ii) Engage with stakeholders on food prices in the state; (iii) In collaboration with Security Agencies, arrest and prosecute violators of this Order and (iv) Control the buying and transporting of food commodities within and outside the state, including international borders.

"Similarly, (v) to do all other things incidental or necessary for the enforcement of the provisions of this Order."

Governor Dikko Umaru Radda emphasized the collaborative nature of the initiative, said, "We call upon all citizens, traders, and stakeholders to join us in this fight against food insecurity.

"By working together, we can ensure that everyone in Katsina has access to the food they need," Governor Radda explained.

# Nigerian Military Will End War In North East Soon - Theatre Commander

## \*Theater Command, 7 Div organize 2023 annual WASA/NASA in Borno

By; SADIQ ABUBAKAR, Maiduguri

The Theatre Commander Joint Task Force (JTF) North East Headquarters, Operation Hadin Kai' (OPHK) Maimalari Cantonment Maiduguri, Major General Shaibu Waheed has reiterated the commitment and determination of the Nigerian military to decimate all the remnants of Boko Haram insurgents and rid them from the North East region as well as the Lake Chad region.

Gen. Waheed added that the Theater Command has been receiving all the necessary support and encouragement from the President, Chief of Defense Staff (CDS), General

Christopher Musa, Chief of Army Staff (COAS), Lt. General Taoheed A. Lagbaja and the Borno State Governor, Prof. Babagana Umara Zulum since he assumed office few weeks ago.

The Theatre Commander stated this on Saturday, during the celebration of 2023 West African/National Social Activities (WASA/NASA) held at the 212 Battalion Headquarters Parade Ground, Maimalari Cantonment, 7 Division, of the Nigerian Army Maiduguri.

He said, "WASA day all over the country, is an opportunity for officers and soldiers to mingle, revisit their traditions and culture, and we are determined to

maintain this tradition.

"It is an annual regimental event which bring in officers and men of the Nigerian Army to collectively celebrate cultural display and dances from all cultural and ethnic groups across the country, and to signify peaceful atmosphere.

"This is even as the window of opportunity is still open for other terrorists to repent and embrace the 'Operation Safe Haven' corridor for their onward reintegration into the society.

"I want to inform this gathering that the Nigerian Military with support for other security agencies and all stakeholders are poised to decimate all remnants of Boko Haram terrorists from the region.

"Even though, the window of opportunity is still open for other terrorists to repent and embrace the 'Operation Safe Haven' corridor for their onward reintegration into the society or face defeat". Waheed said.

General Waheed also highlighted briefly on some support from the federal government and defense headquarters, including the provision of additional fighting weapons, equipments, review of frontline troops allowances and welfare to boost their morale.

He further expressed optimism that his troops will soon bring to an end the insurgency fight against terrorism, issues of kidnapping, banditry and other crime bedeviling the region and

country at large

According to him, WASA day is a symbol of unity, socialization and affection among and between the families and friends of the troops in operation and also as respite in strengthening relations among the troops and officers which serves annually as an avenue for the Nigerian Army to interact and socialize with each other, both the soldiers, families and friends as well as the civil society (Civil-Military Relations)

Highlights of the event included dances, sings, drama, exhibitions/gallery shows, presentation of souvenirs dignitaries, donations and photographs among others.

# Family Business: NDLEA Arrests Female Lawyer, Spouse, Mother, Herbalist, Others Over Inherited Illicit Drug Cartel

By; RAYMOND TEDUNJAYE, Lagos

A family of four, their herbalist, salesgirl and one other have been apprehended by operatives of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) over alleged engagement in illicit drugs business, New Nigerian Newspapers has learnt.

The family, which comprises of a female lawyer identified as Adaobi Nweke, 36, her mother, Mrs. Ngozi Nweke, 65, Chukwudi Abel, 33, Amarachi Paul, 18, all members of the family, were said to have been arrested alongside Emeka Nkemefola, 36, boy friend to the lawyer, Dike Okpara, 43, herbalist to the family and their 22-year-old salesgirl, Blessing Jonathan for holding forth to the illegal drug business inherited from their late father.

Our correspondent gathered that the suspects were nabbed in Abia, during a joint raid operation between the NDLEA and men of the State Homeland Security at 23 Arochukwu street, Umuahia around 11pm on Wednesday 14th February 2024. The Director, Media & Advocacy of the agency, Femi Babafemi who made the disclosure in a statement yesterday, noted that investigations revealed that members of the family had long been in the illicit drug business passed on to them by their now late father, Jonathan Nweke.

He hinted that various quantities of Cocaine, Heroin, Methamphetamine, Loud, Cannabis Sativa and precursor chemical with a total weight of 1.670kg as well as N578,400

monetary exhibit were recovered from them as at the time of the arrest.

Babafemi, who also disclosed other achievements recorded by the Agency across the country, said attempt by a 25-year-old Uber driver, Joshua Henry to deliver a consignment of 26.2grams of Loud picked in Abuja to a customer in Keffi, Nasarawa state on Monday 12th February was thwarted by NDLEA operatives who intercepted him.

He stated further, " In the same vein, 54-year-old Dada Adedara was on Wednesday 14th Feb arrested at Dan Bare area of Kano State with 468 blocks of cannabis weighing 246.4kg. Same day, operatives in Ogun state arrested the duo of Kafayat Junaid and Sakirat Osoanu with 13kg cannabis sativa.

" In Kogi state, a suspect, Charles Chike, 45, was arrested by NDLEA operatives in a hotel in Lokoja on Friday 16th Feb. with 290 blocks of compressed cannabis weighing 116kg.

" The exhibit was concealed in the boot of a blue Honda Accord car marked Abuja ABC 853 SL, which took off from Ekiti state enroute Abuja. Not less than 227kg of same substance was recovered from Atoshi camp, Emure -Ile, Owo LGA, Ondo State, while two suspects: John Jonathan and Emmanuel Alex were arrested.

" While acting on intelligence, operatives in Edo state on Wednesday 14th Feb. intercepted a consignment of methamphetamine coming from Onitsha, Anambra state to Lagos, in a Toyota Sienna bus marked Anambra NZM 347 ZL.



*Nweke family and other accomplices*

" The meth consignment weighing 0.966kg was concealed inside a cassava made local food item, African salad popularly called "Abacha". The driver of the vehicle, Afamefuna Ibeawuchi Kingsley, 42, was arrested in connection with the seizure.

" On the same day, a team of NDLEA officers also intercepted a Peugeot 406 space wagon car driven by Akhere Fardam, 47, along Uromi road in Esan Northeast LGA. A search of the vehicle led to the recovery of 865 bottles of codeine; 2,600 pills of tramadol and 600 tabs of swinol and rohypnol.

" In Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory, NDLEA operatives conducted raid operations in Kubwa area of the FCT during which they arrested Tawa Wasiu, 47, and Iliya Ibrahim, 18, with

10.5kg cannabis, 13.5 grams of diazepam and 2.9 grams of tramadol tablets. Another suspect, Yaro Bala, 27, was arrested on Thursday 15th Feb. with 50.5kg cannabis during a stop and search operation along Abaji/Abuja highway on his way from Auchi Edo state to Paiko, Niger State.

" With the same vigour, the various commands of the Agency across the country continued with the War Against Drug Abuse, WADA, advocacy campaign in the past week. Some of them include: WADA sensitisation lecture for students and teachers of St. Theresa's College Oke-Ado, Ibadan, Oyo state; students and staff of Banma Girls Day Secondary School, Bida, Niger state; students of Dame High School, Abatete, Anambra state; students

of Government Day Secondary School, Tudun Saibu, Soba LGA, Kaduna state; students of Community Comprehensive Secondary School, Obinagu, Udi LGA, Enugu state and students of Government Girls Secondary School, Garo, Kano state."

While commending the officers and men of the MMIA, Abia, Nasarawa, Edo, Kogi, Kano, Ogun, Ondo and FCT Commands of the Agency for their outstanding feats in the past week, Chairman/Chief Executive Officer of NDLEA, Brig. Gen. Mohamed Buba Marwa (Retd) equally applauded their counterparts in all the commands across the country for intensifying their WADA advocacy lectures thus creating a fair balance between their drug supply reduction and drug demand reduction efforts.

# Allow States In Nigeria Develop At Their Own Pace, Gov Makinde Tasks FG

*\*Commissions 12.5km dualized Challenge – OdoOna Elewe-Ellebu-Apata road*

By: BAYOAKAMO, Ibadan

Governor Seyi Makinde on Friday, asked the Federal Government to allow states in the country to develop at their own pace.

Speaking at the commissioning of the dualized 12.5 kilometers Challenge – OdoOna Elewe-Ellebu-Apata road, Ibadan, the governor said the country's federalism system should allow for the diversity of Nigeria to be reflected in the development of its states.

According to him, a one-size-fits-all approach to development will not work in a country as diverse as Nigeria, adding that each state has unique needs and resources, and should be allowed to use those resources to develop their own states.

The governor emphasized that this would lead to more efficient and effective development and would ultimately benefit the entire country as well as encourage competition and innovation among states which would lead to more effective use of resources.

"Let me use this opportunity to talk about the meeting we had a few days ago. We the governors of the Peoples Democratic Party including my brother here. We met in Abuja and one of the key issues we discussed is economic hardship our people are facing", he said



Gov Seyi Makinde at the Commissioning of the road

Gov Makinde added, "Our focus at this time is helping our people overcome the challenges of the times. Some people continue to play politics and tell lies about how things are".

"I read claims that FAC has doubled for states and local government areas. I think it's just a lazy way to situate things. We must be talking about baking a bigger cake. FAC is what everybody is talking about.

The governor stressed "Why are

we even going to Abuja in the first instance to share FAC? Were they doing that in the first republic?"

Well, FAC has moved up from about 6 billion Naira per month to about 8 billion Naira per month, but so also the responsibilities of government". Promising to increase the level of infrastructural development in the state and work to bring more dividends of democracy to the people, the governor announced

the extension of wage awards to workers in the state by another six months

Gov Makinde who named the newly commissioned road as Chief Theophilus Akinyele way stressed that the extension of the wage award payment for the next six months was to further cushion the effect of subsidy removal

Speaking as the guest at the event, Gov Peter Mba of Enugu state tasked political leaders in

Nigeria to do more in building projects for the country.

"We can only expand our economy through critical infrastructure like this one done by my brother, Engr. Seyi Makinde", he said

Governor Mbah commended Gov Makinde for his decisiveness and progressive mindedness which is essentially about the collective interest of the people.

## Lagos Govt, Panelists Underscore Importance Of Circular Procurement, 100% Plastic Neutrality

By: MATTHEW UKACHUNWA  
Lagos

An official of Lagos State government has described circular procurement as a cornerstone of sustainable practices that focuses on purchasing goods and services designed for durability, repairability and recyclability.

Special Adviser to Lagos State Governor on Climate Change and Circular Economy, Titi Oshodi, made the description at the year 2024 Circular Exchange Lagos event which was held on February 1, on the theme, "Reflect, Learn and Build."

Oshodi said that organizations can significantly reduce waste, conserve resources, minimize their environmental footprints and build business opportunities for local entrepreneurs by adopting circular procurement principles.

According to the special Adviser, this year's event serves as a platform for reflection, learning and advancement

following a year of collaborative efforts with diverse partners through the circular business platform to cultivate the circular economy business landscape in Nigeria.

The 2024 Circular Exchange Lagos event convened stakeholders, academia, policy makers, small and medium scale entrepreneurs (SMEs) and organizations to advance the circular economy ecosystem in Lagos and Nigeria.

"The convening also served as a platform to celebrate sterling achievements of players in the circular ecosystem, evaluate milestones, and set new goals towards more circular Lagos," the organizers wrote in a statement titled "2024 Circular Exchange: CBP, LBSSC, Others Promote Innovation and Entrepreneurship Opportunities for the Circular Business Ecosystem."

The organizers stated that the event also afforded attendees and stakeholders an opportunity to network with industry leaders, take learning from circular champions and collectively address

challenges within the circular economy value chain.

They pointed out that with a focus on fostering opportunities for circular business and investment, promoting sustainable practices and driving policy changes toward a circular economy in Nigeria, the event sought to brainstorm and strategize on accelerating sustainability goals for socio-economic impact on the sub-region.

"Attendees had the chance to delve into focus points such as identifying challenges and opportunities specific for developing the market for circular businesses in Nigeria, exploring tools and learning experiences developed by the circular business platform and its partners, as well as showcasing local initiatives driving circular economy practices," the organizers explained.

The Circular Market Debrief Panel session of the event focused on leveraging tools to support local innovation and entrepreneurship.

There was an Ecosystem Report Session

during which Christopher Nwogwu, founder of Greenpreneur, facilitated discussions that were aimed at encouraging ecosystem improvement, exploring solutions and outlining the overarching vision for 2024 in driving ecosystem achievement.

On the occasion, the President of Waste Managers of Nigeria, David Oriyomi, said, "Once waste is properly collected, the environment is better for it, and there is always a nexus between our well-being and our environment. Once your environment is clean and waste is effectively collected, then you have what is called a prehealthcare service."

Panelists, including Dr. Muyiwa Gbadegesin, Managing Director of Lagos Waste Management Authority (LAWMA), shared insights on how to achieve 100 per cent plastic neutrality, and emphasized the responsibility of individuals for effecting change.

# How Deployment Of Hunters In North-East Helped Reduce Crime - Hammanjoda

By: **BASHIR BELLO DOLLARS, Abuja**

The Nigerian Hunters and Forest Security Service (NHFSS) has said that massive recruitments and deployments of hunters in the North-East region of the country has helped tremendously to battle as well as reduce forest crime in the region.

Speaking exclusively with our correspondent, the Zonal Commander North-East Zone, ACG Haruna Umaru Hammanjoda Furo, said hunters now battle criminal elements, which he described as bigger animals in the forests.

He said over 50,000 hunters now ensure that the six states in the North East zone are protected from insurgents who commit crime and run into the bushes and forests for cover and hunters have ensured that Bauchi, Bornu, Adamawa and other states in the region have forests devoid of kidnapers den, armed-robbery gangs and other daredevils.

The North-East ACG of the Nigerian Hunters and Forest Security Service (NHFSS) who disclosed that about 400 hunters were recently recruited in Yobe State, said Bauchi State Governor, Senator Bala Mohammad, has been assisting hunters 100%.

He said just last week, the governor doled out N110 million to hunters in the 20 local government areas of the state.

He also said that Governor Mohammad has donated about 17 Hilux Utility Vehicles and over 300 motorcycles to hunters for operational efficiency.

He said that apart from the foregoing, Senator Bala Mohammad equally paid hunters N6 million every month as allowance.

That he has been paying them allowance since the year 2000 till date.

Apart from the monthly allowance, the Governor of Bauchi State also pays hunters daily allowances on every operation they carried out in the forests. With the collaboration of the Nigeria Police, Army, Nigeria Security and Civil

Defense Corps and others, hunters have been able to flush out bandits and other criminal elements from the forests in Bauchi State.

In Bornu State, ACG Haruna Umaru Hammanjoda Furo revealed that Bornu State Governor Professor Zulum had borrowed a leaf from his Bauchi State counterpart.

He said Professor Zulum, has donated about 30 operational vehicles and motorcycles to hunters to enable them to function effectively in the state.

According to him, Adamawa State Governor, Amadu Fintiri gave hunters 21 operational Hilux for the 21 local government areas of the state, while Taraba State Government also assisted hunters with operational vehicles, adding that hunters have not reneged in ridding the North-East zone of wilder animals in the forests (human criminal elements) which he said is their core mandate.

ACG Haruna Umaru Hammanjoda Furo however, advised governors of the South East states to emulate what their counterparts in the North East are doing through the hunters to fight forest crimes.

He said Nigeria is one united nation and that there should be freedom of movement any day any time, contrary to the sit-at-home scare imposed on the region by faceless outlaws. The North-East ACG of the Nigerian Hunters and Forest Security Service (NHFSS) who appealed to President Bola Asiwaju Ahmed Tinubu to assent to the Nigerian Hunters and Forest Security Service Establishment Bill currently on his table, said federal recognition accorded hunters would be an added impetus to combating crime and criminality across the country, especially forest related crimes.

He commended the Commander-General of Nigerian Hunters and Forest Security Service, Dr. Joshua Osatimehin for his relentless efforts in ensuring strict

professionalism and orderliness amongst hunters in their operations across Nigeria.

He also extended commendation to the

Deputy Commander-General (Technical Services) Ambassador Dr. John Metchie for his wonderful support in technical operations and modern technology to

ensure that hunters succeed in their operations and services to Nigerian citizens by engaging the criminal elements in the country confidently.

The DCG he said, is fully

committed to his duty and patriotically assisting the service to meet up to the various technical challenges facing it.



ACG Haruna Umaru Hammanjoda Furo

## Kano Electric Installs New 33kV Feeder For Improved Power Supply

By: **JABIRU A. HASSAN, Kano**

Kano Electricity Distribution Company Plc. (KEDCO) has improved power supply in Rijiyar Zaki, Bayero University and Gaida axes of Kano State.

A statement issued to journalists yesterday by KEDCO's Head, Corporate Communication, Sani Bala Sani, said the improved electricity supply in the aforementioned areas followed the commissioning of a new 33kV Gaida feeder in Kumbotso Transmission Station.

The statement also

said, "the new Gaida feeder will de-load Rijiyar Zaki 33kV feeder from 30/40 TR2 Tamburawa Transmission Station by over 50% to improve power supply and ensure network stability."

Commenting on this development, KEDCO's Managing Director/CEO, Abubakar Yusuf, said, "the project will improve supply reliability within Rijiyar

Zaki, BUK, Gaida, Dorayi, and environs.

"The bifurcation of 33kV Rijiyar Zaki Feeder and subsequent commissioning of 33kV Gaida Feeder is a strategic move to address the increased demand for electricity in these areas and ensure reliable and efficient power supply to our teeming customers." In his remarks, the company's Chief

Technical Officer (CTO), Engr Inuwa Bala Daneji, said, "this move will drastically reduce KEDCO's technical losses and downtimes as the feeder is now shorter and de-loaded; Earlier, it was running in overloaded condition thereby adversely affecting its quality and reliability of supply."

Also speaking, the Regional Operations Manager, Engr. Badomasi Yusuf, who said the new feeder will improve stability of the distribution network, added that, it will feed from 60MVA T4 from Kumbotso Transmission Station and that KEDCO engineers confirmed the transformer will not be overloaded.





## Umuada Awgu Association Places N1m Bounty On Anambra Woman Who Allegedly Tortured 11-yr Old House Help

*\*Gives police 48 hours to fish out perpetrator*

By: **KELVIN OKPARA, Enugu**

**W**omen of Awgu Local Government Area of Enugu State, where an eleven years old househelp, Miss Happiness Nwafor, was recently violently brutalized with hot knife and electric iron by her madam, hails from, have placed a one million Naira bounty on the perpetrator, Adachukwu Cukelu Okafor, who has been declared wanted by the police.

It would be recalled that same. women, had last week Wednesday, staged a peaceful protest in Enugu, demanding justice for the victim, who was tortured with hot knife and electric iron by her Madam who equally mutilated different parts of the minors body, including her vagina.

This is coming barely 48 hours after the federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, via the Minister, Uju Kennedy Ohanenye announced a bounty of two million Naira on the perpetrator

The women said anybody who avails the police, Anambra State Government, or other relevant authorities with necessary information that could lead to the arrest of the perpetrator, will smile home with one million Naira from them. The perpetrator, who hails from Anambra State and resides in the commercial city of Onitsha, where she perpetrated the barbaric act, was said to have accused the victim of fondling the private part of her eight year old daughter while bathing her.

Briefing newsmen on Thursday under their platform, Umuada Awgu Progressive Association otherwise known as Umuada Awgu Global, its president/Founder Ambassador Chinemerem Anyi, accompanied by other members of the body, said it beats the organization's imagination that almost three weeks after the woman perpetrated the evil act, the police is still saying that she is still at large.

They posited that going by the manner the matter is being handled by the Anambra State Police Command, the organization is beginning to smell a rat, adding that they are giving the police 48 hours to apprehend the perpetrator or incur the full wrath of the women who she said, are heart broken over the barbaric act.

According to Anyi, the Awgu. women have been resisting the temptation of taking the laws into their hands over the matter as civilized people, but warned that such calm disposition should not be taken for granted or weakness.

"Today, we are here gathered for this important press briefing over the recent brutalization of our daughter, Miss Happiness Nwafor by her wicked Madam.

"We are using this media briefing to call on the butcher woman to better submit herself to the police, or other relevant authorities, because no matter where she is, she will be fished out," the group said, vowing that the organization would not rest on its oars until justice is served on this matter.

The leader of the group said the police and Anambra State Government should as a matter of utmost urgency, implore every arsenal in apprehending the culprit, saying the group is being pushed to the wall on the issue.

"Adachukwu is a beast and must so be treated. She has murdered sleep, and cannot sleep, she has bitten more than she can chew," the group declared.

The organization used the briefing to call on mothers to bear the number of children they can cater for, to avoid giving out their under aged children as househelps.

## 2024 Ham Week Cultural Festival Holds After Six Years Break

By: **IBRAHIM ADAMU, Kaduna**

**B**arring any last minute change in plans, this year's Ham Week Cultural Festival has been slated to hold between March 22 to 31, 2024 in Kwoi, Jaba Local Government Area of Kaduna State after an absence of six years.

According to a statement from Chairman Organizing Committee of the festival, Ambassador Bulus Lolo, the week-long cultural display would be marked by various activities such as; free medical outreach, symposium, football tournament, beauty pageant, talent hunt, traditional dances, art and cultural displays among others.

The statement further indicated that there would also be a site visit to historic places in Nok Village, a hub of one of the most ancient World civilizations.

Ambassador Lolo explained that the Nok people, predominantly farmers with a long history of monotheism reserved the period for thanksgiving and showing gratitude to God for bountiful harvest season and to seek the blessings of the Creator for yet another bumper period of crops.

He said the Nok people known by their firm belief in one deity, including Muslims, Christians and traditional adherents have universal commitment to peaceful coexistence wherever they live around

the world.

He disclosed that Muslims would on March 29 use the auspicious occasion of Jumma'at prayer to mark the 2024 Ham Week Festival in various Friday mosques while the Christian faithful of Nok extraction would use Sunday service of March 31 for thanksgiving and supplication to God for all His abundantly grace for mankind.

"Our people as custodians of renowned Nok Civilization and the famous Terracotta dates back to 500BC are known for their chivalry, valour, confidence, innovation, hard-work, resilience, trust, vision among other commendable attributes.

"It doesn't mean we don't

have history beyond this ancient period mentioned above, a visit to Nok will convince one via the relics of the old iron civilization and tantalizing sculptures.

"The whole essence of marking the festival is for sober retrospection on God's favours for mankind vis-a-vis our relationship with one another as it affects our environment and all other creatures around us and beyond," he pointed out.

Ambassador Lolo stated that the highpoint of the weeklong festival would be a convergence on Kwoi of all invitees from within and outside Nigeria for the grand finale on Saturday March 30 for unique cultural displays of the Nok people.

## Global Peace Foundation Urges Southern Kaduna To Unite Against Use Of Illicit Drugs

By: **AMOS TAUNA, Kaduna**

**C**ommunities in Southern Kaduna have been enjoined to unite with security agencies in the area towards the fight against insecurity.

The people have also been urged to address the detrimental impact of illicit drugs and devise comprehensive strategies to mitigate its effects among the citizenry.

The Global Peace Foundation Nigeria, in partnership with the AMAYA Peace Foundation, orchestrated a pivotal event in Southern Kaduna, emphasized the critical importance of synergy between community members and security agencies on the urgency of addressing the

pervasive issue of drug abuse to ensure peaceful coexistence in the area.

The Country Director of Global Peace Foundation Nigeria, Rev. John Joseph Hayab, urged participants to confront the issue of drug addiction with empathy and compassion, drawing upon personal anecdotes the drugs has on individual wellbeing.

He underscored the imperative for a paradigm shift in societal attitudes towards individuals grappling with addiction and emphasized the need to love and support in facilitating the rehabilitation and reintegration of those affected by substance abuse.

He emphasized the need for holistic approaches to address the root causes of addiction, advocating for enhanced support services, community outreach initiatives, and rehabilitative programs, by ensuring renewed commitment to combatting drug abuse and fostering a culture of compassion and understanding within the people of Southern Kaduna.

Sheikh Halliru Maraya, the Northern Coordinator of Global Peace Foundation Nigeria, advocated for the concept of "One Family Under God," stressing that the inherent unity among all humanity irrespective of diverse backgrounds.

He noted the devastating repercussions of

illicit drug use, emphasizing the adverse effects on mental health and societal stability.

Maraya pleaded for collective approach by all in ensuring a renewed commitment to combatting drug abuse and promoting a culture of peace and understanding among the people of Southern Kaduna.

Participants, throughout the event, engaged in discussions and proposed pragmatic solutions to address the complex challenges posed by drug abuse and stressed the need for community outreach initiatives to enhanced support services and rehabilitative programs in the area.

## Lassa Fever Outbreak: 10 Feared Dead, 25 Others Infected In Ebonyi

*\*7 LGAs affected*

By; MKPUMA ENYINNA, Abakaliki

Following an outbreak of Lassa Fever in Ebonyi State, 10 persons have reportedly lost their lives, while 25 others are infected.

The local government areas affected include Onicha, Ikwo, Ezza North, Ebonyi, Izzi, Ohaukwu, Abakaliki with Hausa quarters and Nkaliki residential areas recording the highest number of cases.

According to the Disease Surveillance Notification Officer, Ministry of Health, Mr. Orogwu Sampson, the state recorded 53 cases last year, while 36 people lost their lives, adding that

from January 4 to February 16, 2024, about 25 people have been infected including two healthcare workers with 10 deaths recorded.

While he said that the disease cuts across all ages, he noted that out of the 25 confirmed cases, 16 people are men, whereas nine are women, disclosing that those who died comprised: a pregnant woman, two children, men and women. "Other LGAs apart from, Onicha, Ikwo, Ezza North, Ebonyi, Izzi, Ohaukwu, Abakaliki with Hausa quarters and Nkaliki residential areas that have not recorded a case so far may be because they have not reported not that it doesn't exist there".

He said that the treatment is free and urged people to go for early detection, early presentation and treatment to avoid further loss of lives.

On his part, the State Epidemiologist, Dr. Ogbonna Nwambeke enumerated the efforts of the state government together with the partners such as WHO, Breakthrough Action Nigeria, UNICEF among others to reduce the ugly menace and called for provision of logistics to increase surveillance and community engagement against risk factors.

Dr. Nwambeke advised people to stop bush burning, avoid eating rats and not to touch the surface an infected person

has touched as well as maintain high level of personal and environmental hygiene like covering their food and utensils properly.

He appreciated the state government for giving them large volume of Personal Protective Equipments (PPEs) to give to health workers at National Obstetrics Fistula Centre to ensure that their own health workers are alive to save others.

It is worthy to note that Lassa Fever is a hemorrhagic illness that occurs every dry season in Ebonyi State, but the outbreak is different this year as it started so early.



Sen Abbo

## Nigerian Senator Seeks Visa Ban For Corrupt Judges

*\*Says a bad judge worse than 100 terrorists*

By; TOM GARBA, Yola

A former member of the Senate, Senator Elisha Abbo, has called for a visa ban against corrupt judges and justices in the nation's High Courts and Court of Appeal.

Abbo who represented Adamawa North Senatorial District in the 9th and part of the 10th Senate before nullification of his mandate by the Court of Appeal on October 16, 2023, made the call while briefing journalists in Abuja recently.

The aggrieved politician had at a similar press conference in Abuja last week, told the media that he had filed petitions against Justice Chioma Nwosu-Iheme, Justice Olabode Adegbehingbe, and Justice Muhammad Ibrahim Sirajo, to the National Judicial Council and the Chief Justice of Nigeria (CJN), over their judgment in the electoral case between him and Reverend Amos Kumai of the People's Democratic Party (PDP).

He alleged that the justices carried out a judicial coup against democracy by nullifying the election he won with close to 12,000 votes against his closest rival through the cancellation of votes in 253 polling units out of 924 polling units in Adamawa North Senatorial District.

Abbo said that while he was awaiting a response on petitions filed against the alleged corrupt justices from President Bola Tinubu, the Chief Justice of Nigeria (CJN) Kayode Ariwoola, and the National Judicial Council (NJC), he has also petitioned the

United States of America, European Union, and United Kingdom, to slam visa ban against the affected justices.

His words: "The cause I am fighting, is not a personal one between me and Justice Chioma Nwosu-Iheme and others but between good and bad.

"War against corruption in Nigeria must be taken to the judiciary where some Judges and Justices are carrying out judicial banditry or coup against democracy through unjustifiable nullification of elections of people validly voted for by Nigerian electorate.

"Such judicial banditry must be fought in and outside the country by calling for a visa ban on the affected Judges and Justices and even revocation of visas of their family members already resident abroad.

"Once my petition to NJC is treated, I'm ready to open the Pandora's box as regards calls made to me by agents of the corrupt justices, for bribes during electoral litigation against me.

"Finally, as cried out last week, President Tinubu, the CJN, and NJC should please help to save our Judiciary by withdrawing the membership of Justice Chioma Nwosu-Iheme from the Supreme Court of Justice.

"She should also on her own, resign from the bench because as long as she remains there, people like me, will not stop telling the whole world, the banditry she is running in the judiciary. A bad Judge is worse than 100 terrorists.

## Ibadan Business Woman Arraigned In Court Over Alleged N58m Fraud

*\*Remanded in EFCC detention facility*

By; BAYO AKAMO, Ibadan

An Ibadan based business woman has been arraigned before an Oyo State High Court sitting in Ibadan by the Ibadan Zonal Command of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) for allegedly obtaining N58,458,000.00 by false pretence from her victims.

The business woman, Temitope was arraigned before Justice Kamorudeen Babatunde Olawoyin, on a four-count charge of obtaining by false pretence, on Wednesday, February 14, 2024.

The offence according to the EFCC, contravenes Section 419 of the Criminal Code Law Cap 38, Laws of Oyo State, 2000 with one of the count charges reads: "That you, Ajayi Oluwabukola Temitope 'F' on or about 9th April, 2021, at Ibadan, within the jurisdiction of this Honourable Court, with intent to defraud, obtained the sum of N23, 183, 000.00 (Twenty-three Million, One Hundred and Eight Three Thousand

Naira) from Alhaji Yusuf Nadabo by falsely representing to him that the money is meant for the supply of four trucks of RC cola, Zero Cola and Coca Cola carbonated Soft drinks which pretences you knew to be false and thereby commits an offence of Obtaining Money by False Pretence contrary to Section 419 of the Criminal Code Law Cap 38, Laws of Oyo State, 2000."

Another charge reads: "That you, Ajayi Oluwabukola Temitope 'F' on or about 5th June, 2021, at Ibadan, within the jurisdiction of this Honourable Court, with intent to defraud obtained the sum of N17, 375, 000.00 (Seventeen Million, Three Hundred and Seventy Five Thousand Naira) from Altine Musa by falsely representing to him that the money is meant for the supply of 4,500 cartons of carbonated soft drinks at the rate of N2,750.00 per carton and 6,500 cartons of Coca-Cola 35CL at the rate of N850.00 per carton which pretences you knew to be false and thereby commits an offence of

Obtaining Money by False Pretence contrary to Section 419 of the Criminal Code Law Cap 38, Laws of Oyo State, 2000."

The business woman, Temitope however pleaded not guilty to the charges when they were read to her. Prosecution counsel, Sanusi Musa Galandachi told the court that Temitope allegedly swindled her victims of their money under the pretext of supplying carbonated soft drinks to them and that she fraudulently obtained the sum of N8.5million from one Idris Sheriff, N9.4million from one Ifeanyi Mmadubuike, N23.1million from one Alhaji Yusuf Nadabo and N17.3million from one Altine Musa respectively.

The Prosecution Counsel asked the court for a trial date and prayed the court to remand the defendant in the Correctional Centre due to the fact that she was a flight risk and would definitely jump bail if granted, adding that she jumped an administrative bail earlier granted her by the EFCC and that there are several petitions recently received against the

defendant that would soon be concluded for prosecution.

While responding to the prayers of the prosecution counsel, the defendant's counsel, S.B. Ajibola pleaded with the court to admit his client to bail, adding that a bail application has been filed and served on the prosecution.

After listening to both counsels, Justice Olawoyin threw out the bail application filed by the defence counsel after upholding the submission of Galandachi that the defendant is a flight risk and ordered that the defendant be remanded in the EFCC detention facility pending the hearing and determination of the case.

Justice Olawoyin ordered that the defendant be remanded in the EFCC detention facility pending the hearing and determination of the case.

The court ordered for accelerated hearing for the prosecution to open and close its case and adjourned the matter to March 14, 15 and 21, 2024 for commencement of trial.

## Bullion Go-Neat Petitions Police Over Alleged Defamation, False Information Against Products

*\*Accuses Reuben Abati, Chioma Chukwunedu, Naira Metrics, EA Team*

By: BAYOAKAMO, Ibadan

**B**ullion Go -Neat Global Manufacturing Company Limited has petitioned the Commissioner of Police, Federal SARS, Adeniji Adele, Alagbon, Lagos State over alleged defamation and spreading of false information against its products.

In the petition made available to journalists yesterday, signed by the Company's Legal Representatives, Isaac Izunya (Esq) of Izunya Izunya and Co, the company said the alleged false reports involve its product, Coco Samba Milk and Chocolate Flavoured With Herbal Extract, which they claimed was intercepted and seized by German Customs due to its being unsafe for human consumption.

The petition titled, "Petition Against Reuben Abati, Chioma Chukwunedu, Naira Metrics and EA Team", alleged them of the offences contrary to Section 24 (2) (c) and Section 25 (1) of the Cyber Crime Act 2015, as well as Section 375, 376, and 125 of the Criminal Code Act".

Bullion-Go-Neat Global Limited, a registered manufacturing company in the petition, accused Chioma Chukwunedu and her associates of utilizing media platforms, specifically E A Team and Nairametrics, to disseminate falsified and untrue information about its product, Coco Samba Milk and Chocolate Flavoured With Herbal Extract.

The company maintained that the alleged false reports involve its product, Coco Samba Milk and Chocolate Flavoured With Herbal Extract, which they claimed was intercepted and seized by German Customs due to its being unsafe for human consumption.

According to the legal representatives, the suspects in the defamation acts include, Mr. Reuben Abati who allegedly actively participated in the generation, diffusion, and circulation of false information on the products on various social media platforms.

The company contends that the malicious intent behind the false news is to cause substantial damage to its business reputation, affecting customers confidence, thus leading to economic losses.

According to the petition, the suspects are accused of violating Section 24 (2) (c) and Section 25 (1) of the Cyber Crime Act 2015, as well as Section 375, 376, and 125 of the Criminal Code Act.

The legal representatives emphasize that the alleged actions of the suspects have caused substantial economic and reputation losses to Bullion-Go-Neat Global Limited.

The petitioner urged the Commissioner of Police to investigate and prosecute the suspects, emphasizing the need for decisive action to restore lost confidence, goodwill, integrity, and reputation for the affected company.

He cited relevant legal provisions, including Section 351 of the Criminal Code, which holds individuals publishing defamatory matter, knowing it to be false, liable to imprisonment.

The legal representatives call on websites such as Reuben Abati's blog, Nairametrics, Opr. News, and "Our Heritage Reporter," along with other media that carried the news, to produce evidence from the German laboratory to NAFDAC if indeed they have published factual information.

The Chairman of Bullion Go - Neat Global Manufacturing Company Limited, Ambassador Olufemi Ajadi Oguntoyinbo said he was surprised and shocked when he read the damaging false reports about their product.

"Nobody served us any letter or notice concerning the alleged interception of our product in Germany. We approached several departments in NAFDAC and we were told there was no such complaints about our product anywhere", he said.

Ambassador Ajadi added, "Suddenly, a blog which claimed it represented NAFDAC threw the information out and it didn't communicate with us or ask for our opinion on the matter. We believe good journalism requires hearing from all sides before publication. But we were not consulted and our opinion wasn't sought".

## Labour Party Needs To Be Rescued, Ex Presidential Aspirant, Fadojoe Cries Out

By: MIKE ODEH JAMES, Kaduna

**C**omrade Faduri Oluwadare Joseph popularly called Fadojoe, a former presidential aspirant under Labour Party and the National Leader of Rescue Movement For New Nigeria aka Rescue The Vulnerable Initiative, has raised alarm over the monumental corruption allegations presently bedeviling Labour Party as well as the misappropriation of the presidential campaign funds obvious from the financial statements released by Mr. Peter Obi. In a video on his official YouTube channel, Fadojoe laments that Nigeria is at the lowest ebb so far since the history of the country.

"And the Labour Party that Nigerians were looking out for to rescue the country is now languishing in monumental corruption allegations as well as financial misappropriation obvious in the record on the presidential campaign funds released by Mr. Peter Obi. Thus, Labour Party now needs to be rescued.

"The issue of repeated financial mismanagement, embezzlement, forgery and other allegations on corruption against Labour Party National Chairman, Barr Julius Abure is so terrible and should not be swept under the carpet.

"However, that will be a discussion for another day. But I will call on the appropriate government authority to carry out proper investigation into the monumental allegations and ensure justice is done".

The activist noted further that since after the election, "we have been asking Mr. Peter Obi to give financial record of the election funds to Nigerians, especially as the chunk of the campaign funds was donated by Nigerians who laboured so much to make their money. It took repeated speaking out, lot's of our press releases from our group before eventually the campaign financial record was released (after seven months of speaking out).

"Surprisingly, looking at

the financial report objectivity it is obvious that what was released to Nigerians can be best described as shameful and shamble financial report clearly depicting mismanagement of kindhearted donations from Nigerians.

"Therefore the pertinent questions begging for answer include, but not limited to the following:

"1. How sensible is it that N744.5 million was claimed to have been spent for legal fees for the election petition tribunal when the amount said to have been spent on running the whole election is less than half of that?

"2. We are aware of some lawyers that offered services for Labour Party pro bono, then how did what was spent on the presidential election petition amounted to that? Nigerians need further and more detail clarifications.

"3. Another claim that a whopping over N324 million was spent on Polling Units Agents calls for serious investigation on the modalities of the disbursement of such amount of money, when majority of the Polling Agents did everything for free including buying their own refreshments from their personal pocket, with so many polling units without Labour Party agents due to lack of funding released?

"In fact some of us sponsored Polling Units Agents to different poling units, from our personal account just to cover up for the day of the election. Without gainsaying, the rigging of the election must have been made so easy and easily covered due to the obvious lapses of not having Labour Party Agents in many polling units across Nigeria.

"4. The total of N295,606,145.00 that was claimed to have been spent on campaign what was it spent on, considering the different sacrifices Nigerians offered in support of Labour Party Presidential Campaign where despite the different huge sum of money donated, Nigerians still produced campaign material from their individual or combined contribution? We are all aware of the different



campaign offices donated, making of billboards across the country, printing of posters, flyers, ballot specimen, T-shirts, face caps, wrist bands as well as production and airing of campaign jingles on radio and television; all from individual or combined contribution without demanding one kobo from Labour Party and or the Presidential Campaign Council.

"5. All over the world we have not heard of any campaign where what was claimed to have been spent on court proceedings is more than double of what was said was spent on the entire campaign. If that is suppose to be government expenditures under the watch of Mr. Peter Obi can he ever agree to have appended his signature to such frivolous claim?"

"6. Were the people handling the Labour Party Presidential Campaign finance more interested in going to court after the election than outright been declared as winner during the election?

"7. How then will anyone ever think that Labour Party that claimed to have used total of N295,606,145.00 for all campaign expenses apart from the so called agents funds that nobody knows what it was used for, while also claim that post election court cases gulped N774,500,000.00 (more than double of total of what was claimed spent on campaign)?

"All of the above are clear manifest of mismanagement of campaign funds sacrificially donated for kindhearted Nigerians." "Fadojoe also seized the opportunity to call the attention of President Bola

Ahmed Tinubu to the fact that the situation in Nigeria is completely unbearable. Stressing that "many Nigerians are so hungry, prices of foodstuffs and other unavoidable basic needs are skyrocketing daily, Nigerians are getting to the edge and are now protesting from the north, south, east and west. Dear president, you promised a renewed hope, but what Nigerian are getting is renewed hardship, renewed suffering, renewed hunger, renewed economic downturn, renewed insecurity as we are watching our beloved nation going down the drain.

"I hope the government will act as fast as possible to turn things around from the state to the federal.

"This is what some of us saw that we said let us have the younger generation handle our country. Because we are still young, vibrant and without over-clogging thinking faculties. So we will surely do better if given the mantle of leadership.

"Enough of recycling those who are already old, tired, expired and supposed to have retired. In 2023 we desired younger, more vibrant and agile Nigerians to take over the mantle of leadership in our dear nation, but we couldn't achieve that. I hope we will seriously work towards achieving that through the 2027 general elections.

"May God bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria. May God bless the good people of Nigeria. May God bless you and may God bless me. Thank you," he concluded.



# Boko Haram: Borno Has High Maternal, Neonatal Mortality Rates - Commissioner

\*UNICEF donates medical supports worth 300,000 US dollars for women, children health needs

By; SADIQ ABUBAKAR, Maiduguri

The Borno State Commissioner of Health and Human Services, Professor Baba Malam Gana has said that the state unfortunately, is one of those in Nigeria with very high indices of maternal and neonatal mortality rates as a result of the Boko Haram insurgency.

He also added that, "at any time, we have over 400,000 women who are pregnant. We have 1.5 million women of childbearing age and we have children under five who are quite substantive in number to about 1.2 million.

Professor Gana stated this on Thursday, while receiving essential medical equipment and kits worth 300,000 US dollars donated by the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) at the Central Stores Maiduguri.

He also thanked UNICEF for its regular interventions and expressed Governor Babagana Unara Zulum's appreciation to

UNICEF for its laudable support always, since the inception of the insurgency to date, saying, "It is my singular honour and privilege to be here today in the Central Stores of the UNICEF and appreciate on behalf of His Excellency the Executive Governor of Borno State, Professor Babagana Umara Zulum, gratitude and appreciation for the generous donation by UNICEF.

"This donation is apt and acknowledgeable. I would like to recall the generosity of UNICEF in terms of assistance to Borno, especially in the insurgency period, which has resulted to loss of 45% of our healthcare facilities.

"Some of them were partially damaged. Our health facilities were destroyed by the insurgents. And it has led to loss of a lot of health personnel. Some were kidnapped, some were killed, and some have suffered from post operational stress disorders. And that left us in a very callous and political

situation.

"But with the assistance of the UNICEF, brought some succour to our people. And I'm sorry to have to tell you that Nigeria is in the bottom in terms of such indices of maternal mortality and mortality, which is something that UNICEF stands very strongly for in order to change it.

"So that every child is accepted. Every child has got the best of every woman who is pregnant, would have a safe delivery. And in order to achieve this is, the State Governor of Borno State, Professor Babagana Umara Zulum has made free health care services free in terms of maternal care to the people of Ghana state.

"So, UNICEF has graciously looked into all these, considering all the problems we have had due to the insurgency and also you know, the human resources for health. They have looked into these up to date and donated equipments which we know, will not only furnish some of our primary healthcare but also even

our secondary care facilities.

"Where women who are delivering would have benefited from this premise donated is quite substantial. And we're very grateful to UNICEF, and all the donors around the world for considering us which is worth 300,000 US dollars.

"I can assure the Chief of Field Office, Maiduguri, Borno State that our Executive Governor, Professor Babagana Umara Zulum is somebody who is transparent, who is workaholic and is known for his judicious use of funds and equipments which has earned him across the country a lot of awards and you have seen for yourself, how many healthcare facilities are currently being built including building of institutions, health centers, and even building some nursing schools.

"We need more resources for health centers, hospital General Hospital and water supply facilities in collaboration since 2001 where health this year has 15% budget allocation and

above. So, all this is done by the governor as means to exemplify his character of doing things that he has in mind because of the people of Borno State.

"We look forward to working with you in the future. And to assure you that we're always there for you and then we will ask you for more because we are the center of the insurgency. So, we will still come back to you to have private discussions as to which areas we will work together to move our state forward.

"And in fact, this morning we have the West African Surgeons who just came forward and we'll be collaborating with them on some areas of pediatrics so that every child will benefit from it as the state government is doing so much as UNICEF is considering state in the northeast of Nigeria which is unique and looking after women and children especially," Prof. Gana said.



# Lagos NSCDC Boss Keshinro Reiterates Importance Of Traditional Institutions, Seeks Support On Intelligence Gathering



*The monarch of Onigbongbo kingdom with the NSCDC Commandant and his entourage*

## Umuada Awgu Association Places N1m Bounty On Anambra Woman Who Allegedly Tortured 11-yr Old House Help

### \*Gives police 48 hours to fish out perpetrator

By; **KELVIN OKPARA, Enugu**

Women of Awgu Local Government Area of Enugu State, where an eleven years old house help, Miss Happiness Nwafor, was recently violently brutalized with hot knife and electric iron by her madam, hails from, have placed a one million Naira bounty on the perpetrator, Adachukwu Cukelu Okafor, who has been declared wanted by the police.

It would be recalled that same. women, had last week Wednesday, staged a peaceful protest in Enugu, demanding justice for the victim, who was tortured with hot knife and electric iron by her Madam who equally mutilated different parts of the minors body, including her vagina.

This is coming barely 48 hours after the federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, via the

Minister, Uju Kennedy Ohanenye announced a bounty of two million Naira on the perpetrator. The women said anybody who avails the police, Anambra State Government, or other relevant authorities with necessary information that could lead to the arrest of the perpetrator, will smile home with one million Naira from them.

The perpetrator, who hails from Anambra State and resides in the commercial city of Onitsha, where she perpetrated the barbaric act, was said to have accused the victim of fondling the private part of her eight year old daughter while bathing her.

Briefing newsmen on Thursday under their platform, Umuada Awgu Progressive Association otherwise known as Umuada Awgu Global, its president/Founder Ambassador Chinemerem Anyi, accompanied by other members of the body, said it beats the organization's imagination

that almost three weeks after the woman perpetrated the evil act, the police is still saying that she is still at large.

They posited that going by the manner the matter is being handled by the Anambra State Police Command, the organization is beginning to smell a rat, adding that they are giving the police 48 hours to apprehend the perpetrator or incur the full wrath of the women who she said, are heart broken over the barbaric act.

According to Anyi, the Awgu. women have been resisting the temptation of taking the laws into their hands over the matter as civilized people, but warned that such calm disposition should not be taken for granted or weakness.

"Today, we are here gathered for this important press briefing over the recent brutalization of our daughter, Miss Happiness Nwafor by her wicked Madam.

"We are using this media briefing to call on the butcher woman to better submit herself to the police, or other relevant authorities, because no matter where she is, she will be fished out," the group said, vowing that the organization would not rest on its oars until justice is served on this matter.

The leader of the group said the police and Anambra State Government should as a matter of utmost urgency, implore every arsenal in apprehending the culprit, saying the group is being pushed to the wall on the issue.

"Adachukwu is a beast and must so be treated. She has murdered sleep, and cannot sleep, she has bitten more than she can chew," the group declared.

The organization used the briefing to call on mothers to bear the number of children they can cater for, to avoid giving out their under aged children as househelps.

By ; **RAYMOND TEDUNJAYE, Lagos**

The Commandant of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence (NSCDC) Lagos Command Adetun Keshinro has emphasised the strategic importance of traditional institutions in gathering credible and actionable intelligence and ensuring adequate safety and security of lives and property in the state.

Keshinro made the remark during courtesy visits to His Royal Majesties (HRMs) the Alayeluwa Oba Dr Olusesan Olukunmi Akingbola, Olu of Oregun Land, on Tuesday, 13th and Oba Oluwasegun Adeyemi Ajasa, Awise of Onigbongbo Kingdom on Wednesday February 14, 2024.

The Public Relations Officer, Lagos State Command DSC Abolurin Oluwaseun made the disclosure in a statement obtained by our correspondent.

According to the statement, the Commandant, who appreciated traditional rulers in the state for their unwavering support to the formations of the Command in their various kingdoms, requested for much more support in the areas of intelligence gathering, structural outlook of the command and many more, which will inform quality delivery of security services in line with the Corps' mandates amongst other things.

The Olu of Oregun Land, Alayeluwa Oba Dr Olusesan Olukunmi Akingbola

commended the Lagos State Commandant for his competence and acknowledged that he was the first amongst his contemporaries in the Corps to have visited his palace and discuss security matters, which he believed have the impetus to put an end to the current and already foreseen challenges bedeviling our dear state.

In his comment, HRM Oba Oluwasegun Adeyemi Ajasa, Awise of Onigbongbo Kingdom also commended the State Commandant's efforts towards partnering with traditional institutions and viewing the royal stools as one of the crucial platforms to engage if truly, we wanted to put an end to all forms of heinous and intolerable crimes bedeviling our communities, state and nation at large.

He assured the Lagos State Commandant of his full and unwavering support due to the very crucial role the Corps has been playing in safeguarding critical national assets and infrastructure, which are the life wire of the socio-economic sector of the state. The NSCDC Commandant further seized the opportunity as well to avow his unflinching assurances to ensure adequate safety and security under the present dispensation, with a stern commitment to interagency collaboration and community or grassroots intelligence driven strategies and stakeholders' engagements amidst other possible and workable solutions.

## Plateau APC Publicity Secretary Shot Dead

By; **BUHARI B. BELLO, Jos**

The Publicity Secretary of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Plateau State, Sylvanus Namang, has been shot dead in Pankshin town, Pankshin Local Government Area of the state.

An official of the party, who spoke on condition of anonymity, confirmed the incident to our correspondent yesterday on telephone, adding that the APC scribe died from injuries sustained in the attack.

He said that the late Namang was a dependable ally, and deeply committed to the development of the APC at the grassroots and state levels, adding that the party would issue a statement regarding the circumstances surrounding his death.

Namang was gunned down outside his hotel room in the area by hoodlums who opened fire at him around 7:30 am.

Sources also said that the deceased left home on Saturday to attend a burial in Pankshin where he was suddenly killed.

# Ibom Oil/Gas Corporation Bill Will Drive Sectoral Investment - CHRAN

By; PATRICK TITUS, Uyo

A Bill for a Law to establish the Ibom Oil and Gas Corporation and for Other Purposes Connected Thereto, when passed, will enhance investments and create wealth in oil and gas sector of Akwa Ibom State.

The Director, Center for Human Rights and Accountability Network (CHRAN), Otuekong Franklyn Isong, flanked by the Secretary, Barr Christopher Ekpo, and other members made the observation during a chat with journalists in Uyo on Wednesday.

The bill which has passed through the second reading in the State of Assembly, is sponsored by Prince Ukpang Akpabio, member representing Essien Udim State Constituency and the co-sponsors by other members.

Isong, who commended the sponsors of bill, described the bill as long overdue in the state, being

one of the top crude oil bearing states in the country.

CHRAN, a civil society group lauded the Bill on its objectives, which include engaging in oil and gas upstream activities, including exploration, drilling and production, investing for the purpose of participating in oil and gas bid rounds and seeking the allocation of marginal oil fields

Others include, acquiring old and new exploration and drilling prospects and prospecting abandoned oil wells in Nigeria and overseas; optimising the benefits of the petroleum policies of the federal government; liaising with federal government agencies or private and multinational companies to deliver petroleum products to Akwa Ibom state in the most effective and cost efficient manner.

Investing in downstream oil and gas activities including gas processing businesses, petroleum products retailing, gas retailing, gas pipelines

deployment, acquisition of petroleum products tank farms and other distribution facilities, and investing in refineries, petrochemical processing or other production processes.

CHRAN also noted that the Ibom Oil and Gas Corporation, envisaged in the Bill would create employment for the teeming unemployed Akwa Ibom indigenes, generate revenue for the state and serve as a vehicle for economic growth and regeneration while harnessing and consolidating the huge oil and gas potentials of Akwa Ibom State.

"The beauty of the Bill is that, it will provide for both upstream and downstream activities by the Ibom Oil and Gas Corporation. In that wise, CHRAN believes that the acquisition of petroleum products tank farms and other distribution facilities, envisaged in the Bill, will go a long way to ensure the availability of petroleum products in the

State.

"The foresight of the sponsors of the Bill reflects in the provision in the Bill for expansion of the Ibom Oil and Gas Corporation to make for investment in existing companies or consortia and acquisition of old or abandoned oil wells and exploration and drilling facilities in the country and overseas." CHRAN, stated.

The group advocated for support for the Bill by all members of the Akwa Ibom State House of Assembly, the Executive Arm of the Akwa Ibom State Government and indeed, all Akwa Ibomites to ensure a quick passage of this important Bill and timely assent to the Bill by the Governor of Akwa Ibom State, in due course.

It commended the lead sponsor of the Bill, Prince Ukpang Akpabio, who is the member representing Essien Udim State Constituency and the co-sponsors of the Bill.



## Oborevwori Grieves Over Passing Of Asaba Monarch

By; UTEBOR PETER, Asaba

Governor Sheriff Oborevwori of Delta State has expressed sadness over the passing of the Asagba of Asaba, Obi Prof. Joseph Chike Edozien, CFR.

The Asagba, who was a distinguished medical scholar and first Black-African indigenous Dean of Medicine in a foreign land, passed on few months to his centenary birth anniversary.

In a statement by his Chief Press Secretary, Sir Festus Ahon, in Asaba, Oborevwori stated that the revered monarch, throughout his 33-year reign, provided purposeful leadership for his people and residents of Asaba, the

state capital.

He said that Asaba witnessed a quantum leap in urbanisation during Edozien's rule, with respect to population, infrastructure, and socio-political developments.

The Governor remarked that Professor Edozien made significant contributions over the years to making Asaba welcoming and pleasant for all Nigerians. According to him, the late Asagba was a "scholar per excellence, bridge-builder, and elder statesman.

Oborevwori prayed that God would rest the soul of the departed monarch and grant the royal family and the people of Asaba the strength to bear this great loss.

# FG Secures \$30bn Foreign Direct Investment

By; AMOSTAUNA, Kaduna

A \$30 billion Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs) commitment that will be a game-changer in the efforts to accelerate the nation's economic growth, has been secured by the federal government.

The Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment, Dr. Doris Uzoka-Anite, while disclosing on Friday at Abuja during a press briefing, explained that their bilateral engagements have been fruitful and have led to significant investment announcements and partnership opportunities for Nigerian trade, saying that a notable example is the G20 summit in India, where a \$14bn worth of FDI inflow to Nigeria was announced and being actualized.

She said that they have also got \$10 billion for oil and gas investment commitments.

According to her, "Since then, we have seen the Confederation of

Indian Industries visiting Nigeria to further explore identified investment opportunities. These engagements with India, Germany, Netherlands, UAE, South Africa, and others have opened up avenues for investment and the establishment of joint regulatory protocols."

Dr. Uzoka-Anite stated that several millions of jobs would be created as those investment funds roll into the economy, adding that her team was working to enhance trade opportunities for Nigerians through the Trade Intelligence Unit to create a fully automated Centre of Excellence.

The minister said the centre would employ top-tier talent and collaborate with world-class institutions for the purpose of gathering and analyzing trade intelligence, stressing that the ministry has also re-launched the Nigerian Trade Policy 2023-2027, which was geared at stimulating the

domestic economy by connecting Nigerian SME's to the global value chain thereby ensuring that Nigerian businesses have the capacity to be globally competitive.

She added that in furtherance of ensuring this global competitiveness, they are currently negotiating their accession into the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AFCFTA) Agreement that is posited to be the largest free trade area in the world, with a combined GDP of \$3.4 Trillion and access to a market of over 1.3 Billion people spread across 54 member states of the African Union.

Recently, she explained that she was at the 13th AFCFTA Trade Minister's meeting where they are actively negotiating Nigeria's unique position on several crucial matters bordering on digital trade, safeguarding against illegal transshipment under the AFCFTA and tariff lines in specific sectors of

the Nigerian economy.

According to the minister, the successful implementation of the AFCFTA is expected to lead to diversification of exports, improved market access, enhanced trade opportunities and increased foreign direct investment, adding that under the Presidential Council, they are implementing several initiatives to reform the commodity trading landscape and also NCX's operations and performance.

While negotiating best deals for Nigeria, the minister emphasized the need for Nigerian-made goods to meet global standards, warning that they e have to ensure that their products meet the right standards to enable our exporters earn good foreign exchange income.

Dr. Uzoka-Anite said that international oil giants, Shell Petroleum Development Company is not leaving Nigeria, pointing out that they are selling their onshore assets and they are investing in gas

and investing in offshore assets.

She reiterated the position of the Federal government that oil and gas companies must show evidence of export proceeds repatriation before further export permits would be approved for them.

Dr. Uzoka-Anite said that the administration launched the National Talent Exports Programme (NATEP) to create 1m through talent exchange/export, business process outsourcing and job outsourcing.

She said that her ministry was cooperating with the Nigeria Diaspora Commission (NIDCOM) to revamp and relaunch the Diaspora investment initiative to attract diaspora funds into investment platforms and vehicles in the country.

The minister explained that there was no legal services agreement between Nigeria and the United Kingdom, as the recent Memorandum of Understanding between the two had no such provisions.

# Customs FOU Zone 'B' Seizes Items Worth Almost N2bn In One Month

By; JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON

Customs Service Federal Operations Unit (FOU) Zone 'B' has within a month, made seizure of various items with Duty Paid Value (DPV) of almost two billion Naira.

This was disclosed by the Comptroller FOU Zone B, Dalha Wada Chedi during a press briefing on Friday at the zonal headquarters in Kaduna.

"The Total Duty Paid Value (DPV) of the Seizures made within the period under review is One Billion, Nine Hundred and Seventy-Five Million, Six Hundred and Six Hundred and Fifty-Seven Thousand, Eight Hundred and Sixty-Five Naira and Ninety-Six Kobo (#1, 975,657,865.96) only," he said.

According to him, the seizures were made between January 1 to February 16, 2024,

covering a total of 27 items.

"I am pleased to welcome you to the Federal Operations Unit (FOU) Zone 'B' to brief you on the anti-smuggling feat of the Unit from 1st January to date.

"The operatives of the unit have for the period under review remained resolute in the fight against smuggling thereby making several seizures of 27 different items ranging from used foreign shoes, foreign parboiled rice, Second hand clothing, expired milk and juice powder, among others.

"On Wednesday, 24 January 2024 at about 2200hrs, the operatives of the unit intercepted One (1) truck conveying One Hundred and Seventy-Nine (179) Bags of Tiger Nuts (50Kg each) based on intelligence along Maigatari/Malamfatori/Birniwa axis of

Jigawa State," he said.

According to him, on February 3, 2024, the operatives of the Unit arrested three (3) trucks along Gumel-Kano road in Jigawa State.

"The arrest was made following information shared by the intelligence network of the NCS-Headquarters, Abuja on the suspicion that they were conveying prohibited items.

"Hundred per cent (100%) physically examination was conducted at the premises of Kano/Jigawa Command and the Three (3) trucks were found to contain 5076 Cartons of Foreign soap, 703 bales of Foreign second-hand clothing, 925 cartons of macaroni, 320 bales of foreign textiles and 12 Jumbo sacks of foreign used shoes," he informed.

The comptroller explained that two

suspects were arrested and detained at the Kano/Jigawa Command in connection with the seizures and they have been granted administrative bail pending the outcome of the ongoing investigation.

"Also on 11 February 2024 at about 2200hrs, the operatives of the Unit acting on credible intelligence along Tsafe-Funtua Road in Zamfara State intercepted One (1) truck on the suspicion of improper importation.

"Further examination revealed that the truck was conveying 75 cartons of expired foreign jolly juice powder and eight sacks of foreign expired milk powder that were found to have expired since 2019 thus unfit for human consumption.

"The expired milk was concealed with sacks of dried hides & skin. These are expired, unused and contaminated items



# Customs FOU Zone 'B' Seizes Items Worth Almost N2bn In One Month

which if not intercepted by our operatives would cause havoc to the society in general.

"Other items seized within this period are: 237 Bags of Foreign Parboiled Rice (50Kg each), 1837 cartons of foreign spaghetti, macaroni and couscous, 1707 jerry-cans of premium Motor Spirits (PMS) 25 litres each, 3459 cartons/sachets of Amoxicillin, Artesunate, 500 Mg, 35 cartons of flame lighters, 2089 cartons of foreign dates, 142 cartons of YES Cigarettes, 810 pieces of foreign used tyres, many vehicles deposited at various Customs formations in the Zone, among others.

"It is important to mention that the foreign dates and the Tiger-Nuts by their nature are edible and perishable goods would be auctioned in line with the provisions of

Paragraph 15 (b) of the Schedule of the Nigeria Customs Service Act No. 35, 2023.

"These unprecedented seizures were made as a result of contravention of several sections of NCS Act 2023 and breach of extant Presidential directives on border closure.

"It is a fact that things are difficult for common men in this country, despite this; smugglers are adding to the suffering of the citizens by smuggling these expired and unhealthy items that are injurious to health and wellbeing of the people.

"The Unit is an enforcement arm of the Service that will continue to arrest situations that may harm the citizens of this country. I want the general public to know that the personnel of the NCS are Nigerians too and we share in their pains

at this critical time," he said.

Speaking further he said, "However, the operatives of the unit will not relent until smugglers are out of business. We will not be tired in our twenty-four hours and seven days round the clock enforcement drive to suppress smuggling.

"In addition, I enjoin the general public to be on our side in fighting the menace of smuggling which undermines government goal for revenue generation and aims at compromising the health of unsuspecting Nigerians. This is a fight that we all must give priority to for the president to succeed and deliver on the renewed hope agenda to Nigerians.

"I want to use this medium to thank the Comptroller-General of Customs, Bashir Adewale Adeniyi MFR and his management for their morale boosting

leadership and encouragement to our Officers and Men towards achieving our mandate," he said.

The drugs and expired milk were handed over to the National Agency for Food, Drugs, Administration and Control (NAFDAC) for further investigation.

NAFDAC representative, Asst Director North West Zone, Dr. Paul Faruna after the handing over, said that he appreciates the gesture from Customs.

He thanked then for the collaborating and was optimistic that the synergy between the two agencies will be sustained.

"They have assisted us in so many ways to curb fake drugs," he added.

He advised Nigerians against purchasing fake or expired drugs, urging the general public to always report such cases as their identities remain protected.



## Plots To Destabilise Alia's Administration By Abuja Forces Uncovered, Benue Govt Cries Out

By; ARCHIBONG ESUENE, Makurdi

**B**enue State Government has said that there are devious plans by forces in Abuja comprising some members of the National Assembly from Benue to destabilize Gov. Hyacinth Alia's administration despite all the positive developments recorded by the administration within eight months.

In a statement by the Chief Press Secretary, Tersoo Kulas, the State Government said that it has smelt this on many fronts, particularly, following the torrent of divisive concoctions sponsored in the media by these same agents of underdevelopment, who are not comfortable with the massive positive development in the state. The State Government while reacting to series of attacks in the media by some members of the National Assembly from the state, described their actions as unfortunate. On the media briefing by

Abba Moro in Abuja recently that the dissolution of the former elected LG Councils by the Benue State House of Assembly is the cause of insecurity in Benue State, the CPS said the government is worried because such insinuation coming from a person of Moro standing should not be overlooked.

"Benue people should ask Moro to unravel more about what he knows of the root cause of insecurity as it relates to the dissolution of elected LG councils. Our suspicion is that Moro may be discreetly cooking crooked plans to destabilize the state to justify his assertion".

On the allegations against the Government by a member of House of Representatives Philip Agbese, he said the government viewed his fabrications as a deliberate attempt at misinforming the people with the vicious aim of creating an uprising against the administration of Rev. Fr. Hyacinth Alia.

"Agbese blatantly, during a press conference in Abuja, lied about security votes for the state. We make bold to state unequivocally here that security vote for Benue has never risen to N1bn needless to mention N3bn under Rev. Fr. Alia's administration. So, Agbese will surely be provided an avenue for him to prove beyond reasonable doubt such unfounded allegations against His Excellency, Rev. Fr. Hyacinth Alia and the Government of Benue State"

On the media insinuations that a letter was sent to herdsmen to return to Benue for open grazing," it would be recalled that during the burial ceremony of the late Tor Sankera at Katsina-Ala recently, His Excellency, Rev. Fr. Hyacinth Alia made an unambiguous pronouncement that the Anti Open Grazing and Prohibiting Law of Benue State is still alive and shall be enforced fully."

He debunked the the

negative impression that the government of Benue State has sent a letter to any group including herdsmen to come into the state to contravene the law in question.

He further stated that the Government of Benue State is worried that based on the already exhibited desperation of some retrogressive elements, it is possible they must have equally cooked such a nefarious communication to achieve their unholy ambition.

'The Benue State Government is digging into this matter. If anything of such is discovered, the perpetrators must be assured, they will have to answer for their sins against the state.'

According to the press statement, the Benue State Government appreciates President Bola Ahmed Tinubu who is keeping his determination to keep and fulfil his side of the covenant.

## Fedpoly Daura Matriculated 625 Students



By; SULAIMAN AHMED MISAU, Katsina

**F**ederal Polytechnic Daura in Katsina State has matriculated third set of its 625 students for 2023/2024 session.

The Ceremony conducted at Sports Complex of the Polytechnic in Daura attracted Parents and other well wishers.

In his address at the occasion, Rector of the College Professor Aliyu Mamman said the School has total of 1,195 students In its 16 NBTE approved National Diploma Programmes.

Professor Mamman who congratulated the matriculating students for securing admission said the aimed of the programmes was to prepare the mindset of the newly admitted students to work towards inculcation of sound moral character and achievement of academic excellence.

He explained that, the School secured about 300 bed apace at separate hostel for male and female students in DauraTown. adding that, " we also secured two Buses to take

care of students Transportation needs within and outside Daura."

Professor Aliyu Mamman urged DEAN students Affairs to start all arrangements for the smooth take off of the students union activities with effect from the 2023/2024 academic session.

In a vote of thanks, the DEAN students affairs, Alhaji Muhammad Sale Gaskiya warned the students to desist from any act that, would tarnish their Image and called on the Students to be Good Ambassadors of the school, wherever they found themselves.

Alhaji Sale Gaskiya assured that the school management would do every thing possible to Improve the Students Welfare.

The students were administered the oath of office by the legal adviser to the school.

## DCO loses Seat Over Alleged N2.450m Extortion In Delta

By; RAYMOND TEDUNJAYE, Lagos

**I**n an avowed determination to curb misconduct in Delta State Police Command, the new Commissioner of Police Abaniwonda Olufemi has ordered the removal of the Divisional Crime Officer (DCO 2) of Abraka Division over alleged extortion of N2, 465,000.

Our correspondent gathered that the DCO, SP Ibrahim Ishaku has been summoned to the command headquarters in Asaba and queried over the unprofessional conduct.

The Delta State Police Command Spokesperson DSP Bright Edefe in a release on Wednesday disclosed that the Police Commissioner had ordered the DPO of the Division to report at the headquarters along with the DCO over the conduct.

The release reads, " Following the reported case of extortion of the sum of N2,465,000 by the Divisional Crime Officer 2, Abraka Division, the Commissioner of Police Delta State CP Abaniwonda



Olufemi on receipt of this disturbing report directed the DPO Abraka to report at the headquarters alongside the DCO 2 SP Ibrahim Ishaku. "The CP after getting brief of the disturbing incident

immediately ordered the removal of the DCO 2 SP Ibrahim Ishaku with immediate effect and the officer issued a query for misconduct.

"The Commissioner of

Police Delta State CP Abaniwonda reiterates that the Command under his watch will deal decisively with any recalcitrant officer who carries out any form of misconduct, extortion, or incivility to members of the public and assures the public of the readiness of the Command under his watch to deal decisively with any erring officer while hoping that this will serve a deterrent to others.

"He assures members of the public that no officer found wanting will be spared noting that serving the people of Delta state with honesty and strict adherence to their human rights remains a top priority of the Command.

"For Complaints, members of the public can reach the command through the Command control room at 0803 668 4974 or

Social media handles

Twitter: @DeltaPoliceNg

Instagram: @pprodelta

Facebook: Nigeria Police Force Delta State

Or the PPRO on Twitter via @Brightgoldenboy."

### CHANGE OF NAME

AWAN - I, formerly known and addressed as Miss Afiniki Awan Yakubu now wish to be known and addressed as MRS. AFINIKI MICHAEL YAKUBU. All former documents remain valid. General public and authorities concerned should please take note.

# Payment Of Gratuities: Gov Lawal Rekindles Hope Of Helpless Retirees

By; NUHU SALIHU ANKA

A dream of every retired civil servant is to get his gratuity paid to him before his death. Thousands of retired civil servants both at the states and the federal government level have died before they could get their gratuities, while thousand others are still in a waiting list and have no hope of getting this last entitlement.

Many state governments have stopped paying the gratuity, despite persistent pressure being mounted on them by the retirees and the organized labour unions.

Infact, some state governors do not consider payment of gratuity to retired civil servants as a right but rather a privilege.

This wicked attitude of non payment of gratuity has put many retired civil servants into serious difficulties and hopelessness.

Many of them have died of hypertension, while those who have survived the situation have been paralyzed and could no longer fend for their families.

In Zamfara state, payment of gratuity has been suspended for the last 10 years or more, as such, the administration of Governor Dr. Dauda Lawal inherited a backlog of gratuity which stood at N13.4 billion.

The past administrations made several false promises, more especially during the electioneering campaigns without fulfillment.

However, with the coming of Governor Dauda Lawal as the fifth democratically elected Governor, retired civil servants who have lost hope are now smiling and their dream of spending their gratuities is becoming a reality.

Although, Governor Dauda Lawal did not promise to settle the backlog of gratuity owed to retired civil servants during his campaign, he decided to pay them in order



Dauda Lawa, Zamfara Governor

to alleviate their suffering. Out of magnanimity, Dr. Dauda Lawal directed the ministry of finance to commence the payment of the backlog of N13.4 billion gratuities to retired civil servants in the state. The state government had established a committee to authenticate the retired civil servants' data to pay off the gratuity debt accumulated from 2011 to date. After validating the data of retired civil servants, the government discovered that the total amount owed from

state and local governments was 13.4 billion Naira. The committee has already gone far with the authentication of data submitted by local government and state pension commission and physical verification of beneficiaries. Retired state and local government employees who were verified have begun to receive their gratuity payments since Thursday. Similarly, the government would ensure that all retirees are authenticated and paid

their gratuities without any difficulties. The retirees who have been owed gratuities since 2011 finally started receiving their payments and many of them are now jubilating and praying for the success of Dr D a u d a L a w a l ' s administration. The backlog of gratuities accumulated over years is now being cleared and payment has since commenced. The State government has taken a significant step towards addressing the

outstanding debt of gratuity owed to retirees, which comprises death gratuities, retirement gratuities, and contract gratuities. With this development, one will beat his chest and say that, Governor Dauda Lawal is fulfilling his promise to serve the people of the State by rescuing and rebuilding the state for the better.

*Nuhu Salisu Anka is the Director General, Media and Communications, Government House, Gusau*

## Unemployment: Nwifuru Tasks Tertiary Institutions To Offer Entrepreneurship Courses

By: MKPUMA ENYINNA, Abakaliki

The Governor of Ebonyi State, Chief Francis Ogbonna Nwifuru has charged institutions of Higher Learning to offer only courses that will provide job opportunities to their graduates. He gave the charge when he received Management of Evangel University, Akaeze, Ebonyi State. He said it will be a wasted effort on the part of graduates if they are unable to secure jobs after school, saying it will

make them constitute burden to their families and the Society.

"It is not proper to give admission to someone whose job opportunities are not in the labour market.

"I am very particular about the quality of graduates our institutions produce. If Evangel University decides to distinguish themselves by producing very productive graduates the society will at times desire to get or employ, it will make them exceptional," he said.

He reiterated his

administration's quest to work with stakeholders to improve the standard of education in the state.

The Vice Chancellor of the University, Prof. Iche Kalu said they were in the Governor's Office to inform him of his nomination for the award of Doctor of Science, honoris causa by the University Senate.

"At the 94th regular meeting of the Senate of the Evangel University, it was resolved that you will be awarded the Doctor of Science, honoris causa during the 2nd to 3rd

Convocation ceremony slated for March, 16th this year. This is in consideration of your track records. We watched the way you piloted the affairs of the State Assembly as Speaker and later by the grace of God you were elected chief executive of the state. We felt you merited this award and that is our purpose of coming," he said.

The Vice Chancellor used the visit to congratulate the Governor on his victory at the Supreme Court.

## Ibom Oil/Gas Corporation Bill Will Drive Sectoral Investment - CHRAN

By: PATRICK TITUS, Uyo

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Others include, acquiring old and new exploration and drilling prospects and prospecting abandoned oil wells in Nigeria and overseas; optimising the benefits of the petroleum policies of the federal government; liaising with federal government

agencies or private and multinational companies to deliver petroleum products to Akwa Ibom state in the most effective and cost efficient manner.

Investing in downstream oil and gas activities including gas processing businesses, petroleum products retailing, gas retailing, gas pipelines deployment, acquisition of petroleum products tank farms and other distribution facilities, and investing in refineries, petrochemical processing or other production processes.

CHRAN also noted that the Ibom Oil and Gas Corporation, envisaged in the Bill would create employment for the teeming unemployed Akwa Ibom indigenes, generate revenue for the state and serve as a vehicle for economic growth and regeneration while harnessing and consolidating the huge oil and gas potentials of Akwa Ibom State.

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"The foresight of the sponsors of the Bill reflects in the provision in the Bill for expansion of the Ibom Oil and Gas Corporation to make for investment in existing companies or consortia and acquisition of old or abandoned oil wells and exploration and drilling facilities in the country and overseas." CHRAN, stated.



## Oyo Govt Shuts Six Health Facilities Over Quackery

\*Says it won't tolerate any form of quackery or substandard practice in the health sector

By: BAYO AKAMO, Ibadan

The Chairman Oyo State Anti Quackery Task Force Committee, Dr. Adekunle Aremu has disclosed that the state government, has shut six health facilities across the state over quackery.

Dr. Aremu listed the offences of the sealed health facilities to include recruitment of unqualified personnel to provide medical services and engage in illicit practices.

According to the Anti Quackery Task Force Committee Chairman, the operation was part of the Oyo State Government's efforts towards protecting the health and well-being of residents, saying, the state government would not tolerate any form of quackery or substandard practice in the health sector.

"The goals remain clear, Oyo State government is dedicated to upholding

rigorous standards and prioritizing the health and safety of every resident," he said.

Dr. Aremu added, "The government ensures that healthcare services consistently meet the highest benchmarks for quality and safety, so citizens can trust their well-being".

Emphasizing that anyone found culpable would face the full wrath of the law, Dr. Aremu urged the people of the state to report any suspicious or illegal activity in any health facility to the Ministry of Health or the nearest security agency.

While advising the public to patronize only accredited and registered health facilities in the state, adding that they must ensure only qualified personnel attend to them, he appealed to health workers to abide by the ethics and standard of their profession.

Tasking the people of Oyo state to

cooperate with the government in its quest to provide quality and affordable health care to the people, he listed the sealed

health facilities as New Jobi Memorial Hospital; Omolara Clinic & Maternity Home Iped Amazing Grace Medical Clinic; Emiloju Clinic and Maternity Centre Ogbera and S a f e w a y

Clinic, Gbaremu; Emilagba clinic and Maternity Centre, Ibadan.



One of the sealed health centres



# Open-door Governance And Uba Sani's Perspective

By: JAMES SWAM

The mid-January ruling by the Supreme Court affirming Senator Uba Sani as the elected governor of Kaduna State came as the harmattan intensified.

Delivered on Friday, 19 January 2024, the verdict marked the climax of a protracted legal battle that had kept the citizens of the state on edge since the election was held in March the previous year.

Over the course of eight months, outstanding legal experts engaged in rigorous legal arguments, citing various authorities. They navigated through the Governorship Election Petition Tribunal, the Court of Appeal, and finally, the Supreme Court. The apex court's judgement, which upheld the declaration made by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), ended a quest for a return to Sir Kashim Ibrahim House by the opposition Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

With the resolution of the election dispute, the administration's attention now turns to the expectations of the populace - accessible and affordable healthcare, education, clean drinking water, improved rural infrastructure, reasonable housing, a conducive environment for peaceful coexistence, and supportive regulations for the growth of micro, small, and medium enterprises.

For Governor Uba Sani and his team, these are pivotal to the administration. The government has prioritized the welfare of its citizens and the implementation of achievable plans to address these urgent development needs in the four years of the administration.

Now, the crux of the matter. Shortly after the court's judgment, the governor issued a concise press statement, inviting all citizens, including those from the opposition, to collaborate in delivering effective governance. He underlined the importance of a people-centered, inclusive approach, stating, "It is time for us to join hands to take Kaduna State to a higher level." In other words, no one should be indifferent to the dreams of the state.

Governance, he emphasised, is a collective effort, requiring open-mindedness and a willingness to



Gov Uba Sani

embrace diverse perspectives. Unlike historical figures like Napoleon Bonaparte, who viewed relationships as purely transactional, Governor Uba Sani is committed to fostering meaningful collaborations aimed at advancing the development of the state. He recognises that true progress stems from collective efforts and bold initiatives, rather than individual achievements.

In pledging to lead an inclusive and development-oriented government, the governor signals his commitment to prioritising the interests of the people above personal acclaim. He envisions a future where the success of Kaduna State is shared by all its inhabitants, reflecting a collective endeavour

towards progress and prosperity. This is primarily why he has highlighted that his administration welcomes positive ideas to enhance governance. In other words, he has urged citizens to offer fresh viewpoints to the various socio-economic and political challenges hindering the state's progress, aiming to expedite Kaduna's development.

"Our doors are open to all stakeholders in the Kaduna Project," he stated in the press release. "Any citizen of Kaduna State who has something to contribute will be given an opportunity. It is about the glory of Kaduna State, not personal glory," the governor boldly added.

The governor's inclusive

approach marks a significant step in the state's political evolution, empowering those committed to Kaduna's advancement to actively participate.

He firmly believes in leveraging diverse skills for effective results, moving beyond passive observation to proactive engagement.

This perhaps underscores the imperative of the administration's development agenda, one of which focuses on strengthening open government partnership (OGP) under the nurturing citizens' engagement platform to promote citizens' participation in governance.

Often likened to a wizard, not in the magical sense but for his exceptional abilities, Governor

Uba Sani understands the realities of life. His leadership transcends political divides, prioritising collective well-being over partisan interests. By keeping his doors open, he seeks to integrate diverse ideological perspectives to propel Kaduna into a model state for the 21st century.

Indeed, the governor's perspective on open door governance makes sense. Compared to those who shut their doors because of differences in political ideologies, faith, or socio-economic status, Uba Sani has proved to be a divergent thinker. Swam, a former press secretary to the deputy governor of Kaduna State, is the author of 'How to be an Effective Spokesperson.'

# New NIGERIAN

"The Greatest Weapon is Truth"

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## ADVERT RATE

SPACE	COLOUR			BLACK AND WHITE		
	RATE	VAT	TOTAL	RATE	VAT	TOTAL
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
1" x 1 Col	6,072.00	455.40	6,527.40	4,083.42	306.26	4,389.68

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- All adverts are expected to be in cash or bank draft in favour of New Nigerian Newspaper's Limited.
- Series discount is subject to the stipulated number of insertions, and it is payable only at the end of a campaign (to be deducted from balance pay).
- COPY DATE:** for all the Title Heads is three working days for the North and four working days for the South.
- Cancellation of previously booked advert will be accepted in writing within four working days notice, less than 24 hours to the date of publication will attract 25% surcharge.
- Advertisers/Agencies are to provide their Camera ready artwork in electronic copies, in PDF, or JPEG format.
- Advertisers will be surcharged 20% of the applicable rate where artworks are not provided.
- Adverts may not be published if the visuals given are considered too poor as to affect the reproduction.
- Alterations to original order should be conveyed in writing at least 24 hours to desired alteration date.
- Colour guides are to accompany coloured adverts.
- The management of New Nigerian Newspapers Limited reserves the right to reject an advert or any publication in any of its titles where such materials are considered distasteful for public exposure or libelous.

TECHNICAL DATA			
<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

LOOSE INSERTS					
S/NO	SIZE	RATE	VAT	TOTAL	
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	

CLASSIFIEDS					
S/NO	POSITION	SIZE	RATE	VAT	TOTAL
1	Registration of Trustees	3" x 2 Cols	6,857.14	514.29	7,371.43
2	Loss of Documents	2" x 2 Cols	4,400.00	330.00	4,730.00
3	Change of Name	Per Box	2,000.00	-	2,000.00

Special Position			
SPACE	RATE	VAT	TOTAL
FULL W RAPA ROUND	6,750,000.00	506,250.00	7,256,250.00
HALF W RAPA ROUND	4,500,000.00	337,500.00	4,837,500.00
PA GE 2 O R 3	400,000.00	30,000.00	430,000.00
PA GE 4 O R 5	375,000.00	28,125.00	403,125.00
PA GE 6 O R 7	325,000.00	24,375.00	349,375.00
FR ONT PA GE M A S T H E A D E A R P I E C E	215,000.00	16,875.00	231,875.00
FR ONT PA GE S O L U S	312,500.00	23,437.50	335,937.50
FR ONT PA GE S T R I P	375,000.00	28,125.00	403,125.00
B A C K PA GE E A R P I E C E	200,000.00	15,000.00	215,000.00
B A C K PA GE S T R I P	250,000.00	18,750.00	268,750.00
C E N T R E S P R E A D (C O L O U R )	837,500.00	62,812.50	900,312.50
D O U B L E S P R E A D (C O L O U R )	700,000.00	52,500.00	752,500.00
C E N T R E S P R E A D (B L A C K & W H I T E)	575,000.00	43,125.00	618,125.00
D O U B L E S P R E A D (B L A C K & W H I T E)	590,000.00	44,250.00	634,250.00
FR ONT PA GE (10" X 6)	3,250,000.00	243,750.00	3,493,750.00
R O P S T R I P (C O L O U R )	125,000.00	9,375.00	134,375.00
R O P S T R I P (B L A C K & W H I T E)	85,000.00	6,375.00	91,375.00

PROPERTY AND IT, VACANCY, AGRIC, AND EVENTS/EDUCATION RATE						
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

# Bukar Abba Ibrahim: The Man Who Touched My Life (2)

By; HASSAN GIMBA

Adamu Maina Waziri is one politician most people misunderstand. He is one man who does not suffer fools and, unlike the typical politician, he shoots from the hip, the reason some saw him as "crude". His word is his bond; and if you asked him for a favour that he can grant, he would tell you, and if he promised, he would deliver. But if he wouldn't, he would not bat an eyelid in telling you no.

This is not the kind of leader Nigerians want. Nigerians prefer the man who will tell them, "Ah, we did it for others, why not you? Come tomorrow" and they will make you waste a year on "come today, come tomorrow". Opponents capitalised on Waziri's perceived "naivety" to inject his fear into the hearts of their followers. Nonetheless, I gave him (Bukar) what I believed was an honest answer. I said, "I believe anybody who comes out to aspire to be a governor has good intentions and therefore would be good."

Though I still believe so for Yobe, I doubt if it applies to the national level, considering the catastrophe Nigeria saw between 2015 and 2023.

Meanwhile, I will leave Bukar's response to my answer between the two of us with God as a witness - where it has been all this while.

Apart from the irony of Bukar having a son who used to be a Waziri die-hard, they cracked jokes and taunted each other whenever they met.

Waziri told me the hilarious story of how they once met on a plane and Bukar pointed at his leg and said, "Adamu, if you want to be governor, come and hold on to this leg," to which Adamu retorted, "That leg is like the leg of a grasshopper; the grasshopper flies off, leaving its leg with the person who holds it."

And he could be practical. In 2007, knowing I laid my neck on the political guillotine having played an active role in the bid of Tumsah (who was his Commissioner for Agriculture when he first governed Yobe) to be governor on the platform of the Action Congress of Nigeria, Bukar, knowing the politics of Yobe, thought the new governor may not be friendly to me. So he called me to his home in Maitama and said something like: "Forget politics and think of survival; follow (your brother) Adamu Waziri." Waziri was a minister as his party was in government at the centre.

Even though as a journalist covering the state I interacted with Bukar Abba, my first one-on-one encounter with him was during the campaigns for the 1993 presidential elections in which Chief MKO Abiola stood as a candidate in his party, the SDP.

The Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), Yobe branch, had set up a political commission of five, with Comrade Bashir Abubakar Sadik (Barry White) as chairman and me from the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) as secretary. Our job was to go around the state and sensitise

NLC-affiliate unions on the need for peaceful, free and fair elections, but most importantly on the need to mobilise for the SDP candidate because the party, being "a little to the left", was more in tune with labour.

Comrade Baba Usman Sambo, then NLC state secretary, facilitated our meeting with Bukar. He easily welcomed us, told us a lot of political stories and then gave us an SUV from the Government House carpool and some other necessary logistics.

When General Abacha struck, he had a last encounter with us, the press. I recall telling him, "It is not the people of Yobe that rejected you. Whenever you come back, we will vote for you again." And so it happened.

Never a man of vanity, the glitters of the world hardly take his attention. Baba Ba'aba, who was his long-running secretary to the state government and his permanent secretary when he was a commissioner, told me the story of how he went to Sherrifson, a trendy supermarket in Maiduguri, to buy modern furniture to replace those in Bukar's sitting room while he was away on a trip.

He said the moment Bukar entered the sitting room and saw the change, he just smiled and said, "Baba kenan!"

He said, "Bukar dan kawye ne", not derogatorily but in admiration and awe. Explaining further, he said Bukar would come and meet people sitting under a tree and he would just remove his gown and sit on the ground with them. He was indeed an embodiment of humility.

And he kept those he knew around him. When he was in the Senate and I was an editor with Leadership newspaper, he would call me to arrange the press for him if he had anything to say. Likewise, when his late daughter got married, he gave all the adverts to me.

Earlier when he was governor, I was given an appointment with the Yobe Broadcasting Corporation after coming first in a rigorous examination and interview conducted for 53 of us, but the appointment was rescinded, because of local politics, on the excuse that "it was given in error."

When I told him about it after some months, Bukar told me he would instruct them to absorb me if I wanted. I thanked him but declined.

Even though he had never shed tears in his life, he was full of empathy and generosity. In one of the weekly briefings he held with the press every Wednesday before Executive Council meetings, he confessed to having never shed tears in his life, no matter what he did. He thought, or was told, that there was a problem with his tear glands!

He loved the press. His time was a golden age for the local press because he encouraged them to blossom. During his time, there were about five local newspapers - the highest number among the northeastern states. There was Yobe News, later changed to The Mark,



## Hassan Gimba Monday Column

published by Sanusi Oladipo, who came as a Youth Corps member but found a home in Yobe and went on to marry another 'corper', Imabong. Three children they gave birth to in Yobe are now university graduates.

We also had Newsray of the late Campbell Ori, who later started a Hausa version called Hakika; Pioneer Administrator, later became City News, and finally, Sky News, of Yusuf Mammai, Rural Front of December Gboru, The Nest of Martin, The Finder of late Akpan and I published The Informant, combined with its Hausa version, Mafadi.

Under my leadership, the Yobe State Newspaper Publishers' Association from time to time interacted with him and he made sure all adverts we published were paid. We lapped on his benevolence and always did adverts for local governments and MDAs without even their asking, which were always paid from the SSG's office.

The way we were treated made some local publishers from other Northeastern states join us and in 2006 we formed the North East Publishers Forum (NEPF) with me as pioneer chairman and Mr Freedom Haslon, publisher of News Now, from Adamawa State, as pioneer secretary. In 2005, my late wife, Lami Fatima

Babare, came home from work looking sad. She was an English language lecturer at the Federal College of Education (Technical), Potiskum. The reason for her mood was that her colleagues were going to Hajj that year and she was the odd one out. They were either married to big guns or had fewer demands on their salaries and so could afford to pay for the pilgrimage.

I had no one to go to, to make her dream come true except Bukar. And so I wrote a letter to him, requesting a Hajj slot and went to Damaturu on a Wednesday (it was much easier to see him as a journalist). I waited until he had finished discussing with the press in the chamber and then I went to him and dropped the letter in front of him and, without a word, turned and left.

Not quite five minutes later, his police orderly, ASP Kingimi, rushed out with the letter and handed it over to me with his signature of approval.

And so my wife went to Makkah, I became a hero in her eyes, and our marriage hit a new purple patch. And all of that courtesy of Bukar Abba Ibrahim, the man who touched my life and those of many others in Yobe and across Nigeria. May Allah accept his soul into al-Jannat fidaus.

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

# Final Team List Released As Nigeria Under 18, 20 Men Handball Team Travel To Ghana For IHF Trophy Africa Zone 3 Phase

By: JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON

The national under 18 and 20 men handball teams will travel to Accra, Ghana today, ahead of the IHF Trophy Africa Zone 3 Phase which will commence tomorrow.

The IHF Trophy Africa Zone 3 Phase will hold from February 20th to the 24th 2024 at the Borteyman Multipurpose Sports Hall, Accra Ghana

The national teams have been undergoing intensive preparations under the tutelage of their Coaches Emeka Nnamani (under 18 coach) and Fidelis Obi (under 20) respectively at the Rowe Park Sports Center in Yaba, Lagos.

The two coaches have released their final list of 14 players each that will represent the country in the Youth and the Junior categories of the competition with several of the invited making the list while four players were dropped.

Nigeria's under 18 and under 20 men's team will be playing in a round robin competition with the under 18 team playing in the Youth category alongside Benin Republic, host Ghana and Togo while the under 20 team face the likes of Benin Republic, Cote'd'voire, Ghana, Liberia and Togo in the Junior category.

The Nigeria teams will begin their campaign on Tuesday as the under 18 team face Benin Republic at 2pm Nigeria time while the under 20 team play Liberia at 8pm.

FINAL LIST OF PLAYERS FOR IHF TROPHY (U18) YOUTH MEN 2024 AFRICA-ZONE III.

1. KAREEM FARUK (TOJEMARINE ACADEMY)
2. SULAIMAN AZEEZ. (TOJEMARINE ACADEMY)
3. FALOKI CHRISTIAN. (TOJEMARINE ACADEMY)

4. OBABORI SAMUEL. TOJEMARINE. GOAL
  5. GANIU ADURAGBEMI. TOJEMARINE
  6. AB ATTAHIRU SAHABI. SOKOTO. RIMA --- GOALKEEPER.
  7. ISYAKA Mustapha TOJEMARINE
  8. ALIYU RUFAI TOJEMARINE
  9. YUSUF SULAIMAN SOKOTO.
  10. MOHAMMED MUSA ROAD SAFETY.
  11. MOHAMMED MUSTAPHA CONFLUENCE STARS
  12. SULAIMAN SANI. CONFLUENCE STARS
  13. FASHOGBON SULAIMAN. LAGOS. SEASIDERS
  15. ABODE OLUWATOBILOBA OFFICIALS.
- HEAD COACH NNAMANI JOSEPH EMEKA  
ASSISTANT COACH AYO JOSHUA.

FINAL LIST OF PLAYERS FOR IHF TROPHY (U20) JUNIOR MEN 2024 AFRICA-ZONE III.

- 1 Shagari John (niger utd.)
  - 2 Sofeme Christopher niger utd.
  - 3 Sunday Mathew niger utd.
  4. Ughojor B, Obaro Tojemarkine Lagos.
  5. Ajibike Kareem O. Tojemarkine Lagos.
  6. Mukaila fuad Gbolaham Tojemarkine Lagos G/keeper.
  7. Kuti James Akorede Tojemarkine Lagos.
  8. Akani Basit olayinka
  9. Joseph Emmanuel (De Defenders)
  10. Abubakar Abdulrahman (sokoto Rima)
  11. Abubakar Almustapha (sokoto Rima)
  12. Shittu Umar (plateau vipers)
  13. Ibrahim Yusuf plateau vipers.
  14. Ojo olumide oluwagbenga. (Addidja HC Cotonou)
- Officials  
1. Coach Fidelis Obi - Head Coach  
2. Innocent Nwankwo - Assistant Coach

## NTI Shaping Nigeria's Educational Landscape, Says Minister of Education

By: IMRANA ABDULLAHI, Kaduna

The Minister of Education, Prof. Tahir Mamman has said that the National Teachers' Institute (NTI), Kaduna is shaping the educational landscape in the country.

The minister, who was represented by the Director, Colleges of Education, Dr Uche Uba, made the disclosure in a keynote address, on Thursday, February 15, at the opening ceremony of the 2024 Cohort III Capacity Building Workshops for 10,840 basic school teachers in Sokoto State.

Prof. Mamman said teacher training provides an avenue for knowledge exchange and capacity building.

"It equips teachers with the needed teaching methodology and enhances participants' engagement, because professional development focuses on innovation," he said.

The workshop was declared open by Gov. Ahmad Aliyu, represented by the Commissioner for Basic Education, Sokoto State, Hon. Muhammad Tukur Alkali.

Having acknowledged the good service delivery of Sokoto State Universal Basic Education Board, Aliyu called on all the stakeholders to support the training.

He, therefore, commended NTI for "making a stride in fulfilling its mandate of capacity building of teachers."

The Governor described what is happening in teacher education in the state as a transformative journey, which NTI is making possible.

In his opening remarks, the NTI Director and Chief Executive, Prof. Musa Garba Maitafsir said education is the bedrock of any society and teachers are the architects of a meaningful future.

The Director and Chief Executive applauded the federal government's



unwavering commitment to educational development in the country.

Giving references to the Institute's various trainings conducted in 2022 and 2023, Prof. Maitafsir said NTI has been rigorously concentrating on digital literacy training in compliance to the global best practice.

Prof. Maitafsir said further that the president's Renewed Hope agenda in the sector, championed by the Minister of Education, Prof. Tahir Mamman, featured and demonstrated commitment to excellence, inclusivity and innovation as well as a beacon that guides effort towards a brighter and more promising future.

"The federal government's vision for a Renewed Hope in education, reflects a profound understanding of the pivotal role that teachers play in shaping the destiny of our nation," he added.

Prof. Maitafsir commended the Federal Ministry of Education, BESDA, Sokoto State Universal Basic Education Board and all stakeholders that have contributed

in making the training a reality.

"I urge the beneficiaries of this training, particularly the 10,840 selected teachers to always remember that you are the catalysts for the desired change," he concluded.

The NTI Chief Executive, having commended the Sokoto State government on its commitment to educational development, said the state government under Dr. Ahmad Aliyu Sokoto has demonstrated a profound understanding of the role education plays in fostering individual growth as well as national development.

He further expressed the commitment of NTI in its effort to address lapses and shortfalls of educators at all levels.

In a goodwill message, the Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar III, CFR, represented Alhaji Sani Umar Jabbi, Sarkin Yakin Gagi, commended NTI and the Governor of Sokoto State for transforming teacher education in the state.

Meanwhile, the representative of the Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT), Sokoto State Chapter, Comrade Babangida congratulated the teachers and applauded the effort of Sokoto State Government.

Earlier in a welcome address, the Executive Chairman, Sokoto State Universal Basic Education Board, Alhaji Umar Nagwari Tambwal, represented by the Director, Administration, Tukur Abdullahi, appreciated Sokoto State Government, NTI and BESDA for such a wonderful collaboration.

While the representative of Learn to Read, an NGO, Alhaji Ahmad Umar, appealed to the Sokoto State Government to train teachers on coaching and mentoring.

The training, which commenced immediately after the opening ceremony, is focusing on accessibility, intensive literacy and system strengthening.

Other important stakeholders and associations that attended the ceremony included All Nigeria Confederation of Principals of Secondary Schools and Provosts of Colleges of Education as well as academics.

The opening ceremony was attended by all NTI Management staff, who included, Ag. Registrar and Secretary to NTI Council, Hajiya Fatima Abbas Jega, NTI Bursar, Mal. Yunusa Danbala Labaran, Ag. Director Quality Assurance and ICT Department, Dr. Angela Ozibo.

Others were the Ag. Director Examinations Department, Dr. Ibrahim Bala as well as Overseer FOSS Department, Mrs. Bilquis Umar and Dr. Armiya'u Malami Yabo, Special Assistant to Director and Chief Executive of NTI, Kaduna.

# Edo: APC Stakeholders Congratulate Danco, Urge Ganduje To Disregard Idahosa

By: JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON

A group under the aegis of APC Stakeholders Forum has asked the party's National Chairman, Abdullahi Umar Ganduje to disregard the declaration made by Governor Hope Uzodimma, even as they congratulated the emergence of Hon. Anamero Dekeri as party candidate.

The forum also urged APC national chairman, Abdullahi Umar Ganduje to rally support for Hon. Anamero Dekeri as the authentic candidate of the party.

Imo State Governor Uzodimma, who was the chairman of the primary committee, had declared Hon. Dennis Idahosa as the winner of the primary election, while a returning officer, Ojo Babatunde

declared Hon. Anamero Dekeri as the APC candidate.

Addressing a press conference yesterday in Abuja, the APC Stakeholders Forum led by Hon. Emmanuel Godwin declared support for Hon. Dekeri, adding that the APC Edo State needs his (Danco) statewide popularity, competence and capacity to win Edo State gubernatorial election.

The Forum said the purported announcement of Idahosa is null and void and it should be disregarded in its entirety, adding that Governor Uzodimma lacks the power to usurpe duties and responsibilities of local government returning officers in the Edo state primaries.

"Let me first of all start by congratulating the winner of the just concluded

primary election in Edo state, Hon. Anamero Dekeri for emerging victorious in the just concluded Edo State APC Gubernatorial Elections.

"Hon. Dekeri popularly called DANCO is indeed the man of the people with proven capacity to win the general elections in Edo state across the 18 local governments. The Man with mandate of the people to reclaim Edo state back to the APC in September 21st, 2024.

"As critical stakeholders of the party, we stand with Hon Dekeri. We stand by him and we want to assure the good people of Edo state that succour is on the way.

"The APC edo state needs his statewide popularity, competence and capacity to win Edo State gubernatorialelection.

"In this instance, we have been inundated with news

that a particular candidate was announced yesterday by His Excellency, Hope Uzodimma who incidentally is the chairman of the primary election committee, Edo state. It is unfortunate that Hope Uzodimma who is not the returning officer in whatever capacity assumed the position and went ahead to announce Denis Idahosa when the returning officers were still collating the results.

"We wish to therefore state categorically that the purported announcement is null and void and it should be disregarded in its entirety. Governor Uzodimma lacks the power to usurpe duties and responsibilities of local government returning officers in the Edo state primaries.

"We also condemned in a very strong term the attempt by His Excellency

Hope, Hope Uzodima to subvert the will of the Edo people by declaring fictitious results from the 18 local government areas in the absence of the collation officers who were officially sent to the various local governments.

"We call on the National chairman of our great party the APC, His Excellency, Dr. Abdullahi Umar Ganduje and the president of Federal Republic of Nigeria, Bola Ahmed Tinubu to as a matter of honour discard Governor Hope Uzodimma's infamous declaration of one Mr. Denis Idahosa who didn't win the primaries. This is a man who lacks the capacity, competence and character to win Edo state gubernatorial election for the APC come September 2024.

"Finally, whilst throwing

our collective support behind the validly nominated candidate, we also wish to call on the good people of Edo State both home and the diaspora to team up behind Anamero Dekeri popularly called DANCO to immediately begin to set up tactical mechanism to confront the PDP candidate ahead of September 2024.

"It is on record that in a viral video, the state chairman of the party, Emperor Jarret Tenebe had remarked that only Anamero Dekeri and one other Monday Okpebholo are the two aspirants legally qualified to contest the edo APC primaries held on 27th February, 2024 because only the duo complied with the APC guidelines of payment of membership validation exercise. It is on record that Anamero Dekeri alone paid for over sixty five thousand APC members."



# Beach Volleyball: 12 Players Resume Camp For African Games

By; **JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON**

A total of 12 beach volleyball players have resumed camp ahead of the 13th African Games in Ghana.

The 13th African Games will be held in Ghana from 8th to 23rd March 2023.

The men's list included the champions of the 2023 Beach Volleyball Star Tour, Ibrahim Peter and Uchenna Augustine.

Others are Emenike Ezike, Ike Sylvester, Philip Zakka and Victor Eze.

Multiple National Champion, Francisca Ikihiede lead the women's team to the national camp in Badagry, Lagos. Others

are; Esther Mbah, Pamela Bawa, Naomi Yaro, Sarah Sanda and Dorcas Isaac.

Francis Imoudu and John Iwerima will handle the men's team while Kayode Ajilore

Christy Amadi are in charge of the women's team.

The national beach volleyball players are currently training at the Marina beach opposite Chief Mobi Palace in Badagry, Lagos.



# AFCON: Okumagba Commends Supporters Club For Successful Outing

*\*Thanks Okoli SAN, Apostle Chinyere of OPM, AITEO's Benedict Peters*

By: BAYOAKAMO, Ibadan

Founder and National President of the Super Eagles Supporters Club (SESC), Prince Vincent Okumagba at the weekend, commended the club members for the successful outing at the Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) 2023 in Cote d'Ivoire.

The SESC National President in a statement also expressed gratitude to notable Nigerians that contributed financially and otherwise to the successful one month outing.

According to him, the support by the SESC members and other Nigerians made significant impact on the welfare of all SESC members in Abidjan to support the Super Eagles, adding, "it is times like these that we realize the true power of unity and team work, and I am proud to say that we have a group of supporters who exemplify these values with their every action."

"Although, our journey did not culminate into lifting the coveted trophy after coming so close, I firmly believed that we displayed immense strength, resilience, and sportsmanship throughout the competition", he said.

The SESC National President added, "Your presence in the

stands, your chants, and your unwavering faith in our team and country truly made a difference and inspired both the players and management (NFF) alike.

"As we reflect on the journey we undertook together, let us remember the moment of triumph, the lesson learned in defeat, and the bonds that were strengthened along the way. Your support is the cornerstone of our team's success and for that, I offer my deepest gratitude."

Prince Okumagba stressed, "I hope this message finds you well, I write to you today with a heart full of gratitude and admiration for the unwavering support you showed during our nation's cup journey in Cote D'ivoire. Your dedication and sacrifice did not go unnoticed, and I am deeply thankful for the effort the committee led by Mr. Nnadi Chigozie and each and everyone of you put in to cheer on our team (Super Eagles)".

"I am humbled by the remarkable generosity of Lotana C. Okoli (SAN), Hon. F Warri, Apostle Chibuzor Chinyere of Omega power Ministry (OPM), and a personal assistance extended to me by the executive vice chairman of AITEO Group, Mr. Benedict Peters".



# SWAN Thumbs Up Pillar of Sports For Redeeming Super Eagles' Pledge

*\*Congratulates Ex-Deputy President over club appointment*

By: JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON

The Sports Writers Association of Nigeria (SWAN) on Friday, commended Nigeria's Pillar of Sports, Chief Donatus Agu Ejidike, for redeeming his N1 million pledge to the Super Eagles.

Chief Ejidike had promised to give the country's senior men National team N1 million per goal at the final of the just concluded Africa Cup of Nations in Ivory Coast on Sunday.

In a statement, SWAN President, Mr. Isaiah Benjamin, through the Association's Secretary-General Amb. Ikenna Okonkwo said the steady support by the Pillar of Sports to the Super Eagles, other national teams and indeed the various sporting is worthy of emulation.

"Nigeria's Pillar of Sports who is also a Patron of supporters club has been doing tremendous in using his personal earnings to drive sports development in Nigeria.

"One will think that he might renege on his promise after the team couldn't win, but he went ahead to hand the money over to them. I mean, this is the way to go.

"His kind gesture over time is what our dear nation needs at this time and always. We therefore enjoin other well-to-do individuals and corporate organisations to emulate him by using Sports to create pathways for youth engagements, thereby reducing unemployment and insecurity," he said.

Meanwhile, SWAN has congratulated its former Deputy President, Alhaji Umar Sa'id, who was recently appointed as a member of the newly constituted management team of one of Nigeria's foremost clubs Wikki Tourist of Bauchi State.

The Association also congratulated Dauda Chiroma, the General Manager, Albarka Radio Bauchi, who is a staunch SWAN member for his new appointment in the club.

While sending his felicitation, the SWAN President, Mr. Benjamin enjoined them to professionally contribute their quota in the upliftment of the club.

He also prayed Allah to grant them the wisdom to function optimally in their positions.

## NPFL Match 20: Rangers Beat Akwa United 1-0

By: KELVIN OKPARA, Enugu

Rangers International FC of Enugu, yesterday, defeated visiting Akwa United of Uyo, 1-0 in the Match Day 20 of the abridged Nigeria Professional football league NPFL.

The Flying Antelopes opened scoring via Jersey No. 3, Kenneth Igbokwe few minutes into the second half as the game ended goalless in the first half with Rangers missing many scoring chances. With the three points, the Enugu club side now have 31 points in the NPFL log,

and are 7th position on the table.

Attempts by Akwa United to counsel the goal proved abortive as they lost a penalty.

Speaking with sports writers at the end of the 90 minutes encounter, Rangers Head coach, Ali Suleman said both teams were prepared for the game, saying that Akwa United is a strong team.

"Everybody was prepared for this 2nd stanza of the league. It was not an easy game, but I am happy that we won,"

**AFCON: Okumagba Commends Supporters Club For Successful Outing**

*\*Thanks Okoli SAN, Apostle Chinyere of OPM, AITEO's Benedict Peters*

**Story on Page 23**

## CCDRN, SPDC-JV Train 3,400 Vulnerable Persons On Lifesaving, Hold Exhibition

By; JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON

The Centre for Community Development and Research Network (CCDRN) funded by Shell Petroleum Development Company Limited (SPDC) and its partners-Nigerian National Petroleum Limited, TotalEnergies and Nigerian Agip Oil Company have organized an exhibition of products produced by the 3,400 vulnerable persons trained on lifesaving skills in Yobe State.

In his remarks before the inspection of the exhibition, the CCDRN Director Programmes, Abba Isiaku Adamu revealed a total number of 3,400 vulnerable persons drawn from Gujba and Jakusko local government areas were trained and given starter packs.

"The SPDC Joint Venture Livelihood projects is an exhibition from Gujba and Jakusko local government areas showcasing a wide range of incoming generating products and services including well-packaged groundnut oil, local

pasta, leather work, and tailoring materials among others".

"In addition to being trained and given starter packs, the beneficiaries underwent capacity-building training, mentorship and business development support and were linked to market outlets. This exhibition is organized to mark the end of an intervention support provided for the conflict affected areas" he said.

The Commissioner for Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management represented by the Director Humanitarian Affairs, Kaku Bizi commended the CCDRN and the SPDC-JV for impacting positively on the lives of the vulnerable persons in the two local government areas. He said the initiative has supported the government of Yobe state especially now that the state is at the recovery stage.

Also in their goodwill messages, the Emir of Gujba represented by Abba Mai-Muktar, the District Head of Gujba as well as the Director Rescue of the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) said the 3,400



beneficiaries of the training have received empowerment training that will support them recover from their lost means of

livelihood.

The aim of the exhibition is to showcase the products, gain patronage and establish business

linkages. It is also to enable the stakeholders to appreciate the investments of the SPDC-JV in Yobe state through the CCDRN.

## Deal With Fake News Merchants, CSO Urges NAHCON

By; JABIRU A. HASSAN, Kano

Independent Hajj Reporters (IHR), a faith based Civil Society Organization (CSO) that reports and monitors Hajj and Umrah activities, has called for the arrest and prosecution of all persons who manufacture, publish and circulate unverified and misleading information about recruitment of staff into the National Hajj Commission of Nigeria (NAHCON) as well as enlistment into Hajj 2024 National Medical Team.

In a statement yesterday, IHR recalled that NAHCON recently issued a statement to debunk a fake news item about recruitment of Nurses for the

2024 Hajj being promoted by fraudulent individuals.

IHR also recalled that before the 2023 Hajj, some disgruntled elements had created a website and shared the links to unsuspecting members of the public alleging that the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia was sponsoring thousands of people from Nigeria to Hajj free of charge.

"An online fact checker pesacheck, traced the internet protocol address link to a location in Oyo state in Nigeria.

"Also, while the national coordinator of this group was in Saudi Arabia for pre-Hajj preparations visits, a lot of people kept calling him to verify

the authenticity of Saudi Arabian recruitment of Hajj volunteers from Nigeria to assist in this year's Hajj. According to them, the information was broadcast in the Mosque urging those who are interested to apply through a certain foundation.

"Our findings revealed that a female founder of the so-called foundation went to convince the Imam of a Mosque in Kaduna that she was tasked with the job of recruiting Hajj volunteers seeking the assistance of the Imam to help broadcast the news which he obliged.

"After discovering that the lady had no such opportunity, the Imam quickly made a counter announcement withdrawing his

earlier statement regarding the recruitment of Hajj volunteers from Nigeria.

"Just yesterday, NAHCON was compelled to issue another disclaimer of a number being used by scammers to call people claiming to be calling from NAHCON," it said.

It added that releasing statements by NAHCON over fake news is becoming a recurring trend and as such, they urged the commission to have all those behind the ignoble messages arrested and prosecuted. This we believe will serve as a deterrent to others.

The hands of all Hajj administrators are already full

and they need not be drawn into refuting fake news all the time to the detriment of the more important tasks before them.

IHR also said it is worrying that this and many such incidences has diplomatic implications during Hajj because Nigeria, which has the fifth largest contingent, plays a vital role in Hajj operations in Saudi Arabia.

"While we commend the commission for quickly issuing statements denying the non-existence of recruitment of Nurses, they should begin to track and arrest all those who use Hajj as a cover to perpetuate fraudulent practices", IHR said.