

STILL IN CAPTIVITY

11 SCHOOLGIRLS OF FGC, BIRNIN YAURI

595
DAYS

1 STUDENT OF BETHEL BAPTIST HIGH SCHOOL, KUJAMA

567
DAYS

Nasarawa: How I lost 9 children to air raid after paying N6m – Fulani leader

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N1.8trn used vehicles imported into Nigeria from US in 6 years

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Infrastructure devt in Nigeria fantastic, Buhari says in Kano

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PoS operators hike charges amid naira notes scarcity

- Agents charge N1,000 for N10,000 transaction
- DSS intercepts currency racketeers
- Gunmen attack PoS operators, injure 3 in Bauchi
- Why e-payment may not address naira scarcity – Experts

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■ People queue up at ATM machine to withdraw the new naira notes in Abuja yesterday

Photo: Onyekachukwu Obi

ISWAP 'distributes' old naira notes to passengers in Borno

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FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The trouble with putting armor on is that, while it protects you from pain, it also protects you from pleasure

- Celeste Holm



AFRICAN SAYINGS

“No matter how full the river, it still wants to grow”

(African Proverbs)

Source: BBC collection of listeners' proverbs

WEATHER

Compiled by JAMIL H. SALIM

ABUJA	KADUNA	KANO	MAIDUGURI	Jos	SOKOTO	IBADAN	ENUGU	P/HARCOURT	LAGOS
PARTIALLY CLOUD	PARTIALLY CLOUD	PARTIALLY CLOUD	PARTIALLY CLOUD	PARTIALLY CLOUD	PARTIALLY CLOUD	PARTIALLY CLOUD	PARTIALLY CLOUD	PARTIALLY CLOUD	PARTIALLY CLOUD
36 21	36 16	34 13	36 14	31 14	37 17	37 23	38 22	31 18	33 25
MAX MIN	MAX MIN	MAX MIN	MAX MIN	MAX MIN	MAX MIN	MAX MIN	MAX MIN	MAX MIN	MAX MIN

(Temperature in centigrade)

PRAYERS TIMES

RAJAB 9, 1444 AH

PRAYERS	ABUJA	ENUGU	KADUNA	KANO	KATSINA	LAGOS	MAIDUGURI	P/HARCOURT	SOKOTO
FAJR	5:40	5:39	5:41	5:38	5:42	5:58	5:20	5:43	5:51
DHUHR	12:47	12:51	12:48	12:43	12:50	1:03	12:27	12:50	1:00
ASR	4:03	4:07	4:04	3:59	4:06	4:19	3:43	4:06	4:16
MAGHRIB	6:33	6:34	6:33	6:28	6:31	6:52	6:10	6:37	6:43
ISHA	7:38	7:39	7:38	7:33	7:36	7:57	7:15	7:42	7:48

SOURCE: Society for the propagation of Islam, Kaduna



PHOTO OF THE DAY

■ A woman taxi driver at Nyanya, Abuja yesterday

Photo: Ikechukwu Ibe

STOCK INDEX

GAINERS	JOHNHOLT	GEREGU	NAHCO	INTENEGINS	MAYBAKER	LOSERS	WAPIC	TRIPPLEG	ROYALEX	HONYFLOUR	UPDC
OPEN	N1.21	N176.00	N8.55	N0.69	N4.85	OPEN	N0.41	N0.96	N0.78	N2.18	N0.95
CLOSE	0.11	16.00	0.75	0.06	0.37	CLOSE	-0.04	-0.09	-0.06	-0.15	-0.06
CHANGE	10.00%	10.00%	9.62%	9.52%	8.26%	CHANGE	-8.89%	-8.57%	-7.14%	-6.44%	-5.94%



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IN-DEPTH

Nasarawa: How I lost 9 children to air raid after paying N6m – Fulani leader

From Umar Muhammed, Lafia

Relatives of victims of last week's bombing in Nasarawa State that saw no fewer than 40 pastoralists killed and more than a dozen others injured have expressed anger over the incident.

Recounting their ordeal to *Daily Trust* at the weekend, the relatives blamed Governor Samuel Ortom of Benue State for being an antagonist of the Fulani in the state.

Daily Trust reports that the victims were killed in an airstrike suspected to be carried out by the Nigerian Air Force (NAF). The victims were said to have returned from a border town in Benue State to their domain in Nasarawa State after retrieving their cows which were arrested under the Benue State Anti-Grazing Law. They claimed that they were made to pay more than N29m as fine and asked to convey their cattle back in trucks and that it was while they were offloading the animals that they were bombed.

The attack took place at Kwatre Angulu in Rukubi, Doma, the headquarters of Doma LGA.

I lost nine children

Sixty-year-old Alhaji Alfa Bello told *Daily Trust* that he lost nine children in the air raid.

He told our correspondent on Sunday in Lafia, the state capital, that he was at home when one of his sons informed him that the Benue Livestock Guards had arrested his cows and took them to Lanta in Benue State. He said he paid N6m as fine to retrieve the cows.

Alhaji Alfa further said it was while the animals were being offloaded from the trucks that brought them back that the air strike took place killing his nine children and those who came to assist in the offloading.

He explained that, "Benue State Livestock Guards arrested my cows and took them to Lanta area of the state. I went there and retrieved my cows, and while offloading them at Kwatan Angulu in Rukubi in Doma LGA, all of a sudden an airstrike came from nowhere and killed my nine children, including my cows."

"Also, among those who were killed were 15 drivers who conveyed the cows from Benue.

"The death of my children has demoralised me. All my strength has finished. All my hope has been shattered. Those



■ One of the victims of the airstrike, Muhammed Iliyasu, at the Dalhatu Specialist Hospital (DASH), Lafia



■ Another victim at DASH, Muhammed Aliyu

Photos: Umar Muhammed

that killed my nine children have finished me.

"The bomb has destroyed all I had laboured for. Where do I start from? I have lost everything that I had laboured for in just one day. Since the sad incident happened I have not been eating. In fact, I was put on drip."

He, therefore, appealed to both the federal and Nasarawa State governments to come to his aid to enable him pay the medical bills of the injured persons.

Also narrating his ordeal to our correspondent, Adamu Abdullahi (30), said they paid N1m on each cow as fine.

Abdullahi, who has two wives and 10 children, said they were offloading the cows when the airstrike happened and that many people and their cows were killed.

He said among those killed were 15 drivers who conveyed the cows from Benue.

He explained that, "I ran

when I heard the blast and in the process I fell and dislocated my left hand. I am also experiencing pains in my chest, legs and stomach. I am appealing to the federal and state governments to please come to our aid."

He said he was the breadwinner of his family and that since the incident nobody was taking care of his family, especially his aged mother.

Also speaking to our correspondent, Isah Aliyu-Musa, who is nursing his two brothers, Usman Bawa and Ibrahim Hassan, at the Aboki Hospital in Lafia, said N27m was paid as fine before the victims retrieved their cows.

He wondered why they were attacked as there had not been any misunderstanding between the pastoralists and any farmer in Benue State.

He said, "There was no any misunderstanding between the Fulani herders and Benue State farmers. So, I wonder why the military aircraft came to bomb

our people. The livestock guards from Benue State took our cows all in the name of their anti-grazing law.

"This is a terrible situation that has ever happened to us. The military aircraft bombed our people like animals. What kind of leadership do we have in our country where some group of people take laws into their hands and start killing people at will as if they are not human beings?"

Ortom should scrap anti-grazing law – Miyetti Allah

Meanwhile, the National President of the Miyetti Allah Kautal Hore, Abdullahi Badejo, has urged the Benue State Government to immediately scrap the Open Grazing Prohibition and Ranches Establishment Law to prevent the persistent disagreement between the government and the herders.

Badejo gave the charge at the Government House, Lafia, on Thursday when he led over

200 leaders of Fulani groups to visit Governor Abdullahi Sule to register their anger on the incident.

He accused Governor Ortom of conspiracy against the Fulani pastoralists by implementing the anti-open grazing law which he said had made life difficult for herders in the state.

He said, "The Fulani people have been pushed to the wall by incessant attacks, particularly in Benue State, as a result of anti-open grazing law, and I want to say it here today that an injury to one Fulani is an injury to the entire Fulani community in Africa.

"We have so far lost 40 Fulani to the attack, and as I speak to you now, 15 others are receiving treatment in various hospitals in Nasarawa State.

"Nine persons were killed in a single family during the attack. We are peace-loving people and we do not want any confrontation.

"The anti-grazing law that was established by Governor Samuel Ortom is the reason for all the challenges that we are facing. The law should be scrapped because it was made by humans and not God. It is only when it is scrapped that all these challenges will come to an end."

Badejo added that so many cows were still in the custody of the Benue State Government and urged Governor Ortom to immediately release them to the owners.

Reacting to the incident, Mr. Ahmed Sarki-Uman, Chairman Doma LGA, Mr Sarki-Usman, confirmed the incident.

He debunked the rumour that those killed were bandits, saying they were Fulani pastoralists who went to retrieve their cows seized by the Benue State Government after payment of fines.

The council chairman disclosed that no fewer than 50 people were still missing, adding that those that were confirmed dead were 35 at the scene of the bombing and that about 15 people were receiving medication in various hospitals.

He further said that, "The authority of Doma LGA had met with the state government and the leadership of Fulani pastoralists with a view to finding a lasting solution to the present situation.

He assured the people of the area, especially the Fulani pastoralists, that peace would return to Doma soonest.

PoS operators hike charges amid naira notes scarcity

By Sunday M. Ogwu,
Balarabe Alkassim (Abuja),
Abiodun Alade (Lagos),
Ibrahim M. Giginyu (Kano)
& Maryam Ahmadu-Suka
(Kaduna)

Despite the extension of the deadline by the Central Bank of Nigeria on Sunday, scarcity of the new naira notes worsened yesterday as Nigerians were unable to get cash from counters in banks in many parts of the country.

It was also tough getting money from Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) of the banks as well as Point of Sales (PoS).

Buyers and sellers, especially in informal markets were stranded as some of them were still finding it difficult to agree on cash transfer.

Even though it was Monday, many banks could not attend to desperate customers over the counter. On the other hand, PoS terminals that are a critical part of the payment system do not have the new naira notes to give customers.

Many of the operators said they had to use "black market" to get both the old and new notes from "unexpected quarters," hence their resolve to charge a lot of money from people who were willing to withdraw cash.

Some POS operators yesterday collected as much as N1,000 to release N10,000. The total number of POS machines deployed by merchants and individuals across Nigeria hit 1.6 million in November 2022, according to the data released by the Nigeria Inter-Bank Settlement System (NIBSS).

There are approximately 17 automated teller machines, 147 point-of-sale devices and four bank branches for every 100,000 Nigerians, according to a new report by McKinsey.

However, most of these facilities, which were meant to facilitate a gradual transition to a cashless economy in Nigeria were somehow strangled to the extent that they could not offer the needed services.

Some bankers told our reporters that they had been directed, and were being closely monitored, to ensure that no old naira note that got to the bank goes out again.

They also lamented that they were yet to get adequate supply of the new naira notes to meet up with the increasing demands of their customers.

Efforts by this newspaper to get the actual amount of new notes printed by the CBN met a brick



■ An ATM machine in one of the commercial banks in Abuja yesterday

Photo: Onyekachukwu Obi

wall yesterday but some credible sources said it was not more than N200bn.

The CBN said over N3trillion was in circulation but had mopped up over N1.9 trillion so far.

Daily Trust reports that the scarcity, which started at the weekend owing to the rush to beat the initial January 31 deadline for the return of old notes of N1,000, N500 and N200 continued yesterday as most ATMs around Ikeja, Oshodi, Maryland and Lagos Island were out of cash.

Despite the extension of the deadline by 10 days, our correspondents observed that customers who visited banking halls for withdrawals were turned back as they were told that only deposits were accepted.

"The CBN must come out clean on this matter and the banks need to support the apex bank to make this policy work," said Mrs Janet Obiora, who visited one of the banks in Ikeja.

"How can they claim they don't have new notes despite claims by CBN that there are enough new notes in circulation? The two cannot be right, Nigerians require explanation," she said.

However, a staff of one of the commercial banks in Ogba confided in Daily Trust that they were still awaiting new notes from the head office, promising that ATMs would be loaded as soon as the new notes were made available.

A journalist in Abuja, Abdullahi Yusuf, said he was at the UBA branch in Asokoro but could not withdraw at the counter.

"They told me to go to the ATM

and when I got there, I could only withdraw N5,000. It was the same at GTB around Jabi," he said.

"This is really frustrating because Nigeria's economy is driven by the informal sector; people need cash to do so many things. Sadly, the CBN had mopped up the bulk of the old naira notes and has refused to make the new notes available," he said. Khadija Yusuf, a resident of Abuja said she visited at least five PoS operatives but could not get money because they also don't have.

"The fifth PoS operator charged me N1,000 instead of N200 before he gave me N10,000. I had to pay the charges because I needed the money to buy fuel, which I ended up buying at N350 per litre at the black market," she said.

Gunmen attack PoS operators, injures three in Bauchi

Hoodlums suspected to be armed robbers have shot and injured three people while trying to get new currencies from a PoS operator, carted away an unspecified amount of money in Zaki Local Government Area of the Bauchi State.

State Commissioner of Police, CP Aminu Alhassan, confirmed the incident yesterday at the Palace of Galadiman Katagum, Alhaji Usman Mahmood Abdullahi, when he accompanied Governor Bala Abdulkadir Mohammed to commiserate with the victims.

He said the victims came to get new currencies when the hoodlums trailed them and opened fire on them to scare people away.

He said that no life was lost but three people were injured.

It's difficult getting money – Operators

Kehinde James, a PoS operator at Utako, Abuja, said they no longer get money from banks.

"The whole transition policy is not working because I was at three branches of First Bank and Access Bank where I maintain accounts but could not withdraw my money. I had to resort to what they called black market at Wuse market. I paid extra money to the trader and that is why I am also charging extra," he said.

Hafsat Ismail, another operator along Adetokunbo Ademola Crescent, in Abuja, said she also got the new notes from "black market."

"I paid N50 for every N1,000 and that is why I am charging N100 for every N1000. If you want to withdraw N20,000, you have to pay me N2,000," she said.

In Ado-Ekiti, POS agents charged N100 per N1,000 new notes, resulting in N1,000 per every N10,000 transaction as against the previous N200 per N10,000 before the introduction of the new notes.

In Kano, both the old and the new naira notes were scarce yesterday despite the extension.

Investigation revealed that the PoS operators now charge between N300 and N500 for N10,000 withdrawals.

Malam Abdullahi Umar, a PoS operator along Zaria Road, said he closed shop since last Friday because he couldn't get the new naira notes and also couldn't get the old notes despite the fact that his customers were in need of cash.

Nasiru Ibrahim, who has a patient at Aminu Kano Teaching Hospital (AKTH), said he paid N500 to a POS operator to withdraw N10,000.

"I wanted to buy food for my ailing father but had to walk for over two kilometres to get the POS operator who collected N500 from me. It is very sad," he said.

Why e-payment may not address naira scarcity— Expert

The Fiscal Policy Partner and Africa Tax Lead at PwC, Mr Taiwo Oyedele, has said that encouraging Nigerians to use e-payment channels for transactions may not necessarily address the current scarcity of naira notes in circulation until the government makes e-payment easier and safer for the people.

According to him, many countries that have embraced electronic payments and minimal use of cash are doing so not because their currencies are scarce or to

avoid penalties.

Instead, he said they do so because their economies run on credit even as e-payment is more convenient, safer, and incentivized than cash. Sharing his thoughts in a Twitter thread, Oyedele suggested that a more effective strategy by the CBN would be to make e-payments easy and attractive.

He said the apex bank would also need to supply as many naira notes as necessary and leverage intelligence to identify and punish criminals with illicit funds.

While noting that the amount of currency in circulation before the naira redesign was not the problem in Nigeria, Oyedele said: "As it turns out, Nigeria has one of the lowest amounts of currencies in circulation relative to GDP or per capita of N15,200 (about \$34) compared to the U.S. at \$6,700 per capita, the UK at £1,200 per capita and the Eurozone at €3,600 per capita."

"Even if we consider the US dollar as a global currency, America has more dollars printed per person on earth (\$280) than the amount of naira per Nigerian citizen (\$34).

"Therefore, the real problem with naira in circulation is the illicit cash in the hands of corrupt persons and other criminals, which is best tracked and controlled through financial intelligence than currency restriction or scarcity," he said.

DSS intercepts syndicates

The Department of State Services (DSS), yesterday, said it had intercepted some members of organised syndicates involved in the sale of the new redesigned naira notes.

A release by the Public Relations Officer of the DSS, Peter Afunanya said that in the course of their operations in parts of the country, they also established that some commercial bank officials were aiding the economic malfeasance.

"Consequently, the Service warns the currency racketeers to desist from this ignoble act. Appropriate regulatory authorities are, in this same vein, urged to step up monitoring and supervisory activities to expeditiously address emerging trends.

"It should be noted that the Service has ordered its commands and formations to further ensure that all persons and groups engaged in the illegal sale of the notes are identified. Therefore, anyone with useful information relating to this is encouraged to pass the same to the relevant authorities."

Millions of Nigerians at risk of neglected tropical diseases – FG

By Ojoma Akor

Nigeria has about 25 percent of all Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) in Africa, with millions of persons at risk.

The Minister of Health, Osagie Ehanire, said this yesterday in Abuja during the commemoration of the World Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) Day, organised by the ministry in collaboration with the World Health Organisation (WHO).

NTDs include lymphatic filariasis,

onchocerciasis, schistosomiasis, soil transmitted helminthes, buruli ulcers, leishmaniasis, dengue, guinea worm disease, trachoma, leprosy, rabies, noma, yaws, mycetoma and snakebites.

He said 122 million people were at risk of lymphatic filariasis, 33 million at risk of onchocerciasis, 20.8 million at risk of schistosomiasis, 29.4 million at risk of soil transmitted helminthes, 5.3 million at risk of trachoma- and 6.5 million at risk of Human African Trypanosomiasis- respectively.

He said Nigeria was particularly interested in NTDs as they are a group of communicable and non-communicable diseases occurring mostly in isolated areas of developing countries with poor sanitation and nutritional status, unsafe water supply, substandard living conditions and low level of education.

He said though sufferers might be many, the diseases were still "neglected" because they were almost absent from the global health agenda and were associated with

stigma and social exclusion. "Neglecting the population also helps perpetuate the cycle of poverty and limited access to professional opportunities," he added.

Meanwhile, the WHO yesterday released a new progress report, entitled 'Global Report on Neglected Tropical Diseases 2023' which showed that the number of people requiring NTD interventions fell by 80 million between 2020 and 2021, with eight countries were certified or validated as having eliminated one NTD in 2022 alone.

Tuesday, January 31, 2023

FG backs US on visa ban, says Buhari not eyeing third term

By Maureen Onochie

The Federal Government says it is in support of the visa restrictions imposed by the United States of America on those undermining democracy in Nigeria.

The Minister of Information and Culture, Laid Mohammed, said this in Abuja yesterday during the 20th edition of the

President Muhammadu Buhari Administration's Scorecard Series (2015-2023).

He said: "Whatever action is taken against anyone who undermines this democracy that has been watered by the blood of many of our patriots is right and justified. For us as a government, we are proud to say that no Administration since Nigeria's return to

democratic rule in 1999 has shown more fidelity to the democratic process than ours, and no president since 1999 has been as unambiguous as President Muhammadu Buhari, in word and in deed, with regards to leaving office after the constitutionally-stipulated two terms."

He said Buhari had left no one in doubt of his dogged determination to ensure free, fair and

credible elections; hand over to a successor elected by Nigerians and return to his hometown of Daura after the May 29, 2023 handover date.

He said the president had also given unprecedented support to the Independent National Electoral Commission and signed the Electoral Bill 2022 which Nigerians had hailed as a reason to have confidence in the electoral

process.

The minister also restated the government's stance that the 2023 general elections would be held as scheduled.

He said the administration was, therefore, proud that it had sent unambiguous signals to Nigerians "and indeed to the world that we'll leave office come May 29, 2023."

He stated: "We've not

been mired in any third term controversy like was witnessed under the PDP. In fact, we're creating the template on a smooth transition of power that will guide future administrations. Let those who undermine our democracy be sanctioned, and let them carry their own cross. As a government, we have no reason to worry because our hands are clean!"

Nigeria at very high risk of Lassa fever – NCDC

● As death toll hits 37 in 16 states, FCT

The outcome of the risk assessment of Lassa fever placed Nigeria at a very high risk as increased transmission has been recorded compared to previous years just as the number of states infected has risen.

Director-General, Nigeria Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, Ifedayo Adetifa, disclosed this to the News Agency of Nigeria yesterday.

He said 244 cases of Lassa fever were confirmed in 16 states and the FCT with 37 deaths (a case fatality rate of 15.1%) recorded as of January 22.

He listed the states that recorded the cases as Ondo (90), Edo (89), Bauchi (13), Taraba (10), Benue (9), Ebonyi (9), Nasarawa (7), Plateau (5), Kogi (4), Anambra (2), Delta (1), Oyo (1), Adamawa (1), Enugu (1), Imo (1), and the FCT (1).

"Healthcare workers have also been shown to be at increased risk of infection and death," he said.

He said the NCDC activated a national multi-sectorial Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) on January 20 to coordinate and strengthen ongoing response activities.

He said prior to the activation of EOC, the NCDC had deployed national rapid response teams to hotspot states to support contact tracing, case management, risk communication and community engagement, among others. NAN


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\$1.3m case: Kano APC senatorial candidate's arraignment stalled

From Clement A. Oloyede, Kano

The All Progressives Congress (APC) Kano Central senatorial candidate, Abdulsalam Abdulkarim Zaura, popularly known as AA Zaura, on Monday appeared before a Federal High Court in Kano to take his plea in a \$1.3 million fraud charge levelled against him.

Zaura is being accused of defrauding a Kuwaiti of \$1.3m was billed for arraignment after the Court of Appeal quashed an earlier discharge and acquittal judgment of the court and ordered his retrial.

Daily Trust reports that his re-arraignment earlier billed for October 14 and 31, and November 10, could not go ahead following his absence in court, with his lawyer arguing that his client did not have to appear before the court because of an appeal before the Supreme Court against the appellate court's judgment.

This led the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) to declare it was on the hunt to arrest the politician.

However, the

arraignment could not go ahead as scheduled following the absence of his counsel, Ibrahim Waru.

Upon the call of the case, counsel to EFCC, Aisha Habib, drew the attention of the Judge, Justice Mohammad Nasir Yunusa, to the absence of the defence counsel and that she was in receipt of a letter from the counsel notifying her of a pre-election trial he was attending at the Supreme Court, Abuja.

She, however, pleaded with the court to proceed with the arraignment citing Section 33 Sub-Section (a) of the constitution to argue that the law allowed a defendant to take his plea even in the absence of the counsel.

She also urged the court to take judicial notice of the several adjournments the case had suffered due to the absence of the defendants during previous hearing dates.

Ruling on the application, Justice Yunusa adjourned to February 6 to allow the defendant enough time and facilities to defend himself as enshrined in Section 36 (2) A and B of the constitution.

UDUS produces first made in Nigeria COVID-19 vaccine

From Abubakar Auwal, Sokoto

The first COVID-19 vaccine produced in Nigeria is ready for preclinical trial. The vaccine, codenamed "SJN3T CorVac", was produced by the Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto (UDUS) under the sponsorship of the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund).

Daily Trust learnt that some tertiary institutions and centres were engaged by TETFund with a grant of N450m to produce indigenous COVID-19 vaccines within 18 months. They include UDUS; University of Jos (Unijos); National Veterinary Research Institute (NVRI), Vom; Nigeria Medical Research Institute (NMRI), Yaba; and the National Research Institute for Chemical Technology (NARICT), Zaria.

UDUS was to design and construct a DNA vaccine candidate while Unijos was to carry out preclinical trial of the vaccine candidate. NIMR was to design and

construct a peptide subunit vaccine candidate, while NARICT and NVRI were to develop the vehicle for the delivery of the vaccines and upscale the production of the vaccine candidates respectively.

Presenting the vaccine candidates to the Executive Secretary of TETFund, Sonny Echono, on Monday, the Vice Chancellor (VC) of UDUS, Prof Lawal Bilbis, said the vaccine candidates were produced within 11 months of the receipt of the first tranche of the grant.

He said, "More specifically, this milestone portrays our expertise in the application of state-of-the-art technologies to rapidly develop vaccine candidates against emerging or re-emerging infectious diseases in Nigeria," noting that the university had produced vaccine candidates for Lassa fever and other infectious diseases.

Receiving the vaccine, Echono commended the university, saying it was steadily growing in strength in terms of problem solving research.

Ojuelegba accident: Sanwo-Olu orders speedy trial of truck owner, driver

From Abdullateef Aliyu, Lagos

Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu has ordered the speedy trial of the truck owner and driver of the container truck which fell on a passenger bus in Lagos, killing nine passengers.

This is just as the state government has identified some of the victims who died in the accident.

Among those identified are Miss Blessing Isioma "F"; Abdurahman Okoya Sunday "M"; Felix John Ifeanyi "M" 40year and Olatokunbo Basirat King "F" 49years.

There was outrage on Sunday over the incident at the Ojuelegba Bridge which has become notorious for such kind of accidents.

The government had in the past restricted movement of trucks and articulated vehicles in day time while the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) also

banned unclatched container trucks on the highway. Giving an update on the incident, Commissioner for Information and Strategy, Gbenga Omotoso said the governor after receiving an interim report of the incident directed the police to speed up their investigation of the matter.

Police arrest cultist at APC rally with 2 pistols, cartridges in Kwara

From Mumini Abdulkareem, Ilorin

The Kwara State Police Command on Monday said it arrested one Safi Abolaji aka Ojulari, 44, of Kankatu area, Ilorin, for allegedly invading the political rally of the All Progressives Congress (APC).

The police said Ojulari confessed to being a member of the opposition PDP and a cultist of the Aye Confraternity.

In a statement Monday night, the Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO) in the state, Ajayi Okasanmi, said his arrest followed intelligence that led to him being overpowered by public-spirited persons and policemen.

He said two locally made short guns with cartridges and some charms were found in his possession adding that the suspect had just been released from the correctional facility after serving a

prison term.

"During the investigation, the suspect, who confirmed to be an active member of the Aye confraternity, who was also just recently released from the correctional facility after serving a prison term, could not sufficiently explain his presence at the APC rally, having confirmed to be a member of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in the state," he added.

We won't allow any group to destabilise Nigeria's democracy – COAS

From Abubakar Akote, Minna

The Chief of Army Staff (COAS), Lt Gen Faruk Yahaya, has vowed that the Nigerian Army (NA) will do everything possible to ensure a stable democracy in Nigeria by dealing decisively with violent groups emanating from various parts of the country.

Gen Yahaya said this while speaking at the opening of a three-day Training and Doctrine Command's (DRADOC's) combined training and doctrine seminar for officers and men of the NA with the theme: "Enhancing Training and Operations through Doctrinal Imperatives in a Joint Environment", and inauguration of projects at the training and doctrine command headquarters in Minna,

Niger State, on Monday.

Represented by the Director General (DG), Nigerian Army Heritage and Future Centre, Abuja, Maj Gen Kamilu O. Kadiri, the COAS said the training was geared towards repositioning and uplifting the NA for a greater excellence and performance of its duties by enhancing professionalism, readiness and cooperation.

He said, "In history, most of the failed battles recorded are either traceable or ascribed to inadequate, improper or lack of requisite training. The training must be realistic, continuous and evolving to meet the changing nature of war, conflict and domestic realities."

Yahaya said the army must also maintain training and retraining of its officers and men to enable them

deliver well in the ongoing fight against insurgency and other violent crimes across the country.

Earlier in his welcome address, the Commander, TRADOC, Maj Gen Stevenson O. Olabanji, said the objective of the seminar was to highlight issues that bordered on training, operations, administration and logistics and how they impacted on the effectiveness of the army, as well as developing the capacity of all personnel towards harnessing their skills and contribution to the operational efficiency of the army.

The facilities inaugurated are the TRADOC Records Office, Finance Commander's House, Corporal Below Quarters, Nigerian Army Post-Exchange and Officers Mess Squash Court.

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Tuesday, January 31, 2023

Infrastructure devt in Nigeria fantastic, Buhari says in Kano

By Muideen Olaniyi (Abuja) & Clement A. Oloyede (Kano)

President Muhammadu Buhari has described ongoing infrastructure development across the country as 'fantastic'.

The president spoke at a State Banquet in Kano to conclude his one-day official visit to the state after inaugurating several projects executed by the federal and state governments as well as the private sector.

He inaugurated the Dala Inland Dry Port hosted by the Kano State government in collaboration with the federal government.

The project was conceived as part of the federal government's ports reform programme designed to decongest the seaports, while also taking shipping and port services closer

to importers and exporters in the hinterland.

The president also inaugurated the Nigeria Sovereign Investment Authority (NSIA)-funded 10MW Haske Solar Plant in a 24-hectare land in Kumbotso Local Government of Kano State.

He also inaugurated the Family Homes Funds Estate, Darmanawa, Kano, which consists of 469 affordable housing units with ancillary infrastructure. The president implored citizens to appreciate what they have because the country is not dire when compared with other countries.

"When I fly by helicopter, the number of high-rise buildings I see and the amount of development on the ground are fantastic," he said. He congratulated state governor, Abdullahi Ganduje, for doing very well on infrastructure, adding that his recent visits to

Kogi, Yobe, Lagos and Katsina states had shown that the respective governors had done very well, within the confines of funds available to them.

Earlier, Kano state governor, Abdullahi Umar Ganduje said one of the projects inaugurated and named after the president - Muhammadu Buhari Interchange at Hotoro - will help to serve not only Kano citizens but also serve people coming from neighbouring states and countries.

He also said the newly commissioned Cancer Treatment Centre at Muhammadu Buhari Specialist Hospital, Giginyu was named after his wife because of her concern for cancer patients especially those battling with breast cancer.

Youths pelt Buhari's chopper, convoy with stones

Meanwhile, some youths pelted the aircraft and advance motorcade of the president with stones.

Daily Trust gathered that shortly after the president inaugurated the dry port and the independent power project at Kumbotso LGA and was departing Zawaciki to the emir's palace, the youths aimed stones at the chopper which was already airborne.

Another incident reportedly occurred after the advance party departed the palace to Ahmadu Bello Way for the inauguration of the Tier IV Data Centre and Galaxy Backbone Limited Office Complex, some people pelted the vehicles with stones with many running helter skelter to avoid being caught up in the ensuing commotion.

At the Hotoro area where

he went to inaugurate the Muhammadu Buhari Interchange, youths also took to the streets after the president had departed and were pelting the convoy with stones, a situation that led the security operatives in the convoy to fire warning gunshots into the air and later fire teargas canisters to disperse gathering mob.

Daily Trust gathered that after the security left the scene, the youths made bonfires at different locations on the road.

Recall that Ganduje had earlier written to the president to reschedule the planned visit, citing discontentment as a result of the fuel scarcity and the new naira notes policy of the CBN.

However, the governor said the state was ready to receive the president after he granted an extension of the deadline for the old naira notes.

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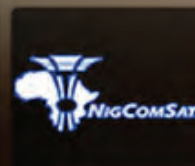
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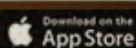
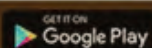
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Cashless policy can stop illicit election financing – Osinbajo

By Muideen Olaniyi

Vice President Yemi Osinbajo says the cashless policy in Nigeria can curb illicit election financing by making it possible to track funds when effectively operated.

He stated this yesterday at the Presidential Villa, Abuja, when he received a delegation of the European Union Election Observation Mission led by Mr Barry Andrews, the Chief Observer, who is also a

member of the European Parliament.

Osinbajo said, “so much money can be spent without it being tracked” under the current election financing practices in the country.

“I think that what we should be looking at is to provide more infrastructure. The cashless thing has been really advantageous and helps with tracking. That sort of infrastructure is useful for more financial inclusion and the more financial inclusion you have, the easier it is to track.”

Noting the serious difficulty in controlling election financing because of cash transactions, he said there are still infrastructure issues required to be in place to ensure an efficient cashless system in the country.

“With cash transactions, it is still difficult to seriously control election financing,” he said.

In his remarks, Andrews said the Observer Mission would be monitoring the February elections and hope for a peaceful and fair electoral process.

Diezani seeks to stop auction of seized assets

By John Chuks Azu

A former Minister of Petroleum Resources, Diezani Alison-Madueke, yesterday asked a Federal High Court in Abuja to vacate an order granted to the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission for final forfeiture of her seized assets.

The application was sequel to a notice by the EFCC for the sale of the assets after it obtained various court orders.

In an originating summons

by Diezani's counsel, Mike Ozekhome (SAN), dated January 9, 2023, she said she was not given fair hearing as contained in Section 36(1) of the Nigerian Constitution, 1999 in the grant of the orders for the forfeiture of the assets.

She said the various orders were made without jurisdiction, submitting that they “ought to be set aside ex debito justitiae.”

“The several applications upon which the courts made the final order of

forfeiture against the applicant were obtained upon gross misstatements, misrepresentations, non-disclosure, concealment and suppression of material facts and this honourable court has the power to set-aside same ex debito justitiae, as a void order is as good as if it was never made at all,” she said.

But the EFCC, through an affidavit deposed to by a detective, Rufai Zaki, asked the court to dismiss her application.

70% of ECOWAS Court judgments not implemented – President

By Joshua Odeyemi

The president of the Community Court of Justice, ECOWAS, Honourable Justice Edward Amoako Asante, has lamented the non-implementation of decisions of the court by member states.

While speaking at the official opening ceremony of the new office building of the Community Court of Justice, ECOWAS, in Abuja yesterday, he expressed dismay that only about 30 per cent of the court's

judgements had been implemented.

“Unfortunately, the effectiveness of the Court has been circumscribed by poor enforcement of its decisions, which stands at about 30 per cent despite the court's impressive record of decision and courage attributable to the independence and character of the judges,” he lamented.

Asante, however, said the Court had significantly contributed to the promotion of regional peace and stability as well as good

governance, transparency and accountability.

In his opening remark, President, ECOWAS Commission, Alieu Touray, also lamented the low rate of implementation of judgements of the ECOWAS court, calling on member states to remedy the situation.

Nigeria's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Zubairu Dada, pledged Nigeria's continuous collaboration with the court to ensure the implementation of its judgements.

UTME: No candidate will be registered without personal email – JAMB

By Chidimma C. Okeke

The Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) has announced that as from January 31, no candidate will be registered without the provision of an email address.

It said this was to ensure best practices were followed in the process of capturing all relevant data pertaining to the candidates.

JAMB spokesperson,

Fabian Benjamin, in a statement yesterday, said the latest advisory, aside from aiding in eliciting relevant and up-to-date data of candidates, was also imperative for facilitating the transmission of urgent and vital communication to candidates cheaply and efficiently.

He noted that the e-mail provides more flexibility in communication and is

a more professional way of reaching out to candidates.

“Candidates are, therefore, advised to get their genuine e-mail addresses before proceeding for UTME registration. In addition, candidates are to ensure that their passwords are kept securely as the Board does not retrieve lost e-mail passwords or change e-mail addresses once registered,” he said.



ASSOCIATION OF NATIONAL ACCOUNTANTS OF NIGERIA (ANAN)

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1ST SESSION OF ANAN 2023 MANDATORY CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (MCPD) PROGRAMME IN FCT, ABUJA.

DATE: 6th - 8th February, 2023

VENUE: AGNL Wizzy's Place Events Complex. Plot 575D Odumegwu Ojukwu Way, Gudu District, Abuja

TIME: 9:00 am daily

MCPD FEE: MCPD FEE: N40,000 (Forty Thousand Naira Only). Fee covers Course, Souvenir and Lunch

OTHER FEES: e-Mcpd: N5,000, Annual Subscription: (CNA) N15,000, (FCNA) N20,000

Theme:

Understanding Financial Disclosures on Sustainability

Tuesday: Registration

Wednesday: MCPD Lectures

Thursday: MCPD Lectures and induction of new members

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Members are advised to make all payments prior to the programme and proceed to fill the online registration form on www.anan.org.ng

METHOD OF PAYMENT



ATTENDANCE:

This session is designed for members in North Central : Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, Plateau and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

However, members who intend to participate in the programme from other States are encouraged to attend.

It is mandatory for every members of the Association to attend this programme at least once in a year, whether he/she is in practice or not. There is no exemption.

All participants must be corporately dressed.

Signed:

Dr. Kayode Olushola Fasua, FCNA
Chief Executive Officer

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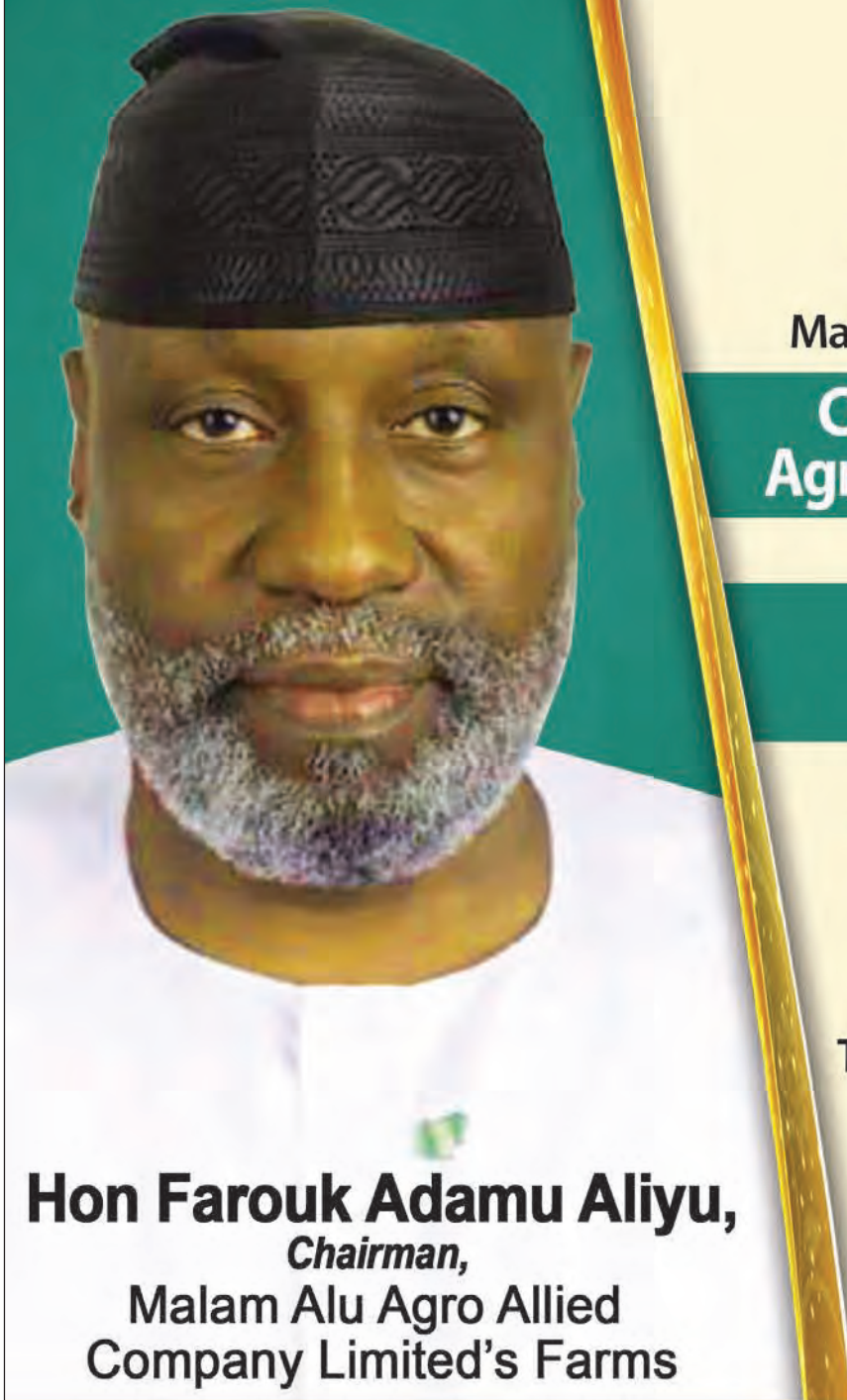
by His Excellency,
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on **Tuesday, 31st January, 2023,**
at **BIRNIN KUDU, JIGAWA STATE.**

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Signed:

High Chief Mike Nwaukoni
C.E.O/Chairman



Hon Farouk Adamu Aliyu,
Chairman,
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NIGERIAN ARMY

CAUTION: THE GENERAL PUBLIC IS ADVISED TO DISREGARD ANY ONLINE APPLICATION PORTAL OPENED BEFORE THIS PUBLICATION.

NOTICE: PROSPECTIVE APPLICANTS AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC ARE TO ALSO WATCH OUT FOR SUBSEQUENT JINGLES ON TELEVISION AND RADIO STATIONS AFTER THIS PUBLICATION.

ADVERTISEMENT FOR DIRECT SHORT SERVICE COMMISSION COURSE 27/2023

1. Applications are invited from eligible Nigerians for commission into the Nigerian Army (NA) as Direct Short Service Commission (DSSC) officers. The DSSC is open to both civilians and serving military personnel. Only serving military personnel sponsored to civil institutions by any of the Services of the Nigerian Armed Forces shall be considered.

CORPS AND SERVICES

a. **Nigerian Army Medical Corps.** All applicants for the NA Medical Corps are to present proof of registration with their professional regulatory bodies and current practicing licenses. Other requirements are as follows:

(1) Medical Consultants of various Disciplines.

Applicants could belong to fields of specialization such as General Surgery, Orthopaedic Surgery, Anesthesia, Neuro-Surgery, Cardiothoracic, ENT Surgery, Physicians (Cardiologists, Endocrinologist, Nephrologists and Neurologists), Ophthalmologists as well as Obstetrics and Gynaecologists, Pediatricians and Family Medicine Physicians. Applicants must also satisfy the following criteria:

- Must be Fellow of the National Postgraduate Medical College of Nigeria or equivalent Postgraduate Medical College.
- Not be more than 40 years of age by May 2023.
- Must have full registration of Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria (MDCN) for the undergraduate degree and additional qualification/registration as appropriate.
- Must have current MDCN license to practice as specialists.

(2) **Medical Doctors (Non Consultants).** Applicants must possess MBBS/BDS or equivalent with not more than 5 years post - qualification experience and must be fully registered with the MDCN.

(3) **Dietitians/Nutritionists.** Applicants must possess a minimum of BSc (Second Class Lower) degree or HND (Lower Credit) and must be fully registered with relevant professional bodies.

(4) **Dental Surgeons.** Applicants must possess a minimum of BSc (Second Class Lower) degree and must be fully registered with relevant professional bodies.

(5) **Pharmacists.** Applicants must possess Bachelor of Pharmacy and must be fully registered with the Pharmacist Council of Nigeria.

(6) **Nurses.** Applicants must possess a minimum of BSc (Second Class Lower) Degree in Pediatrics or Nephrology or they must be in one of the following categories: Orthopedic, Anesthetist, Registered or Psychiatric Nurses (with BSc Second Class Lower Degree) fully registered with the Nursing and Midwifery Council of Nigeria.

(7) **Medical Laboratory Scientists.** Applicants must possess a minimum of BSc (Second Class Lower) degree or HND (Lower Credit) in Medical Laboratory Science and must be fully registered with the Medical Laboratory Science Council of Nigeria.

(8) **Speech Therapists.** Applicants must possess a minimum of BSc (Second Class Lower) degree in Speech Therapy and must be fully registered with relevant professional bodies.

(9) **Occupational Therapists.** Applicants must possess a minimum of BSc (Second Class Lower) degree in Occupational Therapy and must be fully registered with relevant professional bodies.

b. **Nigerian Army Band Corps.** Applicants must possess a minimum of BA (Second Class Lower) degree or HND Lower Credit or equivalent in Music with Associate of Royal Academy of Music (ARAM) and Associate of Royal College of Music (ARCM).

c. **Directorate of Legal Service.** Applicants must possess LLB (Hons) from a recognized institution. In addition, applicants must have been called to the bar from Nigerian Law School. A minimum of 2 years post law School legal practice is required and applicants must present evidence of such.

d. **Directorate of Islamic Affairs.** Applicants must possess a minimum of BA, B Ed (Second Class Lower) degree in any of the following areas: Hadith and Islamic Studies, Tafseer (Exegesis) and Qur'anic Science, Hadith Sciences, Islamic Theology and Hadith, Islamic Propagation and Religious Studies, and Qur'an and Islamic Studies from recognized Nigerian universities, Azhar University,

Cairo or Saudi University. Each applicant would be required to produce testimony of excellent character from a reputable Islamic religious organization in Nigeria. Applicants must be able to speak Arabic and English languages.

e. **Directorate of Chaplain Services (Protestant).** Applicants must possess minimum of BA (Second Class Lower) degree in Divinity Theology from any of the seminaries/universities recognized by the NA Directorate of Chaplain Services (Protestant). Applicants must belong to one of the 18 major denominations of the protestant faith. Soldier applicants must have served the NA with a minimum of 6 years experience in chaplaincy work and must be vetted and recommended by the NA Directorate of Chaplain Services (Protestant). Applicants must provide proof of Ordination, attestation and certification by an ordained Bishop.

f. **Directorate of Chaplain Services (Roman Catholic).** Applicants must be Ordained Catholic Priests from a Roman Catholic approved seminary, affiliated to a National Universities Commission accredited University or Urbanian University, Rome. Applicants should possess a minimum of Bachelor of Arts (Second Class Lower) degree in Philosophy or Theology. Applicants must have good standing in the church and be released by a Diocesan Bishop with a proof of ordination. Applicants must be vetted and recommended by the NA Directorate of Chaplain Services (Roman Catholic).

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

2. All applicants must satisfy the following conditions:

a. Be a Nigerian as defined in the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

b. Be a male or female between the ages of 20 and 30 years. Medical consultants could be between 25 - 40 years of age by May 2023.

c. Be medically, mentally and physically fit according to NA standards.

d. Be recommended and attested to his/her good character by at least 2 recognizable referees who are either a Local Government Chairman/Secretary or an officer of the Armed Forces not below the rank of Lieutenant Colonel and equivalent or an Assistant Commissioner of Police and above who must hail from the applicant's state of origin. Passport photographs of referees must be affixed to the letter of attestation.

e. Applicants must submit a letter of Attestation from their former institutions.

f. Measure in height at least 1.68m (for males) and 1.65m (for females).

g. Must not have been convicted by any court of law. Military personnel applying must be free from any disciplinary case and endorsed by the applicant's Commanding Officer/Commander.

h. Possess at least a first degree with not less than Second Class Lower Division or HND (where applicable) of not less than Lower Credit from any accredited institution of learning.

i. Possess valid birth certificate endorsed by the National Population Commission, Hospital or Local Government Council or valid age declaration.

j. Possess a valid certificate of state of origin.

k. Applicants must possess NYSC discharge certificate or valid exemption certificate as appropriate.

l. Graduates with professional qualifications must be duly registered by relevant regulating bodies recognized by Nigerian Laws at the commencement of cadet training.

m. Only post secondary academic credentials obtained from 2013 to date will be considered.

n. Applicants must present valid contact addresses and telephone numbers of parents/guardians and Next of Kin as appropriate.

o. Candidates must not have any bodily inscriptions or tattoos.

p. Candidates must tender all original copies of educational certificates (primary to post secondary).

q. Service personnel must present valid military identity cards and letters of recommendations by their Commanding Officers/Commanders. They must also present valid letter(s) of respective Service sponsorship to tertiary academic institutions (where applicable). Additionally, they must have served for a period of **not less than 5 years** in the unit.

r. Candidates must not belong to any cult/society/fraternity.

s. Candidates with ability to swim will have added advantage.

CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

3. The DSSC will be granted for a total of 15 years, for an initial period of 8 years, renewable yearly for another period of 7 years. Direct Regular Commission (DRC) may be granted on conversion after 3 years as a commissioned officer. Other Service conditions include the following:

a. The DSSC officers shall be on probation for the first 3 years of service.

b. Conversion to DRC is not automatic but based on application by an eligible commissioned officer. It is however based on availability of vacancy and other criteria that are or will be in force from time to time.

c. All graduating officer cadets must sign an acceptance of the terms and conditions governing the DSSC before they are granted commission into the NA.

d. The reckonable period of service for civilians who become commissioned officers will be based on the date of commencement of cadet training while that of military personnel applicants would be date of enlistment.

e. Medical Consultants on successful completion of military training shall be granted the rank of Major with seniority effective from date of commission.

f. Officer cadets who successfully complete the military training shall be granted the rank of Lieutenant (except for medical consultants who will be commissioned as Majors) with seniority effective from date of commission.

METHOD OF APPLICATION

4. Applications are to be made online **free of charge** from **31 January 2023 to 14 March 2023.**

a. How to apply:

- Go online and visit NA webpage at: recruitment.army.mil.ng and choose DSSC option from the page.
- You will be redirected to the page where you can read the qualification criteria for the ongoing DSSC courses.
- Click on the "Apply Now" button for the DSSC as per your qualification and Corps of choice.
- At the prompt, you will be required to select if you are serving or have served in the Armed Forces of Nigeria. Choose the appropriate option and proceed.
- If you do not have an account click on "Sign Up" (a verification will be sent to your email) or enter your login details and log in.
- Fill out the form and ensure all required documents listed below are uploaded:
 - Passport photograph.
 - Educational certificates.
 - Evidence of membership of any professional body.
 - Certificate of state of origin.
 - Birth certificate or age declaration.
 - NIN/BVN.

b. **Print Out.** Applicants must print out their online generated photo-slip on completion of their application. The first page is to be signed by the Registrar of any Court of Law while the second page is to be signed by the applicants' Local Government Chairman/Secretary or any military officer of the rank of Lieutenant Colonel or equivalent and above who hails from an applicant's state of origin. **Successful applicants would be required to take a written examination at assigned examination centres. Successful candidates would present their printed application forms (photo-slips, guarantors form, attestation form etc) at the Examination Centres and subsequently to the Selection Board during interview.**

CLOSING DATE

5. All applications must be submitted online not later than **14 March 2023.**

FURTHER INQUIRIES

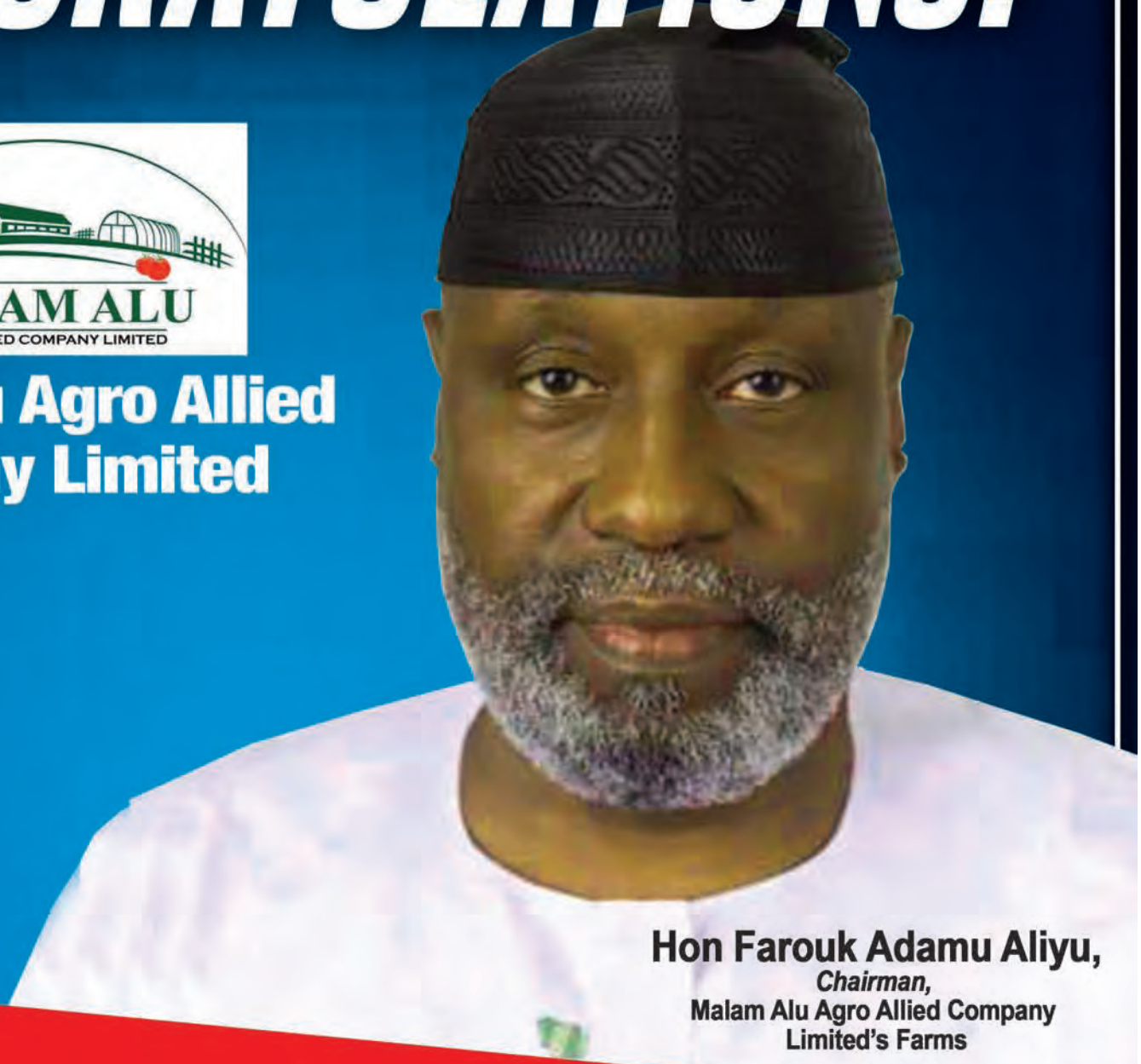
6. For further inquiries, please call 08179269294 or 08109959294 between **0800 -1800 hours (8am - 6pm)** daily.

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by His Excellency, President Muhammadu Buhari, GCFR,
on Tuesday, 31st January, 2023,
at BIRNIN KUDU, JIGAWA STATE.

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Congratulations!

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Signed:
Engr Ikechukwu Nnamani
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Malam Alu Agro Allied Company Limited



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on Tuesday, 31st January, 2023,

at BIRNIN KUDU, JIGAWA STATE.

C O N G R A T U L A T I O N S !

Signed:

M A N A G E M E N T .



Brentex Petroleum Services Limited.

INSIDE POLITICS

“It will be a shame for APC Northern governors in particular to turn around and say they don't want Asiwaju. People will even laugh at us — Governor Abdullahi Sule of Nasarawa State

Why Nigerians must monitor mock BVAS accreditation – INEC Chair

By Abbas Jimoh

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has urged registered voters in the 436 designated Polling Units (PUs) nationwide to participate in Saturday's mock accreditation exercise with the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS).

The INEC Chairman, Prof. Mahmood Yakubu, made the call yesterday in Abuja, when he received a delegation of the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), led by its president, Mr Anthony Banbury.

He also urged registered voters who had yet to collect their Permanent Voters' Cards (PVCs) to use the opportunity of the extension of the deadline to collect them.



■ Yakubu

He said INEC was committed to free, fair and credible elections and the will of Nigerians would prevail.

“One of the things that we have decided to do is to ensure that we test run the device by conducting a mock accreditation exercise. We have announced that this exercise is going to happen on Saturday, February 4, meaning it is going to

happen this weekend.

“So once again, I seize the opportunity of this visit to appeal to Nigerians to please go to the designated polling units. We have 436 of them, 12 PUs in each state of the federation and four in the FCT so that they can test run this device.

“In the unlikely event of challenges, we have time between

the conclusion of the exercise and the general elections to respond to the challenges. But we are very happy with the functionality of the machines so far, particularly the tests carried out on the number of machines received in preparation for the general elections,” Yakubu said.

He urged civil society organisations (CSOs), the media, political parties and Nigerians across the board to observe where they wished in the deployment of the BVAS for the mock exercise on Saturday.

On the preparations for the 2023 general elections, Yakubu said INEC had made tremendous progress in terms of acquisition and delivery of materials for the election.

He said the largest chunk of materials required for the election,

both sensitive and non-sensitive, were already in various locations.

The INEC boss said basically, INEC was good to go and that by February 9, the commission would commence the training of election duty staff.

Yakubu said having released the timetable for the election in February 2022 and identified 14 activities, the commission has successfully implemented 12 activities, thus only two activities are outstanding.

He said, “The first one is the end of the campaign by political parties, which by law is 24 hours before polling day, which is going to be on the 23rd of February for the presidential election and the state governorship and State Assembly and then the Election Day proper, which is on the 25th of February for the presidential and National Assembly on the 11th of March for the state elections.”

Speaking earlier, Banbury said whatever happens in Nigeria's forthcoming elections would have an impact on other elections coming up this year around the globe.

INEC should conduct presidential, gov'ship other polls same day – Shari'ah council

From Maryam Ahmadu-Suka, Kaduna

The Supreme Council for Shari'ah in Nigeria (SCSN) has asked all well-meaning Nigerians to prevail on the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to hold the presidential, governorship, senatorial, House of Representatives and other elections on the same day in the country.

The council said political violence might stop the second phase of the election, stressing that some desperate politicians were already warming up to cause crisis.

Addressing newsmen in Kaduna, the Secretary General of the Supreme

Council for Shari'ah in Nigeria, Nafi'u Baba-Ahmed, flanked by other members of the council, said, “There is a high probability of the second election not holding because of violence from the first election. It is not going to be feasible. The first election is the presidential and National Assembly elections.

“Our fear is that, in light of the precarious security situation in the country and the fact of the admission by security agencies that they are overstretched, it is quite possible, in fact, highly probable that some desperate politicians who might lose the election will trigger political violence to the extent that the

subsequent elections may not hold.

“In light of this, we engage all those that matter. We met with some of the key security chiefs, who expressed their understanding of the situation who agreed with us that their manpower is already overstretched. And it is going to be a situation and an uphill task to cope with political violence.

“We, therefore, advise that INEC should be prevailed upon to hold all the elections on the same day. This way we will avoid a situation where some desperate politicians that are about to lose cannot create chaos in the country such that we will be left with elections half held, half on hold.”

Atiku will grant Nnamdi Kanu unconditional release – Campaign DG

By Baba Martins

The Director General of the Atiku/Okowa Presidential Campaign Council (PCC) in Anambra State, Prof. Obiora Okonkwo, has said the PDP candidate, Atiku Abubakar, would grant the detained leader of the banned Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), Nnamdi Kanu, unconditional release if he becomes the next president of Nigeria.

Kanu has been in detention since June 2021, when he was intercepted and renditioned to Nigeria from Kenya by the federal government and faced terrorism charges.

However, the Court of Appeal sitting in Abuja,



■ Atiku

on Thursday, October 13, 2022, quashed the terrorism charges and acquitted him of the seven-count charge.

The federal government is, however, challenging the judgement at the Supreme Court.

Okonkwo, in a statement yesterday, said Atiku would release Kanu unconditionally if elected president on February 25.

He, therefore, urged the people of the zone to throw their weight behind the PDP candidate to win the election.

“I am saying this with every sense of responsibility that Atiku will grant Nnamdi Kanu unconditional release. That is in Atiku's agenda for permanent peace in the South East.

“In addition, he will apply a political solution to release all those genuine IPOB agitators in detention without trial.

“Atiku's government had serious talks with the group and others, with the view to restoring their faith in the country, and making them part of the efforts for a better Nigeria.

Fuel, naira scarcity: No face-off between Buhari, Tinubu — Senate's deputy whip

By Abdullateef Salau

The Deputy Whip of the Senate, Aliyu Sabi Abdullahi, has debunked insinuations that there is a “cold war” between President Muhammadu Buhari and the All Progressives Congress (APC) presidential candidate, Bola Ahmed Tinubu.

Tinubu had, last week, at a campaign rally in Abeokuta, Ogun State, said there was an alleged plan to sabotage his presidential ambition through fuel and naira scarcity, raising concerns in some quarters that there may be a cold war between the duo.

But Senator Abdullahi, who represents Niger North Senatorial District, said Buhari was fully in support of Tinubu's

presidential bid and was working hard to ensure that the APC candidate emerged victorious through a credible election.

The lawmaker stated this yesterday while speaking with reporters during the commissioning of a remodeled township stadium in New Bussa, Borgu Local Government Area of Niger State.

He described the former Lagos governor as the best candidate to sustain Buhari's legacy projects and other initiatives.

He said, “Our party is intact. As we are going to the national election, we believe as the president of this country, his duty is to make sure that there is a credible election. We have asked for a credible election, and we are going to anchor our victory on

the credible election.”

Meanwhile, the lawmaker urged Nigerians to keep hope alive on the local government autonomy, which was rejected by some state assemblies.

“I'm still very hopeful that local government autonomy will be approved. Out of the 27 states that have voted, some supported local government autonomy. So, it is still possible that we can achieve the required number,” he said.

Senator Abdullahi also said the renovated township stadium, which was executed through his constituency projects, was done to create an enabling environment for youths to showcase their talents and develop their potential in sports.

Kaduna group cautions youths against electoral violence

From Ahmed Ali, Kafanchan

The youth wing of the Southern Kaduna Peoples Union (SOKAPU) has appealed to youth in the zone not to allow themselves to be used as destruction tools by politicians who may wish to cause violence before, during and after the elections.

This was contained in a statement issued yesterday by the National

Secretary of SOKAPU's Youth Wing, Comrade Augustine Bayei, at the end of its stakeholders' meeting over issues affecting the youth constituency and its prospects in the region.

The group said the union's leadership has keenly watched the campaigns and promises of all the candidates from different political parties and would soon reveal the position of the union to its members about the

candidates to vote for at all levels.

It noted that the union could only indicate interest and vote for candidates who would protect their collective interests as a people.

“As patriotic citizens of our dear country, may we all preach the message of peace and discharge our civic responsibilities.

“As we go to the polls next month to elect our leaders, let us vote wisely,” the group said.

Senatorial race: S/Court affirms Aliero, Abdullahi as PDP candidates in Kebbi

● INEC gets order to replace SDP candidate withdrawn in Rivers

By John Chuks Azu

The Supreme Court has affirmed Senator Muhammad Adamu Aliero as the candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) for Kebbi Central Senatorial District ahead of the February 25 poll.

A five-member panel of justices led by Justice Chima Centus Nweze, yesterday set aside the judgement of the Court of Appeal, which earlier refused Aliero's appeal challenging a Federal High Court ruling on the primaries of the party on May 24 and June 9, 2022, which he won.

In the majority judgement by Justice Amina Augie, the panel held that Aliero's appeal challenging the declaration of Haruna Dandio Saidu as the PDP candidate for the senatorial district, had merit.

The apex court held that the decisions of the lower courts were done without jurisdiction as the nomination of a candidate was an internal affair of a



■ Aliero



■ Abdullahi

political party.

Similarly, the apex court validated the election of Dr Abubakar Yahaya Abdullahi as the PDP candidate for Kebbi North Senatorial District for the February 25 senatorial election.

Citing Section 84 of the Electoral Act, Justice Augie stated that Senator Abdullahi's case bordered on substituting a candidate who had earlier withdrawn from the race.

Meanwhile, a Federal High Court in Abuja has ordered the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to accept the replacement of a senatorial candidate in Rivers State for the

February 25 poll.

Justice Emeka Nwite, yesterday, directed INEC to publish the name of Fred Atteng in place of Gokana Geoffrey as the candidate of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) for Rivers South-East Senatorial District.

He held that INEC's refusal to accept Atteng was a breach of Section 29 of the Electoral Act, 2022.

The court also disregarded a counter affidavit by INEC dated December 10, 2022, which was filed outside the 10 days required to do so.

The suit was brought by SDP and Atteng Fred challenging INEC's

refusal to accept his candidature after the withdrawal of Gokana Geoffrey as the candidate of the party for Rivers South-East Senatorial District.

He had contended that by the provisions of sections 29(1), 31 and 33 of the Electoral Act 2022, INEC did not have the constitutional and statutory powers to prevent SDP from replacing its candidate who voluntarily withdrew his candidature for the 2023 general elections or "reuse, neglect or fail to accept names of submitted candidates as represented by the 2nd plaintiff (Fred)."

EU deploys observers, calls for peaceful polls

By Joshua Odeyemi

The Chief Observer of the European Union Election Observation Mission (EU EOM) to Nigeria 2023, Barry Andrews, has urged authorities, candidates and political parties in Nigeria to ensure that the upcoming general elections are peaceful and further election-related violence is prevented.

He made the plea at a press conference in Abuja, yesterday to officially launch the EU EOM.

The Chief Observer said, "This is the seventh EU Election Observation Mission to Nigeria since 1999. The EU attaches great significance to these elections. Every voter has the right to cast their ballot in a safe environment free from intimidation and undue influence.

"We encourage the authorities, candidates and political parties to commit to peaceful conduct prior to, during and after election day.

"Cooperation between all institutions and parties participating in the elections is crucial. The presence of a level playing field, freedom of expression, assembly and association, respect for human rights and a neutral and independent election management body at all levels are all essential for democratic elections."

During his four-day visit to Nigeria, the Chief Observer has met with a wide range of interlocutors including state authorities, INEC, political contestants, members of the judiciary, media stakeholders, citizen observers as well as other civil society representatives to discuss the ongoing electoral process.

Educate voters, stop hate speech, Yiaga Africa tells candidates, parties

By Abbas Jimoh

Ahead of this year's general elections, Yiaga Africa has urged the 18 registered political parties and their candidates to educate the electorate, shun hate speech and other electoral malfeasance and engage in issue-based campaigns.

This was contained in the 20-page 'Yiaga Africa's Watching the Vote Third National Pre-Election Observation (PREO) Report.

It said hate speech on the basis of age, health, gender, religion, ethnicity or disability has remained relatively constant over time but the prevalence of each kind of hate speech varies by geo-political zone.

"In addition, the violence monitoring tool revealed the rising threat of violence and insecurity in local government areas that are difficult to access for election-related activities

due to insecurity. It also tracks attacks on INEC's facilities and personnel and insecurity.

"Yiaga Africa reiterates many of the same recommendations that emerged in previous reporting periods. Yiaga Africa encourages electoral actors with a mandate to provide voter information, especially on key changes to the electoral process, to increase activities in those areas where voters are relatively uninformed.

"We encourage candidates, media houses and citizens, especially social media influencers to refrain from using incendiary language and to maintain a respectful campaign environment.

"We recommend that the upsurge in fuel prices and shortages be closely monitored as economic grievances could exacerbate tensions and serve as catalysts for electoral violence," the report said.

Atiku: I'll revitalise textile companies, reconstruct Bakalori Dam

● I'll end poverty, fuel scarcity, complete IDSP – Tinubu

By Baba Martins (Abuja) & Iniabasi Umo (Uyo)

The presidential candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Atiku Abubakar has promised to revitalise textile companies and reconstruct the Bakalori Dam if elected on February 25.

He made the pledge yesterday in Gusau, the Zamfara State capital, while addressing supporters and party stakeholders during the PDP presidential campaign rally.

He said he would reconstruct the Bakalori

Dam to enable farmers that have been prevented from engaging in their farming practices to return.

"When you elect your governor, we will collaborate with him to ensure that all the things Zamfara needs are done. As a federal government, we will ensure the construction of a railway that brings wealth to Kaura.

"We will work with the state government to revitalise the closed down textile companies. We will give businessmen capital to open these textiles

for job generation. I promise under the federal government, we will reconstruct Bakalori Dam for those farmers that were prevented from farming.

"Two governors in the past made a pledge to me to construct an airport but failed to do it, the federal government will assist the state to build the airport in Zamfara."

Meanwhile, the presidential candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu has said he would end poverty, fuel scarcity and complete

Ibom Deep Seaport Project (IDSP), if elected.

Tinubu who stated this yesterday in Uyo during the APC presidential campaign rally in Akwa Ibom State, said his completion of the seaport in Lagos State was proof of his experience and ability to complete the IDSP in Akwa Ibom State.

"God will put you in the right direction to vote for the right person. I guarantee you that fuel scarcity will stop. You will not suffer again. Go and get your PVC and vote for the right person," he said.

Atiku's 5-point agenda will address Nigeria's challenges – Rep

From Victor Edozie, Port Harcourt

A member of the House of Representatives from Rivers State, Hon. Doctor Farah Dagogo, has said the presidential candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party

(PDP), Atiku Abubakar would address Nigeria's challenges if elected.

He spoke yesterday during a sensitisation parley with Atiku's supporters in Port Harcourt, the Rivers State capital.

The lawmaker said, "Part

of the problems that had bedeviled our country in recent times is the need to address the restructuring menace and that of resource control, which is paramount to the people of the Niger Delta and other regions in the country with natural

resources."

Atiku's five-point-agenda is tailored towards; restoring Nigeria's unity, strengthening national security, fostering economic prosperity, improving educational delivery and restructuring.

Sokoto gov'ship: APC candidate promises to restore monthly stipends to imams, others

From Abubakar Auwal, Sokoto

The governorship candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Sokoto State, Ahmed Aliyu has promised to pay monthly stipends to Mosques' Imams and their assistants if elected.

Speaking in Gwadabawa yesterday as part of his statewide campaigns, Aliyu also promised to clear the

backlog of N6000 monthly stipends allegedly owed to the destitute in the state.

"I visited Sarkin Makafi and I was touched by his revelation. He told me that they have not been getting their monthly stipends.

"When our leader and my father, Wamakko, was the governor of Sokoto State, Imams, their assistants and those calling for prayers were put on monthly stipends," he pledged.