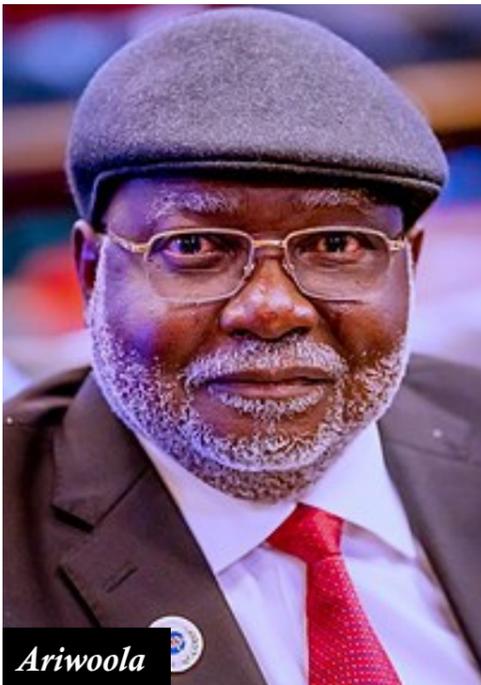




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News

N15bn VP residence shocking - Peter Obi

Presidential candidate of the Labour Party (LP) in the 2023 elections, Peter Obi says Nigeria needs leaders who are willing to make sacrifices for it to progress.

Obi in a thread on his X page on Monday said the proposed N27 trillion 2024 budget presented to the national assembly last week by President Bola Tinubu contains non-essential things while millions of Nigerians are suffering.

"Even as I am still stud-

ying the 2024 fiscal budget as presented to the National Assembly last week, I cannot wait as I am compelled to ask what is exactly wrong with us as a country," Obi wrote.

"I ask this question because it is hard for me to understand some of the recent happenings in our nation, in these critical times.

"The recent news about a budget provision of N15 billion for the construction of a new residence for the Vice President is both shocking

and disheartening, considering the many important challenges facing our nation.

"Just recently in the Supplementary Budget, the sum of N2.5 billion was included for the renovation of the Vice President's residence in Abuja, which means that he already has a residence. "Our health facilities have collapsed, and unemployment is skyrocketing.

"I am convinced that 99.9% of Nigerians can only dream of living in the cur-

rent residence of the Vice President. "This is the finance needed to develop the much-needed human capital. "The budget of N5 billion for student loans, which is yet to be disbursed is only a tiny percentage of the cost of the Vice President's new home.

"I am sure the major teaching hospitals in Nsukka, Lagos, Ibadan, and Zaria did not receive this much capital vote in the budget this year."

The former Anambra gov-

ernor said having compassionate leaders in power is critical in the journey of a new Nigeria.

"Our leaders must therefore stop the recklessness and insensitivity to the plight of the masses," he added.

"We need leaders who show compassion and are willing to sacrifice for common progress and development. Such compassionate and frugal leaders are critical in our journey to the New Nigeria.

Ndigbo's Tinubu 2027 support hinged on Nnamdi Kanu release

- Ohanaeze

The Ohanaeze Ndigbo Worldwide has stated that Ndigbo may vote for President Bola Tinubu in 2027 if he frees the detained leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), Mazi Nnamdi Kanu. Okechukwu Isiguzoro, the factional Secretary General of the Ohanaeze Ndigbo, said this in a statement on Monday.

According to him, the unconditional release of the IPOB leader would completely bury the widely-held view that the ruling All Progressives Congress, APC, hates the Igbo ethnic-nationality.

The ex-Ohanaeze youth leader admonished the government to initiate a genuine and all inclusive truce involving the detained IPOB leader and critical stakeholders in order to address the insecurity in the South East.

He said, "We emphasize that the effects of Nnamdi Kanu's release will gradually diminish the rising popularity of both Peter Obi and Simon Ekpa in the South East.

"Additionally, from a security perspective, Simon Ekpa's disruptive activities and terrorist tendencies in the South East will be consigned to the annals of history." Isiguzoro urged the President to consider Kanu's unconditional release.

"We assure that the Igbo ethnic-nationality stands behind him, and we trust that he will handle this matter with utmost care and consideration", he added.

... Mocks, condemns Tinubu for sponsoring 1,411 delegates to COP28 summit

Former Governor of Anambra State, Peter Obi has attacked President Bola Tinubu for sponsoring 1,411 delegates to the COP28 Climate Change.

Obi, in series of tweets on his X handle on Sunday, said in a twist of sad irony, "let me congratulate the giant of Africa, Nigeria, for matching the great China, with the same number of contingents at the ongoing COP28 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Nigeria's contingent to COP28 totaled 1411, the same number as the Chinese contingents."

Obi said while China's budget for 2024 is about \$4 trillion, about \$2,860 per head; Nigeria's budget is about \$33 billion, about \$165 per head. He stated that China has a high Human Development Index,

HDI, with a ranking of 79 out of 191 countries measured, and that Nigeria has a low HDI, with a ranking of 163 out of 191 countries measured.

"Nigeria has more people living in 'Multi-Dimensional' poverty than China, despite China having seven times our population. Most importantly, the vast majority of those in the Nigerian delegation to COP28 are non-relevant civil servants or relations, friends and hangers-on of high government officials.

"Most of them hardly understand or have anything to do with Climate Change.

This huge contingent is out at public expense at a time when most Nigerians can hardly afford food and basic needs as a result of economic hardship.

"I pray earnestly that a day will come soon enough when we can focus on competing with China on productivity and the miracle of migrating the highest number of its citizens out of poverty over a relatively short time.

"As we have kept emphasizing, we must stop waste as a tradition of our government and nation. We urgently need to cut the cost of governance and invest in production," he said. According to Obi, "We need to de-emphasize unnecessary ceremony and showmanship as a mode of government behaviour.

"We need to tie spending to necessity and national priority. A New Nigeria is possible. We only need to do the reasonable and the necessary."

Gov Otti promises support as Catholic Varsity takes off in Umuahia

Governor Alex Otti has commended the Catholic Church for establishing the first university in Umuahia, the state capital.

The institution, named Lux Mundi University, is located at the new Ndagbo City, IsiamaAfaraukwu/Ossah, Ibeku, in Umuahia North Council. Lux Mundi, is one of the private universities recently approved and granted license by the Federal Government through the National Universities Commission (NUC).

It is affiliated to Apollos University, Florida, United States of America. An elated Otti, who expressed delight at the vision of the university's

Founder and Pro-Chancellor, Prof. Gabriel O. C. Okenwa, an indigene of the host community, said the school would fill the gap created by the absence of a university in Umuahia.

He promised to support the university in any area of need.

The host community has been agog over the development for which the traditional ruler of Afaraukwu Ibeku, Eze Edwin Ibeabuchi, extolled the foresight of Prof. Okenwa for "bringing this monumental development stride to Umuahia City in general, and particularly, Afaraukwu/Ossah, Ibeku Community."

The University's maiden academic year began on November 28, 2023, with ongoing admission of students into three faculties, namely Law, Management Sciences, Arts and Social Sciences.

The university's pioneer Principal Officers include

Chancellor/Chairman, Board of Trustees (BoT), Archbishop Lucious Ugorji; Alternate Chairman, BoT, Associate Professor, Ahmed A. Audi; Founder/Pro Chancellor, Prof. Okenwa; Chairman of Governing Council, Prof. Augustine Uwakwe; Vice Chancellor, Prof. Paul Eidson and Acting Registrar, Blessing Ibebunjo.

Uwakwe disclosed that many prospective pioneer students are still seeking admission into the university, whose motto is 'Illuminating Humanity.'

He attributed the rush for admission into the university to its easily accessible location, affordable fees, offer of New HP laptop computers to students under special arrangement, scholarship offer to first 50 students, including the provision that under its foreign affiliation arrangement, students can conclude their degrees in the United States after three years.

Gov. Peter Mbah avows inclusiveness, transparency in budgetary process

In tune with the processes that accentuates transparency and inclusiveness in the budgetary process, the Enugu state government led by His Excellency, Rt. Hon. Barr. Peter Ndubuisi Mbah has on Saturday, the 2nd of December, 2023 through the Ministry of Budget and Planning held Citizens' Engagement on the 2024 Budget at Nike Lake Resort, Enugu.

Governor Mbah ably represented by the Hon. Commissioner for Budget and Planning, Barr. Chris-Roberts Ozongwu in an opening remark reiterated that his administration is open to transparent budget processes. In his words; "citizens' engagement as an important part of budget process is integral to better decision making, better planning, better budgeting and better accountability". He further stressed that the essence of the event is to get the voices of the citizens involved in governance.

Also, in a welcome address, the Hon. Commissioner for Budget and Planning, Barr. Chris-Roberts Ozongwu commended Governor Peter Ndubuisi Mbah for his unswerving efforts towards transparent leadership, fiscal transparency and improved public services delivery in the State. Hon. Ozongwu re-emphasized, that the meeting is to encourage participatory budget process in which a recognizable percentage of the inputs made by citizens during the event will be reflected in the 2024 budget in reality of the Governor's mantra, "business unusual".

He further noted that the height of the event would be the presentation of Citizens' Accountability Report (CAR) on the implementation of the 2022 Budget of Consolidation and Transition prepared from the 2022 Audited Financial Statements in collaboration with the Civil Society Organisations and the moment the citizens come up with their inputs for the 2024 budget.

At the course of presenting

the 2022 Citizens' Accountability Report (CAR) by the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Budget and Planning, Mrs. Clara Nwakaego Ezech and the Co-Chairman, Open Government Partnership representing Civil Society Organisation, Barr. Cromwell Chibuzor; it was pointed out that the Audited Financial Statement of the State which was produced by the Accountant General of the State is summarized in the 2022 CAR in a format that every Citizen of Enugu can easily comprehend.

Mrs Ezech noted that the State within the fiscal year had an aggregate expenditure of N130.4Billion equivalent of 69.9% performance rate while the revenue aggregate performance stood at 76.7%. In the sectoral recurrent expenditure, Education had 23.7% of the total allocation and a performance rate of 97.8%. However, they reiterated amongst others, the State government's decision to increase the total allocation of

Tinubu approves sale of Presidential Aircraft, calls for bidders

The Nigerian Air Force (NAF) has announced the sale of the Falcon 900B aircraft, which is a part of the presidential air fleet.

NAF has also called on interested persons to submit their bids for the purchase of the aircraft. Details about the sale was contained in a flyer shared on the X page of the NAF on Monday evening.

According to the flier, the aircraft was put up for sale following the approval of the Federal Government. The Federal Government of Nigeria has approved the sale of Falcon 900B aircraft owned by the Nigerian Air Force (NAF)," the flier read.

"In compliance with pro-

visions of the public procurement Act 2007, the NAF hereby invites all interested parties to submit bids for purchase of the aircraft. The bids can be submitted by email or physically.

"If submitted by email, the bids are to be password protected and sent to dproc(at)airforce.mil.ng while the password is to be sent separately to dproc2(at)airforce.mil.ng. "For physical submission, the quotations are to be enclosed in an envelope and sealed while the envelope is to bear the name and address of the interested company/entity as well as the description and reference to the request. "It should also bear the statement."

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News

Imo Assembly inaugurates Committee on Rural Devt, Chieftaincy Affairs, Autonomous Communities

The Imo State House of Assembly Standing Committee on Local Government Area, Rural Development, Chieftaincy and Autonomous Communities has set motion rolling for effective service delivery, following its official inauguration.

Recall that Speaker Chike Olemgbe on November 16, 2023 before adjournment officially announced the list of standing committees of the 10th Imo House of Assembly.

Fourteen days after, while other committees were yet to do the needful, the same cannot be said of the Local Government Area, Rural Development, Chieftaincy and Autonomous Communities committee.

The member representing

Ideato North State Constituency, Hon. Udeze Ernest Okechukwu (Okey is Okay) is the Chairman. The Majority Leader of the House and member for Owerri West, Kanayo Onyemaechi, is the Vice Chairman.

The Deputy Speaker who represents Nwangele State Constituency, Amara Iwuanyanwu and his Oru East Colleague who serves as the Chief Whip, Chigozie Nwaneri are Members of the Committee.

Mr. Austin Okuwuikie is the Clerk of the Committee. In his inauguration speech, Udeze Ernest Okechukwu described his emergence as the Chairman of the Committee as a privilege and another good opportunity to serve the Imo people.

While pledging his loyalty

to serve diligently in the discharge of his duties, he remarked that he would consolidate on the good antecedents set by his predecessor, the late Rt. Hon. Innocent Arthur Egwim. Udeze affirmed Egwim as a good predecessor who served well while he held sway as then Chairman of the same Committee in the 9th House.

“Okey is Okay” as fondly called reiterated that transparency will be the watchword, as he will always apply wisdom at all times.

“I, my Vice, and the honourable members of this committee will be diligent to duty, especially as this has to do with Communities and the people. We are here to oversee local governments, rural development, chieftaincy, traditional and auto-

nous communities’ affairs.

Let people feel free and come to us with their cases for adequate solutions,” said Udeze. Lending his voice, the Vice Chairman, Hon. Kanayo Onyemaechi said, “The 10th Assembly journey

has commenced.

This is a sensitive committee that requires wisdom, intelligence and dedication. We in this committee are equal to the task. We will work for the betterment of Ndi Imo and that is the reason we are

duly elected lawmakers.”

Chigozie Nwaneri didn’t differ from the assertions of his colleagues as he believes they have come to join hands with the executive arm of government in serving Ndi Imo.

Crisis rocks Abia Nursing School over allegations of fake WAEC result

Some students of nursing in Abia State, who were allegedly screened out from participating in the re-ordered Preliminary Test Session (PTS) examinations for allegedly presenting fake WAEC results, have claimed they were unjustifiably screened out by the organizers.

This is as the State’s Commissioner for Health, Dr Ngozi Okoronkwo has said that only those whose O’Level results were verified and confirmed to be authentic, were qualified to take part in the first day of the exam, which commenced on Monday.

The fresh examination, which was held at a popular CBT centre in Umuahia, was nearly disrupted when uniform-wearing nursing students tried to stop the exercise while protesting their exclusion from writing the test.

This time around, the complainants included some of

the 75 “successful” students whose results were cancelled, especially those from Amachara School of Nursing.

According to some of the students, they were not allowed to take part in the examinations by the organizers who claimed the WAEC results they presented were not verified to be authentic.

However, the students insisted that their results were authentic, while others said that the message informing them to come with their original WAEC results came a few hours before the re-sit examination.

Apart from these, some of the nursing students alleged that they submitted their O’Level results even before being offered preliminary admissions to study nursing.

But the Abia State Commissioner for Health, Dr Ngozi Okoronkwo in reaction, explained that some measures were put in place to ensure that the exercise was

conducted in a transparent manner.

According to the Commissioner, a verification process was installed to ensure that only those whose WAEC results were verified to be authentic were allowed to sit for the exercise.

She noted that principals of the schools were urged to ensure that their students came with their original WAEC results for screening, pointing out that those whose results were discovered to be fake were screened out. Okoronkwo added that a transparency mechanism was put in place where students’ results would be released soon after taking it, disclosing that such successful students would sign their results before leaving the centre to avoid a situation where claims of results manipulation would arise.

Meanwhile, the examinations would continue till Thursday, according to the Abia State ministry of health.



L-R Hon. Nnanna Igbokwe, Gov. Sanwolu of Lagos State, Rt. Hon. Femi Gbajabiamila, Chief of Staff to President, Barr. Wike, Minister FCT and Rt. Hon. Ben Kalu, Deputy Speaker House of Reps at a function in Abuja.

Imo PDP suspends chairman, Ugwu over misconduct, Chidi Dike takes over

The state Chairman of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in Imo state, Engr Charles Ugwu has been suspended.

His suspension which was made public on Tuesday, followed a motion moved by the PDP Chairman of Ohaji Egbema local government area and Chairman of all PDP Chairmen in the state, Hon Emeka Alihe, seconded by the PDP Chairman of Owerri Municipal, Hon Godspower Apollon and adopted by no fewer than 18 other Local Government Chairmen as well as members of the State

Executive Committee (SEC), on the 24th of October, 2023.

Ugwu was suspended over alleged gross misconduct and insubordination. The Okigwe Zonal Chairman of the party, Chidi Dike was appointed as Interim state Chairman of the party. Also in a letter tagged, “Majority Resolution of Members of the State Executive Committee of Peoples Democratic Party, Imo state Chapter at Its Meeting Held on 24/10/2023, Passing Vote of No Confidence/Suspending Engr Charles Ugwu from Office Immediately as the Chairman, Imo State Chap-

ter of the Peoples Democratic Party” signed by the state Secretary of the party, Hon Njaba Duruiheoma, Emeka Alihe, a Chieftain of the party called for the immediate suspension of Engr. Charles Ugwu from office.

He said the party chairman failed to summon meeting of the State Working Committee contrary to the provisions of S. 21 (3) of the Party Constitution.

Engr. Charles Ugwu, according to him, had no justifiable reason for failing to attend any of the thank you tours embarked upon by the Governorship candidate of the party, Senator Samuel Anyanwu, to the 27 L.G.A of Imo State including that of Owerri Municipal Council that was done at the State Secretariat of this party contrary to S. 58 (i) (e) of the Party Constitution not withstanding that he was duly notified of the tour. A party chieftain who spoke to our correspondent said, “his suspension would have come as at October 24th but was kept till after election to avoid people reading negative meaning into it.”

South East has highest percentage of hypertension cases, NHS reveals

The Nigerian Hypertension Society on Monday said the South-East geopolitical zone bears the highest burden of hypertension in the country. The President of the NHS, Prof Ayodele Omotoso, made this known in Abuja at the 23rd Annual General Meeting and scientific conference themed, “Tackling the burden of hypertension in Nigeria from primary to tertiary care,” and

sub-themed, “Telemedicine as a tool for hypertension control in sub-Saharan Africa.”

Omotoso, a Professor of Medicine at the University of Ilorin, Kwara State, and Consultant Cardiologist at the University of Ilorin Teaching Hospital, Ilorin, Kwara State, said the burden of hypertension in Nigeria is enormous and needs urgent attention.

Enugu govt gives 24 hrs ultimatum to contractors to repair damaged public infrastructure

Enugu State government has given contractors of construction companies, entities and individuals engaged in road construction, public and private installations of fibre optic cables and other similar projects 24 hours to replace and fix all damaged infrastructure and other public facilities caused by them and their agents’ activities in the state or risked being blacklisted by the government.

While threatening to commence the process of blacklisting and prosecuting erring companies and individuals willfully engaging in the acts of sabotage against government facilities, the government said it was dismayed at the level of the brazen impunity these contractors and companies had been frustrating the efforts of the government towards ensuring that the basic amenities provided for the people were enjoyed by them.

Addressing a stakeholder’s meeting involving individuals, contractors, companies and service providers digging and trenching in the

state, and representatives of Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) which have some of their facilities buried under the ground, Monday, at the Government House, Enugu, the Secretary to the State Government (SSG), Prof. Chidiebere Onyia, said all the parties carrying out trenching in the state have a duty of care of ensuring that existing facilities are protected and replaced where damages occur.

He lamented that water supply lines, gas lines, electricity installations, sewage lines, fibre optic cables, internet, mobile phone masts and telephones wires, roads, drainages, kerbs, pedestrian paths, dedicated lanes, emergency lanes, trees and flowers, green areas, buildings, and other accessories or other utilities incidental to critical infrastructure were being sabotaged and vandalized with impunity by contractors, companies and their workers.

He charged the MDAs responsible for supervisory role or oversight functions to ensure that they carry

out their duty without fear, stressing that the state was taking stringent steps that would deter people from destroying public utilities and other critical infrastructure.

“Contractor shall repair any damage to critical infrastructure within 24 hours of the occurrence of the damage, and shall guarantee that repair of damages by the contractor shall restore the damaged utility and critical infrastructure to the original state of the infrastructure as if damage did not occur.

“Contractor hereby indemnifies the state for any damage done or reasonably deemed to have been done to any utility and critical infrastructure during the work or a post-work impact of the work by the contractor.

“The contractor commits to pay daily penalty shall for any period in which the damage remains unrepaired after 24 hours of the damage. Where the state fixes the damage, the contractor shall pay any costs which the state issues for the repair work,” part of the indemnity clause jointly reached by the stakeholders read.

Editorial

Diphtheria infections: Looking at Anambra govt's approach as Pilot method in South East

The Anambra State Government has begun a two-day training for Disease Surveillance and Notification Officers, to prevent the spread of diphtheria and other communicable diseases to the state. The Commissioner for Health in the state, Afam Obidike, while declaring the training open on Tuesday in Awka, said the training was necessary based on the growing concerns over the current outbreak of diphtheria in some states. Mr Obidike, a medical doctor, said that no fewer than 11,000 suspected cases had been recorded in the country and the state needed to put precautionary measures in place. According to him, the surveillance officers were drawn from the 21 local government areas of the state. The commissioner said that the training was part of the government's steadfast response to the diphtheria outbreaks occurring in various states in the country. "The officers will be equipped with preventive skills and techniques on how to collect samples of any outbreak in their respective council areas and notify the relevant ministry or agency for prompt action. "This is necessary, especially at this harmattan period, where some respiratory tract infections could be high. "We adopted this measure when the state witnessed monkeypox, Lassa fever, yellow fever and measles. We used the measure to identify diseases and have it treated or quarantined," he said. The commissioner urged the officers to take the training seriously for the good of the residents. Earlier, the state's epidemiologist, Chima Emembolu, said the training was solely sponsored by the state government without any support from any health partners in Nigeria and beyond. "Governor Chukwuma Soludo released funds so that we can be proactive and put measures in place to prevent the spread of diphtheria to the state as well as respond promptly to any disease outbreak. "We appreciate the state government for the support," he said. He said the initiative will facilitate the adoption of solar power across all police barracks and colleges. "It will help to lighten up security with solar power to reduce security vulnerability," he noted, adding that the Police Go Green initiative is the latest milestone in Nigeria's green and sustainable journey.

Meanwhile, The Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) on Thursday said about 15,060 suspected cases of diphtheria infections have been recorded in the country as of 19 October.

Out of the suspected cases, 9,478 were confirmed from 137 local government areas (LGAs) across 20 states including the Federal Capital Territory. The Director General of NCDC, Ifedayo Adetifa, while speaking at a press briefing in Abuja, said majority of the confirmed cases, (71.5 per cent) were aged between one to 14 years, with infants accounting for less than one per cent of the cases. Mr Adetifa said data also shows that Kano, the epicentre of the infection has the highest number of cases at 7,747, followed by Yobe with 841 cases. Giving a further breakdown of the diphtheria cases, the NCDC boss said Bauchi State recorded 369 infections, followed by Katsina - 275, Borno - 164, Jigawa - 24, Kaduna - 18, Lagos- eight, Zamfara- seven, FCT- seven, Gombe- five, Sokoto- four, Osun- three, and Niger State with two cases. He said Cross River, Enugu, Imo, Nasarawa, Kebbi, Taraba recorded one case of diphtheria infection each. Speaking at the briefing, the Executive Director of the National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA), Faisal Shuaib, said a total of 1,692,762 children, between six months and four years of age, have been diligently administered the Pentavalent vaccine—a vital safeguard against the disease. Mr Shuaib said in addition, an impressive 3,166,419 children aged four to 14 years have received the Td vaccines, further strengthening the country from the disease among children and teenagers. "The phase two, round one of our outbreak response using diphtheria vaccines commenced on 23 September and has unfolded in

seven states, encompassing 56 LGAs that are profoundly impacted by the ongoing outbreak," he said.

He said the reach and impact of this concerted effort have been nothing short of remarkable. Mr Shuaib said Kano State has exemplified its commitment to the cause, ensuring the immunisation of 1,111,310 children with Td vaccines and 544,737 children with Pentavalent vaccines in the phase two. He said Katsina, another hotspot in this outbreak, has vaccinated 403,252 children with Td vaccines and 255,075 children with Pentavalent vaccines. "Similarly, Kaduna, Bauchi, Borno, Jigawa, and Yobe have not faltered in their efforts either, collectively securing the health and well-being of hundreds of thousands of children through dedicated vaccination campaigns," he said. Mr Adetifa, the NCDC boss, said in response to the outbreak, the agency has deployed National Rapid Response Teams (NRRTs) to affected states, offering on-site surveillance and response support. He, however, said security challenges have led to limited accessibility to some locations in the affected LGAs. "The laboratory network has been instrumental in conducting preliminary and confirmatory testing at both sub-national and national levels," he said. "Currently, there are 18 laboratories in the diphtheria laboratory network across 13 states, with ongoing optimisation efforts in Jigawa and Zamfara states." He said the NCDC has also provided training and technical support to laboratory personnel across states. He noted that the risk communication and community engagement have been prioritised in addressing the outbreak. "NCDC has developed and disseminated public health advisories on diphtheria, as well as social behavioural change materials in collaboration with partners," he said. "Regular media engagements, school engagements, and social listening on social media platforms are being utilised to raise awareness and address misinformation." In his remarks, WHO country representative, Walter Mulombo, appreciated responders and health workers who have been working to treat patients, conduct surveillance, perform laboratory tests, and administer vaccinations.

Represented by UNICEF's Chief of Health, Eduardo Celades, he highlighted the incredible achievements that have been made in a short period, including the vaccination of millions of children. "This success is attributed to the leadership of the NCDC, NPHCDA, and the Federal Ministry of Health, as well as the unwavering commitment of the frontline workers," he said. He emphasised the collective commitment of all stakeholders to bring an end to the outbreak. However, Diphtheria is a serious bacterial infection caused by the bacterium corynebacterium species that affects the nose, throat, and sometimes, the skin of an individual. According to NCDC, people most at risk of contracting diphtheria are children and adults who have not received any or a single dose of the pentavalent vaccine (a diphtheria toxoid-containing vaccine), people who live in a crowded environment, in areas with poor sanitation, and healthcare workers who are exposed to suspected or confirmed cases of diphtheria.

NCDC also said the disease spreads easily among people through direct contact with infected people, droplets from coughing or sneezing, and contact with contaminated clothing and objects. The symptoms of diphtheria include fever, runny nose, sore throat, cough, red eyes (conjunctivitis), and neck swelling. In severe cases, NCDC said that a thick grey or white patch appears on the tonsils and, or at the back of the throat associated with difficulty in breathing. We, therefore urge the federal Government and Anambra State people to take the approach very seriously to enable it yield reasonable result.

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Opinion

Who Will Tell The Chief Justice?

By Chidi Odinkalu

After 14 years, the High Court delivered judgement in 1997. By this time, Bendel State had ceased to exist. In its place, the military had on August 27, 1991 created two successors in Delta and Edo states and what used to be the High Court of Bendel State sitting in Warri (Division) had become the Warri Division of the High Court of Delta State. The Court of Appeal dismissed SPDC's appeal in 2000. The company then proceeded up to the Supreme Court which took 15 years to reach a judgement in 2015, 32 years after the case began. By this time, the boy who was two years old when the case began had become a man and a lawyer, even accompanying his dad to the proceedings at the Supreme Court. Eburn Sofunde, the Senior Advocate who related this story addressed the special session on behalf of the Body of Senior Advocates of Nigeria, BOSAN.

He also told the story of another case filed by Lagos State against the National Sports Lottery, NSL, which began on February 5, 2005. A little over 18 years later, on March 31, 2023, the Supreme Court decided the appeal on the jurisdictional objection of the NSL to the original proceedings and remitted the substantive case back to the High Court of Lagos State for trial. Naturally, Mr. Sofunde wondered aloud about the fate of ordinary litigants if a powerful state like Lagos has no sensible pathway to a timely exit from the courts. Mr. Sofunde is characteristically parsimonious with words and is not given to hyperbole or oratorical flourish. So, when he says – as he did in his address to the Supreme Court – that public confidence in the judicial system “is at an all-time low... to a point where it may no longer be redeemable”, you would think that those with responsibility to run the legal and judicial systems of the country would pay heed. He also told the Supreme Court, rather charitably, that its judgments were becoming mostly “perfunctory”. The Attorney-General of the Federation, Lateef Fagbemi, a prince and a Senior Advocate, chose to take the Fifth Amendment. Treating the occasion mostly as a social call, he congratulated the new SANs; told them how elevated and special they had suddenly become; warned them to avoid speaking to the media and wished everyone “good health in



Ariwoola

body, spirit, and soul”. If he had continued, he may even have found time to tell the new SANs that they have become a new species that have no need for urinals or toilets! We digress though because everyone waited to listen to the CJN. Born on August 22, 1954, Olukayode Ariwoola will retire from office when he turns 70 in August 2024. As he acknowledged in his address, this was his last opportunity to report as the leader of the judicial system. It was also opportunity to begin framing his legacy in the public imagination. He grappled valiantly with the former task but appeared to have missed the memo on the latter. In particular, his address needlessly concatenated contradictions, defensiveness, and avoidance. It read like an ode to an institution incapable of introspection or too immersed in impunity to understand the vice in arrogance.

The CJN claimed that the Nigerian judiciary had “fared well in the out-gone legal year” and is now “more deserving of public trust and confidence than ever before”. But he immediately followed this up with the promise that “we are poised to reposition it (the judiciary) for effective justice delivery”, which begs the question why anyone would want to reposition an institution that is faring so well as to be deserving of public trust and confidence. In a rallying cry to judges everywhere in Nigeria, the CJN invited them to “never be overwhelmed by the actions or loud voices of the mob or crowd”. The paragraph before this contained the telling admission that “the true touch-stone for measuring the success of a judicial institution is the degree of confidence reposed in it by the public”, even going as far as warning judges that they “are

definitely going to work more assiduously and tirelessly to make our country earn for itself the fullest respect and confidence of both the citizens and the international community”. The CJN, it seemed, could not quite make up his mind about the state or public standing of the institution he leads. Even worse, his use of the word “mob” in the address was a piece of inspired own-goal because it appeared to fit much better as a description of an organised crime ring, which is what a mention of the judiciary reminds many people in Nigeria of these days. Evidence in support of this perception lay in the numbers he reeled out. First, the CJN delivered a report on judicial vacancies, congratulating himself for appointing nine new Justices of Appeal in September and 23 new judges of the Federal High Court in October 2023. He failed to disclose that among the new appointments, one of the 23 new judges was his own son (appointed with the most scandalously scanty credentials), or that among the new Justices one was his nephew and another was the son-in-law of the President of the Court of Appeal. He also had “the cherry (sic) news”, that soon the Supreme Court will recruit 10 more Justices to bring it up to the full

complement of 22. If he brings to that process the kind of blinkers that ruled the filling of the vacancies in the Federal High Court and the Court of Appeal, then most people have a right to be worried. Departing from judicial vacancies, the CJN proceeded to report that from September 12, 2022 to July 11, 2023, his Supreme Court registered 1,271 motions and appeals out of which it “heard 388 political appeals, 215 criminal appeals and 464 civil appeals”. At a similar occasion only two years ago, Ariwoola's predecessor, Tanko Muhammad, reported that the court's portfolio of 269 appeals disposed of included 139 civil appeals, 102 criminal appeals, and 28 “political cases”. So, two years ago, “political cases” were 10.67% of the appeals heard by the Supreme Court. According to CJN Ariwoola's report, the same court in the past year “delivered a total number of 251 judgements, of which 125 were political appeals, 81 were civil appeals, and 45 were criminal appeals”. In just two years, the output of the court had fallen by 6.69% and political cases have risen from 10.67% to 50% (49.8% to be exact). Meanwhile, in the law faculties, professors still teach students that there is a “Political Questions Doctrine” which is a rule for denial rather than acceptance of cases. These numbers dramatise the extent to which the Supreme Court has become captured by politicians and explain the crisis of lack of exit from courts that Eburn Sofunde complained bitterly about. It is little wonder that the only people who can dispense any form of kindness towards the CJN and his “mob” of exponents in the jurisprudence of the Italian Job are exclusively politicians. The misfortune is that rather than see an opportunity, this CJN can only see enemies. Who will tell the Chief Justice?

These numbers dramatise the extent to which the Supreme Court has become captured by politicians and explain the crisis of lack of exit from courts that Eburn Sofunde complained bitterly about.

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News

Abia Guber: Emenike, APC seek redress at Supreme Court

The Abia State Governorship Candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in the 2023 poll, Ikechi Emenike, and the APC have expressed dissatisfaction with the Saturday verdict of the Court of Appeal, which upheld the election of Alex Otti of the Labour Party (LP).

Yesterday, Emenike and the Abia APC stated their intention to pursue justice by taking the case to the Supreme Court. In a statement, the Abia State APC Chairman, Kingsley Ononogbu, said, "The Party's Governorship Appeal: High Chief Ikechi Emenike vs INEC & others had become another victim of the Nigeria judicial abracadabra."

Ononogbu continued: "The court of appeal Lagos

division dismissed our Appeal against the unconstitutional declaration of Alex Otti as the governor of Abia State in the March 18 General Election."

He said APC and Ikechi's team of lawyers became apprehensive when 8 pm the night before the ruling, news started flying that judgment would be delivered the following day.

"When our Lead counsel, Tochukwu Maduka, SAN, contacted the deputy registrar, court of appeal Lagos, he apologized and sent a hearing notice of the day's sitting at about 9am.

"It is unfortunate that democracy and rule of law have been reduced to this pitiable level in our dear county. In this circumstance, we will

not even relent. "We urge our members to keep calm as we are prepared to take steps and approach the Apex court in the land for a final review of this obvious truncation of justice for curious reasons.

We are aware that the journey to freedom had never been an easy one. We urge everyone to continue to remember our leader, High Chief Ikechi Emenike, - the last man standing in our prayers."

A lawyer, Nnamdi Adiele, who said he was in the Lagos division of the Court of Appeal to witness the judgment, said: "Justice Habeeb Adewale Abiru abandoned the law, shunned justice and embarked on a voyage of political fallacies and personal barb."

He expressed worries about

"the fate of Nigeria if clear constitutional provisions are so regrettably treated." Ken Dike, another legal expert, questioned the application of qualification criteria in the removal of Governors of Plateau and Kano states and the Abia Central Senator, among others.

He highlighted the inconsistency, noting that in the case of Otti, party waiver appeared to be considered superior to both the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the Electoral Act. Dike expressed the view that these "strange pronouncements need to be tested at the Supreme Court."

Police raid IPOB camp in Aboh-Mbaise, kill ESN Commander

The Second in Command to Eastern Security Network, ESN Commander, Ebube Virus, has been killed in a fierce gunfight. The deceased suspect is on the Command's wanted list due to his nefarious activities in the Aboh-Mbaise axis.

The Commissioner of Police, Imo State Command, CP Aboki Danjuma said this in a statement issued by Police spokesman in the state, Henry Okoye, on Tuesday.

The CP said, "Following the confessions made by the suspected IPOB/ESN Terrorist allegedly involved in the killing of DPO Ahiazu Mbaise and other dastardly acts in the Mbaise axis, op-

eratives of the Command's Anti-Kidnapping squad led by CSP Oladimeji Odeyeyiwa on Monday 4th of December, 2023 stormed the criminal hideout of a deadly IPOB/ESN Terrorist Syndicate led by Ebube Virus and Ishaka, at Umuogu Amuzu in Aboh-Mbaise LGA of Imo State and dislodged the terrorists.

The statement reads, "In the process, a ferocious battle broke out between the terrorists and the combat-ready Police agents, neutralising the Second in Command to Ebube Virus, who is well-known on the Command's wanted list due to their nefarious actions in the Mbaise axis. Others who had been shot at had escaped.

From the neutralised terrorist, one AK-47 rifle with 19 rounds of live ammunition was found. "An operation is underway to find additional fugitive suspects and bring them to justice.

"While praising the brave officers for their unwavering efforts in the fight against all violent crimes in the State, Imo State Command CP Aboki Danjuma, the Commissioner of Police, affirms the Command's commitment to working with other.

CP Danjuma called on 'Ndi Imo' to support the Police and other sister security agencies with timely and actionable information that will assist in the crusade against Terrorism in the state.

He encouraged owners of hospitals and first-aid outlets to report any person seen with or treating gunshot injuries to the nearest Police Station.

FG releases 11 from Enugu Correctional Facilities

No fewer than eleven inmates of the Enugu Correctional Centre have been released under the federal government prison decongestion programme. The eleven inmates were drawn from the Enugu, Nsukka as well as Oji River and Ibite-Olo custodial centres.

The inmates were handed over to the Minister of Interior, Dr. Olubunmi Tunji-Ojo who was in Enugu on Saturday for their official release to their families and society.

The Ministry of Interior flagged off the release of 4,068 inmates sentenced to various terms of imprisonment with option of fine and compensation in Custodial Centres nationwide.

Speaking at the ceremony at the Enugu Maximum Correctional Centre, the minister said the gesture is part of measures to decongest Custodial Centres and make them humane for proper reformation and rehabilitation of offenders to take place.

He said as at November, 2023, there were about 80,804 inmates in 253 custodial facilities nationwide, which total installed capacity for the 253 Custodial Centres was less than 50,000 inmates. Dr. Tunji-Ojo acknowledged that the alarming figures show that Nigeria's custodi-

al facilities are over-crowded, necessitating the initiative targeted towards addressing the overcrowding conundrum bedeviling Custodial Centres and their reformatory function.

The minister said most of the benefitting inmates at the verge of their freedom are indigents who cannot afford to pay their fines, and are languishing in custody. He disclosed that philanthropic individuals, groups and corporate bodies, raised the sum of N585, 000,000 for their release as part of their corporate social responsibility. The minister advised the released inmates to stay off crime and criminality. He also charged their immediate families and the society not to stigmatise them.

Supreme Court dismisses Ihedioha's suit against Uzodinma

The Supreme Court, on Tuesday, dismissed a suit filed by Emeka Ihedioha of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in Imo State.

Ihedioha, the former governor of Imo State had approached the apex court seeking to be issued a certificate of return as the rightful Governor of Imo State.

Ihedioha claimed that the Imo State Governor, Hope Uzodinma wasn't qualified to run in the first place. Ihedioha and Uzodinma contested against each other in the governorship election held in 2019.

Uzodinma contested on the platform of the All Progressives Congress (APC), while Ihedioha was the candidate of the PDP. The PDP candidate was declared winner by the Independent National Electoral

Commission (INEC), the Supreme Court, however, declared Uzodinma as the authentic winner of the election.

Justice Tijjani Abubakar on Tuesday, dismissed Ihedioha's application for lacking in merit, describing it as unnecessary and vexatious and awarded the cost of N40 million against Mike Ozekhome for bringing the matter before the court.



A handout picture provided by the UAE Presidential Court shows President of the United Arab Emirates Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan (L) meeting with President of Nigeria Bola Ahmed Tinubu, on the sidelines of the COP28 climate talks in Dubai on December 3, 2023.

FG takes formal delivery of N336b 2nd Niger Bridge

The Second Niger Bridge has been officially handed over to the Federal Government. Contractor of the Second Niger Bridge, Julius Berger handed over the 1.6 kilometres long bridge estimated to cost N336bn to FG over the weekend.

The bridge links Anambra and Delta states. The project was launched on May 23, 2023, but, there were ancillary roads and other construction works that needed to be done after the inauguration.

In a short ceremony held at the toll area of the bridge over the weekend, Minister of Works Dave Umahi expressed approval of the project. Umahi said that the bridge is open to concession for any private company prepared to finish all associated roads, handle toll collection, and recover their investments.

"The roads are going to be completed when we have completed the two inter-

changes: one is taking us off from Asaba town to cut off the traffic, and the other one is going to be done by Reynolds Construction Company Ltd to avoid Onitsha town and take you straight to Obosi," he said.

For his part, the Managing Director, of Julius Berger Nigeria Plc, Lars Richter, said the handover was just a technical one. "The Main Second Niger Bridge has been completed. The toll stations are

also ready for use," Lars said.

The idea of constructing the Second Niger Bridge emerged in 1978/79, with Shehu Shagari, then a candidate for the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), championing the proposal. Other governments have since then tried to start, but didn't go ahead.

The bridge opened for local traffic on December 15, 2022. To accommodate the ongoing construction of connecting roads, temporary routes have been established, ensuring the bridge's accessibility during the Christmas holidays. Currently, there are no toll fees for crossing the bridge.

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News

Supreme Court imposes N40m fine on Mike Ozekhome over 'frivolous' Ihedioha guber suit

The Supreme Court on Tuesday in Abuja imposed a fine of N40M on human rights activists and Constitutional lawyer, Chief Mike Ozekhome for filing a frivolous, vexatious and irritating motion before the Court in respect of Imo Governorship tussle decided in 2019.

Ozekhome, a Senior Advocate of Nigeria SAN, called to the Nigerian Bar over 42 years ago and was fined a huge amount for bringing a motion before the

Apex Court seeking to revalidate the suit that removed Emeka Ihedioha as Governor of Imo State in 2019.

The Senior lawyer was ordered in a ruling by Justice Tijani Abubakar to personally pay the N40M fine to four respondents he dragged before the Court.

Those to be paid are the Action People's Party, APP, Uche Nnadi, Uche Nwosu and the Independent National Electoral Commission INEC.

In the motion considered

to be frivolous by the Court, Ozekhome had asked the Court for a consequential order to compel INEC to issue a fresh Certificate of Return to Ihedioha to enable him spend a four-year tenure as Imo Governor.

His grouse was that the incumbent governor, Senator Hope Uzodinma unlawfully spent the four years that Ihedioha ought to spend. Among others, Ozekhome in the motion claimed that the All Progressives Congress APC had no candidate in

the 2019 Imo Governorship election, hence, Uzodinma ought not to have been made governor on the platform of APC.

However, the Apex Court dismissed the motion on the ground that it has no jurisdiction to entertain such a motion. Justice Abubakar held in the ruling that the request was strange, frivolous, baseless, unwarranted, vexatious and irritating. He further held that the motion was a calculated design to demonize the Supreme Court.

Missing kids: Abia schools issue advisory to parents, guardians

Following the disappearance of four pupils on their way to school in Umuahia, Abia State, some schools in Umuahia and Aba have sent extra advisory messages to parents whose children are studying in their institutions.

According to findings some schools in Umuahia and Aba have made it mandatory for parents/guardians to physically bring their children to schools, directly hand them over to school authorities, as well as sign their signatures attesting that their kids were brought to school.

They are also expected to do the same before taking the children even if their private residence is a stone's throw from the schools. Apart from these, the schools have advised parents who have no

cars, to ensure that they rode in the same hired vehicles to their children's schools and not to place maximum trust on public transporters.

A private school at Amuzukwu and Low Cost Housing Estate in Umuahia North LGA and another one at Umungasi, Aba, have sent messages to parents, warning them against every form of carelessness.

They cautioned that the school would not be held accountable in the case of any identified security lapses caused by parents. It could be recalled that the four missing children of the same parents, Mmesomachi, Chinweotito, Testimony and Godswill were taken to an unknown destination by an unidentified tricycle rider engaged by their mother, Mrs Oluchi Chimobi Agha.



Nigeria's delegate number for the COP28 has continued to generate debate.

Anambra First Lady celebrates with 2 mothers who delivered quadruplet, triplet

...As beneficiaries from free antenatal care laud Soludo's govt

From Uchenna Ezeadigwe, Awka

Anambra governor's wife, Mrs Nonye Soludo says the ongoing free antenatal care and delivery services in the state will continue to attend to the most primary health needs of women and save low income families of serious financial burdens.

The governor's wife stated this when she visited two women who recently delivered quadruplet and triplet respectively at Referral Health Centre, Awgbu, and Enugwuabo Health Centre, Ufuma, both in Orumba North Local Government Area.

Two days ago, Mrs Amuche Anoliefo, from Agulu in Anaocha Local Government Area, gave birth to a set of four babies at Referral Health Centre, Awgbu, same day that Mrs Ujunwa Edeh who hails from Ehamufu, Enugu State, but resides in Ufuma with her family, gave birth to triplet at the community health centre.

On reception of the news,

Mrs Soludo booked a surprise visit to celebrate with the two mothers and present her own gift to the babies.

Both women are beneficiaries of the recently-introduced free antenatal care and delivery services in Anambra State.

Speaking at each of the health facilities, the governor's wife said that the current administration will continue to unveil smart health policies that have direct positive impact on the poor, and praised health caregivers who attended to the women during the successful childbirth.

She expressed joy that both women have been saved from bearing heavy costs amounting to millions of Naira, because they benefitted from the free antenatal care and delivery initiative, and urged pregnant women living in the state to take advantage of the programme.

The governor's wife also asked the nursing mothers to ensure that they feed the babies natural food supplements, look after their health and to ensure that they get all the necessary vaccines that

have been introduced by the government.

On his part, the Chief of Staff to the Governor, Mr Enerst Ezeajughi, who was in governor's wife entourage, commended her for making the visit and for bringing joy to the families of both women.

He said that government will consider to upgrade the Referral Health Centre, Awgbu, to a general hospital, as it already boasts enough manpower, bed space and basic equipment.

For Mrs Anoliefo and Mrs Edeh, who could not conceal their emotions, said the visits meant so much for both families, as the governor's wife has brought another light of joy to complete their celebrations.

The Commissioner for Health, Dr Afam Obidike, that of Women Affairs and Social Welfare, Mrs Ify Obinabo, the Executive Secretary of Anambra State Primary Health Care Development Agency, Pharmacist Chisom Uchem, among others were also in the governor's wife entourage.

Gov Otti says more structures earmarked for demolition over road expansion

Governor Alex Otti has disclosed that more structures will be demolished in the wake of the on-going expansion of the 3.5 kilometres Okpara Square in Umuahia to Ossah on the Enugu-Umuahia-Aba-Port Harcourt Expressway, to pave the way for the said road expansion.

He disclosed this while inspecting the ongoing expansion works, saying that he was informed that more houses/structures were again marked for demolition, but assured that, like the first demolished 130, the owners of the new marked ones must be paid compensation before their structures would be demolished.

Happy with the contractor's indication that one side of the road would be ready for commuters' use during the Christmas season, he

noted that with the dry season setting in, the ongoing work would progress on 24 hours daily basis towards the entire work delivery within the 18 months scheduled time frame.

He reiterated that his motivation to expand the road to six lanes from the initial four lanes was informed by the traffic congestions on it, especially during festive seasons, as those familiar with this road know that commuters experienced difficulties during festive seasons.

Meanwhile, Governor Otti of the Labour Party (LP) has commended the verdict of the Court of Appeal justices, who, at the weekend, in Lagos, upheld his election, which the Election Tribunal had affirmed on October 6, 2023.

Otti, in his reaction, on the separate appeals filed by his

rivals, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and All Progressives Congress (APC), as well as their governorship candidates, Okey Ahaiwe and Ikechi Emenike, respectively, who challenged his election and its affirmation by the tribunal, described the Court of Appeal justices as deeply thoughtful and fearless in upholding the facts of law in the face of desperate and undemocratic onslaughts geared towards ensuring usurpation of a mandate that is both popular and divine.

He said: "The thoughtfulness, fearlessness and unblemished erudition of the learned justices as captured in the judgment spoke eloquently of their determination to deepen our democracy, which holds the majority wishes of the people as its foundation."

Stand Up For Women Society 'll intensify humanitarian services - Chairperson

By Ikenna Orioha

A social group, Stand Up For Women Society (SWS), Imo State Branch, says it will intensify humanitarian services of liberating vulnerable women in the society thereby give them happiness, hope for better living and sense of belonging and womanhood.

This assurance was given by the Chairperson of SWS, Imo State Branch, Lib. Meg Odinaka during the Thanksgiving Service/Get-Together Party held at Bruno Hotel, Owerri, on Sunday.

Also, Thanksgiving Service which preceded the party was held at Chapel Winners Church Owerri.

The Chairperson noted that since 2021, SWS has been helping women and

children in the society in many ways, enumerating that "in 2021 we visited some Motherless Homes, FMC Owerri where we paid hospital bills for some less-privileged children, held free medical treatment, gave out sanitary pads to students of Akwakuma Girls and other secondary schools in Imo State".

She added that SWS had partnered with an NGO, Michael Asawalam Foundation in Mbano to carry out humanitarian activities. Within these few years God has helped us to touch lives positively. 2024 is going to be a great year for us and we will continue to touch lives meaningfully. Its is on record that we went to national conference in Lagos State and Abuja in 2022 and 2023 re-

spectively". Stating that the Church Outing and the Get-Together Party were held to thank God for leading them successfully as well as to merry and regig for the coming year, Odinaka urged members to remain committed so that SWS would always soar higher.

Expressing joy over their success, God's abundance of grace and strength, Vice Chairperson and Secretary of SWS, Lib. Dr. Mrs. Caro Eze Okeke and Lib. Chimekwa Iwu, hinted that the United Nations had recognized SWS Imo State Chapter given to effectiveness, efficiency and commitment of its leadership, saying its leaders are among international leaders who are going to the United Nations Conference in 2024.

News

Kaduna civilian bombardment: 'We were after terrorists,' Army apologises as Tinubu expresses sadness

Authorities of the Nigerian Army have taken responsibility for the Sunday night bomb attack, which led to the death of dozens of civilians in Kaduna State. The Army said the villagers were inadvertently affected during its routine mission against terrorists in the axis.

Muslims were observing a Maulud event at Kurmin Biri village in Igabi Local Government Area of Kaduna State when a plane hovered above the celebrants and dropped a bomb.

The Overseeing Commissioner of the Ministry of Internal Security and Home Affairs, Kaduna State, Samuel Aruwan, made the clarification. He spoke after

the state's Security Council meeting on Monday (today).

Aruwan said that during the meeting the state government received briefings on the Sunday night attack.

The heads of security agencies, Islamic clerics, and traditional rulers were at the meeting presided over by the deputy governor, Hadiza Sabuwa Balarabe. At the meeting, the General Officer Commanding 1 Division Nigerian Army, Major General Valentine Okoro explained the circumstances that led to the unfortunate attack.

Aruwan said: "The Kaduna state government has received briefings on Sunday night's attack, which left several citizens dead and oth-

ers injured. "The General Officer Commanding One Division Nigerian Army, Major General VU Okoro, explained that the Nigerian Army was on a routine mission against terrorists but inadvertently affected members of the community.

"The deputy governor, at the end of the closed-door meeting, conveyed the condolences of the government and people of Kaduna State to the families that lost their loved ones and prayed for the repose of the victims' souls. "As of the time of this update, search-and-rescue efforts are still ongoing, as dozens of injured victims have been evacuated to Barau Dikko Teaching Hospital by the government."

Meanwhile, President

Bola Tinubu has expressed sadness over the killing of villagers in an accident bombing of Tundun Biri village in Igabi Local Government Area of Kaduna State. About 30 people lost their lives in the incident, which occurred on Sunday night during the celebration of Maulud in the village.

Reacting in a statement on Tuesday by his spokesman, Ajuri Ngelale, President Tinubu described the incident as very unfortunate, disturbing, and painful. The president directed a thorough and full-fledged investiga-

tion into the incident and called for calm while the authorities look diligently into the sad incident.

President Tinubu also sympathized with the families of the victims, the people and the government of Kaduna State over the death of the villagers in the bombing mishap. The statement reads: "President Bola Tinubu sympathizes with the families of the victims, the people and the government of Kaduna State over the bombing mishap in a village at Tundun Biri in Igabi Local Government Area of

the state.

"President Tinubu describes the incident as very unfortunate, disturbing, and painful, expressing indignation and grief over the tragic loss of Nigerian lives. "The President directs a thorough and full-fledged investigation into the incident and calls for calm while the authorities look diligently into the mishap.

"The President also directs swift and comprehensive medical attention for surviving victims while praying for the repose of the souls of the deceased."

ASUU regrets mass resignation of lecturers in public varsities

The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) says most departments and units in Nigeria's public universities are understaffed as a result of teachers leaving for greener pastures.

Prof. Ayo Akinwale, Chairman of the University of Ibadan Chapter of ASUU, stated on Tuesday in Ibadan, Oyo State, that Nigeria's public universities are in pitiful condition, with stress and dissatisfaction obvious on the faces of poorly paid lecturers.

He said, "Except President Bola Tinubu arrests the situation by reviewing the conditions of service in

terms and salaries, allowances, and infrastructure, many good hands will continue to resign and leave the country. Unfortunately, the same government that is not funding education has a National Assembly proposing to establish 32 more universities."

The ASUU chairman said bad and delayed pay, unpaid allowances, bad infrastructure, lack of respect for the academic community, and a seemingly vanishing hope are some of the factors responsible for lecturers resigning in recent months.

According to Akinwale, building more institutions will not fix the problem.

"The union has received reports on how colleagues resign on a monthly basis because of the way lecturers are treated and poorly remunerated in Nigeria.

"Universities around the world are poaching more quality hands, and if not halted by the government, through intentional reviewing of upward conditions of service, it will be difficult to retain the best hands.

"Vice Chancellors cannot single-handedly employ to replace staff as urgent as it is needed again. They have to

contact Abuja for approval, which may take six months to a year, if not more, before they get approval. By this time, the best candidate has gone to a more serious country that respects quality.

"Sadly, people from higher up there from the Ministry of Education to legislators themselves want to dictate who the universities should employ," the Oyo State ASUU chairman added.

The North-West zonal spokesman of the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), Halima Suleiman, told Channels Television that 66 other victims were also injured in Sunday's bombing.

She said the fatality figure was gotten from the local authorities after the burial of the victims on Monday.

Initial Confusion

Confusion had trailed Sunday's accidental air strike with the Nigerian Air Force (NAF) saying it was not responsible for the bombing.

Hours later, the Kaduna State Government said the Army had taken responsibility for the accidental mistake.

Nigeria's armed forces often rely on air strikes in their battle against so-called bandit militias in the North-West and North-East of the country, where jihadists have been fighting for more than a decade.



The Chief of Army Staff (COAS), Lieutenant General Taoreed Lagbaja (seated left), visits Kaduna State on December 5, 2023 after the deadline bombing that killed over 85 people.

EBSU students ready for protest over Police killing of 23-year-old

Students of Ebonyi State University are set to protest against brutality in Abakaliki, the state capital. Anger brewed against the Police in the State following the death of Ayogu Evans who allegedly died following a hot chase by police officers attached to Ebonyi State Police Command.

In a short statement made available to 9News Nigeria by the EBSU SUG President, Tobias Oshim Nkwegu said "Next 72hrs may get so tensed if no substantial action has been taken on the 3 identified police officers that chased EBSU 23-yr-old student to death".

It was gathered there are plans for heavy protest in the state if the officers involved in the case are not identified. However, the Ebonyi State Police Command on Monday narrated the circumstances surrounding the death of a 300-level student of Ebonyi State University, Ayogu Evans who died while being chased by police officers on

Saturday, December 2.

According to the spokesperson for the state police command, SP Onome Onowakpoyeya, in a press statement on Monday, the EBSU student sped off while being stopped for a "stop and search" at a checkpoint around Nkaliki Road in Abakaliki, the state capital.

The student of the Department of Sociology was allegedly chased by the policemen when he had the accident and was rushed to the hospital by passersby but was confirmed dead a few hours later.

A source who spoke on condition of anonymity said, "The people who brought him to the hospital confirmed that he was being chased by the police when he suddenly had an accident and that the police officers that were chasing him ran away after he had the accident.

"They later came back to move his wrecked car to their station at Liberation Estate." But the police spokesman said the police officers who

were after him did not run away and that the victim had been rushed to the hospital by good citizens before their men got there and they only towed his vehicle to the division's station.

The statement read, "On December 2, 2023, around 12noon, police operatives on stop-and-search around Nkaliki Road sighted a vehicle that was approaching their checkpoint but suddenly reversed and sped off.

"The action of the driver (Evans) raised the suspicion of the police operatives which made them pursue the vehicle. The driver did not stop till he was involved in an accident along Oriuzor Road. "Traffic officers were alerted and with the effort of good citizens, the victim, Ayogu Evans, a student of Ebonyi State University was conveyed to the hospital where he unfortunately gave up the ghost.

"The Commissioner of Police, Ebonyi State Command, CP Augustina Ogbodo, immediately addressed the stu-

dent leaders and assured them that their concerns would be thoroughly investigated and anyone found culpable will be sanctioned accordingly.

"The commissioner of police is using this medium to encourage the citizens to support the police while they carry out their mandate and to report any unprofessional conduct of police officers on duty to the police authority while assuring the public that disciplinary actions will be taken against any erring police officer."

EFCC arraigns couple for alleged land fraud in Enugu

The Enugu Zonal Command of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) has arraigned a couple, Simon Udeani and his wife Dorcas Udeani before Justice M.G. Umar of the Federal High Court sitting in Enugu.

EFCC in a statement said the couple was arraigned on three-count charges bordering on obtaining the sum of N2,750,000.00 by false pretence in an alleged land fraud. One of the charges against the Udeanis state that between 10th July 2019 to 19th De-

cember 2019 in Enugu, Enugu State, induced one Onugu Angela Chinyere to deliver to them N2,750,000.00 under the pretence to sell to her a plot of land.

The land is situated behind Ebenezer Anglican Church, Ala-Uguaji along Enugu/Port Harcourt Road. The offence is contrary to Section 1 (1)(a) of the Advance Fee Fraud and Other Fraud Related Offences Act, 2006 and punishable under section 1 (3) of the same act.

The couple pleaded not

guilty to the charges, following which prosecuting counsel, Nurudeen Ingawa prayed the court for a trial date, while the defence counsel, E.C. Nwauba Esq made an application for their bail.

Justice Umar granted them bail in the sum of N5 million with one surety in like sum. The surety must be a civil servant not below grade level 10 and residing within the court's jurisdiction. The case was adjourned till February 6, 2024.

News

Kaduna bombing: Embarrassment for Army, Nigeria – Peter Obi

Presidential candidate of the Labour Party, Peter Obi has described the bombing of Tudun Biri Villagers in the Igabi Local Government Area of Kaduna State by the Nigerian Army as regrettable.

Obi made this assertion in a statement via his official X handle on Tuesday, saying the incident is an embarrassment for the Nigerian Army and the country.

Recall that not less than 80

Muslims lost their lives in the incident, which occurred on Sunday night during the celebration of Maulud Nabiyy in the village.

Obi said any incident that leads to harm or the loss of lives of the innocent people they are meant to protect should be avoided.

The former Governor of Anambra State, who said the bombing mishap is highly regrettable, asked the military to exercise utmost caution and professionalism to avoid

this kind of embarrassment to both the military and the country.

Obi also called on the security agencies to work with reliable human intelligence reports on the ground before any offensive attack to avoid innocent casualties, as has been recorded in Kaduna.

He also commiserated with families that lost their loved ones and prayed to God Almighty to forgive their sins and grant them eternal rest.

He stated, “I read with sadness, the devastating reports of the accidental bombing of Tudun Biri Village in the Igabi Local Government Area of Kaduna State, by a Nigerian Army craft that mistook the villagers for terrorists.

“The lethal incident left death tolls reported to have risen to 80, with several others injured. While our military continues to fight impressively against insecurity in many parts of the

country, they must exercise utmost caution and professionalism to avoid this kind of embarrassment to both the military and the country.

“Any incident that leads to harm or the loss of lives of the innocent people they are meant to protect should be avoided.

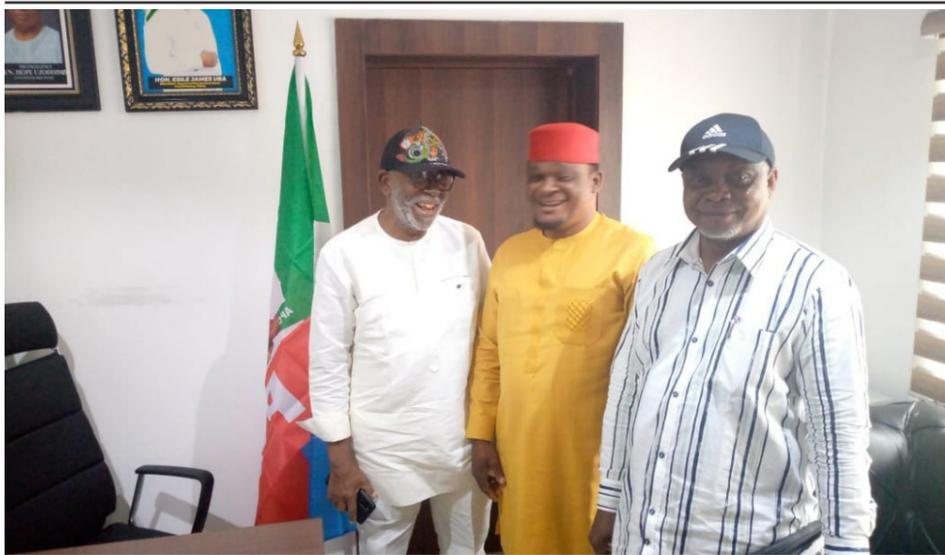
“Even though the mishap is one too many, the security agencies should work with reliable human intelligence report on the ground before any offensive attack to avoid

innocent casualties, as has been reported in this case.

“Fatal mistakes like this leave indelible trauma on the families who have lost their loved ones to this ugly and unfortunate mishap. I sincerely commiserate with families that lost their loved ones.

“And to the dead, I pray God Almighty to forgive their sins and grant them eternal rest, and quick healing to the injured. We pray that such a mistake leading to a sorrowful outcome, as this, never happens again in our country.

“It is regrettable that the problem of insecurity in our nation has persisted for so long that we are now paying such unintended human costs as collateral damage.”



The Imo State House Of Assembly Committee On Tourism, Culture and Creative Arts was on Monday, inaugurated by its Chairman and Member Representing Onuimo State Constituency with Hon Chief James Uba Esile and Director General Of Ahajioku, Ray Emeana and Special Adviser on Arts and Culture to the Governor of Imo State, Centre Hon Chief Paddy Obinna.

Army regrets ‘Kaduna bombing’, apologises

The army chief, who visited the site of the mishap that has thrown the nation into a sorrowful mood, apologised on behalf of the Nigerian Army to the community, the government, and the people of Kaduna State.

Lagbaja, who visited the victims two days after the accidental strike in the Igabi area of the North-West state, promised to guard against such an occurrence in the conduct of military operations.

“My assessment of that unfortunate incident of Sunday, December 3, 2023, is that it is grave, regrettable. We will do everything possible to prevent such an occurrence from happening again in the conduct of our operations going forward,” he said about one of the country’s deadliest military bombing accidents.

The army chief was accompanied by principal staff officers from the army headquarters and the General Officer Commanding 1 Division and also met with the Dangaladima Zazau, the District Head of Rigasa, Architect Aminu Idris, other leaders, and members of the community.

Eighty-five were killed in an air strike by the Nigerian

Army at Tudun Biri village in the Igabi Local Government Area of Kaduna State, in one of the country’s deadliest military bombing accidents.

The North-West zonal spokesman of the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), Halima Suleiman, told Channels Television that 66 other victims were also injured in Sunday’s bombing.

She said the fatality figure was gotten from the local authorities after the burial of the victims on Monday.

Initial Confusion

Confusion had trailed Sunday’s accidental air strike with the Nigerian Air Force (NAF) saying it was not responsible for the bombing.

Hours later, the Kaduna State Government said the Army had taken responsibility for the accidental mistake.

Nigeria’s armed forces often rely on air strikes in their battle against so-called bandit militias in the North-West and North-East of the country, where jihadists have been fighting for more than a decade.

However, such air strikes have not been without controversies and accidental bombings and alleged miscalculations, with innocent

Nigerians, including soldiers as casualties.

Earlier in 2023, NAF took responsibility over a fatal airstrike on Kwatiri, a Nasarawa village. At least 39 persons were killed and six others injured in the airstrike that occurred on 24 January.

In 2021, about 20 soldiers on ground were allegedly slain in Mainok, Borno State, when a NAF fighter jet responding to attacks on a military camp by Boko Haram insurgents bombed the military camp based on a wrong coordinate.

‘Tinubu Orders Probe’

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu on Tuesday ordered an investigation after the army acknowledged one of its drones accidentally struck

Egamba highlights economic role of Imo’s tourism sector

Barrister Jerry Egamba, Imo State’s Commissioner for Tourism, emphasized the pivotal role of the hospitality and tourism industry in enhancing the state’s internally generated revenue (IGR).

This was contained in a press release signed by the Public relations officer of the ministry, Mrs V.C Awaeze. Encouraging hotels and tourist centers across the state to

Criticism over Nigeria’s COP28 over-bloated trip to Dubai Climate Conference

Nigerians have criticised two agencies of the federal government, whose heads chose Dubai, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), to announce a partnership meant to be executed back home.

The agencies – the Rural Electrification Agency (REA) and the National Agency for Science & Engineering Infrastructure (NASeni) – signed a joint Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), in Dubai on the sidelines of the ongoing

Tudun Biri village as residents were celebrating a Muslim festival.

“President Tinubu describes the incident as very unfortunate, disturbing, and painful, expressing indignation and grief over the tragic loss of Nigerian lives,” the presidential spokesman, Ajuri Ngelale said in a statement.

Governor Uba Sani of Kaduna State also ordered a full investigation into Sunday’s incident, reassuring the citizens that their security and protection will be prioritised in the sustained fight against terrorists, bandits, and other criminal elements.

While directing the immediate evacuation of the injured to the Barau Dikko Teaching Hospital for emergency medical attention, the governor disclosed that The Kaduna State Government will be responsible for their treatment and related logistics.

adopt global best practices in guest management, Commissioner Egamba addressed Protea Hotels as a Special Guest during this year’s Christmas tree lighting ceremony at the hotel premises.

He lauded the hotel’s initiative to bring guests and clients together during the Christmas season, urging other hotels in the state to follow suit and embrace similar gestures.

28th Conference of the Parties (COP28), a United Nations-organised gathering on climate change.

The celebratory announcement of the partnership seemingly to justify their participation in the conference and the government-funded trip to Dubai, angered many Nigerians who believe it was a waste of scarce public resources.

This is even as Nigerians have condemned the country’s large number of delegates funded by the government to the conference, in the face of economic hardships millions of Nigerians are grappling with back home.

Of the 1,411 participants from Nigeria, the government said 422 attended at the expense of public funds.

On Sunday, the REA and NASeni signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on collaboration and the sharing of knowledge in Dubai.

Both agencies are Abuja-based and are meant to execute the project back home in Nigeria.

While the REA is saddled with the responsibility of powering rural Nigerian communities, NASeni has the mandate of coordinating the proliferation of technologies developed in the country.

“This Memorandum of Understanding signifies not only a partnership but a pact to empower lives through the transformative power of clean and accessible energy,” the Managing Director of the REA, Ahmad Salihijo, was quoted to have said about the MoU in a post published on the Agency’s X handle.

“At the REA, we are inspired by the prospect of leveraging the strengths of both organisations. Together, we will navigate the intricate landscape of research and development, driving innovation that will redefine the energy landscape of our nation.”

The REA X handle also listed the objectives of the

MoU to include collaboration in research and development of projects, setting of standards and enforcing quality in electrifying underserved communities in Nigeria.

Other objectives of the MoU as posted on X is: “To share knowledge, data, and information related to rural electrification; To promote the use of renewable energy sources, such as solar, wind, and biomass, in rural electrification projects, contributing to sustainability and environmental goals.

“Aid the development and maintenance of infrastructure necessary for rural electrification, including power distribution networks and access to energy services; To collaborate on the development of policies, regulations, and guidelines that support the expansion of rural electrification efforts.

“To establish mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the progress and impact of rural electrification projects, ensuring accountability and transparency.”

‘Police Go Green’

The Inspector-General of Police (IGP), Olukayode Egbetokun, an official also considered to have unnecessarily swollen the ranks of the Nigerian delegation to the conference, launched a Nigerian Police initiative to be implemented in Nigeria in Dubai.

Mr Egbetokun, who played no consequential roles at the event, said the NPF would unveil the Nigeria Police Green Initiatives (NPGI) as an effort to drive low-emission engagements and boost effective policing in Nigeria.

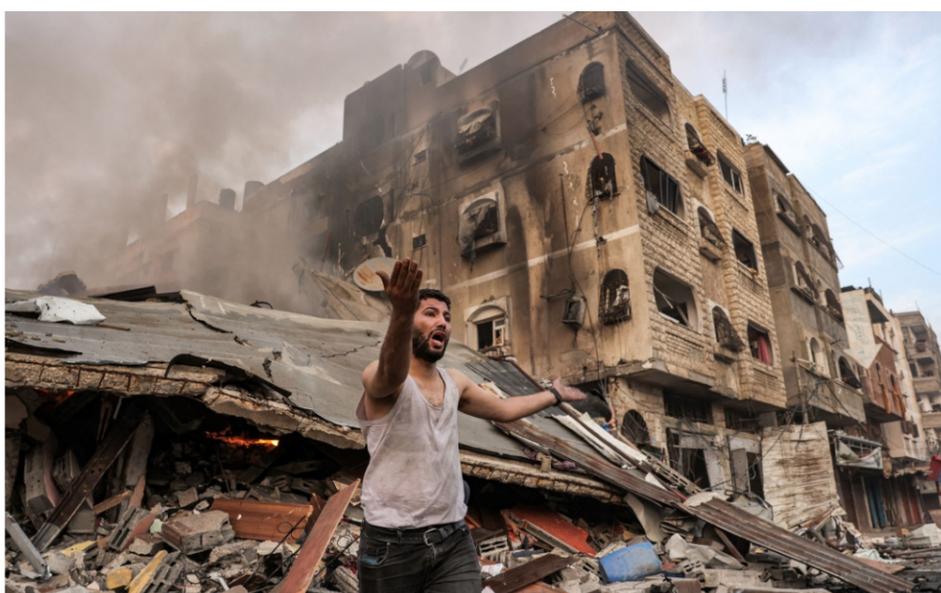
He said the Nigerian police emission reduction programme is a sustainable development programme aimed at deploying green initiative solutions to support Nigeria’s transition to a low carbon emission programme and also boost the Force’s operational efficiency and capacity to fight crime and maintain law and order in Nigeria.

Foreign

Hama Soldiers Deserting As Israel Intensifies Gaza Bombardment

There have been reports of disarray among Hamas' members and soldiers, as several soldiers have deserted their posts and are mingling with civilians in order to escape the violence occurring in Gaza. It was revealed that the current Gaza war is the deadliest Israeli-Arab conflict in many years. Bostic said that the Israeli government, in a bid to evacuate the citizens of Gaza from Khan Younis, had dropped leaflets in Arabic and put out interactive notes online dividing Gaza into 2400 zones, showing the places where battles are ongoing, and the places that are safe to live in. However, he said, "The problem is the telecoms providers, they've been disrupted and shut off, so people can't even see things online. They're going into complete confusion and chaos." They don't know where to go, they don't know how to survive. Already, 600,000 have been told to head for the south to Rafah. The problem is, Rafah is already overcrowded, and people are living in the streets, making shelters if they can or finding tents if they can. "To add to that chaos, there's even chaos amongst Hamas fighters and members themselves. There are reports that you're now seeing desertions. Israeli media saying that some Hamas fighters are actually throwing down their weapons and mingling with civilians to avoid any fighting at all. "You also have the fact that Hamas, they pay the salaries of civil servants in Gaza. They pay the salaries of the police. No one has been paid for two months. There have been reports also of crowds storming Hamas warehouses where food is being kept because there is simply no food at all. "And of course, the hospitals that you mentioned, 25 out of 36 hospitals are now shut down and closed, and 52 out of 70 primary health facilities are also closed, and now there's a blood shortage because so many injured people are coming into hospital. It's a chaotic scene that's only going to get worse." He then

reflected on the ongoing strikes in Khan Younis as he said, "This phase has already seen some of the most intense bombardments by the Israelis since the war started. By bombardments I'm talking about aerial strikes, motor shelling, tanks firing shells as well. Satellite imagery now showing that Khan Younis, the second biggest city in Gaza Strip, is now basically almost encircled, surrounded by heavy armoured Israeli vehicles." Bostic described the ongoing war as "the deadliest Arab- Israeli conflict since Israel's invasion into Lebanon in 1982." He said, "Unlike past conflicts in which Israel was just exchanging gunfire and shelling Hamas, this time, they want to uproot, they want to remove Hamas entirely. They want to basically disable them, their infrastructure, and that means going after their tunnel infrastructure." He also said that there are reports from the US media that Israel, as an option, has begun to install pumping stations in Gaza to begin flooding Hamas' network of tunnels, as they believe that is where the Hamas leadership has fled to and is now hiding in, as well as the hostages they have with them. Meanwhile, Israel carried out deadly bombardments in Gaza on Sunday as international calls mounted for greater protection of civilians and the renewal of an expired truce with Palestinian militant group Hamas. The Israeli army said it had conducted more than 400 strikes in Gaza since a ceasefire collapsed on Friday, with the Hamas government saying at least 240 people had been killed. Hamas and Palestinian group Islamic Jihad announced "rocket barrages" against multiple Israeli cities and towns including Tel Aviv, and Israel said that two of its soldiers had died in combat, the first since the end of the truce. At least seven people were killed in an Israeli bombing early Sunday near Gaza's southern border with Egypt, the Hamas-run government said. Israeli



strikes also hit the Nuseirat refugee camp in central Gaza late Saturday, killing at least 13 people, according to the official Palestinian news agency Wafa. US Vice President Kamala Harris on Saturday sharply rebuked the rising civilian toll in Israel's eight-week war, sparked by an unprecedented attack on October 7. "Too many innocent Palestinians have been killed," she told reporters at UN climate talks in Dubai. "Frankly, the scale of civilian suffering and the images and videos coming from Gaza are devastating." An estimated 1.7 million people in Gaza — more than two-thirds of the population — have been displaced by war, according to the United Nations. "I cannot find words strong enough to express our concern over what we're witnessing," the head of the World Health Organization, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, said on Sunday on X, formerly Twitter. Fadel Naim, chief doctor at the Al-Ahli Arab hospital in Gaza City, said his morgue had received 30 bodies on Saturday, including seven children. "The planes bombed our houses: three bombs, three houses destroyed," Nemr al-Bel, 43, told AFP, adding he had counted 10 dead in his family and "13 more still under the rubble". Gazans are short of food, water and other essentials, and many homes have been destroyed. UN agencies have declared a humanitarian catastrophe, although some aid trucks did arrive Saturday. The Palestine Red Crescent

Society said Israel had told NGOs not to bring aid convoys across the Rafah border crossing from Egypt after the truce expired. But the charity said on Saturday its Egyptian colleagues had managed to send over a number of trucks. Israel withdraws negotiators Hamas fighters broke through Gaza's militarised border into Israel on October 7, killed about 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and took around 240 Israelis and foreigners' hostage, according to Israeli authorities. Israel vowed to eliminate Hamas in response and unleashed an air and ground campaign that has killed more than 15,000 people, also mostly civilians, the Hamas authorities who run Gaza say. A week-long truce, brokered with the help of Qatar and backed by Egypt and the United States, led to the release of 80 Israeli hostages in exchange for 240 Palestinian prisoners. But that truce collapsed with both sides blaming each other for violating its conditions. Israel said that Hamas had tried to fire a rocket before the ceasefire ended, and that it had failed to produce a list of further hostages for war will last 10 years".

release. Israeli negotiators left Doha on Saturday after reaching a dead end in talks aimed at securing a fresh pause in hostilities. The Israeli army said 137 hostages were still being held in Gaza. Israel's Defence Minister Yoav Gallant told reporters on Saturday that fresh military action was needed to "create the conditions that push (Hamas) to pay a heavy price, and that is in the release of hostages". Israeli hostages released from Gaza spoke publicly on Saturday for the first time, urging their government to secure the release of the remaining captives. "The moral obligation of this government is to bring them home immediately, without hesitation," said Yocheved Lifschitz, 85, who was released by Hamas in October, before the truce deal. French President Emmanuel Macron appealed for "stepped-up efforts to reach a lasting ceasefire" to free all hostages, allow in more aid and to assure Israel of its security. He took issue with Israel's stated war aims, warning that if the "total destruction of Hamas" in Gaza was the goal, "the further hostages for war will last 10 years".

"Total victory' But Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the war would continue "until we achieve all its aims" including eliminating the Islamist movement. "Our soldiers prepared during the days of truce for total victory against Hamas," he said in Tel Aviv on Saturday, at his first press conference since fighting resumed. "There is no way to win except by continuing the ground campaign," Netanyahu told reporters, underscoring that this would be done while "observing international law". Israel's air, naval and ground forces have attacked more than 400 targets in Gaza since the ceasefire ended, the army said on Saturday. The figure is roughly in line with the daily average number of strikes prior to the pause, according to military figures released previously. Warplanes hit "more than 50 targets in an extensive attack in the Khan Yunis area" of southern Gaza, according to the military. Separately, members of an Israeli armoured brigade "eliminated terrorist squads and directed fire against terrorist targets in the north of the Gaza Strip", the military said. In the occupied West Bank, the Israeli army said troops shot dead a Palestinian at a checkpoint near the city of Nablus after he "drew a knife and started to advance towards them." Syria said Israel carried out air strikes near Damascus on Saturday. Iran's Revolutionary Guard accused Israel of killing two of its members in Syria who it said had been on an "advisory mission".

Gazans are short of food, water and other essentials, and many homes have been destroyed. UN agencies have declared a humanitarian catastrophe, although some aid trucks did arrive Saturday. The Palestine Red Crescent Society said Israel had told NGOs not to bring aid convoys across the Rafah border crossing from Egypt after the truce expired.



NPFL fines Gombe United N7m for match disruption

The Nigeria Premier Football League, NPFL, on Monday fined Gombe United Football Club over disorderly conduct by their fans during a match against Kano Pillars on Sunday.

The fans allegedly threw stones inside the Pantami Township Stadium while the game was in progress.

According to a press statement obtained on Tuesday, the management of Gombe United Football Club is to pay N7 million in addition to a one-match stadium ban for the club's fans.

The statement also faulted the club's management for failing to provide the necessary security for the visiting players.

The statement partly read, "In the aftermath of fans' unruly conduct in another Match Day 11 fixture, Gombe United were fined a total of N7 million and a one-match stadium ban to fans for breaches ranging from disruption of the match by fans throwing objects onto the field of play, to disruption of the live broadcast of the match and failure to provide adequate and effective security.



Gombe United FC.

...As NNL fines Sokoto, Ijebu United for assault on match officials

The board of Nigeria National League (NNL) has fined Sokoto United and Ijebu United for violating the rules of the league.

The two clubs committed the offence in their matchday three fixtures.

Sokoto United were handed a fine of N1 million for the offence and a further N50,000 to replace the damaged windscreen of the Kebbi United bus and the hospital bill to treat the injured Kebbi player, Eli John.

Their fans at half time intimidated and attacked match officials with missiles while they were retiring back to the dressing room and same repeated itself on their way out to resume the second half, this led to delay in commencement of the second half.

The same attack continued at the end of the match, which ended

2-1 in favour of the home team, Kebbi United.

In addition, Sokoto United chief coach, Muhammed Dan Asabe, and his goalkeeper trainer, Shehu Rilwan, were handed a two-month ban by the NNL for their roles in the attack of the match officials.

Sokoto United have been given till 15th December to respond to the fine.

Similarly, Ijebu United are to pay the sum of N500,000 for the attack their supporters meted on match officials on their matchday three encounter with Tradesafe Football Club of Lagos.

Supporters of Ijebu United were alleged to have descended on match officials after the away team, Tradesafe equalized in the game that ended 1-1.

Ijebu United are to pay the fine before their next home game.

Katsina United vs Enyimba matchday 12 tie postponed

The Nigeria Premier Football League have postponed the matchday 12 fixture between Katsina United and Enyimba, reports revealed to Newsmen.

The game was earlier scheduled for the Mohammed Dikko Stadium on Wednesday.

A new date is yet to be announced by the NPFL.

According to reports, the post-

ponement was due to logistical reasons.

Katsina United suffered a 1-0 defeat in their last match against Sporting Lagos on Sunday.

Enyimba defeated Sunshine Stars 1-0 the same day.

Both teams will intensify their preparation for the matchday 14 fixture against Shooting Stars and Abia Warriors, respectively.



Katsina United FC and Enyimba FC

Bruno Fernandes, Havertz, Sterling - 27 players facing suspension

Up to 27 players are close to being suspended for one Premier League.

The affected players have accumulated four yellow cards already.

A fifth booking will automatically trigger a one-match ban.

Already, Manchester City travelled to Aston Villa without Rodri and Jack Grealish, who picked up their fifth yellow cards during the 3-3 draw with Tottenham on Sunday.

Those who collected five yellow cards in the first half of the season will miss one match.

It is now 14 fixtures in and the likes of Kai Havertz and Bruno Fernandes will be desperate to avoid another costly booking.

Here are all the players who have been shown four yellow cards:

- Kai Havertz (Arsenal)
- Matty Cash (Aston Villa)
- Lucas Digne (Aston Villa)
- Douglas Luiz (Aston Villa)
- Kristoffer Ajer (Brentford)

- Lewis Dunk (Brighton)
- Enzo Fernandez (Chelsea)
- Raheem Sterling (Chelsea)
- Jordan Ayew (Crystal Palace)
- Jarrad Branthwaite (Everton)
- Abdoulaye Doucoure (Everton)
- Ashley Young (Everton)
- Antonee Robinson (Fulham)
- Issa Kabore (Luton)
- Tom Lockyer (Luton)
- Marvelous Nakamba (Luton)
- Bruno Fernandes (Manchester United)
- Sean Longstaff (Newcastle)
- Kieran Trippier (Newcastle)
- Orel Mangala (Nottingham Forest)
- Ibrahim Sangare (Nottingham Forest)
- Anel Ahmedhodzic (Sheffield United)
- Oliver Norwood (Sheffield United)
- Jack Robinson (Sheffield United)
- Destiny Udogie (Tottenham)
- Rayan Ait-Nouri (Wolves)
- Hwang Hee-chan (Wolves)

Why I threw bottle at Chelsea Coach, Pochettino - Cole Palmer

Chelsea midfielder, Cole Palmer has apologised to manager Mauricio Pochettino after accidentally throwing a bottle at him.

The incident occurred last Saturday after Chelsea drew 2-2 with



Palmer

Arsenal at Stamford Bridge.

Palmer, who joined the Blues in a £42.5 million deal from Manchester City this summer, opened the scoring from the spot.

However, after Mykhailo Mudryk made it 2-0, the Gunners fought back to earn a point.

After Arsenal's 84th-minute equaliser, Palmer chucked a bottle towards the dugout and it hit Pochettino.

"When they scored their second goal I was getting a drink," Palmer told Chelsea's website.

"I went to throw the bottle away, as you do, but didn't look. I just saw it loop dead slow and hit the gaffer.

"I said sorry to him and apologised properly after the game. Hopefully he won't drop me for that!"

Leverkusen won't stop Boniface, Tella from playing at AFCON 2023 - Coach Rolfes

Bayer Leverkusen Managing Director, Simon Rolfes has revealed that the duo of Victor Boniface and Nathan Tella will be released for the 2023 Africa Cup of Nations.

Boniface and Tella are expected to be included in Nigeria's squad for the competition.

Leverkusen's Chief Executive Officer, Fernando Carro earlier complained about the timing of the competition and claimed the club will take legal action to prevent the two players from taking part in the competition.

Aside from Boniface and Tella, Die Werkself will also be without Odilon Kossounou (Ivory Coast), Edmond Tapsoba (Burkina Faso) and Amine Adli (Morocco) during the competition.

Rolfes said they will not stop the players from attending the tournament. "If they are called up, they will go," Rolfes said to Kicker about the five Bayer Leverkusen players in line to represent their respective countries at the AFCON.

The 2023 AFCON will run from January 13 to February 11, 2024.



Boniface

Awoniyi nominated for Nottingham Forest Fans' Footballer of the Year award

Taiwo Awoniyi is in the running for the Nottingham Forest Fans' Footballer of the Year 2023 award.

The Nigeria international will battle Orel Mangala, Danilo and Morgan Gibbs-White for the award.

Awoniyi was Nottingham Forest's top scorer last season.

The 26-year-old scored 10 goals in 25 league appearances for the Tricky Trees in the 2022/23 season.

The striker has netted four times and registered two assists in 10 league outings for Steve Cooper's side this season.

Awoniyi is currently sidelined with a groin injury.



Awoniyi



Guest Writer

Nigeria's delegation at COP 28 in Dubai

By Reuben Abati

The biggest story in Nigeria at the moment is the size of Nigeria's delegation to the 28th Conference of Parties (COP) of the United Nations Summit on Climate Change, otherwise known as COP 28. In simple terms, the objective of the Conference of Parties is to secure multilateral, bilateral agreements on the consensus of a panel of international, intergovernmental, climate change scientists (IPCC) that for our world to be safe, global temperatures must be kept at a level not above 1.5C, as adopted in the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement, beyond which the whole world will be at risk. Before this year's conference, it was disclosed in a UN Report that the world was indeed endangered and that the threshold could go beyond 2 degrees C. By September, the world had exceeded the projected limit, far above pre-industrial levels.

This was meant to put pressure on world leaders to pay more attention to the threats of carbon emission, climate change, and their impacts on human communities, that is challenges-induced within the global ecosystem by the rise in sea levels, hurricanes, floods and environmental disasters, occasioned by man's abuse and neglect of the environment: that is, a man-made, man-conditioned environmental crisis. Climate adaptation, carbon markets, and climate financing are issues that have been atop the global agenda in the last three and more years. UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, said the "emissions gap is more like an emissions canyon."

From COP 26 in Glasgow, Scotland, to COP 27 in Sharm el-Sheikh in Egypt, the Africa Climate Week organised by the African Development Bank Group in Nairobi, Kenya, in September (Africa's 11th Conference on the subject), and now COP 28 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, the goal has been to keep global warming to a limit of 1.5C or 2 C. – the second threshold in the Paris Agreement. High income countries account for the bulk of greenhouse gas emissions. At COP 26, commitments and pledges were made across the public and private sectors. At COP 27, in Egypt last year, many key arrangements remained unresolved, especially the demand by the developing countries for a loss and damage fund to compensate low-income nations. The main achievement of this year's event would be the resolve on Day One to agree on a loss and damage deal for greenhouse gas emissions. Payments are to be made into the fund on a voluntary basis. The World Bank will host the fund for four years on an interim basis. A number of countries have already made pledges: Germany (\$100 million), UAE (\$100 million), United States (\$17.5 million) and Japan (\$10 million). It is still a far cry from what is required, but it is a historic, hard-fought achievement.

For good reason, Nigeria is a participant at COP 28. We showed up in 2021 at COP 26, where during the presentation of National Statements, President Muhammadu Buhari pledged Nigeria's commitment to a net-zero emission policy. Buhari was not in Egypt for COP 27, the country was represented by Mohammed Abdullahi, who was then minister of Environment. This year at COP 28, Nigeria's new President, Bola Ahmed Tinubu is fully on ground in Dubai for the World Climate Action Summit scheduled for a total of 13 days –



President Tinubu

30 November to 12 December. President Tinubu has been very active, participating in high level sessions where he has shared the platform with world leaders including the COP 28 President, Sultan Ahmed Al-Jaber, former US Vice President and climate change activist, John Kerry, and the Chinese Envoy on Climate Change. President Tinubu has also met on the sidelines with Chancellor Olaf Scholz, with whom he discussed Nigeria's energy needs and the need to deepen collaboration with Germany; Prime Minister Mark Rutte of the Netherlands; President William Ruto of Kenya; President of Namibia, Hage Geingob; and climate activist and philanthropist, Michael Bloomberg. He has made statements about Nigeria's commitment to end gas flaring, reduce the carbon footprint and commit not just to an energy mix, but an eco-friendly future driven by sustainable, alternative energy, to turn Nigeria into an investment friendly environment for carbon market investments. He has also been using every opportunity to ask for collaboration with other nations. At the African Green Industrialisation session on Saturday, President Tinubu further made a strong case for Nigeria and Africa.

It is most unfortunate, however, that Nigeria's participation, which should have turned out as one of President Tinubu's major outings on the international scene, from the perspectives of economic diplomacy and sovereignty affirmation, has now been marred, irretrievably by reports of Nigeria's large delegation at the conference – the largest from Africa, and the fourth largest globally after the host country, UAE, Brazil and China – which is just attending a 13-day event. There has been some quibbling and tittle-tattle over the exact size of the delegation. I am familiar with that. In our time, when the naira exchanged for less than N150 to the dollar, and Nigeria was a high performing economy in Africa, with an annual GDP growth of over 6 per cent, SaharaReporters constantly complained about the size of the President's delegation to conferences.

If the number was anywhere near 30, SaharaReporters would raise an alarm, and if I called to complain about a deliberate attempt to de-market the country and the Presidency, the publisher, Omoyele Sowore, would tell me that he was an Ijaw man who had no reason to de-market his own brother, and that in any case he had a copy of the delegation list. I put it all down to sabotage

from within. But this time the situation is slightly different. The information out there in the public domain about President Tinubu's delegation to Dubai was extracted by analysts from the COP 28 website, and from reports by Statisense, a leading AI data company, and instructively from the State House list. Whereas the details and figures may differ just slightly, what is clear is that Nigeria has a total delegation of 1,411 persons in Dubai for COP 28. One newspaper reported that the main delegation travelled to Dubai in three plane loads – chartered flights, and the worst part of it is that the Nigerian government did not give the contract for the air freight to any domestic airline.

The total cost of the air ticket for the 590 delegates on the Federal Government's account is estimated at N880 million. To be added upon this is the vast expenditure on hotel accommodation and estacodes. In a Statisense report, estacode per night for a Minister is \$900, Special Adviser – \$800, Director General of MDAs – \$900, House of Representatives member – \$900... and so on. The only category that I did not see is the estacode for mistresses, family members and confidantes who, according to the opposition parties, notably the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and the Labour Party (LP), are all over Dubai as delegates. Ovieteme George, the Arise News correspondent reporting from Dubai, has claimed that he has not seen most of the delegates at key events that he has covered so far; not even at the Nigerian Pavilion: at most, the President and a few persons are the active ones at the events. Our investigative journalists would do well to check the shopping malls of Dubai, or cozy hotel rooms where far more pressing and important climate change discussions may be taking place among Nigerians!

Debo Ologunagba, speaking for the PDP, has complained about an "over-bloated delegation" brimming with "cronies, political minions and mistresses at huge expense to the nation." Peter Obi says Nigeria's capacity to compete with China should be in the area of productivity, rather than the waste of resources on delegates to conferences, junkets, as well as unnecessary ceremony and showmanship as a mode of government behaviour – at a time more Nigerians are living in multi-dimensional poverty. Waziri Atiku Abubakar, the PDP presidential candidate, says Tinubu is in Dubai for an "owambe" party, an all-comers jamboree, that is ridiculous and indicative of a lack

of governance awareness and responsibility. The only voice of protest that I have not heard is that of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) and the Trade Union Congress (TUC), who have been championing the call for accountability in the management of state resources. Someone has since whispered to me that they too may have their representatives in Dubai as part of the COP 28 party!

The tone of the response of the Federal Government is to dismiss the protests as opposition gimmickry. I doubt if this is politics. Temitope Ajayi, spokesperson to the President, was the first to offer a defence along the line that most of the delegates in Dubai are from the private sector and civil society organisations, who paid their way to the conference to promote their respective causes, and that in any case, it is standard practice for all delegates to be registered against their country of origin, in addition to Nigeria being the most populous country in Africa. Ajayi was responding to reports that the Nigeria Council on Climate Change has 54 persons in Dubai, 53 from the Ministry of Environment, 36 from the National Assembly, 138 from the Presidency, and so forth, making a total of 590 on the government list. Yesterday, the Minister of Information, Mohammed Idris fouled up the waters further through a press statement, in which he argued funnily that the Federal Government-sponsored delegation "is made up of a total of 422 persons." He even tried to revise the breakdown in an even funnier manner. Would anyone ask the Minister, what exactly is the difference between 422 and 590? Can he tell Nigerians the difference between Okeke and Okereke? Sometimes, it is better for our leaders to keep quiet than to open their mouths and embarrass government. Minister Idris obviously does not get the point. He even mixed up the numbers in trying to "set the records straight".

COP 28's official published list says more than 97,000 participants are attending COP 28 in person. In order to justify his spin, the Minister cuts the number to "more than 70,000"! Very bad optics. African leaders have often been criticised for rushing to any International Conference to mark the attendance register, whereas they should be insisting that some of these conferences should be held in Africa. This year, Morocco has sent a delegation of 823 persons to Dubai; Kenya, 765; Tanzania, 763, Ghana, 618! Nigeria has a low GDP compared to other countries, with its currency being over N1,000 to \$1, inflation at 27.33 per cent, while planning to borrow almost 100 per cent to fund its 27.5 trillion budget for 2024. Nigeria has now been said to have the same number of delegates with China in Dubai, but while China is the second largest economy in the world, Nigeria runs a bankrupt economy. It is so bad that Nigeria now imports traditional African batik, popularly known as adire and cassava flakes, garri, that our grandmothers used to produce, from China! We even import toothpicks, and yet we have 1,411 persons attending a conference in Dubai, spending to help build the UAE economy. The Tinubu administration tells Nigerians to tighten their belts and make necessary sacrifices for the country to regain and restore hope.

t Hakainde Hichilema, upon assumption of office, refused to collect salaries for eight months, stating that he was more interested in serving the people.