



JUDE ROMEO SONG

Industrial growth techie

A leader in web development and tech education, he is empowering youth and shaping Cameroon's digital future through Highupweb Academy, which has trained over 3,000 students and fosters innovation and entrepreneurship. **P.4-6**

ECHOES

ADAMAWA REGION

Governor places injunction on Cabral Libii-led public events

The ban on the public events of Cabral Libii's Cameroon Party for National Reconciliation, PCRN party, is the latest twist in the prolonged wrangling over the leadership of the opposition party pitting Libii against the party's resurgent founder, Robert Konan. **P.3**

ELECAM

Newly sworn-in Electoral Council Members vow to uphold integrity **P.2**

ROUNDUP

Housing minister's 2025 urban transformation master plan

The Minister of Housing and Urban Development, Célestine Ketcha Courtes, has, in a bid to drive rapid and sustainable urban development, issued a rallying call for her collaborators and partners to embrace a spirit of productivity, kick-starting a new era in the housing and urban development sector. **P.7**

Order **Chouquette**

eau de parfum
 100% made in Cameroun

and its accessories

Handbags. Backpacks.
 Slippers, kits

☎ 690 91 88 68 - 681 23 56 41
 ✉ mimabyosiera@gmail.com



ROUNDUP

ELECAM

Newly-sworn Electoral Council members vow to enhance integrity

The two new members of the electoral body, Elections Cameroon, ELECAM which is in charge of overseeing elections in the country, were sworn-in as new members of the institution's Electoral Council early this week.

By **Brigette BATE**

JEAN Bernard Mboutou Ze and Charles Nanga officially took their oaths of office on Tuesday, February 18, 2025, at a ceremony presided over by officials of the Constitutional Council, marking a crucial step in reinforcing ELECAM's composition ahead of future elections. The appointment of Mboutou Ze and Nanga, formalized through a Presidential Decree on December 20th of the previous year, comes at an essential time for ELECAM as it gears up for upcoming electoral cycles and aims to further enhance its credibility and efficiency. The Electoral Council, the governing body of ELECAM, plays a great role in ensuring the fairness, transparency, and integrity of the electoral process. Mboutou Ze, formerly the Secretary-General of the Supreme State Audit Office, is highly regarded

for his integrity, a quality believed to have influenced his selection to ensure electoral transparency within ELECAM taking his oath testifies his commitment to the country's success. Nanga, a graduate of both the National School of Administration, ENA, in Paris and ENAM in Cameroon, previously served as Inspector General at the Ministry of Basic Education. Their diverse backgrounds and proven track records have instilled confidence in their ability to contribute meaningfully to ELECAM's mission. "First, I would like to thank you all for coming. Once again, I would like to express my gratitude for your trust in Elections Cameroon. As far as I am concerned, I am committed to doing everything necessary to ensure the success of the elections. I will ensure that electoral materials arrive at the appropriate timing, facilitating the smooth conduct of the elections. Looking ahead, I am



dedicated to guaranteeing that future elections take place in the best possible manner throughout the territory, ultimately making us proud of the East Zone,". Jean Bernard Mboutou Ze attested, reassuring the people that his coming in is for a better election ahead. During the swearing-in ceremony, Mboutou Ze also pledged his unwavering commitment to upholding Cameroon's electoral laws with diligence and fidelity. This commitment is essential

for maintaining public trust in the electoral system and ensuring that elections are conducted in a manner that accurately reflects the will of the people. The arrival of Mboutou Ze and Nanga presents ELECAM with an opportunity to benefit from fresh perspectives and renewed energy. They will join existing members in deliberating on key policy decisions, addressing challenges, and implementing reforms aimed at improving the electoral process.

The swearing-in of Mboutou Ze and Nanga, alongside the renewal of mandates for three current board members, represents a key step in reinforcing the council's composition and ensuring its continued effective operation in the lead-up to future elections. As Cameroon prepares for these important democratic exercises, a strong and credible ELECAM is vital for maintaining stability and ensuring that the voice of the people is heard.

FAR NORTH

Biya orders 95M CFA relief for flood-affected students

The emergency relief, ordered by President Paul Biya, is set to assist nearly 7,000 students in securing their official exam registrations.

By **Kylan NDIMIDA**

THOUSANDS of students in the flood-stricken Mayo-Danay division in the far north region have been granted a new lease on their academic future following the government's allocation of over 95 million CFA francs. This emergency relief, ordered by President Paul Biya, is set to assist nearly 7,000 students in securing their official exam registrations under the Department of Examinations and Certification, DEC, and the Cameroon Baccalaureate Office,

OBC. The announcement, made via videoconference by the Minister of Secondary Education from Yagoua's Classical High School, was met with emotional gratitude from school officials, parents, and students alike. The funds aim to address the financial challenges that had threatened to derail the education of those affected by the devastating floods. According to reports, in the 103 impacted schools, educators and administrators had been grappling with an increasing dropout rate, as many families struggled to afford exam registration fees. The situation had become so dire that some students had

entirely abandoned their studies. With the presidential intervention, however, hope has been restored. Gabriel Danzabé, the Divisional Delegate for Secondary Education in Mayo-Danay, described the relief as a vital step toward normalizing academic activities in the region. He emphasized that the financial aid would ensure students are properly registered and can now focus on their preparations. School principals and teachers welcomed the initiative, noting that many students had been at risk of missing their exams due to financial constraints. A principal from one of the affected technical high schools highlighted how the aid has eased the burden on families and provided much-needed motivation for



students. The impact of the floods had been particularly devastating, not just in displacing families but also in disrupting education. Emmanuel Gorsou, a spokesperson for the Presidents of the School Councils, explained how students had been forced to drop out as they struggled with displacement

and economic hardship. The newly allocated funds, he said, offer a second chance for these students to reclaim their academic aspirations. Beyond the immediate financial relief, this initiative signals the government's commitment to maintaining access to education even in times of crisis.

ROUNDUP

ADAMAWA REGION

Governor places injunction on Cabral Libii-led PCRN activities

The ban on the embattled president of Cameroon Party for National Reconciliation, PCRN party is regarded as the latest twist in the prolonged battle over the leadership of the increasingly-divided opposition party where Cabral Libii is up against the party's resurgent founder, Robert Konan.

By **Kylan NDIMIDA**

THE Governor of Adamawa Region, Kildadi Taguieke Boukar has placed a ban on activities led by the embattled president of Cameroon Party for National Reconciliation, PCRN party, Cabral Libii. In a recent directive communicated by the governor via an official letter to the Senior Divisional Officer, SDO of Djerem Division in the Adamawa Region and seen by The National Post newspaper, the governor instructs the local authority to prevent the opposition figure who was one of the top candidates during the 2018 Presidential Election in Cameroon, from conducting any political gatherings, rallies, or activities. The Go-

vernor in the directive, emphasized the urgency of the order, demanding immediate feedback on its execution for reporting to higher authorities. This release has ignited debate about the narrowing space for opposition parties as Cameroon heads towards a crucial electoral period. The ban comes amid rising political tensions in Cameroon. The PCRN, viewed as a rising opposition force, has been actively expanding its forces across the country, with Libii engaging supporters through public events, including book presentations. This activity seems to have triggered concern from the ruling party. While the official reason given for the ban centers around maintaining public order, local political observers suggest it is part of a broader

pattern of restricting opposition activities in Cameroon. Authorities often cite public order concerns to limit gatherings, a practice that has drawn criticism from human rights organizations and international observers. Reports indicate that the order originated from the Minister of Territorial Administration, Paul Atanga Nji, who has been accused of cracking down on opposition parties while supporting those aligned with President Paul Biya's long-standing regime. Allegations have surfaced that Atanga Nji has specifically targeted the PCRN, even attempting to undermine Libii's leadership by recognizing a rival faction within the party. The Governor's directive also mandates the eviction of Libii and his team from the Adamawa region,



ensuring their departure aligns with their pre-approved policy making. It remains unclear whether Libii and the PCRN will challenge the ban or adjust their campaign schedule. The incident highlights the challenges faced by opposition parties in Cameroon as they navigate a complex

political landscape in the lead-up to elections. The actions of the Adamawa Governor and the Minister of Territorial Administration are sure to be scrutinized in the coming weeks, with questions raised about the fairness and openness of the political process.

BALLON D'OR 2024

Who will succeed Emmanuel Mahop, Ngah Manga?

The Cameroon Football Federation (FECAFOOT) has revealed that the 2024 Cameroon Ballon d'Or winner will be announced on February 28, 2025, during the award ceremony scheduled to take place at the Yaoundé Conference Centre. The event will unveil the successors of the 2023 Ballon d'Or laureates, Emmanuel Mahop and Ngah Manga.

By **Brigitte BATE**

THE proclamation was made public on February 18 during a press conference organized at the FECAFOOT headquarters in Tsinga. The event was presided over by the Director of Communication, Jean Marie Nkoussa, and the Head of Competitions, Fadou Ndam, to preview the upcoming ceremony. During the presser, the Director of Communication announced a significant expansion of the 2024 Ballon d'Or, increasing the number of categories from fifteen to nineteen. The new categories, including the Special Prize of the Year, will join existing awards such as Revelation of the Year, Coach of the Year, and Goal of the Year, which will be determined by an online fan vote. Other awards include the Fair Play

Prize, recognizing acts of exceptional sportsmanship, and Goalkeeper of the Year, among others. The winner will be chosen through a rigorous process, starting with a nomination phase. A FECAFOOT commission will then review and narrow down the list, which will be publicly released before the voting process begins. The process involves captains and coaches of Elite One and Two clubs for the men's award, while those from the Guinness Super League will determine the women's winner. Each voter ranks three nominees, assigning four, two, and one point respectively, with the highest scorer claiming the title. In case of a tie, further scrutiny will be conducted. The winners will be unveiled on February 28 at the Yaoundé Conference Centre, marking another milestone in Cameroonian football.

FECAFOOT entrusts President of Jury to Rigobert Song

The former head coach of the Indomitable Lions, Rigobert Song, has been chosen by the FA to lead the jury that will supervise the voting process of the forthcoming Ballon d'Or Award. Coach Rigobert Song will be assisted by five other members. Barrister Eric Bisso will serve as the rapporteur of the commission. The other members include Souleymanou Aboubakar (an experienced coach in MTN Elite football), Bernadette Anong (a coach in the Guinness Super League and former assistant coach of the Indomitable Lionesses), Coach Sampabum Kenneth Sama, and journalist Joseph Valery Fotso.

History of the Ballon d'Or in Cameroon

The Cameroon Ballon d'Or, an annual award recognizing the best footballers in the country, made a strong return in 2022 after years of absence. That year, Souaibou Marou was named



Male Player of the Year, while Ngock Monique won the Female Player of the Year award. Marou's exceptional performances earned him a move to Orlando Pirates in South Africa, though his time there was short-lived. In 2023, the award continued, honoring Emmanuel Mahop as the Male Player of the Year and Ngah Manga Marie Gisele as the top female footballer. Mahop, like his predecessor,

pursued an international career but later returned to Coton Sport of Garoua before traveling back abroad to join Bahrain HIDD. This lack of follow-up has raised questions about the quality of the Ballon d'Or, as past winners often fade from the spotlight. The 2024 edition, initially expected in December, has now been scheduled for February 28, though with considerable delay.

SPOTLIGHT



JUDE ROMEO SONG NKWAIN

Industrial growth techie

Song Nkwain's works are crafted to champion industrial growth and contribute to the overall wellbeing of the Cameroonian society as highlighted through his projects in tech and beyond.

PAGE 4

• PORTRAIT

Jude Romeo Song Nkwain ,
Championing digitalization to
create impact

PAGE 5

• INTERVIEW

“My decision to choose tech as
a career space was driven by a
combination of passion and the
desire to solve problems creatively”

PORTRAIT

JUDE ROMEO SONG NKWAIN

Championing digitalization to create impact

The multifaceted institution led by Song Nkwain has driven and established the youngster whose activities across Cameroon and internationally, are influencing thousands of lives across multiple fields globally.

By TEMBA Junior SUH

VERY few words summarize and describe Jude Romeo Song Nkwain. The daring former student of the University of Yaounde is an inspiring all-rounder. He is a top technology professional and entrepreneur and more. Song Nkwain is Founder and Chief Executive Officer, CEO of Highupweb, a web development company based in Cameroon and the United States of America. The highly-acclaimed star also holds the same position at Highupweb Academy, one of the finest Information and Communications Technologies, ICT training centers in Cameroon as well as the Highupweb Driving school and Highupweb Foundation. The multifaceted institution has driven and established young Song Nkwain as youngster whose activities across Cameroon and beyond are influencing thousands of lives across multiple fields, cementing his spot as a referred figure that is championing tech education and entrepreneurship in Cameroon. Song Nkwain's most famous project is the Highupweb development company. He has through the project, helped dozens of young, struggling and established individuals and institutions in building their online brands through the creation of websites and services in other similar digital components designed to enhance the visibility of companies and personal smaller businesses. The works that he has carried out since the launch of the company in 2018 have helped in immensely creating riches for the dozens of companies and individuals that he has worked with directly and indirectly, leading to the creation of wealth and contributing to the overall growth of the economy in Cameroon and beyond. Besides his activities under Highweb, Song Nkwain's incredible talent in the web designing space have seen him working with several top companies

as an individual. Song Nkwain has worked as a web designer for global telecommunications giant, South African-owned MTN where his works elevated the company's digital presence as a result of the crucial role that he played in designing, developing and optimizing web solutions that align with the multinational company's mission to deliver innovative digital services. Song Nkwain helped the company in boosting its client lead by 60% thereby contributing in immensely growing the telecommunications giant's customer engagement and revenue as a result of his work that included the creation of a "user-friendly, high-performance websites and applications tailored to meet the evolving needs of MTN's diverse customer base and business objectives," as he humbly puts it. Besides MTN where Song Nkwain's works also majorly helped in reaching a remarkable 50% reduction in client operating costs, he has also worked as a web designer for Olam, a global agribusiness company. At Olam, he worked in collaboration with other designers in refining the company's business assets. He has also worked as a web developer for Attindas Hygiene Partners, a forward-thinking company based in Ohio in the United States of America, where he provided "impactful web solutions that enhance user engagement and satisfaction."

Highupweb Academy

Growing up as a teenager, Song Nkwain had a knack to inspire others and drive overall wellbeing. That, perhaps, is the reason behind his move some five years ago to establish Highupweb Academy. Based in Yaounde, Song Nkwain's academy is rapidly cementing its place in the industry as one of the biggest and continuously growing information and communication technologies, ICT training centers in Cameroon. The center has



trained thousands of Cameroonian youngsters across over 10 batches, playing a crucial role in driving the development of the tech industry in Cameroon and curbing unemployment. The structure has worked and continued working with some major tech partners in the private and public sectors in Cameroon and outside Cameroon, including Cameroon's Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications. Thousands of the institution's trainees have moved forward to easily integrate and successfully work with companies, setup personal enterprises among other achievements.

Highupweb Driving School

Song Nkwain is referred to as an all-rounder in the technology industry. But his prolific skills spread beyond the ever-growing and challenging tech world. He is making similar strides in the transport sector through his now growingly famous Highupweb Driving School. Since the launch of the structure which is also known as Auto Ecole Highupweb, in the French language, Song Nkwain

has always stated that the reason behind the creation of the company is simple: he is out to reduce road accidents in Cameroon. According to the youngster who considers the driving school project as an external challenge, he is confident that the company provides a platform for he and his collaborators to train highly qualified, professional, and confident drivers that have what it takes to make Cameroonian roads, where at least a thousand persons die each year due to accidents, safe.

Highupweb Foundation

Song Nkwain created the Highupweb Foundation last year in a bid to give back to the community through needy populations. The foundation provides free training to hundreds of less privileged persons across the Highupweb web development company, the company's academy and the driving school. The foundation has after barely a year of existence, directly impacted the lives of over a thousand beneficiaries and indirectly contributed to the wellbeing of several other thousands of persons,

positioning young Song Nkwain as a youngster that is not only champion technology education and entrepreneurship in Cameroon but also touching lives as a humanitarian sensation that is consistently driven by the zeal to contribute to the overall growth of the larger society.

Educational background

Song Nkwain studied computers sciences in the University of Yaounde I between 2010 and 2014, a background that is believed to be at the heart of his now outstanding overall success in the technology world. Besides the enriching stint at the referred state-owned institution, he has also studied in several other schools in Cameroon and beyond. Among them, the Joss Higher Institute of Management and Information Technology, JIMIT where he notably studied Version Control and Responsive Web Design. His academic background has also taken him to eMarket Institute where he secured skills in Search Engine Optimization, SEO and Adobe Creative Suit.

INTERVIEW

JUDE ROMEO SONG NKWAIN

“My decision to choose tech as a career space was driven by a combination of passion and the desire to solve problems creatively”

In a special seat down with The National Post, Jude Romeo Song Nkwain talks us through his journey towards creatively solving society's problems sustainably.

Views collected by TEMBA Junior SUH

Over the years, an encouraging number of Cameroonian youth have embraced the web and the opportunities that the space offers. A good number of them say they have been pushed by passion while others say they got engaged in the sector just for survival purposes? What motivated your decision to choose tech as a career space?

My decision to choose tech as a career space was driven by a combination of passion and the desire to solve problems creatively. During days in the university, I became fascinated by how technology could shape the future and make life easier for individuals and businesses alike. It was then that I realized that web development was the perfect space to explore my curiosity and creativity. I started my web development journey back in 2015, a time when very few companies had an online presence, whether through a website or social media. After completing my training and internship, I saw a gap in the market and decided to turn my skills into a full-service offering, helping businesses go digital by creating stunning web solutions for them. While many enter the tech field for financial stability, I believe it's about more than just survival. For me, it has not also about following a passion, but about following my energy—what excites and motivates me. The world of tech is dynamic, and the challenges it presents inspire me to keep evolving. It has not just about building websites; it has about creating impactful digital experiences that can truly change the way people and businesses operate. The digital space, especially in Africa, offers limitless opportunities for growth and innovation. By choosing this career, I found a way to not only push my personal boundaries but also contribute to the broader tech ecosystem, helping others to embrace the digital world and unlock its potential.

We understand you have been in the industry for just over five years. But during that period, you have distinguished yourself not only as one of the best in the business but as an all-rounder. What is the

secret behind the incredible drive which has notably led to you working with big brands like global telecom heavyweight, MTN?

Indeed, my journey in the web development industry has spanned over 8 years, and it has been an incredible ride of growth, learning, and evolution. One of the things that have kept me going, and perhaps the secret behind the drive you mentioned, is my unyielding commitment to staying curious and continuously improving my skills. From the beginning, I have always believed that web development is not just about coding but about creating meaningful experiences that resonate with users. I have had the privilege of working with large brands like MTN, and what sets me apart is my ability to adapt and wear multiple hats. It has not just about being a developer, but about understanding the bigger picture—the business goals, the customer needs, and how technology can help bridge the gap between them. Being an all-rounder in the industry means that I am constantly challenging myself to broaden my scope of knowledge. Whether it's web design, development, digital marketing, or project management, I see them as all interconnected components that work together to create the best results. I do not just focus on one aspect; I approach each project with a holistic mindset. This approach has allowed me to deliver impactful solutions that not only meet technical standards but also align with the strategic objectives of my clients. Another key factor has been my ability to adapt to the fast-paced and ever-changing landscape of the tech industry. The digital world is evolving rapidly, and staying ahead of the curve is crucial. I continuously upskill, experiment with new technologies, and keep learning. My work with big brands like MTN is a testament to the power of consistency, discipline, and an unwavering belief in delivering quality. It has the drive to push boundaries and deliver exceptional results that has helped me establish myself as a trusted partner for such big names in the business.

As a web expert, what can you point out as your most fulfilling



achievement?

When I reflect on my journey, I realize that my achievements span across not just web development but entrepreneurship as well. In 2018, after years of honing my skills, I took the leap and founded my own web development company, offering services to clients worldwide. But it didn't stop there. In 2022, I founded Highupweb Academy, one of the leading ICT training centers in Yaoundé. The goal was clear: to give back to my community by teaching Cameroonians some of the skills I've acquired in the tech industry, and to help empower them for a brighter future. To date, Highupweb Academy has successfully trained over 3,000 Cameroonians. Many of these students have gone on to work for top companies, while others have embraced freelancing or started their own businesses. The impact has been profound, and it's truly rewarding to see them thriving. In addition to my work in tech education, I also founded Highupweb Driving School with the goal of reducing road accidents in Cameroon by training individuals to become confident and safe drivers. Through this initiative, we aim to make our roads safer while providing people with the skills to improve their livelihoods. Furthermore, recognizing the digital divide in Cameroon, I launched Highupweb Foundation in 2024. The foundation offers free computer training to adults aged 40 and above, as well as less privileged youth. We have already trained over 150 adults, empowering them with essential skills to adapt to an increasingly digital world. Looking back, it has not just about the websites I have built or the clients I have worked with. It has about the people I have helped, the businesses I have supported, and the communities I have contributed to. This holistic approach to both web development and entrepre-

neurship has been incredibly fulfilling and continues to drive me forward every day.

Aside your personal activities, you also run a web academy like you stated earlier, that is also steadily cementing its position among the most respected in the industry. Why the choice of running such an academy and how successful has the project been per your personal target and evaluation?

Running Highupweb Academy was driven by my desire to give back to my community and share the knowledge I have gained over the years. When I founded the academy in 2022, my goal was not only to teach web development but also to empower young Cameroonians with skills that would open doors to new opportunities in the tech world. We train students in a variety of fields, including graphic design, cybersecurity, database administration, digital marketing, and more. The success of the project has been incredible, with more than 3,000 students trained so far. Many of them have gone on to secure jobs, become freelancers, or even start their own businesses. It has been fulfilling to see our students thrive and contribute to bridging the tech gap in Cameroon. The academy is a key part of my mission to help people from all walks of life gain digital skills and transform their lives through technology.

State institutions like the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications have in the last six or so years, made strides to accommodate and promote structures like your academy and entrepreneurs like you. What is the relationship between you, your institution as a body and other groups like the government?

The relationship between Highupweb

Academy and institutions like the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications has been positive and supportive. Over the years, we've collaborated on various initiatives aimed at promoting tech entrepreneurship and digital skills development in Cameroon. One of the key benefits has been having representatives from the ministry attend seminars at our academy, where they've had the opportunity to orientate and inspire our students. This collaboration not only helps bridge the digital divide but also ensures that we align with national ICT development goals, contributing to the growth of the tech ecosystem

Conclusively, what is your biggest target as a tech expert and for the entire industry in Cameroon?

As a tech expert, my biggest target is to contribute to the transformation of Cameroon's tech landscape by bridging the digital divide and empowering individuals with the skills and tools they need to succeed in the digital world. I aim to create more opportunities for the youth, especially in underserved communities, to pursue careers in technology and entrepreneurship, as I believe this will drive economic growth and innovation. For the entire industry in Cameroon, my goal is to foster a more inclusive and sustainable tech ecosystem where local tech startups and entrepreneurs have the resources and support, they need to scale, innovate, and compete on a global level. This includes strengthening partnerships with government bodies, tech organizations, and international stakeholders to create policies, funding, and networks that will push the industry forward. Ultimately, I envision a thriving digital economy in Cameroon that leads to job creation, improved services, and overall national progress.

2025 VISION

Housing minister's urban transformation master plan

Minister Ketcha Courtes has in a bid to drive rapid and sustainable urban development, issued a rallying call for her collaborators and partners to embrace a spirit of undistracted productivity, kick-starting a new era of strength in the housing and urban development sector.

By **Brigette BATE**

Speaking during the annual conference of the central and decentralised services of the ministry, which took place recently in Yaoundé, held under the theme: "2025 perspectives and the urban sub-sector's contribution to improving living conditions". Served as a platform to showcase the proven impact of urban road and sanitation projects on the daily lives of Cameroonians, as well as to review the ministry's implementation of on-going and planned projects. A key focus was the review of participative management, implemented in 2023, as a critical tool for implementing public policies on urban issues. Additionally, the conference examined the 2024 decentralization drive as an optimal strategy for executing urban projects effectively. In

Minister Ketcha Courtes opening sentence, she highlighted the significance of this year's meeting, particularly in line with upcoming elections, including the presidential election in October. She stressed the need for outstanding results and an effective communication plan to highlight the ministry's achievements and build public confidence. The Minister emphasized that the urban sub-sector is a vital component of the infrastructure sector and serves as a locomotive for the country's overall growth. She highlighted the importance of infrastructure as the driving force behind the country's economic development, citing that Gross Domestic Product, GDP, is concentrated in urban areas, where the majority of wealth is generated. To support productivity, she added, a quality road infrastructure is essential. Minister Ketcha Courtes reiterated that a course has been

set by the President of the Republic, and the ministry's role is to significantly improve urban mobility in the main cities of Cameroon. The 2025 State Budget allocates a total of 1,863 billion FCFA for investment, with over 1,153 billion FCFA specifically allocated for the infrastructure sector. According to the Minister, visible, immediate, and tangible results for the population fall within the framework of the seven-year period of great opportunities, which will easily enable the population to have confidence and allow the peaceful pursuit of the Head of State's great achievements. By increasing productivity and effectively implementing urban development projects, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development aims to contribute to a more prosperous and sustainable future for Cameroon.

OKOK SCANDAL

Christelle Bikoe denies allegations, claims misinterpretation

The restaurant owner Christelle Bikoe Nga, accused of contaminating okok with urine, has refuted the allegations, stating that the viral video was taken out of context.

By **Kylan NDIMIDA**

Speaking during her presentation by elements of the Central Police Station No. 4 in Yaoundé on February 18, Bikoe insisted that the act seen in the video was not intended for public consumption. "I understand the outrage this has caused, but the reality is different from what is being spread online," she declared. Bikoe, alongside her alleged accomplice and partner, Nloga Boum Joseph, was swaggered before the press in Yaoundé's Mvog-Ada neighbourhood. The police, led by Commissioner Mindjom Christine Irène, apprehended the duo after a thorough investigation into the scandal. According to Commissioner Mindjom, Bikoe was arrested on February 14, 2025, in a village in Mvengue Sub-division in the south of the country, where she had gone into hiding following the backlash. During police questioning, Bikoe maintained that the act captured in the viral video was not connected to her business

but was a personal matter involving her husband. "She told us she acted out of frustration due to financial difficulties in her home," Commissioner Mindjom stated. Bikoe explained that her restaurant, which she opened in September last year, was not making enough profits to sustain her family. She claimed that her husband, who had been the main financial provider, withdrew his support, pushing her into extreme frustration. She further stated that the video was not meant to be shared publicly and that she never intended to harm anyone. Despite her defence, police investigations suggest otherwise. Testimonies from residents and her landlord, Christian Chico, contradict her claims. "People in the neighbourhood confirmed they had consumed meals from her restaurant multiple times, and we found several bottles of urine at the premises," the police commissioner disclosed. Eyewitnesses claim that Bikoe had been selling the traditional Okok meal to unsuspecting customers for months. Some former patrons expressed shock and anger, demanding legal



action against her. "I have eaten at her restaurant many times. To think that I may have consumed contaminated food is disturbing," said one resident who requested anonymity. Authorities have classified the act as a severe public health threat, emphasizing its criminal nature. "This is beyond a health violation it is a deliberate attempt to endanger lives. If proven, it amounts to attempted poisoning," Commissioner Mindjom warned. The police have reassured the public that they are committed to ensuring food safety and protecting consumers. "We encourage the public to report any suspicious activities in restaurants or food establishments.

This case serves as a reminder that the authorities will act swiftly to prevent such incidents," the commissioner added. As investigations continue, the case has sparked widespread debate on food safety, trust in local eateries, and the power of social media in exposing or misinterpreting incidents. Some have called for stricter food inspection policies, while others question the role of social media in amplifying unverified information. Meanwhile, Bikoe and her partner remain in police custody, awaiting further legal proceedings. If found guilty, they could face severe penalties under Cameroonian law, including imprisonment and heavy fines.

DID YOU KNOW?

Silverback can lift over 1763 dead weights



The Astonishing Strength of the Silverback Gorilla Silverback, the dominant male primates leading their troops, are renowned for their impressive physical prowess. While their intelligence and social complexity are well-documented, it is their sheer strength that truly captures the imagination. These powerful creatures possess the capability to lift an astonishing amount of weight, showcasing their incredible muscular development and skeletal structure. Research and observations have indicated that silverback gorillas can lift over 1,763 pounds (800 kilograms) of dead weight. This extraordinary lifting capacity surpasses that of even the strongest human weightlifters. For comparison, the world record for a deadlift by a human is just over 1,100 pounds. Several factors contribute to the silverback's exceptional strength. Their robust musculoskeletal system, characterized by dense bones and powerful muscles, is specifically adapted for climbing, foraging, and defending their territory and troop. Their diet, primarily consisting of leaves, stems, and fruits, provides the necessary energy and nutrients to maintain their massive size and muscle mass. The silverback's strength is not merely for show. It is essential for survival in their natural habitat. They use their strength to uproot trees, move heavy logs, and defend their troop against predators such as leopards. In addition, displays of strength are crucial for establishing and maintaining dominance within the troop, ensuring their position as the leader. The silverback's incredible lifting capacity is a testament to the raw power and physical capabilities of these magnificent primates. Their ability to lift over 1,763 pounds of dead weight underscores their dominance in their ecosystem and the importance of strength in their daily lives.

INDEPTH

HAVE YOUR SAY

INSECURITY IN TAXIS

Are bikes safer?

Mounting concerns over safety within taxis are driving a surge in interest toward alternative transportation methods, with bicycles increasingly seen as a more secured option.

By Brigette BATE

THE alarming rise in taxi-related insecurity has sparked widespread concern.

Many now view taxis with apprehension, praying for a safe journey to their destination. The once-common mode of transportation has become a gamble, leaving users anxious and seeking alternative, safer options some victims of taxi-related crime have shared their distressing experiences. “It has happened to me twice, and they took my phones. The one that really pained me is my iPhone 14. They dropped me and kicked off,” said one individual, reflecting a growing fear among taxi users who feel vulnerable and exposed. Another victim recounted a similar harrowing experience: “That was my first time I almost got mad. They took me when in a far distance, dropped me and took my phone, and that day I was going to deliver cakes. Even the cake they took – hungry people.”. The incident highlights the potential for financial loss and emotional distress associated with taxi-related crime these incidents contribute to a narrative of insecurity that is fueling the consideration of hiring bikes as a viable alternative. Bikes offer autonomy



over route and pace, providing a sense of control that taxis often lack. Furthermore, bicycles are exposed to the public, potentially deterring criminal activity. This can be particularly appealing to individuals who have experienced discomfort or unease in taxis. The increasing availability of bike-sharing programs and dedicated cycling lanes is further facilitating the shift towards cycling as a mode of transportation. These initiatives are making bicycles more accessible and convenient, encouraging more people to explore it as an option. Beyond security, cycling offers health and environmental benefits. It provides exercise, reduces congestion, and lowers emissions.

However, bicycles are not without their risks. “When you get in an accident on a bike, you are finished,” said Tizih Chiara, a victim of a bike accident. “I had an accident on the bike; it was like I would lose it. But bikes are fast and are open to the public. For a bike man to assault you that mean he must have planned it for long compared to taxi. They do not need to plan it.” Despite the potential for accidents, the growing concerns regarding safety in taxis are prompting individuals to seek alternative modes of transport. The emphasis on control and security, both bicycles and taxis offer pros and cons, thus both emerging as a choice for users.

OPINIONS

Brenda MISSPAR - Yaounde resident

“They once distracted and stole from me in a taxi”



“I was heading to school, like every morning. It was 8:00 a.m. when I hailed a taxi. After the taxi confirmed my destination, I realized that only half of the cabin was available. As soon as I sat down, the cabin seat suddenly slid back, causing the passengers in the back to cry out in pain. The driver advised me and the gentleman sharing the cabin

with me to try to pull the seat forward. During the commotion, the gentleman took advantage of the distraction to rummage through my bag and steal from me while I was unaware. After 15 minutes into the journey, the driver hinted that we were too cramped to continue together and suggested it would be better for me to continue with another taxi. Without hesitation, I got out. Unsuspecting, I continued my journey in another taxi, where I was more comfortable, seated in the back seat.

Karisma NEMBOT -Bike rider

“It’s understandable why people are increasingly switching to bikes”



It’s understandable why people are turning to bikes. If assaults in taxis are a real concern, then bikes offer a sense of control and freedom that taxis lack. Knowing you are in charge of your road and not confined in a vehicle with a potentially dangerous driver is empowering we have conscious; we are educated people too just circumstances and we are force to do survive but

when you carry a passenger he is under your care. While bikes are not risk-free, the perception of enhanced safety compared to taxis experiencing high crime rates makes the switch a logical choice for many. Personal safety is paramount, and people will naturally seek alternatives when feeling threatened. I am not saying that bikes too are 100% safe but they are few out there to trust.

FOOTBALL

Cameroon qualifies for 2025 U17 AFCON

Cameroon's Under-17 team has qualified for the 2025 Under-17 AFCON after a resounding 7-1 win over Gabon yesterday.

By Kylan NDIMIDA

IN an intense clash against the Panthers of Gabon at the Annex Reunification Stadium in Douala on February 19, 2025, the U17 Lions once again proved their superiority by defeating Gabon’s U17 team 7-1. wonder boy Frank Mafany from Best Star Academy of Limbe who emerged Man of

the Match, scored four goals, with the first coming just two minutes into the match. Abraham Kolly, Oscar Etoundi, and David Bondoma also found the back of the net, while Basile Marvin Ondo scored Gabon’s only goal in the 56th minute. The victory in matchday two of the ongoing UNIFFAC Zonal Tournament has secured Cameroon the first available ticket to the continental championship, scheduled to take place in Rabat, Morocco, in March this year.

Before their last match against DR Congo on February 22, Coach Alioum Saidou’s squad leads the zone’s classification table with six points and an impressive 16 goals scored so far. Central African Republic follows in second place with three points, DR Congo is third with either three, and Gabon sits at the bottom with zero points. This will be Cameroon’s ninth participation in the U17 AFCON, with their last appearance dating back to 2023. In that tournament, they were placed in Group C alongside Mali and Senegal. Unfortunately, Cameroon did not advance beyond the group stage, suffering defeats in



both of their matches. They lost 2-0 to Mali on May 4, 2023, and 2-1 to Burkina Faso on May 7, 2023. The top two teams from this tournament will join other qualified teams in the 2025

U17 AFCON, scheduled from March 30 to April 19, 2025, in Morocco. The continental championship will also serve as a qualifier for the 2025 FIFA U17 World Cup set for Qatar.