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Massive protest in Jos over closure of universities

There was massive turnout of workers and students to protest in Jos, Plateau capital on Tuesday over prolong closure of Nigerian

universities. It would be recalled that Nigerian university workers have been on strike more than five months over non implementation of

agreements between the Federal Government and university unions. The solidarity protest organised by Nigerian Labour Congress in conjunction with the Trade

Union Congress (TUC) was in solidarity with university unions. Plateau NLC Chairman, Comrade Eugene Manji who addressed the workers before the commencement

of the procession, said that organise labour would not folds its hands and watch a situation that affect every Nigerian. Manji said that there is no future for the nation

without education and hence the need for everyone to do the needful to ensure that students return to their classes. "The fastest way to kill a nation is to first kill its education and that is what our leaders are doing. "Some of our students are laying waste at home, while
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Terrorists attack Brigade of Guards in Abuja

BARELY 24 hours after threatening to kidnap President Muhammad Buhari, Malam Nasir el-Rufai and other government officials, terrorists on Monday struck in Abuja and ambushed the Guards Brigade, inflicting serious injuries on the elite force.

A signal on the attack reads that the Law School in Bwari may be targeted for attack.

The primary duty of the Guards Brigade is to provide security for the nation's Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, especially the Presidential Villa.

Security sources said the troops were ambushed on the Bwari-Kubwa Road while on routine patrol.

According to a source, "available reports show that the troops were on routine
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...Salaries not reviewed in 11 years -ASUU

The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) says salaries of university lecturers in the country have not been reviewed in the last 11 years.

Dr Lazarus Maigoro, Chairman of the University of Jos Chapter of the union made this known at the peaceful protest organised by the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) on Tuesday in Jos.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that

the NLC embarked on the nationwide protest in solidarity with the ASUU and other affiliate unions over the lingering industrial action in public universities in Nigeria.

Maigoro said the strike was to push for their demands and to enable government address the lingering issues.

"It is not that we derive pleasure in going on strike, but it has become our last option and this is simply to salvage the decaying state

of university education in Nigeria.

"We entered an agreement with the Federal Government in 2009. Till date this

agreement has not been honoured by government.

"For instance, in the last 11 years, the salaries of university lecturers have not be reviewed. Where in

the world is this done?

"Committees were set up to look into our demands, but government refused to consider the

Cont'd on Page 2

Ekweremadu's wife granted bail

The wife of former Deputy Senate President, Ike Ekweremadu, accused of plotting to traffic a homeless man into the United Kingdom to

harvest a kidney for her daughter, has been granted bail, according to the *Daily Mail* of UK.

Beatrice Nwanneka Ekweremadu, 55,
Cont'd on Page 2



News

Massive protest in Jos over prolong closure of universities

Cont'd from Page 1

some only God knows what is happening to them.

"Virtually everybody in this country is affected by this prolonged strike action, and nobody seems to feel that something wrong is happening in the country.

"Can you have a generation without succession? The gap that is being created who will fill the vacuum?" he asked.

He said that the failure of government to heed to university workers' demands, would lead organised labour to shut down the country indefinitely.

He appreciated the workers for not yielding to intimidation and propaganda.

The Chairman, Senior Staff Association of Nigeria

Universities (SSANU), Plateau State University Bokkos, Mr Timnan Rimdap said that the government was not sincere in its negotiation with the unions.

Rimdap who is North Central Zonal Secretary or SSANU, said no meaningful progress was made in resolving the issues since university workers embarked on the strike.

Chairman, Civil Liberties Organisation, Mr Steve Aluko said that education is a right and the bedrock for development and that any government that fails to secure education is a failure.

Aluko said that government set its committee to look at the issues only for it to turn round and reject the

committee recommendations.

The CLO chairman said that Nigerians would not relent until they rescue the education sector from collapse.

He called on Plateau Government to resolve the crises in all the state tertiary institutions that kept the workers and students at home.

The protesters took their written demands to Plateau State House of Assembly (PLHA).

Speaker PLHA, Mr Yakubu Sanda commended the workers for their peaceful conduct in making known their demands.

Sanda said that the House Committee on Labour would study the demands and also forward it to appropriate quarters.

Terrorists attack Brigade of Guard in Abuja

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patrol of the Bwari-Kubwa area when they were attacked suddenly."

The source, however, hinted that the ambush was repelled by troops of the Guards Brigade, who immediately restored sanity to the area.

It was gathered that the wounded soldiers were evacuated to the Military Hospital for medical attention. The signal message on the attack reads: "Troops on routine patrol on Kubwa-Bwari were ambushed by suspected terrorists.

"Three soldiers were injured during the attack. The soldiers have been evacuated for medical attention.

"Details on the extent of their injuries are still being verified. The ambush happening within the

general area of Bwari Guards Brigade, Captain Godfrey Anebi Abakpa, confirmed the attack but made no further comment. It was however, gathered that two officers of the Guards Brigade lost their lives and their families had been informed

When contacted, spokesperson for the

Guards Brigade, Captain Godfrey Anebi Abakpa, confirmed the attack but made no further comment. It was however, gathered that two officers of the Guards Brigade lost their lives and their families had been informed

Edo confirms 8 cases of monkey pox

The Edo State Ministry of Health has confirmed that eight persons have so far tested positive for monkey pox in the state.

The Commissioner for Health, Prof Akoria Obehi, who disclosed this to journalists in Benin City, said the Ministry had ramped up surveillance and other activities to curb the spread of infectious disease.

She, however, noted that all persons who were diagnosed with the disease have recovered.

Prof Obehi noted, "Amid the rise in the number of confirmed cases of monkey pox in Edo, it has become imperative to warn on the health risks that the virus poses and reiterate the need for residents to be cautious and adhere to safety measures." The Commissioner highlighted symptoms of Monkey pox to include fever, headache, weakness of the body, sore throat, and enlargement of glands under the jaw and in the neck.

"It can also come with the appearance of a rash on the face, palms, soles of the feet, genitals, and other parts of the body, which can appear solid or fluid-filled at the onset and can manifest within a period of two to three weeks following infection, depending on the health status of the



individual."

Prof. Obehi, who urged residents to observe safety measures to reduce the spread of the virus and other infectious diseases in the state, noted, "The virus can be transmitted from infected animals and rodents such as rats, mice, squirrels, and even monkeys; through contact with infected blood, body fluids, spots, blisters or scabs, and sharing of objects.

"Avoid contact with dead or live wild animals such as small mammals, including rodents (rats, squirrels) and non-human primates (monkeys, apes).

"Thoroughly cook all foods containing animal meat before eating; avoid unprotected contact with infected animals, humans, their beddings and other linen; wash hands regularly and use sanitiser when water is not available."

Restating the government's commitment to containing the outbreak and protecting the health of residents, the commissioner said the State Disease Surveillance Team had been deployed to control the outbreak in the state, alongside the engagement of stakeholders across the state's 18 Local Government Areas.

"If you suspect any symptoms of monkeypox, kindly visit the nearest health facility for medical attention or call the Acting State Disease Surveillance and Notification Officer (0806 059 3802)", Obehi advised.

...Salaries not reviewed in 11 years -ASUU



Cont'd from Page 1

recommendations of these committees," he said.

Maigoro accused government paying lip service toward the growth of university education, insisting that education remains the bedrock of development in any society.

According to him, education remains the only asset for the common man, adding that the struggle of the union was not solely personal, but aimed at ensuring standards practices in the education sector.

The chairman thanked NLC and other affiliate bodies for the solidarity in calling on government to address the issues at hand.

Maigoro also called on parents support and collaborate with ASUU toward securing a better future for their children and the generation yet unborn.

NAN reports that

lecturers in government-owned universities embarked on a nationwide strike on Feb. 14 over the adoption of the Integrated Personnel Payroll Information System (IPPIIS) of the government as the payment system in the university sector.

They had also decried the poor funding of universities, non-payment of salaries and allowances of some of their colleagues, as well as the inability of the government to pay earned academic allowance to lecturers, among other issues.

Since the industrial action began, several negotiations between the union and the government have ended in deadlock.

Amid outcry over the effect of the industrial action on the nation's tertiary education sector,

Ekweremadu's wife granted bail

together with her husband Ike Ekweremadu, 60, allegedly trafficked the 21-year-old to London from the streets of Lagos in order to harvest his organ.

They are accused of plotting to traffic him to transplant his organs to their daughter who suffers from kidney failure.

Both Ekweremadu and his wife appeared at the Old Bailey on Friday for a bail hearing. However,

while the wife was granted bail, the husband was denied bail.

According to the report, the Common Sergeant of London, judge Richard Marks, said: "The position is that I have granted bail to Beatrice subject to some fairly stringent conditions but I have refused bail to Ike."

Prosecutors are not appealing the decision, the court heard.

Prosecutor Tim Probert-Wood said previously that the case involved 'exploitation and the harvesting of an organ.'

He said: "The case began on 5 May 2022 when the complainant presented himself at Staines Police Station and claimed he had been transported to this country for the purpose of his kidney being removed.

"He arrived on 20th

February 2022 and was taken to Royal Free Hospital where tests were conducted.

"For the purpose he was there he did not consent to the taking of his kidney. He returned to the house he was staying in and his treatment changed dramatically.

"He described being treated effectively as a slave."

The couple are due to appear at the Old Bailey on 4 August.



Business & Economy

The growing headache of business owners

The COVID-19 pandemic as well as the economic turbulence have had significant impacts on businesses, manufacturers and households, including individual lifestyle and well-being in recent times. The direct consequence of these impacts has been a very large increase in inflation numbers in the country, and it is currently having serious implications. Timi Olubiye writes.

GLOBALLY, no country is immune to inflation. Around the world, inflationary pressure has been experienced in the USA, the UK, and many other developed and developing nations. But in Nigeria, the peculiarity is that inflation has been getting higher steadily for the last two years.

Nigeria is one of the countries where inflation has grown the fastest, and it has been a concern for many businesses, and the government due to its severe impact post-COVID-19. Lately, we have witnessed continued and unexplainable increases in the price of practically every known item and service across the country.

The troubling trend is that most of these basic and essential necessities are increasingly out of reach for the majority of people. Indicating that the country's cost of living has risen at an alarming rate.

That is, the rise in household spending required to maintain a consistent and decent quality of life has been a source of anxiety for many. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) says Nigeria's headline inflation rate increased to 18.24 percent on a year-on-year basis as at June 2022. The percentage change is the highest in the last five years, according to the records.

Though academic literature has pointed out that once inflation exceeds a certain level, on average above 15 percent, it starts to have a negative impact on the economy, principally on economic stability, growth, employment and investment attractiveness.

Even so, the author thinks that the real inflation in an economy is shown by the rise in prices of food, groceries, and other goods and services that people use every day.

Without a doubt, the food inflation trend over the last two years has been overwhelming. The proportion of the majority's income that is spent on food has remained ridiculously high. The persistent rise in inflation results in a decline in the buying power of Nigerians, who are therefore getting poorer.

Because they will be forced to prioritise significant spending and the affordability of essentials will continue to decrease. The consequences of high inflation are a spike in unemployment numbers, a rise in poverty rates, declining savings, a high number of jobless youths, crimes, and unrest.

A report by Aljazeera titled "Inflation rises in Nigeria amid fuel scarcity and insecurity" indicated that four (4) out of ten (10) Nigerians are living below



Adebayo

the poverty line. So, with this trend, the author has noticed a spike and sharp rise in the demand for substituted products and services by the majority of the citizenry in the country. The substitution effect usually happens when consumers replace very expensive items with cheaper ones due to price changes or when their financial conditions regress, and vice-versa.

However, the point is about the decline in purchasing power due to inflation and its attendant consequences. The cost of purchasing products and services required to maintain a given quality of life continues to be a major worry for many families and individuals in the country. According to the substitution effect, people switch from more expensive products and services to less expensive alternatives when prices rise or income declines.

For the majority of businesses, the persistent inflation in the country has made the high cost of running and maintaining independently generated power unbearable, particularly the cost of diesel. This has resulted in a high cost of running businesses. However, this cost is passed on to the consumers without notice. When this cost is passed and consumers find it intolerable, then

a change in demand by switching to substitute products and services prevails.

The propensity for this trend is high and it has been the order of the day. Substitute products or goods are alternative goods that could be used for the same purpose. Therefore, in the presence of inflation, substituting means that consumers seek out alternatives that are frequently low in price, most of the time low in quality, inferior, and largely unregulated. The demand for substitutes continues to rise, because the masses need to survive at all cost, so who has the blame?

The consumers or the businesses? So long as the price of goods and products continues to increase, demand for their substitutes will continue to rise. Consequently, business operators need to be aware of this. For instance, numerous salary earners have been forced to reduce the quality of the food they purchase, and business owners continue to replace family food basket staples with any affordable alternative. Meanwhile, the expenses of transportation, school fees, electricity, cooking gas, and rent are equally on the rise, adding to the burden.

From a business perspective,

substitute products create rivalry, loss of revenue, weak sales, loss of potential customers or consumers, low or no patronage, and threats to business survival. The main absurdity is that businesses cannot even identify the providers of these alternatives, because they remain largely in the dark. For instance, canned and jarred Sardine Titus is expensive, but Sardine Estus an alternative is available and affordable but the producers are faceless and unknown.

Many of such competitors are available in the Nigerian market with a huge market share and competitive pressure. However, the quality of these readily available cheap alternatives is significantly compromised, and market leading companies and products could even suffer business continuity issues if the lower-priced alternative continues to gain market share and interest of the masses.

As a response, it is a time for businesses to re-strategise, engage in high marketing and promotional campaigns, innovate in line with customer expectations and patronage-improving products, and lower prices. Again, businesses can review their pricing model at this time to accommodate consumers and customers with waning purchasing power.

It is also important for the government to play a bigger role in regulating substandard, inferior, and bad products, especially those that are dumped on the Nigerian market. Right now, it's important to look at and understand how substitution can affect the economy, businesses, and environment in order to stop high death rates and illnesses.

Businesses can fail entirely as a result of substitute effects and substitution products outperforming the original. In a market where there are fewer substitute products, there is a higher probability of businesses earning greater profits, but the reverse is the case, with inflation and the current realities.

So, entrepreneurs, business

owners, and SME operators need to clearly understand that their businesses may just suffer from a substitution effect, which can weaken the sales of their products and may be attributed to consumers switching to cheaper alternatives just because they no longer have affordability or the price hike is unbearable. In the view of the author, consumers largely make their choices based on their available spending power and make constant adjustments based on price changes, most of the time on impulse.

So, in a time of high inflation and low consumer spending, cheaper substitutes and second hand (used) items are the alternatives that are available. Observation of the surroundings reveals every accessible space or place for micro businesses to operate, its an avenue to trade in second-hand items which the majority now prefer as alternatives owing to dwindling income and affordability at this time due to inflation. This can make it harder for well-known brands or established businesses to get patronage and remain in business, if differentiation or other business strategies are ignored to stay cost competitive.

Many are unaware that the high inflation rate in the country is one of the major reasons why the Naira is losing value. Therefore, the authors recommend that the government should make a deliberate effort to tackle the key issues in the country: insecurity, incessant power issues, continued exchange rate instability, and non-availability of forex to genuine business operators and exporting companies. Inflation could remain an issue unless these issues are given headlong attention. Good luck!

Source: BusinessDay

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Business & Economy

Rising cost of inputs crippling catfish farming

THE Catfish Farmers Association of Nigeria (CAFAN) on Monday said that the subsector is currently on the brink of collapse as many fish farmers had ceased operation due to the rising cost of inputs for production.

Benjamin Okpere, Edo State chairman of the fish farmers association, told journalists in Benin City, that the market price of inputs have doubled in the last one year and may further push players in the sector out of business if urgent action is not taken to counter the problem.

Okpere, who identified the unabated security challenges and forex trading as some of the driving forces pushing the cost of inputs, asked the Federal Government to support catfish farmers so as to boost local production with a view to increasing profits and meeting demand gap.

"The ever-increasing cost of feed is attributed to the high cost of forex trading and insecurity because those locally produced materials like maize that is found in the North are no longer sufficient as farmers can hardly go to their farms now. So, there is scarcity of those commodities and it has affected the price.

"The catfish business was a thriving one until last year when the economic realities became terrible for many farmers and this has affected production to a large extent. Ordinarily, it has been a profitable venture and, with the ban on imported fish, it has been a good source of protein because people take cat fish as fresh fish, barbecue and as dried fish. It is a delicacy people will not want to miss from their tables," Okpere said.

He, however, decried the interrupted power supply and the continuous price increase of diesel, adding that the cost implication of providing electricity has taken a hit on their business.

"The biggest of the farmers have downscale to some extent because a lot of them rely on generators to run their farms and can hardly buy diesel. One of the biggest factory operators in Benin City used to run power 24hours because of the scale of the factory but right now he has cut down and has resorted to petrol generators that can carry one or two boreholes at a time as against the eight boreholes he used before now.

"So, even the big farmers that have the capacity to operate are still challenged by the economic realities. Yes, we are still in business and some are expanding from small to medium but a good numbers are shutting down.

"Some state government intervention tried to bring in more people by creating jobs like what they did with the Libya returnees and other programs for startups, but we discovered that the



Abubakar

sustainability is threatened because when somebody does a startup and you don't make profits you wouldn't want to

continue because of the challenges that is bedeviling the catfish business," he added.

FG shuts down Scorpion oil Service offshore

THE Federal Government on Monday says it has shut down the diving operations of Scorpion Oil Services onboard MV African Installer offshore Lagos for operating without the requisite approvals.

Mrs Lauretta Adogu, the Director of Factories of the Federation in the Ministry of Labour and Employment, said this during a monitoring exercise conducted by the ministry and the Chief Inspector of Diving, Mr Julius Ugwala.

Adogu, who is also the Director, Occupational Safety and Health Department, said this in a statement signed by Mr Olajide Oshundun, Head, Press and Public Relations in the ministry.

The director said the shut down had become necessary as they had also violated the provisions of the Factories (Diving at Work) Regulations, 2018.

She said that the monitoring exercise was aimed at ensuring full compliance with Nigeria's Factories (Diving at Work) Regulations, 2018.

According to her, the diving operations being carried out by the contractor, Scorpion Oil Services, posed huge threats to the divers.

She also said that an on-the-spot assessment also revealed that the company was using inappropriate equipment and unqualified personnel.

Adogu said that Scorpion Oil Services also disregarded the Local Content law, with the operations wholly dominated by foreigners.

"The operators did not comply with the Factories (Diving at Work) Regulations, 2018.

"The Regulations stipulate that before any diving operation commences within the Nigerian territorial waters, there must be an authorisation approval issued by the Director of Factories of the Federation.

"Additionally, the Local Content law says Nigerians should be considered first for such operations, but the

Nigerians will pay more for bread in the coming days as bakers in some states have announced price hikes to cover the high cost of ingredients.

Kogi Master Bakers said they were resuming production after weeks of strike, but will increase prices of their products.

The association had recently joined the nationwide strike declared by its national body to demand government intervention regarding prices of materials used in bread production.

"Although the federal government is yet to respond to our pleas and demands, we are satisfied that we have at least sent a message hoping for a positive result," Gabriel Bamidele-Adeniyi, "Unfortunately, as we resume production, July 25, prices of bread will definitely increase by 20 per cent.

"A bread of N200 will cost between N240 and N250, that of N500 will cost N600, that of N600; N750, that of N700 will cost N880 and that of N800; between N980 and N1, 000 respectively

"We want the public to know that the new increment in

prices of stable bread is not our making but that of the increase in the prices of commodities we use in bread production.

"We want the government to see to it that prices of yeast, sugar and flour being imported are drastically reduced so that only three companies have the licence to import them.

"Unfortunately those three firms are monopolizing the prices of sugar, yeast and flour to the detriment of bakers in Nigeria," he lamented.

Mr Bamidele-Adeniyi appealed to the government to ensure that the sugar company in Bashuta commenced production and equally open the opportunity for members to obtain the licence to import and obtain loans for better bread production.

Bakers in Abuja said last week they had decided not to take part in the strike as they preferred to engage with the

operator did not meet that requirement, as the place was filled with expatriates," she said..

She also added that diving operations must get authorisation approval before commencement, and this company has not requested for any approval and does not have one.

"The company is being closed for non-compliance to these, and work here has been prohibited," she said. (NAN)

off off ceremony in the zone in view of the state's strategic support for Medium and Small Scale Enterprises (MSMEs) within the zone.

"At the end of the programme, the participants would have acquired improved knowledge on business practice and service delivery, increased access to finance, equipment and other business resources, among others" he said.

Fasanya noted that it was in a

Nigerian bakers announce new price hikes for bread



Adebayo

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Bakers in Abuja said last week they had decided not to take part in the strike as they preferred to engage with the

government to find solutions. They warned that they would suspend production, however, if that failed.

In Cross River, bakers said they were increasing prices and reducing production quantities amid high cost of ingredients and production.

This was disclosed by a leader of the state Master Bakers group, Thomas Odey, in an interview with NAN on Monday.

Mr Odey said the Cross River master bakers did not join the national body in their two weeks' withdrawal of service but resolved to increase price and reduce the quantity of production to prevent wastage.

The Director of Canaan Delight Bakery Nigeria Limited said that a withdrawal of service was not good for the system as a lot of average Nigerians would suffer because bread was a staple commodity in the country.

"The planned increment is not even enough, this is because the price of every means of production has increased from condiments to diesel and all other raw materials.

"This is a global issue that is not peculiar to Nigeria or materials for baking alone but the price of every foodstuff has increased significantly.

"In my contacts with big flour mills in the country, they will tell you the Russia/Ukraine crisis, exchange rate and the issue of sourcing foreign currency are posing major challenges and increasing the price of wheat flour," he said.

Speaking further, Mr Odey noted that the use of cassava and potato flour was an option but the challenge was that the specific species of cassava needed for good flour production was not sufficient in Nigeria.

He said the normal cassava that was common in Nigeria was bitter when used to produce flour while potato cultivation was still largely at subsistence level, making production insufficient in the country.

"In my training with Flour Mill, I discovered that they mixed cassava flour with wheat to get what they used but the kind of cassava they used was a specie we need to develop in large quantities.

SMEDAN to support 3,330 entrepreneurs

THE Director-General of the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN), Mr Olawale Fasanya, said that 3,330 entrepreneurs in the country would be supported with equipment.

Fasanya disclosed this on Tuesday during the official inauguration ceremony of the National Skill Development Initiative ((NBSDI) held in Katsina.

Represented by the Director, Business Skill Development and Promotions of the agency, Mr Monday Ewans, the director-general said that the programme was being implemented in all the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

He said altogether 3,330 entrepreneurs would be impacted with entrepreneur and vocational skills, as well as empowerment materials to the tune of 90 per cent of their required needs.

"As at today, similar programme is commencing simultaneously in all the states within the North-West geopolitical zone of the country.

"Katsina State was chosen specifically for the official flag-



Fasanya



Business & Economy

Nigeria and middle class

THE United Nations categorises them as those whose income falls between \$10 and \$100 per day, while the African Development Bank categorises them as those who earn between \$2 to \$20 per day.

However, in recent times, there are fears that Nigeria is fast losing this category of people to foreign countries. The service sector especially seems to be at the receiving end of this dilemma as many of the professionals who are contributing to Nigeria's human capital development seem to have had enough of a poor and unrewarding economy.

A research report by the World Bank revealed that from 2004 to 2014, Nigeria witnessed a surge in the number of middle-income earners as a result of its fast economic growth, which can be largely attributed to a form of structural change in economic activities from the traditional-agricultural sector to the service sector. However, things are no longer the same for the once vibrant 'Giant of Africa' as major households continue to get vulnerable to its unstable economy.

This is evidenced by the World Poverty Clock report where Nigeria got tagged as the world poverty capital for three consecutive years until recently when the baton was handed over to India.

Since 2015, Nigeria's economy has been grappling to survive as its overvalued currency continues to translate into a persistently high inflation rate alongside a high rate of unemployment and poverty that has defied all economic interventions.

Presently, Nigeria's current minimum wage of N30,000 seems to be a far cry from what it should be given the current economic circumstance. It should be noted that as of 2019, when the figure was approved, inflation rate was 11.40 percent, while the figure increased to 15.63 percent in March 2022.

Presently, the rate of inflation in Nigeria has hit 18.6 percent, which has generated a public outcry as the World Bank revealed that Nigeria needs to urgently introduce a robust economic reform that will address mounting fiscal pressures, boost private investment to create jobs and also come up with policies that will address the poor living standards of its people.

Despite the current realities, there's no tendency yet that Nigeria will consider an upward review of its minimum wage. To many people, one major way to avoid the impending future danger is to relocate abroad either by schooling or as a skilled immigrant.

What has happened in the last decade?

Nigeria had two different economic issues to contend with over the last 10 years as high rate of inflation continues to take a toll on the welfare of its people,

Nigeria's middle class, a category of people whose economic strata falls between the upper class and the working class, is shrinking. These are the people who are well educated and whose enlightened values are likely to contribute to the larger economy. Toun Ogunbiyi writes.



thereby pushing an additional 7 million people into poverty. The rising level of inflation was further worsened by the pandemic outbreak as many businesses were threatened on the account of the worldwide lockdown.

This had a negative effect on the local economy as most people could not afford to purchase the necessary inputs for their businesses, thereby worsening Nigeria's inflation woes. Pandemic aside, Nigeria's economic challenges seem to be more like an endless tunnel; some of which are addressed below:

Devaluation of the naira

The value of Nigeria's currency has always been at the falling side since the 80s when the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) was introduced. One major issue with the SAP was the failure of the Nigerian government to develop major industrial sectors which consequently turned Nigeria into a 'rentier state'. Presently, Nigeria's exchange rate stands at around N600/\$1 despite the intervention of the country's apex financial institution to defend the naira.

Apart from the fact that the country has failed to diversify its economy, one notable factor responsible for the weak naira in recent times is an increased demand pressure amid a dollar scarcity in the official foreign exchange market. This surge is largely traceable to the fact that the quest to immigrate to foreign countries, especially using the channel of education, has tremendously increased.

Economic recession

Over the years, Nigeria's economy has been highly volatile to fluctuations in the global prices of crude oil. In fact, the bulk of economic

recessions experienced by the country have been on the account of the fall in the prices of crude oil in the international oil market. For instance, Nigeria was forced to seek external assistance from the International Monetary Fund in 1986 as a result of the falling global oil prices under conditional ties which have been discovered to be of no benefit to the nation.

Also, by mid-2014, the sharp and continuous decline in crude oil prices led to another period of economic recession, majorly attributed to the slow economic growth in China (the largest importer of crude oil in the world). It should be noted that prior to 2014, crude oil was sold for as high as \$108.13. However, the global price of crude oil fell to \$98.97 by 2014. Also, the year 2016, which marked the beginning of the most recent economic recession in Nigeria, definitely didn't leave any trail of pleasure for many Nigerians.

This happened as a result of the advent of shale oil in the US, which used to be one of Nigeria's largest buyers of crude oil. With no other major export, the government was forced to increase borrowing to make up for the shortfall in revenue. Consequently, the naira was further weakened to the dollar, government revenue dropped considerably, salaries got delayed and many construction projects had to be suspended, while inflation rate has also been on the increase.

Insecurity: If there's one negative life event that is driving up Nigeria's inflation rate, it is its rising spate of insecurity. The country's insecurity challenges have grown beyond just insurgency to a full-scale monster that now involves kidnapping, banditry, separatist agitations and

most recently, attacks on expensive infrastructures. It has also been reported that in some cases, farmers have to pay taxes to insurgents before they can go to farm while billions of naira have also been paid as ransom to kidnappers.

This has consequently led to scarcity of farm produce, especially since the northern part of the country is at the receiving end of these brutal acts. Consequently, higher food prices have been recorded and food importation has increased, thereby amounting to more demand pressure on the already scarced dollar. The resultant effects of all these issues is that Nigeria's food inflation has now been in double digits – an issue that has defied all economic interventions.

Protectionism

In a bid to encourage domestic production and create more employment opportunities, the current administration in 2019 decided to adopt some protectionism measures starting with the closure of the country's land borders. This was subsequently followed by a mix of other policies which involved increased trade tariff and the restriction of foreign exchange on food imports, most significantly rice.

The policy subsequently led to an increased rate of inflation in the commodity market as local farmers and producers have not been able to meet up with the huge level of domestic demand. The average inflation rate for the year 2021 rose to about 16 percent as against 11.02 percent prior to the period of border closure.

A report by the Institute for Security Studies revealed that the policy surely brings back the memories of the same economic measure that

was adopted in 1984 under the military regime headed by President Muhammadu Buhari which tends to favour protectionist policies in order to boost economic growth and generate employment.

Fuel scarcity: The issue of fuel scarcity is not a new phenomenon in the history of the nation. It has become a lifestyle, which the citizens have had to adjust to over the years as its leaders have failed to come up with a sustainable solution to end this menace.

Nigeria's fuel scarcity woes were further worsened by the importation of adulterated fuel this year. Despite the fact that economic activities seem to be stabilising after the adulterated fuel saga, the attendant effects of the fuel scarcity still linger. Consequently, the charges of logistics have significantly increased as the price of commuting in some places has increased by more than 50 percent.

Indeed, the last decade has not been too palatable for Nigerians as the poor living standards, alongside a not-too-convincing government response, which is further aggravated by the country's bad financial position, continues to plunge the country into a deeper challenge.

Presently, Nigeria is witnessing a mass exodus of its once vibrant skilled labour force as the bulk of its populace seems to have lost hope in Nigeria. In recent times, it seems to be that every sector is currently feeling the heat of the mass exodus of this category of people as many of the professionals who are contributing to Nigeria's human capital development seem to have had enough of a poor and unrewarding economy.

.Source: BusinessDay

Politics

Court adjourns lawmaker's case on outcome of primaries

From MOHAMMED ABDULLAHI, Keffi

THE Federal High Court Lafia has adjourned the Nasarawa Western Zone Senatorial case filed by Barrister Labaran Shuaibu Magaji of the All Progressive Congress (APC) over the outcome of the Senatorial primary election that produced Architect Shehu Ahmed Tukur as the winner to the 3rd of August 2022 for continue hearing.

Giving the order for the adjournment, the Presiding Judge Justice Nehizina Idumudia Afolabi stated that the action is to allow all concerned parties/defendants to be served property so that the case can proceed without any distraction.

She therefore stressed the need for all the concerned parties to be adequately and promptly served to avoid all unnecessary delay in the case.

Briefing newsmen after the court sitting, the plaintiff in the case, Barrister Labaran Shuaibu Magaji stated that there was confusion about who and who the various lawyers were representing in the case. He stated that the authenticity of their representation cannot be properly verified or ascertained.

He stated that one of the lawyers claimed to be representing the APC at the national level while others were for the state and that of Keffi Local Government even though there were eleven defendants in the case. As such, they need to be properly



Adamu

served to pave way for the proceedings of the court in the case to continue.

Magaji who was confident of emerging successful at the end of the day, assured that he would pursue the case diligently to make sure that the end justifies the means in the interest of equity, fairness and justice to all especially that the fight is not only about him but for the sake of all upcoming generations.

Also speaking, the council to the APC National Secretary, Barrister Musa Hassan SAN assured of his determination to continue with the case in the next appointed date.

THE NIGERIA STANDARD observed that the court premises was full to capacity with the teeming supporters

of Labaran Magaji who came all the way from the 5 Local Government Areas that make up the constituency. Namely: Karu, Keffi, Kokona, Nasarawa and Toto to show their solidarity and encouragement to him.

THE Candidate of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) for Yagba West in 2023 State Assembly Constituency election in Kogi, Hon. Sunday Isaiah Maiyaki, has assured his constituents of a quality legislative representation if given the opportunity to represent them.

Maiyaki gave the assurance in an exclusive interview with our Correspondent in Lokoja on Monday.

The House of Assembly hopeful said that the sponsorship of motions that would lead to enactment of

From MOHAMMED ABDULLAHI, Keffi

A House of Representatives aspirant for Karu, Keffi and Kokona Federal Constituency in the just concluded primary election, Hon, Jibrin Sulaiman Dahiru has stated that he has accepted the outcome of the reconciliatory efforts put in place by the state Governor and the party in good faith.

Speaking with newsmen after attending the reconciliatory meeting headed by a prominent lawyer, Barrister Hassan Liman (SAN) at the VIP Government lodge, Keffi during the week, Dahiru stated that he has no objection about the outcome of the process.

"Infact I want to assure you and indeed all the parties concerned that I have accepted the outcome of the reconciliatory process and also declare my readiness to support and work for the success of the party within all possible means," he assured.

Dahiru, who was a Special Aide to the former Governor, Umaru Tanko Al-makura stated that "Since election to me is not a do-or die affair, I have to as a true sportsman accept or succumb to what the process has produced even if it was not in my favour," he stressed.

The former SA further stated that since in the first place he had contested for the election to enable him serve the people

Aspirant expresses confidence in reconciliatory efforts



Sule

and he was not lucky to have it he has after accepting the outcome then shifted his gear to provide other services to the people to the best of his own ability.

While commending the state Governor, Engineer Abdullahi Sule and the APC for setting up the Reconciliation Committee, he appealed to all aggrieved members of the party to sheath

their swords and be on the reconciliation table so as to move forward especially that the future is looking very bright and assuring.

Dahiru commended the Reconciliation Committee, Dahiru commended for job well done and tasked them to produce report that would help in healing the wounds so that the party can move forward.

House of Assembly candidate unfolds manifesto

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

laws for the promotion of youth and women empowerment, would be his main focus if elected.

Maiyaki also promised to employ intensive lobbying that would bring succour to his people and wipe out the untold hardship inflicted on them by the ruling All Progressive Congress (APC) in Kogi State.

He vowed that if given the mandate, he would aggressively push for new laws



Maiyaki

that would guarantee adequate checks and balances for the executive and legislative arms of government for accountability and transparency in the system.

The PDP Assembly Candidate further unfolded that his coming on board would ensure that his constituents have access to quality and affordable education.

He, therefore, called on the people of his area to reject the ruling APC that had inflicted poverty, pains and insecurity on them and vote wisely for all the candidates of the opposition PDP to regain their sound livelihood.

Maiyaki, who is a graduate of Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) Zaria, lamented the negative impact of vote buying on the nation's electoral process and urged the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), to end the unfortunate trend.

According to him, this can be effectively achieved by making polling booths a bit far from the eyes of voters and agents

alike, this will give the electorate the audacity to vote for their conscience and disabuse the mind of the 'buyer'.

"It takes two to tango, if the 'buyer' is not sure where the 'seller' voted. Paying will then be discouraged"

"I am highly equipped with competence, character and capacity to represent the good people of Yagba West at the Kogi State House of Assembly in view of my proven track records.

"I have been a party man since 1998. I had represented PDP in several sensitive positions. My representation now if given the chance by God's grace will be of good," Maiyaki said.

While commending PDP delegates in Yagba west for given him their mandate to fly the ticket, Maiyaki appreciated Dr Ekundayo Samuel, for facilitating the media publication which had given the opportunity to unfolding his manifesto to his constituents.

SA bags NHODP award of excellence

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

THE Nigeria House of Dream Parliament (NHODP) has bestowed an Award of Excellence and Recognition on the Special Adviser to Governor Yahaya Bello, on Special Projects, Hon Suleiman Abdulkareem Onyekehi, as the "Most Proactive Special Adviser".

The National Speaker of Nigeria House of Dream Parliament, Comrade Mike Egila, with the Principal Officers of the Parliament, jointly presented the award to the recipient in Lokoja over the weekend.

Egila noted that from their research Onyekehi had

ensured proper coordination of National Social Investment Programme (N-SIP) and judicious utilization of funds for the sensitization and implementaton, logistics as well as prompt payment of SIP staff

He noted that the recipient had also facilitated about 60,000 registration of intending beneficiaries into GEEP 2.0, added to the over 50,000 beneficiaries of GEEP 1.0 in Kogi State.

"Facilitated the increase of Cash Transfer beneficiaries in Kogi from 11,000 to over

74,000; over 26,000 NPower Batch C Steam 1 and 2 as against the 12000 that benefited the NPOWER Batch A and B and over 177,000 primary school pupils, 3000 cooks, thousands of small holder farmers, traders are benefiting from home grown school feeding.

'Distributed and installed 156 computers, projectors, tables and chairs in six Federal and State Government Science Secondary Schools in Kogi State under STEM BURSARY program,' Egila said.

He added that through NSIP over N20 billion has been injected into Kogi economy by the federal government in partnership with the state, directly to the beneficiaries under his supervision.

He stressed that the NSIP Kogi State under his supervision had been rated consecutively as the best NSIP Office in Nigeria by the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs.

He described Onyekehi as a proactive and community developer, a philanthropist, reformist and dedicated to duties and assignment with transparency and accountability, saying the award was to encourage him to do more.

Responding, Onyekehi who doubles as the Kogi State



Onyekehi

Politics

Dandereng crowned Nwanne Ndi Igbo of Jos-South

BY EZEKIEL DONTINNA

THE Executive Chairman of Jos-South Local Government Council, Ambassador Gideon Dung Dandereng, has been crowned by His Royal Highness, Chief Lawrence Onwudinju, of Anambra State as the Nwanne Ndi Igbo of Jos-South LGA, Plateau State. The ceremony took place at the Conference Hall of Zang Commercial School Bukuru in John-South LGA on the occasion marking Ndi Igbo Day and Launching organised by the Igbo Community of the area last Sunday.

Crowning the Council Chairman of Jos-South, the Paramount Ruler, High Chief Onwudinju, said, this was in recognition of his leadership quality in the area and prayed that the gods of Igbo land would not allow thing bad to come his way and that, the Igbo in the area would support him in all that he is doing. Delivering his acceptance speech, the Nwanne Ndi Igbo of Jos-South LGA, Hon. Gideon Dung Dandereng, said, "I am so delighted! You know by the constitution of Nigeria, we are supposed to live as brothers and I have told people time without number that I am a detribalized Nigerian. For us to move forward as Nigerians, we must believe in one another. "This did not come to me as a surprise because, in view of my engagement with different ethnic nationalities within the Local Government, you can



Dandereng

agree with me that peace has totally returned to Jos-South LG and by extension, Plateau State. We will continue to partner and see that, we support the Igbo Community within this local government. "We are going to create an enabling environment for Igbo community to strive by supporting them in all businesses. As we approach the 2023 general election, let us be peaceful, organise and prayerful to God for us to see that we have a peaceful transition come 2023", he prayed. However, Ambassador Dandereng who is the All Progressive Congress (APC)'s

Candidate for Jos-South/Jos-East Federal Constituency to the Green Chamber, also called on the people of his constituency to remember him as the 2023 elections close by, hoping that they would return him as Member representing the constituency.

Eschew politicians using religion as tool

From WILLIE ATTAH, Gombe

A community of Tangale speaking Nigerians from Gombe State living overseas, says Nigeria has failed to utilize qualified, promising and

From JIDAUNA YANUNG Abuja

THE House of Representatives has mandated its committees on National

Security and Intelligence, Interior, Reforming Services, Defence, Army, Navy and Police Affairs to investigate the causes, dimensions and effects of the recent Kuje custodian center attack.

To this end, the joint committee is to make its report available within four weeks for further legislative action.

The lower chamber urged the federal government to implement the recommendations of the special summit of national security organized by the leadership of the house in 2021.

At the resumption of the plenary, the house unanimously adopted the motion moved by Hon. Sha'aban Sharada titled, "Need to investigate the terrorist attack on Nigerian correctional medium security custodian center Kuje".

Representative Sharada recalled the July 2022, terrorist attack the Nigerian correctional service's medium security custodian center, Kuje, in Abuja, and expressed worried that the Kuje custodian center

HoR committee mandated on Kuje attack



Gbajabamila

attack and its terrible outcome along with several related crimes against national security are on the increase despite stakeholders commitment towards equipping the national security enforcement and

intelligence community with significant appropriation of funds.

The House, he said is cognizant of the fact that public peace and safety will continue to be threatened if urgent steps are not taken to address the situation.

Meanwhile, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has advised Nigerians to file lawsuits against candidates who they know submitted false certificates for their eligibility to contest the 2023 general elections.

The electoral body also said it was also involved in 334 pre-election court cases that arose from the conduct of the congress and primaries by political parties for the general elections.

INEC chairman, Prof. Mahmood Yakubu stated these at the swearing in of Dr. Hale Longpet as Resident Electoral Commissioner recently in Abuja.

He said Longpet who is from Plateau State has been deployed as REC for Kogi state.

Prof. Yakubu disclosed that the commission is set to publish the personal particulars of candidates nominated by their political parties for governorship and state assembly elections in all constituencies nationwide as required by law.

He explain that with the publication of the personal particulars of candidates for governorship, deputy governorship and state assembly elections, the commission expects the number of cases to increase.

Prof. Yakubu appealed to all Nigerians (citizens and aspirants) to seize the opportunity to scrutinize the particulars of the candidates and to seek judicial remedy for any observed violation of law as provided in section 29 of the Electoral Acts 2022.

The INEC boss further stated that the issue of internal democracy in parties remains a sore point in the Nation's electoral process in Nigeria.

He added that the commission would continue to engage with them while standing firm against any transgression by strictly enforcing provisions of the law and extant regulations and guidelines.

visionary leaders because of religious bias.

It has therefore called on Nigerians to eschew politicians who use religion as a political tool.

They gave the warning in a press release titled, "Democracy: The power in your hands", signed by it's General Secretary, Lamela Umaru Lakorok and sent to our correspondent in Gombe.

The group said, "We all know that a leader's religious affiliation does not translate into leadership quality".

They cited the example that, "more Muslims have died in Nigeria in the last ten years than in the previous 50 years (www.aciafrica.org)".

It stated further that, "Suppose religion was the yardstick of leadership in Nigeria; how does one explain these tragic deaths of Muslims under the presidency of a Muslim?"

"Ironically, if Nigeria had good leadership that ensured the free exercise of religion and commerce, over 30,000 Muslims would be alive today.

"It appears that the religious beliefs of the national and local leaders did not hinder the wanton killings of Muslims and Christians in Nigeria.

Yet, those who are blind fail to see that it is better to have an excellent servant-leader to guarantee the conditions for their religion's growth than a member of the

-Tangale diaspora

faith who hinders it", the statement added.

While calling on Nigerians to learn to look at other nations where leadership is about establishing a framework for peaceful commerce and the movement of citizens within the country, it warned that Nigeria cannot achieve that through religious bigotry.

"Therefore, at the national level, we must think of which candidates will provide the conditions necessary for our values and for us to flourish as a people", it stressed.

The group also noted with concern that some local politicians in Gombe south are already promoting the politics of thuggery and cautioned that, "We cannot allow this to continue, respect your life and the lives of your neighbors. No politician is worth your life", it warned.

While praying for a peaceful election of leaders, it called on Nigerians to play their part by getting their PVCs and vote the right leaders during the elections.

"It is (PVC) a golden ticket that guarantees your voice is heard. In a democracy, your vote is everything: the larger the number, the more difficult for corrupt leaders to suppress", it advised.

NGO caution youths against electoral violence, intolerance

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

Community Initiatives to Promote Peace (CIPP), a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO), has cautioned youths against electoral violence and intolerance to maintain peace in communities during the 2023 general elections.

Mrs Bola Nelson, Coordinator of CIPP, gave the advice at a one-day workshop organised in

conjunction with USAID, Mercy Corps and Youths Critical Discussion, parents and youths from Adankolo community and religious leaders in Lokoja.

Nelson said parents, community and religious leaders played vital roles in moulding the hearts and attitudes of our teaming youths for a peaceful society.

"Electoral violence is one of the major catalysts of crises and destruction of lives and property in our communities. And we felt we should start

tackling it with seriousness now that we are in the season of elections.

"We expect the participants of our programme to be good ambassadors, who will stand for peace and speak peace to their wards, families, neighbours, communities and organisations.

"We expect them to go and educate our youths not to allow themselves to be used by bad elements or politicians to disrupt the peace of our communities before, during and after elections," she said.

Nelson also called on parents and religious leaders as ambassadors, to caution youths against hate speeches, rumour mongering, fake news and temperament.

"Discipline is key towards maintaining peaceful communities for the desired economic growth and development," she said.

A resource person, Mrs Esther Perter-Sanda, said that the role of parents in the upbringing of children could not be over emphasised, given its importance to a peaceful society.

Perter-Sanda said that in a family, there were differences just as in politics, especially in choice of political parties or candidates.

She said once there was respect and tolerance, peace would reign supreme in that home and community.



Mahmood

IMAGES

NLC ORGANISES PROTEST IN SUPPORT OF ASUU

NLC Plateau State and other sister unions embarked on a solidarity protest strike yesterday, to help drive home the message of ASUU and to galvanise action towards ending the prolonged strike



NLC, Union leaders, students at the Secretariat Roundabout displaying their placards



A mammoth crowd of protesters chanting solidarity songs



NLC Chairmanship Plateau State, Comrade Eugene Manji (middle), NUJ Secretary, Peter Amine (behind) along with other union leaders, and security operatives



Protesters, made up of people from all walks of life



Union leaders and embittered students displaying placards



Labour leaders middle and other supporters



NLC leadership, Comrade Eugene Manji, NUJ Secretary, Mr. Peter Amine and representative of the Commissioner of Police, DCP Emmanuel Chris Ado at the NLC Peaceful rally



Protesters being led by a band students' unions and leadership of NLC and other sister unions

PHOTOS, COURTESY: ANDREW A.

Politics

Labour Party: Nigeria's emerging 'Third Force'

The concept of a third force in Nigerian politics began to gain ground in 2019, when a rising tide of non-performance by the governing All Progressives Congress (APC) and the opposition Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) started dominating public perception. AMOS ESELE & AYO ESAN writes.

In 2022, nine months to the 2023 general election, a month to the national conventions of the 18 registered political parties and a few months to two off-season governorship elections in Ekiti State on June 18 and in Osun State on July 16, a group known as The National Consultative Forum formally announced the formation of a third force on May 22.

According to Bilikis Bello, Communication Executive of NCFront, in a statement titled, 'At Last! Labour Party Emerge as the Third Force Mega Party for 2023,' it took a 15-month interaction among stakeholders, comprising the President of the Nigeria Labour Congress, Ayuba Wabba; President of the Trade Union Congress (TUC), Quadri Olaleye and leaders of political parties, such as Prof Attahiru Jega of the Peoples Redemption Party, Prof Pat Utomi of the Labour Party and Senator Saidu Dansadau of the National Rescue Movement, to birth the 'Force'.

"With the adoption of the Labour Party as our '3rd Force' Mega Party penultimate week, the NCFront has since commenced the fusion of its structures of over 20 million members and supporters nationwide into the Labour Party.

"Consequently, our teeming members all over Nigeria and in Diaspora have been directed to register immediately as members of the Labour Party at all designated registration centres, both online and physically at the Ward Levels, to be able to take part in the ongoing electoral programmes of the Party for the 2023 elections.

"Furthermore, the '3rd Force' Mega Electoral Pact is proposed around agreement on labour charter of demand, EndSars youths demands and constitutional referendum for Nigeria, among others to be agreed as terms of the Alliance for the 2023 elections," Bello said.

The test for Bello's claim of membership strength came during the final two off-season governorship elections in Ekiti and Osun states, a few weeks after Mr Peter Obi emerged presidential candidate of Labour Party on May 30 in Asaba, the Delta State capital.

In Ekiti, the Labour Party's candidate, Comrade Roland Olugbenga Daramola, was unseen and unheard before the election. Out of the 16 governorship candidates, he was even unavailable during campaigns and during the voting, LP was noticeable for having no agents standing in for the party across polling units in the state. This lack of presence was explained away because the party as a 'third force' was barely a month-old.

A month later, the story remained the same in the Osun poll. LP's candidate, Yusuf Lasun, was former Deputy Speaker in the House of Representatives. Unlike Ekiti, he campaigned vigorously and two days to the close of campaigns on Friday, Obi led the party's bigwigs to Osun to drum up support for him.

He came a distant fourth. Out of the total number of 804,450 votes cast, Lasun polled 2,729, trailing the candidate of the Action Democratic Party (ADP), Kehinde Atanda, who polled 10,104 votes; Akinade Ogunbiyi of Accord, who got 4,515 votes; and the winner, Ademola Adeleke of the PDP, who polled 403,371 votes to defeat incumbent Governor Gboyega Oyetola of the All Progressives Congress (APC), who scored 375,027 votes.

In fact, Lasun was in the same league with Awojide Segun of Action Alliance Congress (ACC), who polled 2,148 votes; Ademola Adeseye of Young Peoples Party (YPP) with 1,303 votes; Awoyemi Lukman, African Peoples Movement, APM who got 1,222 votes; and Ayowole Adedeji of the Peoples Redemption Party (PRP), who polled



Obi
1,007 votes.

For Obi, the election was not a verdict on the LP's "exponentially growing strength," but it underscored the need for Nigerians not to relent in the collective resolve to take back their country. "We are barely one month old and have to contend with powers that have been on the ground for decades."

That may be arguable. In 2014, the APC, arising from a merger of four legacy parties in February 2013, was barely a year-old when the Osun poll took place. The party's candidate and incumbent governor, Rauf Aregbesola, won the election and boosted the new party's image and launched it to national prominence.

Osun State LP chairman of the party, Prince Adebayo Bello, however, agrees with the party's presidential candidate.

He said "You cannot compare what happened in the Osun election with what is going to happen at the national election. Our candidate was a major and popular candidate. He was the man to beat in terms of campaign but lost to the power of vote inducement. Yet, his campaign has made the Labour Party a household name in Osun and we are going ahead to build the party at the ward and local government level ahead of the 2023 elections. Because of the way he popularised the party the 'ObiDient' Movement now has a structure in the state."

His Ekiti counterpart concurs with his submission. According to Barrister Okunade Odunayo, in a brief interview with THEWILL, "the people are now realising what we were telling them about the need to vote for credible candidates and party now that the NLC and TUC will be embarking on protests next week. They have realised that the vote selling for a pot of soup cannot lead to solving the problems of poverty and unemployment. I was in Osun for the campaigns. Like we did in Ekiti, we campaigned from house to house. The awareness of the people about LP has been raised so much that I can confidently tell you that Obi will win in 2023."

But one of Obi's rivals for the plum job in the land and presidential candidate of the PDP, Atiki Abubakar, ridicules the idea.

"Peter Obi is not a threat. I really don't expect the Labour Party to take as many votes from the PDP as people are suggesting. We could have seen it in the last election in Osun State. What was the performance of the Labour Party?" he said, in an interview last week with ARISE television.

"They (Obi's supporters) are talking about social media. Mind you, in the North, 90 percent of our people (who will be voting) are not on social media. This party does not have a governor,

does not have members in the State Houses of Assembly. And politics in this country depends on structures you have at various levels and at the national level. It is difficult for a miracle to happen simply because Obi is in the Labour Party."

For many APC stalwarts, PDP's defeat of the governing party still does not reduce them to the same level as LP or make the party popular in the state. They trace their defeat to many factors, including the crisis within the party arising from disagreements among aggrieved chieftains, overbearing influence of some founding fathers in the state.

There is no doubt that since he became the LP standard bearer in the 2023 presidential poll, Obi has not only popularised LP, he is almost synonymous with the party as far as the 2023 general election is concerned.

Obioma Dan, a chieftain of the LP said: "The most potent ground force propelling this hurricane-like movement (ObiDient) remains the character, pedigree, records and achievements of Obi and not necessarily his party. He is giving meaning and followership to the LP."

"Unfortunately, Obi was not on the ballot paper in Osun, rather an unknown Yusuf Lasun, who battled against very highly entrenched political heavy weights, including his political godfathers."

Going forward, the LP in fielding candidates whose character, integrity, records, profile, political philosophy, achievements have corresponding symmetry with those of Obi and at the same time, it should square up with the political strength/weight of other contesting party candidates. This is the easiest way to evaluate and align the common vision and attract more sympathy cum votes to the young and enterprising and rapidly advancing party.

March Oyinchi, National Director of Movement for Change Worldwide, one of the 21 approved groups that formed the Coalition for Peter Obi (CPO), said that apart from giving life to LP, Obi is the most visible face of the party for now.

"But when the campaign starts, other big wigs will join the bandwagon to push the party to the 2023 destination," he told THEWILL on Friday.

Explaining the level of coordination and grassroots impact recorded by the movement so far, he used the work that his organisation has done in eight states in the South-South and South-East geo-political zones with ongoing work in Oyo and Ogun states, as examples.

"In Bayelsa State where I am we

have 370 CPOs networking in all the eight Local Governments. We have Diaspora chapters, which also help to sensitise their people back home, apart from providing material support. Campaign is yet to start. For now, it is only networking and getting people to get their Permanent Voter Cards, PVCs," Oyinchi added.

Ekiti chairman, Odunayo, adds his voice "The big wigs you are talking about will soon come out. They are still underground now because of the security situation in the country."

Confirming the growing strength of the 'third force,' and its likely chances in the 2023 election, a delegation from the United States-based National Democratic Institute and International Republican Institute (NDI/IRI) said on Friday that Obi and former Kano Governor, Rabiu Kwankwaso, constitute a real force in the upcoming general election in 2023. According to them, the 2023 elections would be a departure from some of the political dynamics that defined previous polls in Nigeria.

The delegation of the NDI/IRI, which visited Nigeria from July 13-22 and led by the Secretary of State for Ohio, Frank LaRose, made this disclosure while presenting its first joint pre-election assessment statement to journalists in Abuja on Friday.

They said: "The 2023 elections are a departure from some of the political dynamics that defined previous polls. For the first time since 2007, the presidential election will be an open contest with no incumbent.

"The ruling All Progressives Congress selected former Lagos governor, Bola Tinubu, as its flagbearer. Former Vice President and 2019 presidential candidate, Atiku Abubakar, will contest on the ticket of the Peoples Democratic Party.

"However, the emergence of Peter Obi — former Anambra State governor and presidential candidate for the Labour Party — and Rabiu Kwankwaso — former Kano governor and presidential candidate for the New Nigeria People's Party — as viable "Third Forces" has excited many young Nigerians. If a third party draws sufficient support, a runoff presidential election could be a real possibility for the first time since the transition to democracy, adding complexity to the 2023 elections."

National Chairman of LP, Julius Abure and flagbearer, Obi, refused to pick their calls when THEWILL called them on Friday.

Attempts to get reaction from the National Publicity Secretary of the APC, Felix Morka, also failed as he refused to answer the phone call made to him.

His PDP counterpart, Debo Ologunagba, however thinks referencing LP as a third force to contend with in the upcoming general election is stretching the argument too far. He told THEWILL that structure, a euphemism for party representatives in terms of governors, lawmakers and local government chairmen, matters a great deal.

"I know for any party to win an election, it must have structure. The outcome of the Osun governorship election should actually determine for us whether the Labour Party can actually be described as a Third Force. LP got just a little above 2000 votes in the Osun poll. If you want to assess it on the basis of that performance, can you say that it is a Third Force? This is a party that has no structure. Politics is about structure from the national to the lowest unit. This is a party with no national assembly member, no governor, no local government chairman. You cannot build something on nothing. Labour is a party, but to say it is a third force, no. The results

from the recent off-season elections did not portray it as such."

But the spokesperson of Obi, Mr Valentine Obienyen, disagrees with the views expressed by Ologunagba. For him, Labour and Obi are going to win the 2023 presidential election. He told THEWILL in a brief interview, Saturday morning, that, "from what is happening in Nigeria today and going by Peter Obi's antecedents compared with that of the other presidential contestants, it is a clear win for Obi."

Expanding further, he said that from field reports, "Obi is the most accepted candidate in Nigeria today," arguing that the performance of the party in Ekiti and Osun governorship polls cannot be used as a test case for what would happen at the national election.

For a chieftain of the APC, and Director General of Voice of Nigeria, Osita Okechukwu, the governing party is not losing sleep over the growing impact of the "Third Force" and Labour Party, though he recognises LP's growing presence in the polity.

He said, "We are not threatened at all because there are about 180,000 polling units in the country and we are the main party, covering all the nooks and crannies of our dear country. The Labour Party is yet to cover such mileage. But we must thank Peter Obi and his ObiDient movement for their innovation. One, they will knock off PDP from their traditional electoral base. This gives the PDP goose pimples.

Secondly, the ObiDient movement has captured the imagination of our youths who were hitherto despondent and almost hopeless and luckily made them think positively about Nigeria. One sincerely commends them for this feat. Even if the movement didn't achieve anything, they have already achieved something for the Nigerian State. It is not easy to capture the imagination of our cynical youths. Now they are talking of the President of Nigeria, and on behalf of APC, we promise to sustain their hopes with good governance. I appreciate them but we are not threatened, for we have the number — 22 governors and majority in the national and state Assembly."

Professor Yakubu Ochefu, an economic historian and Secretary of the Committee of Vice-Chancellors of Nigeria thinks the "major political parties need not only to worry but to expect major upsets by the Third Force presented by LP since Obi became its presidential candidate."

Speaking to THEWILL, he said the commitment of the youths pushing the 'ObiDient Movement', shows that the demography in the 2023 general elections will be different.

He said; "Given the increasing awareness of the youths and their readiness to mobilize across the country, rushing to get their PVCs and focus on making a change of leadership presented by Obi is something to watch out for. So far, the two major political parties which have dominated the political space for over 20 years do not seem to present anything different from the policies and programmes they implemented while in office. Moreover, they are plagued by crises that reflect their old, uninspiring ways of doing things. This is also causing disaffection among a wider spectrum of eligible voters who see the "Third Force" as a viable alternative."

Ochefu seems to agree with the NDI/IRI delegation report as he maintained that given the public disenchantment of the major parties, the electronic transmission of results and ongoing mobilisation by the ObiDient movement, Obi may win in the first ballot or force a rerun as the NDI/IRI has said.

News

Guluwa to curb housing deficit in Bokkos

By **BULUS GAMBO**

EXECUTIVE Chairman of Bokkos Local Government Hon. Joseph Guluwa was in Abuja to seek joint venture partnership with estate developers to proffer lasting solutions to the housing deficit in the locality.

To match words with action, the Executive Chairman in company of his Chief of Staff, Hon. Adams Mahwell visited the office of Hydraform Engineering Nigeria in the Federal Capital Territory Abuja to foster relationship.

Hon. Guluwa solicited support of Hydraform Engineering Nigeria Ltd, suppliers of the Hydraform Bricks laying machines to facilitating the council's quest in the installation, training of council staff and citizens of Bokkos LGA on the use of the industrial machines and it's commercialization in order to boost the Internally Generated Revenue base of the council and youth empowerment.

While receiving the delegation from Bokkos LGA, Director of Hydraform Engineering, Engineer Abdulhakeem Huthman, assured the council boss of their willingness to enter into joint partnership with Bokkos Local Government



Guluwa

Council to bring affordable mechanism of property development to the people.

Engineer Abdulhakeem praised the Chairman for taking interest in the use of the machines which have been idle since their delivery and assured the Chairman that if the machines are fully utilised, the council will generate millions per annum.

He further stated if fully put into use, the project will create employment opportunities for the citizen's aside the low cost associated with using the

technology for housing and properties development and roads construction in Bokkos.

Abdulhakeem confirmed that his company was closely following the development of the Pozolana Cement Research of the Nigeria Building and Roads Research Institute (NBRI) which one of its two laboratory in Nigeria is situated in Bokkos LGA, as Nigeria needs home grown and affordable technology to deliver huge housing requirements of Nigerians.

Usman assures retired teachers of better days ahead

CHAIRMAN of Jos North Local Government Shehu Bala Usman has appealed to retired primary school teachers to galvanize support for the Nentawe /Botmang ticket.

He said plans are also underway by this administration to clear the backlog of their gratuity and other entitlements as soon as funds are available.

The Chairman gave the assurance when he played host to Network of Retired Teachers in Politics NORTIP

Jos North chapter led by its Chairman, John Izang in his office at the Council Secretariat in Jos.

The Network of APC Retired Teachers in politics is an association of retirees which came into being recently and is encouraging citizens to patronize the Nentawe Yilwada/Pam Botmang APC Governorship ticket to emerge victorious in the 2023 general elections.

The Chairman Shehu Bala Usman noted that Nentawe

Yilwada and Pam Botmang will sustain infrastructural growth, create employment opportunities for Youth, sustain peaceful coexistence as well as improve on the positive image the state.

This amongst others he said would sustain the state so as to bequeath a prosperous Plateau to the next generation and beyond.

Chairman, Association of Network of Retired Teachers in Politics, Jos North Local Government Chapter said, they are in the council chairman's office to pay him Sallah homage and to inform him of their existence as well as drum support for his administration and to take generation next campaign to the doorsteps of the locality.

The state Chairman Network of Retired Teachers in Politics, Frank Pam urged Shehu Bala Usman to intimate his colleagues in the seventeen local governments to support the association in its quest to mobilize primary school teachers at the grassroots to campaign for Nentawe /Botmang ticket to victory.

Meantime, Chairman of Jos North Local Government Shehu Bala Usman has assured inhabitants of Alama of the readiness of his administration to provide boreholes and other

STAKEHOLDERS in Jos East Local Government Council have adopted new approach to improving Internally Generated Revenue.

Executive Chairman of the Council, Hon Yakubu Izang Ezekiel who unveiled this at the end of stakeholders meeting at the council Chambers, stressed that the Local Government Council was poised to key into the new Revenue Law of the Rescue Administration on the Plateau to improve on her indices.

The Chairman, further called on all the 10 Departments including the education Sub Sector to ensure all sources of Internationally Generated Revenue are promptly explored to change the narrative of over dependency on Monthly Federal Allocation.

The helmsman also pointed out that an enlarged meeting with the Traditional Council, Community Leaders, Religious Organizations, Business and Farmers as well as Cattle Breeders to brainstorm on the new approach for optimal result.

The Legislative Council who was represented by the Chairman Committee on Business and House rules, Hon Joseph Jonathan Azi opined that the meeting was timely

Jos East to boost internally generated revenue

considering the dwindling resources accruable to the Local Government and pledged that the Legislative Arm will give any issue that relates to revenue generation speedy passage.

Directors of the 10 Departments had earlier itemized sources of Internally

Generated Revenue from their various Sub Sectors and identified lack of legislation, mobility, good feeder roads, honesty from revenue collectors, porous nature of markets and activities of middle men as major setbacks to the smooth revenue generation.



Ezekiel

Jos North chairman visits communities affected by flood

EXECUTIVE Chairman of Jos North Local Government Council Shehu Bala Usman has sympathized with inhabitants of Gangare and some parts of Jos Jarawa communities in the area whose houses were submerged by floods.

The incident which occurred

during Saturday and Sunday evening rainfall, resulted in flood overtaking the two communities as a result of the pillars that holds Kaka Madara pedestrian bridge and that of Yan Tukwane which are in the state of collapse as well as other waterways within the localities.

Worried by this development, the community leaders, Councilor representing Gangare ward, Umar Abubakar, and Youth organizations intimated the Council Chairman Shehu Bala Usman on the disaster with a view to ameliorate the plight inhabitants of the area.

The Chairman arrived Gangare ward and was received by community leaders as well as stakeholders of the community trekked a long distance to have an on the spot assessment of the extent of damage Caused by the flood and pedestrian bridges.

He directed the Supervisory Councilor for Social Services, Ari John to take immediate action by putting appropriate measures in place to safeguard the communities from future occurrences.

The Chairman also

Labourer jailed 9 months for stealing Iron rods in Abuja

A Dei-Dei Grade 1 Area Court, Abuja has sentenced a 27-year-old labourer, Abubakar Mohammed to nine months imprisonment for stealing iron rods.

Mohammed, who lives in Katampe, Abuja pleaded guilty to theft and begged the court for leniency.

The Judge, Sulyman Ola, gave the convict an option of N30,000 fine and also warned him to stay away from crimes.

Earlier, the Prosecution

conveyed the sympathy of Governor Simon Lalong to the people of Gangare and Jos Jarawa communities on the unfortunate incident and prayed Almighty Allah against a recurrence of the disasters.

Councilor representing Gangare Ward Umar Abubakar informed the Chairman that many houses were submerged by the floods noting that his visit to see for himself is a source of encouragement to the people of Gangare and Jos Jarawa communities.

The Community Leader of Gangare, Mallam Guda commended the Jos North Council Chairman for the prompt measures taken to alleviate the plight of the people, saying the commencement of work on the pedestrian bridges and other waterways in the localities will bring a sight of relief to the inhabitants who are in a state despair as a result of the flood disaster.

Stakeholders in Gangare, Youths including APC Chairman Jos North, Alhaji Sani Gangare and other Party faithful as well as other inhabitants of the area described the Chairman's visit as a welcome development.

Counsel, Mr Chinedu Ogada told the court that on July 10 at about 3: a. m, the police patrol team while raiding black spots and criminal hide outs arrested the convict.

The prosecutor said that during police investigation, the convict could not give location where he got the iron rods.

He said the iron rods were recovered from the convict.

The offence, he said, contravenes the provisions of Section 287 of the Penal Code.



Usman

News

Man "O" War advises government on motorparks

Stories by EZEKIEL DONTINNA

PLATEAU State Commander of the Man 'O' War, Royal Uche Akumuo, has advised the state government to stand its ground against the high rate of indiscriminate motor parks to protect the lives of citizens against falling victim of criminal elements.

He gave the advice yesterday, while in an interview with THE NIGERIA STANDARD in Jos, the state capital shortly after a sensitization programme for motorists and passengers on safety and security of road organised by Man 'O' War in collaboration with FRSC and National Orientation Agency (NOA).

The Commander said, "we are to conscientize the drivers and their passengers of the need for them to be alert and also monitor each other especially the drivers when there is recklessness. The drivers on their own should be careful not to drive while on drugs or drunk."

"This is why we decided to organise this sensitization programme to draw their attention to that for them to do their best to create safety on our roads because it is everybody business. Also, the indiscriminate siting of illegal motor parks in the state capital in not the best

for us. This will bring confusion and chaos as far as they are not regulated.

"My advice to the government is to stand its ground against the establishment of illegal motor parks because some states have stood their ground and control these indiscriminate establishment of illegal motor parks and it has become a source of revenue generation", he advised.

On his part, the Public Enlightenment Officer of Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), Road Commander Peter Y. Longsan, said, government should rise to the occasion of addressing the challenge of indiscriminate motor parks

using Jos Metropolitan Development Board (JMDB) to regulate, to keep and maintain sanity in the state capital.

He said, "we want to collaborate with them ensure that all the illegal parks are fashioned out. Those registered parks and terminals should operate where government assigned for them to operate to make the state a safe place.

"We expect that the motorists also comply with government directives and support the government so that we join hands together and make sure that crime is no longer tolerated in our state and to make it safe for everybody to live in", he enthused.



Akumou

PDP HoR candidates pledge support for Atiku

A national forum of the People's Democratic Party's candidates for the Federal House of Representatives in the just concluded 2022 primaries across the country has been formed to promote ideals that would lead to the successes of the party in the coming 2023 general elections.

This was contained in a press statement signed by National Publicity Secretary, Hon. Kenaz Isaac, and made available to THE NIGERIA STANDARD in Jos, Plateau State capital Friday disclosing that, the Forum

was named "2023 Reps Candidates for Atiku" in line with its vision and mission.

The statement said, the forum which draws a wide membership across the 36 states of the federation and the Federal Capital Territory Abuja, seeks to work assiduously for the success of His Excellency, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar in the 2023 Presidential election.

The Present National Chairman of the Forum, Hon. QS Mohammed Danjuma (Garkuwa Babba), stated that the 'commitment and

aspiration of PDP aspirants in 2022 primaries, was to galvanise support from all constituencies in Nigeria for the success of PDP at the 2023 polls especially the presidential position of His Excellency Alhaji Atiku Abubakar in particular.

According to him, "the Forum believes that values of His Excellency Atiku Abubakar will lead Nigeria and Nigerians out of the quagmire facing the country now. The forum will collaborate with the various political groups that are already established during their campaigns for the success of the PDP to help in building a solid political structure that will ensure the victory of H.E. Alhaji Atiku in the 2023 general elections.

"The forum is fully convinced that victory of PDP is victory for Nigerians and it is also confident that His Excellency Alhaji Atiku Abubakar's victory in the 2023 general elections is the only sure way to salvage Nigeria from the current hardships and scarcity of resources in the country", the Forum National Chairman assured.



Atiku



Making life worth living

YEARS ago, there were lots of guarantees for graduates of our higher institutions of learning. Once they are done with their studies, they had many jobs waiting for them to choose from. They did not have to stress themselves to get a job. Fast forward to the present. Even graduating from these higher institutions of learning is becoming a luxury. Students spend the better part of their lives struggling to get meaningless certificates they can hardly use to secure employment.

ASUU has been on strike since February 14, 2022 and there are no indications that the strike would come to an end soon. Government seems to care less about the fate of these young people even with the prevailing circumstances in the country. Insecurity has become second nature to all and sundry in our country. Nowhere is safe yet there are no deliberate measures to ensure young people are discouraged from crime and criminality. Government seems to underestimate what these young and impressionable minds could do.

Unfortunately, we have ministers, so called aides to the President who are so arrogant and are complete misfits yet they are not punished for their misdemeanor. Personally, I expect that the Ministers in charge of Labour and Education should have honourably resigned yet they are holding on to offices which responsibilities they clearly cannot discharge. And those who should call them to order have not shown the courage to do what is right.

That being said, parents and guardians need to take more interest in the education of their wards and children. This set needs to be schooled in skills

rather than acquiring certification that would end up gathering dust. If they acquire skills, they are not likely to waste at home even when ASUU decides that they would go on strike. But it should be made known that any society that fails to educate its citizenry is shooting itself in the foot. It would be breeding a set of criminals who would torment it in the future especially in a country that is sharply divided along ethnic and religious divides.

Sadly, the political class has refused to heed to the calls that they put their wards and children in public schools and see whether or not they would find it palatable. If only they realise the danger they are exposing their families to, they would begin to retrace their steps. The quiet revolution going on amongst the youths should concern any right-thinking and futuristic person. Look at the level of discontent and fashion measure to nip them in the bud. The trend in most countries is to hand over power to the young who can turn things

“ Sadly, the political class has refused to heed to the calls that they put their wards and children in public schools and see whether or not they would find it palatable. If only they realise the danger they are exposing their families to, they would begin to retrace their steps. The quiet revolution going on amongst the youths should concern any right-thinking and futuristic person. ”

around. The old brigade has shown its unwillingness to use artificial intelligence to change the course of things. It is this area that the young are adept at. If someone can harness their energies and provide them a platform, a lot of things would change.

Imagine being plagued by insurgency and other crimes yet we cannot deploy technology to help in the fight? You do not need to go to the theatre to cause collateral damage to the enemy. From the comfort of your office, technology could help do the damage before your ground troops do the mopping up.

We cannot pretend that we do not know where and when these people choose to unleash their fangs on society. If our security services are up and doing and are adequately funded, they can sure curb these unfortunate events that are plaguing our society.

The threat on the President's life and that of the governor of Kaduna State is a litmus test of the effectiveness and efficiency of our security forces. If they are allowed to keep pushing the country to the brink, that may as well sound the death knell in our existence as a united and strong country.

What has happened in Sri Lanka must serve as an eye opener to our leaders. If they do not carry out their responsibilities, people are likely to resort to self-help. And, if we reach that point of no return, then leaders would pay dearly for their misdemeanors.

We cannot afford to get to that pass. The SARS riots were signs enough that not all was well. We cannot afford such a wide-scale disagreement to happen again considering the very precarious state our economy is in. A word of caution they say is enough for the wise.

News

BASG approves 44M for livestock vaccination

From **ABBAS GUNGURA, Bauchi**

GOVERNOR Bala Mohammed of Bauchi state has confirmed his administration's approval of N44 Million for the usual yearly livestock vaccination exercise in 2022.

The state Executive Governor made the disclosure during the official launching of the 2022 farming season sales of fertilizer in Nabordo Village of Toro Local Government Area of the state recently. He promised that an ultra-modern specialist veterinary clinic would soon be constructed at Ran Gate in Bauchi metropolis.

According to him, in order to improve and modernize agricultural production in the state, the Bauchi State Agricultural Development Programme, (BSADP) has been rendering agricultural extension Services to farmers to boost food security.

The Governor further noted that BSADP has also been partnering with Agricultural Research Institutes for sourcing improved agricultural innovations for use by farmers to enhance productivity.

Governor Bala said approval has been granted to the Bauchi State Agricultural Supply Company, (BASAC) for the procurement and sale of agricultural inputs at subsidized prices.

Bala however, expressed displeasure with the activities of some selfish and unpatriotic citizens who engage in adulterating all kinds of agricultural inputs.

While describing the act as a sabotage, Bala vowed that government will ensure that perpetrators are traced and punished in accordance with the law.

He therefore directed the ministries of Agriculture and



Muhammed

that of the Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs to immediately constitute a task force committee comprising security agencies and all other stakeholders to arrest and deal with all culprits accordingly.

"Already, I am aware that agro-input Dealers Union of the State have started fighting against this bad habit, and I am assuring you of the support of the State Government", the Governor said.

Bala explained that the war between Russia and Ukraine

has resulted in the shortage of ammonia, a major raw material for the production of fertilizer.

Governor Bala while expressing concern over the situation that led to astronomical rise in the cost of fertilizer, subsidized to Bauchi Farmers and fixed the sales of NPK and Urea at N15,000 and N20,000 per 50kg bag respectively.

He assured of making fertilizer available in all 20 LGAs in the state.

Bello appoints Permanent Secretaries

From **AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja**

KOGI State Governor, Yahaya Bello has approved the appointment of seven new Permanent Secretaries in the state.

The newly appointed Permanent Secretaries will fill some of the vacancies that existed in Kogi State Civil Service

Kogi State Head of Service, Mrs Hannah Odiyo disclosed this in a statement made available to our correspondent on Monday.

The newly appointed Permanent Secretaries are Jibrin Sanda Alhaji, Ali Gloria Eriawata, Ujah Hannah Ilemona and Oloruntoba Iyabo Elizabeth other appointed Permanent Secretaries are Muhammed Kassim Imam, Yakubu Suleiman Aliu and

GOMBE State's Contributory Healthcare Management Agency, GoHealth, has commenced the enrollment of poor and vulnerable persons for its basic health care provision programme.

According to the Director, Planning, Research and Statistics of GoHealth, Tanimu Umar, 40,000 persons, comprising pregnant women, 65 year old persons, children under the age of five, people living with disabilities and Internally Displaced Persons, (IDP's) are the targets for the enrollment.

Already, well trained officers have been mobilised to handle the 10-day enrollment process at various centres across the state.

They will be closely supervised

Gombe targets vulnerable persons for GoHealth programme

by GoHealth staff, supported by Ward Development Committees in all the 114 wards of the state as well as GoHealth Desk Officers.

The basic requirement for enrollment is the National Identity Number, (NIN), due to its huge advantage to tracking subscribers who would be enrolled within the 10-day period allotted for the exercise.

In Pantami and Gidan Magani Primary Health Care Centres, Ahmed Bello and Hauwa Danjuma separately explained to our correspondent how smooth the process had been.

They stated however that aside the failure of some

without the National Identification Number, some others were not qualified based on the specified guidelines.

According to Ahmed Bello, "We are enrolling beneficiaries for the Basic Health Care Provision Fund. We are five in number enrolling beneficiaries here in Pantami PHC. Some of the clients came without the NIN, and some others are not eligible."

"It takes us some minutes to explain to them. We intend to enroll beneficiaries within this area through the sensitisation of traditional and religious leaders," he explained

School feeding: Gombe NGO's, CSO's to commence monitoring

WILLIE ATTAH, Gombe

IN an effort to ensure the required national standard for the National Home Grown School Feeding Programme, some Non Governmental Organizations have been selected to monitor the programme in Gombe State.

Faida Community Development Initiative (FCDI), Advocacy Centre for Development (AC4D) and



Yahaya

Kishimi Shelter and Care Foundation (KSCF) were selected for the exercise in Gombe State.

Speaking on behalf of the others, the Executive Director of Kishimi Shelter and Care Foundation (KSCG), the lead NGO for the exercise, Mrs Grace Samuel, said all the eleven local government Areas of Gombe State are expected to be covered during the exercise.

She said, during a one day State step down capacity building of NGO's/CSO's on monitoring the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme that the aim of monitoring the school feeding programme was to ensure that what is taking place in the schools meet meet required national standards.

According to her, the Federal Government's school feeding programme under the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development was meant for children in rural communities, particularly, vulnerable children, with the aim of increasing children enrollment into schools, retention and commissioning of schools.

She said, apart from increasing the school enrollment, the school feeding programme was to also boost nutrition and feeding of the children.

On the monitoring, Mrs Grace Samuel said, "we are to monitor and see whether the children are being fed well. We'll look at the quality of what is being given, monitor if the environment is clean enough and preparation of the meals. There is a scope of procedure that is expected."

"After the monitoring and evaluation, we'll want to see transparency, accuracy, reliability. These are the measuring standards that we'll employ in the cause of the work", she stressed.

"We are also hoping that it will boost the economy of the communities because local farmers produce will be bought for the school feeding programme, thus creating economic empowerment for people", she explained.

Though they are yet to receive a date for the commencement of the monitoring exercise, they will however immediately begin advocacy in communities to sensitize

Nigeria's 2023 elections will set example for Africa-Buhari

PRESIDENT Muhammadu Buhari on Monday said the 2023 elections will deepen democracy in Nigeria and set an example for the rest of Africa.

Speaking at the celebration of Nigeria's National Diaspora Day held in Abuja, Mr Buhari, who was represented by his Chief of Staff, Ibrahim Gambari, said his government is committed to transparent, credible, free and fair elections.

"I have repeatedly assured of my personal commitment as well as that of my administration to ensure that the processes continue to be transparent, credible, free and fair leading to a smooth election and transition to the next government. This is the only way we can deepen democracy in Nigeria and set the right example for the rest of Africa and hopefully stop the recourse of

unconstituted change in government in our subregion and other parts of the African continent," he said.

The president commended the 17 million Nigerians in Diaspora for being worthy representatives of Nigeria in their various host countries and for their contributions to the home country.

He also commended NiDCOM for its engagement with the diaspora especially for coming up with laudable programmes for the Nigerians in the diaspora; programmes which according to Mr Buhari "will have considerable impacts on our economy for sustainable development."

The hybrid event, organised by the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NiDCOM), is the 16th celebrated by Nigeria and the fourth since the creation of the commission in 2019.

Abike Dabiri-Erewa, the chairperson of NiDCOM, while

addressing journalists at the event, said the event is not a jamboree but a platform for critical discussion and engagements and taking the next steps.

"It is about human capital development," she said.

She added that there is so much good news about Nigeria and Nigerians in the diaspora and no one would celebrate Nigerians but themselves.

Mary Beth Leonard, US ambassador to Nigeria, in her goodwill message, noted that Nigerians represent one of the best diaspora groups in the US and Nigeria sends the highest number of African students to the US.

"So we are the best in the world, most educated, how is it translating back to our home country; how do we create a synergy with them? That is what we are working on, that is the long-term goal," Mrs Dabiri-Erewa said.

The event was also attended by the United Nations Deputy Secretary-



Buhari

General, Amina Mohammed; President of African Development Bank (AFDB), Akinwunmi Adesina; and representatives of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States; International Organisation for Migration; PwC Nigeria amongst others.

Foreign News



UN soldiers from the peacekeeping mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO) take position at a looted warehouse at the UN facilities in Goma on July 25, 2022

Five protesters killed in anti-UN protests

AT least five people have been killed and fifty others wounded on the second day of anti-United Nations protests in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo city of Goma, according to the government.

"We will come back during the day with [a special briefing] on the human and material toll as well as the consequences to be drawn. We will also take stock of the process of withdrawing the @MONUSCO that has already begun," tweeted government spokesman Patrick Muyaya, on Tuesday.

Earlier, at the scene said UN peacekeepers fired tear gas and live bullets at a largely peaceful crowd, killing two and wounding at least two others. Army and police officers deployed to the scene did not open fire. A soldier and a policeman in a bulletproof vest were also hit by bullets, he added.

Demonstrations against the perceived ineffectiveness of the UN peacekeeping operation MONUSCO against armed groups in the country, erupted on Monday.

Hundreds of people blocked roads and chanted anti-UN slogans on Monday before breaking into the headquarters of the UN peacekeeping mission in Goma, an important

commercial hub of North Kivu province.

The UN peacekeeping mission in the DRC, known as MONUSCO, has come under regular local criticism for its perceived inability to stop fighting in the conflict-torn east.

More than 120 armed groups roam the volatile

region, where civilian massacres are common and conflict has displaced millions of people.

The protest comes after the president of the DRC Senate, Modeste Bahati, told supporters in Goma on July 15 that MONUSCO should "pack its bags".

US, Taliban exchange proposals for funds release

US and Taliban officials have exchanged proposals for the release of billions of dollars from Afghan central bank reserves held abroad into a trust fund, three sources familiar with the talks, giving a hint of progress in efforts to ease Afghanistan's economic crisis.

Significant differences between the sides remain, however, according to two

of the sources, including the Taliban's refusal to replace the bank's top political appointees, one of whom is under US sanctions as are several of the movement's leaders.

Some experts said such a move would help restore confidence in the institution by insulating it from interference by the armed group that seized power a year ago

THE chairman of the United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations said he would place a hold on US security assistance to Rwanda in Congress over concerns about the Rwandan government's human rights record and role in the conflict in the neighbouring Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In a letter to US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Senator Robert Menendez called for a comprehensive review of American policy towards Rwanda.

Menendez said he would begin by placing a hold on several million dollars in support for Rwandan peacekeepers participating in UN missions, according to the letter, which was leaked to the media and which his office confirmed was authentic.

A hold is a Senate procedure that prevents a motion from reaching the floor for a vote.

Menendez said he feared that US support for the Rwandan military, while it is deployed to DRC and reportedly backing rebels, would send "a troubling signal that the U.S. tacitly approves of such actions".

US senator favours ending aid to Rwanda



Rwanda's President Paul Kagame addresses the United Nations General Assembly in New York

The M23 rebel group began a major offensive in DRC's eastern borderlands with Rwanda at the end of March. Kinshasa has accused Kigali of backing M23, which the latter denies.

In 2021, the US allocated more than \$147m in foreign assistance to Rwanda, making it Rwanda's largest bilateral donor.

Menendez also cited what he said were credible accusations that the Rwandan government was muzzling critics at home and targeting dissidents living outside the country.

The US State Department reviews its policies in response to

events on the ground and would consult closely with Congress on the question of aid to Rwanda, department spokesperson Ned Price said on Monday.

"We've said before that we're concerned about the rising tensions between the DRC and Rwanda," Price told a regular press briefing, urging both sides to exercise restraint and engage in dialogue.

US politics, Canada's multiculturalism, South America's geopolitical rise—we bring you the stories that matter.

A Rwandan government spokesperson did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

US firefighters to slow huge California wildfire

FIREFIGHTERS have begun to slow the spread of the largest wildfire so far this year in California, after the Oak Fire threatened the famed Yosemite National Park and forced thousands of residents to evacuate their communities.

The massive blaze expanded rapidly since it began on Friday, overwhelming the initial

deployment of firefighters as scorching and dry weather fuelled its galloping pace through dry forest and underbrush.

Several officials with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire) said the fire initially behaved unlike any other they

had seen, with burning embers sparking smaller fires up to 3km (2 miles) in front of the main conflagration.

But firefighters have not seen more of that so-called spotting, Cal Fire spokesperson Natasha Fouts said on Monday from the incident command centre in Merced, about 210km (130 miles) inland from San Francisco.

The absence of other major fires in the region enabled Cal Fire to concentrate 2,500 firefighters on the blaze, and the lack of wind allowed for the continuous use of aircraft to drop water and fire retardant, officials said.

The Oak Fire has engulfed 6,795 hectares (16,791 acres) and is 10 percent contained, Cal Fire said on Monday.

It is the most destructive blaze so far this fire season, destroying more than three times in area than the nearby

Washburn Fire, which has been nearly 90 percent contained. But it pales in comparison with last year's Dixie Fire, which burned nearly 405,000 hectares (1 million acres).

US politics, Canada's multiculturalism, South America's geopolitical rise—we bring you the stories that matter.

California Governor Gavin Newsom declared a state of emergency in Mariposa County on Saturday, citing "conditions of extreme peril to the safety of persons and property".

In recent years, California and other parts of the western United States have been ravaged by huge and fast-moving wildfires, driven by years of drought and a warming climate.

Experts have said climate change is driving heatwaves, drought and other extreme weather conditions around the world.



Evacuations were in place for more than 6,000 people living across the sparsely populated fire zone

Foreign Commentary

Tunisia president-saviour or usurper of powers

As Tunisia's president asks voters to approve on Monday a new constitution that gives him greater powers, North Africa analyst Magdi Abdelhadi looks at the man seen by his supporters as a saviour and by his opponents as a usurper of power.

PRESIDENT Kais Saied clearly feels that he is a man of destiny. Although his authoritarian streak is neither unique nor new to Tunisia or the region, his academic credentials and rhetorical style separate him by a long distance from all other Arab autocrats.

Delivering his speeches in impeccable classical Arabic, often adlibbed, at a considered pace, the former law professor conveys a sense of a man who weighs his words carefully, with clear focus and vision and ironclad determination.

Despite mounting criticism both at home and abroad since he assumed total power in Tunisia a year ago, he has continued undeterred to his, and his alone, desired destination. This may very well be part of his appeal to many Tunisians.

Tunisia was the birthplace of the Arab Spring, which saw the overthrow of long-serving ruler Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali in 2011.

But after more than a decade of political instability, which saw 10 governments come and go and endless squabbles in parliament, at times degenerating into violence, many Tunisians have simply grown sick of this "democracy", which brought no tangible improvement to their quality of life.

On the contrary, the economy was in free fall, with all economic indicators pointing in the wrong direction: inflation and unemployment up, foreign debt up, and the value of the Tunisian dinar has plunged.

And things got much worse as the Covid pandemic struck, and even more so after the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the impact it had on food and energy prices.

Mr Saied is not against the Tunisian revolution, at least that is what he says in public. Rather, he sees himself as the man of the people, who "corrects" the path of the revolution.

But the word "correction" - tassheeh in Arabic - has a notorious history in Arab politics. It has often been deployed to justify power-grabs.

Characteristically, the leader of "the correction" is motivated by selflessness and a profound sense of the weight of history upon his shoulders. He wants to set history



right.

Speaking in the name of the Tunisian people, who have not been consulted in any significant way in its drafting, the draft constitution says: "Out of a sense of profound historic responsibility to correct the path of the [2011] revolution and the path of history itself, that is what happened on July 25 2021."

That is the day President Saied sacked the government, suspended the parliament and embarked on his single-handed mission to redesign the country's political future.

Critics say he's taking Tunisia back to where it was before the 2011 Arab spring - outright autocracy.

We will soon find out whether the Tunisians will endorse that narrative and back Mr Saied's

authoritarianism.

In fact, Tunisians are not alone in expressing disappointment with democracy. Disillusionment with the ability of a democratic system of government to tackle economic hardships is part of a wider trend of perceptions in North Africa and the Middle East.

There is a broad consensus among most observers that the new constitution reverses many of the democratic gains of the 2014 constitution that has been de facto annulled by Mr Saied. He has ruled by decrees since July last year.

As has been widely anticipated, Mr Saied's constitution is designed to give greater powers to the president and far less of it to the elected parliament.

This is a reversal of the balance of

power between the two institutions as it was established in the 2014 constitution.

Crucially, it sets no curbs on presidential powers. There is no way of impeaching him in parliament or by any other institution.

Further, it is the president who selects the prime minister and the ministers, and he can dismiss them. He can also dissolve parliament as it seeks to withdraw confidence from the government.

The new constitution also undermines the independence of the judiciary - a cornerstone of a democratic system.

The mass dismissal of judges by the president has caused outrage in Tunisia

In short, it takes Tunisia back to the presidential system it had since independence with an emasculated parliament that has limited oversight powers.

But the draft does introduce some real innovation - not just for Tunisia, but for the entire region.

It removes the clause, found in most constitutions in the Arab world, that stipulates that Islam is the religion of the state and puts the relationship between religion and the state on a new trajectory.

Instead, the document says that "Tunisia is part of the Islamic nation, and only the state has to work to achieve the objectives of Islam". These are defined as protecting the individual's life, integrity, wealth, religion and freedom - no reference here to Sharia (Islamic law), which has been the main rallying cry of Islamism everywhere.

And Islam is defined not in the narrow terms of Sharia's legal code, but in such broad terms that make it potentially compatible with democratic values, which Muslim reformers have long called for.

This could effectively criminalise the use of religion by any political group, and thus undercut the powerful Islamist movement, Ennahda. But it is very likely to appeal to secularists.

Some of the strongest criticism of Mr Saied and his constitution have focused on the drafting process itself, which was neither transparent nor inclusive.

It was put together by a group handpicked academics. The public online consultation that was announced earlier this year has failed to attract large number of Tunisians - only 500,000, some 5% or so of the electorate.

Crucially, neither the constitution nor the president have specified the criteria for considering the document has secured wide public support.

No threshold for approving the document, nor a minimum turnout have been stipulated.

Tunisia is sharply divided between advocates of political Islam and secularism

Several parties - including the biggest block in the dissolved parliament, Ennahda - have called for a boycott.

But opposition to Mr Saied has never managed to mount an effective campaign to rally the public against the president or force him to change course.

All eyes will be on the turnout. A big turnout with a yes vote could cement Mr Saied's power. A low turnout or a no vote could plunge him and Tunisia in a deeper constitutional crisis.

Although he has been democratically elected with some 70% of the vote in 2019, failure to secure resounding popular support could further undermine his legitimacy and will most likely embolden his enemies to challenge him. Source:BBC News



The mass dismissal of judges by the president has caused outrage in Tunisia

Feature

APC Christians must take a stand

It is no longer news that the All Progressives Congress, (APC) Presidential candidate, Bola Ahmed Tinubu has decided to seek for the office of the President of Nigeria during the forthcoming polls in 2023 through the Muslim – Muslim ticket. This verdict came to fruition after he ratified former Executive Governor of Borno State, Kashim Shettima, a Muslim from the north east region to be his running mate for the elections. BULUS GAMBO, writes.

LET us not forget that before Shettima's most recent designation, there were quite a variety of eligible outstanding and high ranking Christian politicians both from the North East and North Central regions who were initially considered for the slot. These people were by every standard reputable and thoughtful individuals who had served or are still serving this nation with virtue and respectability in all their fields of intellectual endeavors.

All these Christian leaders were not eventually considered to be worthy by the APC caucus or by the former Lagos State Governor, Ahmed Bola Tinubu himself.

By Tinubu's calculations inherently, it was subsequently born out of this usual fallacious hypothesis that since democracy and elections are all about numerical strength and advantage; it was quite pertinent for him to against all odds test-try this shunned option to achieve his set objective. The analogy is that, Tinubu believes that picking a Muslim running mate would afford him secure more votes particularly from the north east than doing otherwise. Already misguided by these selfish core northern elements, the former Lagos State Governor equally believes that no Christian running mate can pull an outstanding numerical figure to help thicken his endeavor of getting the number one job in the country. In any case, since his wife is a Deaconess in her Church, the Christian faithful in the country should be persuaded that their interest would also be insulated.

After all, Tinubu just as his other southern peers who hinged their calculations on the notion that the north is predominantly Muslim dominated while the south is predominantly Christian think that such a political calculation is one of the best applicable in most recent times.

Interestingly, the adherents of this same dogma from the kernel of the northern region have convinced and also stood by him that indeed, Christians in the north are insignificant and may not undermine his venture. They have brainwashed him into believing that contemporary political maneuvering have no moral considerations, a spirit of integration and that of deliberate inclusion. Their positional standing on this issue of political segregation has been and still is, when it comes to politicking, such sacrifices are obviously too hard to consider and or make as far as the caliphate's resounding unpalatable intrigues are concern.

These past few days, we have continued to witness religious fanatics and bigots justifying this sinister and divisive sentiment endorsed by Tinubu and his cohorts. They have unrepentantly continued to display various placards defending their fallaciously perceived notion that Christians are insignificant and should be treated with outmost disrespect in the region and by extension in Nigeria at large. This gesture is indeed not only highly provocative, dangerous and or demeaning but in its entirety very subjugatory and unacceptable by all and every standard. It is an insult on Christians for any politician in Nigeria to openly declare that no Christian anywhere in this nation is competent to hold any kind of office.

The other day, I also heard one of these misled clerics struggling to convince his brothers that "how can Christians who are confined to marrying one wife compare their population with the Muslim Ummah



Tinubu

who are at liberty to marry four wives and have many children?". Before I go further digesting this myopic approach to substantiating his claims, I must sincerely note with all sense of integrity and respect that I have quite a few honest Muslim friends who would never descend so low in their thoughts and or degrade their intellectual capacity in an attempt to score cheap publicity as such. In fact, I have a few others who against their integrity will never buy the idea of fronting a Muslim-Muslim ticket during the forthcoming presidential polls in 2023 after knowing too well how it's outcome would be.

On the contrary however, there are many of such dogmatized clerics who can go extra length to ensuring that Tinubu wins elections on this ticket at all cost. Even amongst some Christian brothers of ours, a few of them are still convinced that placarding such a divisive and dangerous ticket is nothing to be worried about. For most of them who hail from the southern part of this country and have little knowledge of the dilemma Christian minorities up north are facing, any of such protest of political

exclusiveness is regarded as counterproductive in its entirety.

To be blunt, all will agree with yours sincerely that this was not the first time a Muslim-Muslim ticket is coming to play in the annals of our nation's history.

In 1993, when Chief MKO Abiola employed same gimmick which eventually saw him and Alhaji Babagana Kingibe contesting on the platform of the SDP against Alhaji Bashir Tofa and his Christian running mate of the NRC, Sylvester Ugoh,

not many knew the resultant pressure mounted on him before he succumbed to such a political ideology. But again, at that time, Nigeria was not as polarized to the extend of what we are experiencing today. Not long after coming out of decades of oppressive military misrule then, most citizens were only thinking of a more enabling ground for sustainable democratization caring less about other pending issues.

Today, the entire process of primary elections has become so complex and intriguing. Unlike that which was obtainable in the past; Nigerians also ask more question if they are not comfortable with any political arrangements.

Unlike that which was obtainable in the past, candidates are not forcefully pushed down the throats of electorates without resistance.

Base on these calculations, Tinubu must have been living in the past and would not have imagined that such an era was gone with the wind. But Tinubu alone must not be totally blamed over the quagmire APC has found itself in right now.

Those who have followed with keen interest this unfolding development ought to have decoded the fact that the party was periodically changing its antics and inculcating exclusive ideologies and embarking on lopsided appointments which were quite detrimental to the corporate existence of the nation. Just imagine when it became so obvious that Christians were removed from key and strategic positions and replaced by Muslims by this incumbent administration. While our Christian brothers and sisters were left at bay, and Muslims given juicy appointments, Buhari was quick to defend his lopsided appointment saying that his choice was based on competence and those he could trust. Consequently, at a point, the first in the annals of this nation's history, all security heads was of a single faith. Then, we began to notice that other strategic and key offices in the hierarchy of government were isolated for a particular set and or class of people.

This was the same game plan which was activated but not quite comprehended by our Christian politicians in the country. To further re-emphasize that northern Christians are no longer relevant in the scheme of things, Bola Ahmed Tinubu finally let the cat out of the bag by saying that "there was no Christian who is competent to occupy the seat of the vice president in the entire northern region of the country. For the fact that the leader of the party, President Mohammadu Buhari, Senate President, Ahmed Lawal, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Femi Gbajabamila all Muslims and other stakeholders within the party hierarchy saw nothing wrong with this combination, then there is certainly more to it than meet the eye. Not surprising, many of the stakeholders in the APC after digesting this uncharitable remarks by Tinubu have picked up courage to do the needful. Some of them have already described the APC Presidential candidate's remarks as a huge embarrassment to the entire body of Christ and left the party as a sign of protest.

Though it may not be logical for all Christians to abandon the party in protest, a few of these Christian APC stalwarts who are still justifying Tinubu's unfortunate comments are really a disappointment to us all. In fact, we are presently tempted to ask how Christian are some of these brothers of ours in the APC? I have also heard some people proffering an option that since there are other parties available, Christians should stay mute and only express themselves through the ballot box which is an element of fact. However, I still believe that it will not be out of place if our Christian politicians and corporate bodies take a stand on this issue. Yours sincerely is vehemently of the opinion that our Christian brothers in APC must also take a stand on this matter for posterity sake even if they desire to stay back in their party.

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Though it may not be logical for all Christians to abandon the party in protest, a few of these Christian APC stalwarts who are still justifying Tinubu's unfortunate comments are really a disappointment to us all. In fact, we are presently tempted to ask how Christian are some of these brothers of ours in the APC? I have also heard some people proffering an option that since there are other parties available, Christians should stay mute and only express themselves through the ballot box which is an element of fact. However, I still believe that it will not be out of place if our Christian politicians and corporate bodies take a stand on this issue.
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THEY'RE SOWING THE SEEDS OF ABUSE

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Living

Identify when you are being abused

By **ANNE DUVAUX**

ABUSE of any form eats you up from the inside out. It crushes your self-esteem and disconnects you from life. **You don't have to hide and healing is possible though.** It starts with understanding the 8 types of abuse in a relationship. It isn't just physical.

The question of what is considered abuse in a relationship can be difficult to pinpoint precisely. Most people think of physical abuse but there are many more types of abuse that people can inflict on each other. Regardless of the abuse, it eventually leads to mental issues such as depression. **Victims often become desensitized to frequent abuse, and they take on the shame and the guilt.** Nevertheless, if your gut is telling you something is wrong, then it is.

First, you need to understand what is abuse in a relationship is all about. It's more than just about being in a physically abusive relationship. **Emotional abuse**

Abusive relationships don't always start with physical violence. Instead, the types of abuse in a relationship can start with more subtle signs, specifically those geared towards emotions. **These can be as simple as ignoring you or belittling your feelings.**

More specifically, spousal abuse often involves a dominant male. Of course, women can be abusive but some traditional males take the need to protect too far.

Sexual abuse

People often think of sexual abuse in relationships as the obvious one alongside physical abuse. Although, of course, sexual abuse also includes unwanted touch or pressure to perform certain sexual acts.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse in a relationship can include hitting or shoving as



well as throwing things. Of the forms of abuse in a relationship, this is the most likely to lead to depression, anxiety. Basically, anything that can harm you physically or puts your life in danger is part of the physical types

of abuse in a relationship.

Intellectual abuse

We all have needs and boundaries to help us function as healthy and grounded human beings. Intellectual boundaries are often overlooked, especially in a relationship where the lines can

get blurred.

A typical example could be if a spouse stops you from going to church or your spiritual meetings. Perhaps they make you feel stupid for having these beliefs?

No matter what your beliefs are, as long as you're not hurting anyone, you are free to hold them. Otherwise, you simply crush your self-esteem.

Different types of abuse under the intellectual theme could also fall into the digital world. For instance, **your spouse could belittle you by attacking your opinions publicly.**

Material and financial abuse

It all starts innocently with the abuser proposing to help sort out the finances so you don't have to worry. This quickly escalates, and you find yourself cut off from the so-called joint accounts with no access to funds. In essence, the abuser has full control.

Similarly, with material abuse, you are just as violated if your spouse destroys or steals your possessions. A car is an obvious example because once destroyed, you are isolated. In terms of types of abuse in a relationship, this plays a big part in crushing your autonomy.

Mental abuse

This type of abuse in a relationship are varied. This almost doesn't matter. On the contrary, the key question is,

"What is abuse in a relationship?". To answer it, simply observe any act or behavior that can harm your physical or mental health.

Similarly, sex can be used as a way to control other people's feelings such as making people feel ugly or unwanted. Once more, the abuser has hurt the victim.

Cultural abuse

Signs of cultural abuse are similar to the other types of abuse in a relationship. When someone's fundamental core is attacked, it can also lead to depression and anxiety. People can quickly become withdrawn especially if the abuse is also getting physical and they want to hide the wounds.

Typical examples would be to isolate people from their community, deny their traditions or criticize their practice. The ultimate aim is to harm the victim.

Discriminatory abuse

If your partner is treating you badly because of a disability or your gender, you could be experiencing discriminatory abuse. In this case, physical abuse examples could be stopping you from accessing, for example, your wheelchair.

Other different types of abuse within this category could be mocking your gender on social media. They might even bring your age into it. This is further exacerbated if they're exploiting you at the same time by, for instance, using your social aid for their benefit alone.

Guidelines for when facing abuse

Regardless of the types of abuse in a relationship that you're facing, you're not alone and help is available. Leaving isn't always an easy or safe option without first having a plan. So, educate yourself as much as possible as a first step.

You can also reach out to online support groups or therapists that specifically deal with physical abuse in a relationship. They will help you see the abusive relationship patterns, and they'll validate your story. There's nothing worse than doubting yourself during these tough moments.

The idea is to avoid adding fuel to their emotions. That means not answering back and not trying to reason with them. Simply state that you can talk later and then walk away.

If you're in a physically abusive relationship, try to get to a safe place as soon as you can. Try to reach out to friends and family if you can or get yourself to a local support group. Even if you don't have access to your finances, those support groups can help you free yourself.

No one should ever have to suffer at the hands of others. They themselves might have been victims once upon a time, but nothing ever excuses turning on others.

Abusive relationship patterns rarely end and never without help. It's tempting to tell ourselves that things will change when we face different types of abuse in a relationship. Nevertheless, the only



EVERYBODY'S WORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Living

Dealing with middle age crisis

A midlife crisis does not have to be debilitating. It also doesn't need to define your next course of action. You can learn to cope with this transitional time and come out stronger and happier.

If you have identified that you're struggling with a midlife crisis, here are ten tips to consider:

Identify What's Happening

This may sound simple, but the profound act of acknowledging that you're struggling is probably the most important step. If you continue to deny your mortality (or the changes associated with life), you might continue to feel sad, resentful, or lost. But by accepting what's going on and accepting the intense emotions, you allow yourself the space to reflect on what you need to do next.

Focus on Staying Present

Midlife can be hard, especially if you're ruminating over events in the past or obsessing about what may happen in the future. The more you can embrace the present, the more peace and calmness you can experience.

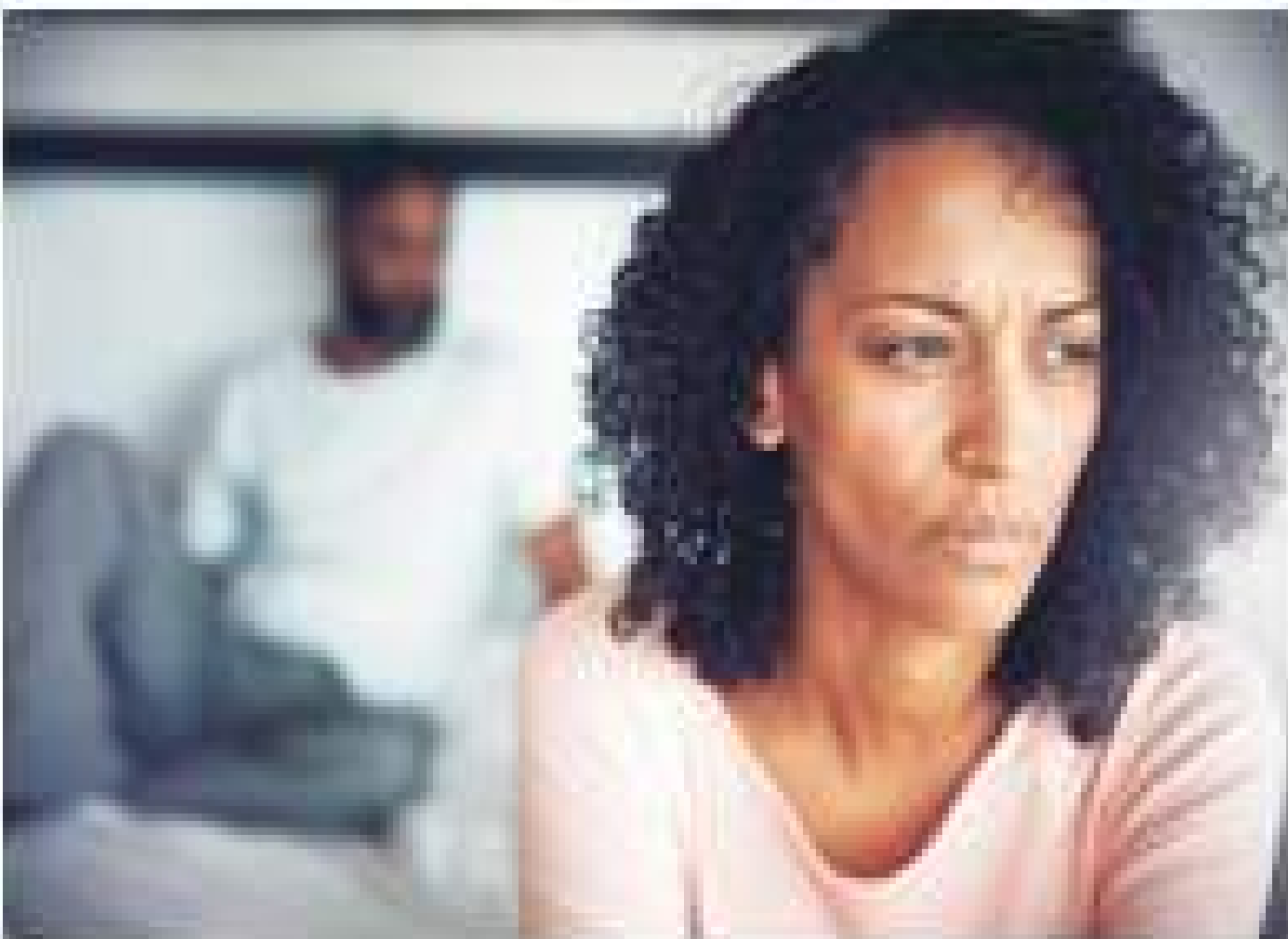
Practice More Emotional Self-Care

Self-care refers to engaging in conscious acts of self-compassion. Self-care isn't selfish- it's an essential part of your emotional well-being. During stressful times, it's even more important to implement self-care into your daily routine.

Practice More Physical Self-Care

Taking care of your body can be just as helpful as taking care of your mind. You can practice physical self-care by:

- Engaging in physical



- activity that you enjoy
- Eating a well-rounded diet full of nutritious foods
- Following a regular sleep schedule and allowing

- your body to rest when needed
- Take an extra-long bath or shower to pamper yourself

There's nothing wrong with making positive changes in your life. But impulsivity can lead to long-term consequences, and it can exacerbate feelings of shame and regret. If you feel the urge to do something drastic, write it down, evaluate the pros and cons, and revisit it at least three days later.

Try Volunteering

Volunteering allows you to focus on other causes and people instead of your own problems. Whether you choose to volunteer at a homeless shelter or clean up the beach, it's a fantastic way to give back and meet new people.

Subsequently, volunteering can also give you perspective on life. It can help you feel more appreciative for what you have. Furthermore, volunteering is associated with many benefits including self-confidence, sense of purpose, and increased happiness.⁷

Decrease Social Media Use

Social media can perpetuate the fear of missing out phenomenon, resulting in you comparing your life to everyone else's. However, social media only tells the partial truth- most people significantly enhance their digital lives by only displaying their successes.

Instead, consider cutting down or eliminating your consumption. You can start by uninstalling the apps or notifications on your phone.

Do Something Different

Getting through a midlife crisis

isn't all about restraint and control! It's okay to take risks and make meaningful changes in your life. You just want to do this responsibly and thoughtfully.

Think about something you've always wanted to try. Whether it's scuba diving or visiting Africa, can you make a plan to make that dream come true? If so, give yourself the permission to make it happen!

Stay Social

If your instinct is to isolate and turn inwards, do your best to stay social. Connect with new, healthy supports and reinvest more time and energy towards long-term relationships. Being with friends and loved ones can help you stay grounded and appreciative of what you do have.

Search for Gratitude

A midlife crisis is all about feeling unfulfilled and disappointed. Searching for gratitude can help counteract these tendencies and keep you focused on your accomplishments and goals for the future. They may not come naturally, so you might have to dig deep for examples, but practicing this frequently can help you notice the good things more in your everyday life.

Signs It's Time to Get Help for a Midlife Crisis

Many people navigate through midlife crises without severe disruptions to their daily life. That said, if you're struggling with feeling lost, disconnected, sad, or angry during this time, you might benefit from seeing a therapist.

How to help a loved one going through a midlife crisis

If someone you know is experiencing a midlife crisis, you can be a supportive ally during this time.

Some ways to support someone going through a midlife crisis include:

Normalize & validate their feelings

Even if you don't personally relate to their experiences, that doesn't make their feelings any less real. If a loved one confides in you about how they feel, make it a point to listen closely, ask reflective questions as needed, and maintain an open mind.

Avoid giving generic advice

It's rarely helpful to tell someone what they should or shouldn't do. Instead of giving advice, aim to give support. If they ask you for your direct advice, remind them that you can only speak on behalf of what works for you or someone else you know.

Check in on them regularly

Make the effort to maintain the relationship. You don't just have to talk about the struggles of midlife! See if they want to try a new activity together. You can oscillate between keeping your conversations heavy and serious and light and enjoyable.

What you are experiencing right now is inherently unique. However, you're not alone. If you or a loved one are going through a midlife crisis, reaching out to a mental health professional—or even a trusted loved one—can make a tremendous difference. You deserve to navigate this transition with ease and grace.



Editorial

ASUU strike: Let the needful be done

DETERMINED to show its solidarity with the striking workers in the public tertiary education sector and lend its voice to the call on the Federal Government to speedily resolve the issues ASUU is advocating for the Nigeria Labour Congress, (NLC) and its affiliate unions decided to embark on a nationwide protest on the 26th and 27th July, 2022.

THIS solidarity protests according to reports is also intended to showcase Nigeria's labour union's strength and resilience to stand against *laissez-faire* attitude of the government to the lingering industrial action in Nigeria's universities, polytechnics, and Colleges of Education and research institutions. This protest is coming on the heels of the recent activation of "no work no pay" policy on striking university workers. The stoppage of salaries of the striking workers is regarded by many stakeholders as not only unwarranted but draconian, especially since the government has continued to show a nonchallant attitude towards resolving the issue.

THE 2009 agreement which was reached after two years of negotiation between the lecturers and government included conditions of service for university lecturers, funding of universities, university autonomy and academic freedom and issues that required legislation to implement. Also included in the agreement were the breakdown of lecturers' salary structure, staff loans, pension, overtime and moderation of examinations.

UNFORTUNATELY, the inability of both parties to reach amicable resolution of this matter has continued to cause significant havoc to the educational sector in the country. This development has forced the National President of Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) Prof Emmanuel Osodeke to take a position that if the government does not meet their demands, the protest would continue.

AS the strike lingers, the children of the common man have always been at the receiving end as the children of these government officials and their cronies are enjoying lucrative scholarships while schooling abroad or in expensive private universities where their academic activities are never interrupted. These are no go areas for average Nigerians who cannot afford to send their children to such places or pay the exorbitant tuition fees.

IT is on record that ASUU is on its 16th strike since Nigeria's return to democracy in 1999, shutting down academic activities in public universities for more than four years within twenty-three years. A duration that is sufficient to complete a whole four-year degree programme. In 2020, ASUU went on 9 months strike, which accounts for the longest since 1999. This epileptic system has made it very difficult for undergraduates of Nigeria's public universities to graduate within 4, 5 or 6 years which they are originally supposed to spend for their courses.

WHILE universities are on strike, students mostly remain bored and idle at home. Such boredom and idleness sometimes lead to mental health challenges which include depression and anxiety, thus taking toll on the students' mental health. Some of these students eventually end-up perpetrating social vices very detrimental to the existence of our nation.

WE believe that its high time the Federal Government ends these consistent strikes in our educational sector to save the system from total collapse. Our striking lecturers must also shift grounds knowing too well that it is our future leaders' future that such acts do truncate.

THEREFORE, all stakeholders must do the needful towards ensuring that we restore the lost glory of Nigeria's educational sector.

IT appears government's directives are no longer respected in our society today because of how reluctant and unserious the system is. It is sad that, this lukewarm attitude has become a habit in each and everyone of us to the points that laws are mere directive and not a rule.

However, recently, the Plateau State Government had issued press statement banning truck drivers from plying the roads in the heart of Jos city from 6am to 6pm, but it was like no order was issued at all. You see these truck drivers without regards to the constituted authority's order in the state, breaking the law at any time of the day.

This action has generated a lot argument because many lives have been lost daily as a result of their reckless driving. No week goes by without reports of truck running into moving small cars, buildings and roadside shops. It would be recalled that, the Polo Roundabout has been a "pit trap" to these truck drivers whose truck lose control.

It was in this regard that the Executive Governor of Plateau gave a restricting order to these drivers to save the lives of citizens, but it seems they are above the



Flouting of government order by truck drivers in Jos

law. Unfortunately, the agencies saddled with the responsibility of arresting those flaunting this order are not doing much to control this ugly situation.

They are always busy concentrating on cars and tricycle riders who are using the road legitimately and allowing these truck drivers plying at odd hours against the government directives making it look as if there were no laws restricting them from plying the road in the day time.

Therefore, stringent actions should be taken by the State Government to put a stop to this unlawful act. A Special Squad should be set up specifically to handle that aspect of disrespect. Again, a heavy fine as high as #20,000 to #30,000 should be charged on whoever flouts the law. This will generate huge revenue to the state government and also save the lives of citizens.

Written by Golching Golek Jenta-Adamu

Of elections and right to choose

IT is a fact that democracy is simply defined as government for the people by the people and of the people. This is no doubt a system that gives citizens rights to participate fully in politics when it comes to election time for the people to elect leaders that would represent them at different levels or offices.

It was in view of this system of government that the people of Osun State in the South West of Nigeria on July 16, 2022 came out to exercise their civic rights by electing a democratic leader that would govern the state for the next four years as a governor as provided by the Nigerian Constitution.

The peaceful conduct of this election that has come and gone, indeed confirmed that the electorate have begun to think inside not outside the box, particularly when it comes to issues that are capable of sparking up violence either before, during or after election.

The Osun polls should as a matter of fact serve as an eye opener for Nigerian electorate now that the 2023 general elections is fast approaching for people to go out and make choices of the leaders

that are going to represent them through the ballot papers.

Certainly, the peaceful conduct of the Osun election did not witness any voter apathy because the people were ready or out to massively vote the candidate of their choice. As reported, despite some cases of the so called vote buying by some candidates, the people were said to have received money from the candidates who insisted on vote buying and perhaps voted against such politicians.

With this kind of pace set from Osun recently conducted gubernatorial election, it therefore, behooves on all and sundry in the country to shun politicians who believe in money bag syndrome in politics.

It may interest you to know that the people of Osun have really spoken through their votes by voting out the incumbent governor who is from the ruling party, APC and elect the candidate of the PDP. Senator Adeleke was the People's choice to unseat the incumbent.

It is equally believed that the new governor elect, was elected based on credibility not because of candidate's platform or party. Nigerian electorate should from now henceforth see election beyond financial inducement and party so that credible leaders will always be elected into various offices.

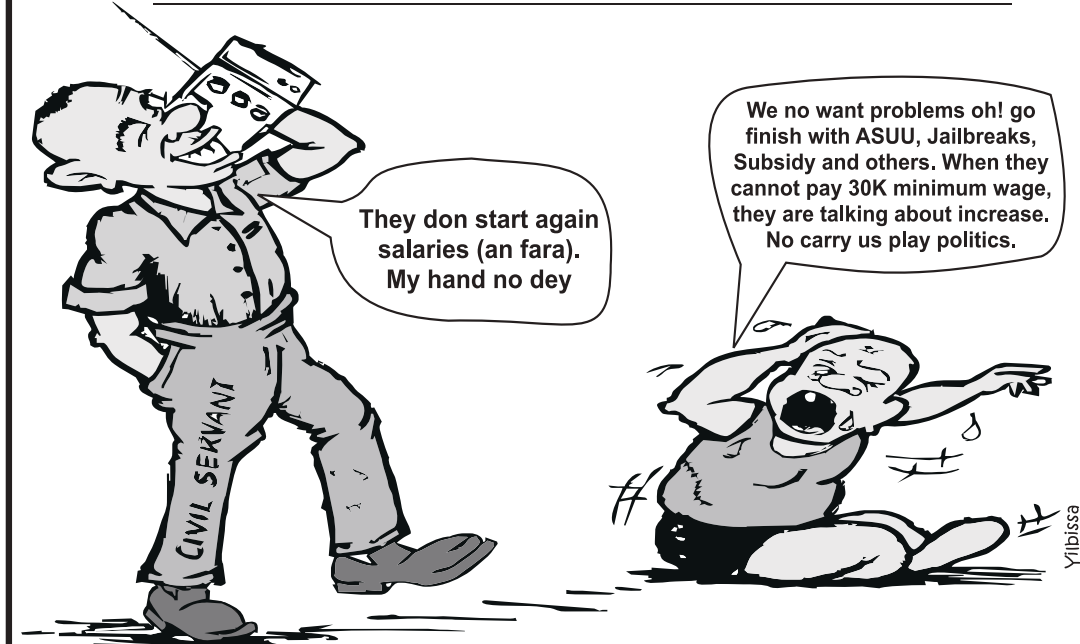
In fact, the success story of the just concluded Osun election cannot be complete without saying a job well done to the INEC for conducting a free and fair polls. Nigerians should commend INEC for making election very interesting, particularly with the improve technology through the use of BVAS which election would no longer be rigged. This is because any vote cast is transmitted direct into INEC sever, therefore, if it is maintained the era of rigging is now gone.

Our security agencies should also be applauded for playing significant role before, during and after the election, especially for maintaining law and order. This was achieved with the support and cooperation of the Osun people.

By JIDAUNA DARING.

Standard Cartoon

FED. GOVT. PLAN TO INCREASE SALARY



Opinion

By Kenneth Amaeshi

The illusions of power, prosperity and prestige

THE lucky people of faith, nonetheless, appear to find a way out of this existential quagmire. Whether or not they succeed and are better off than the faithless ones is yet to be proven. Unfortunately, and strangely, the proof is only in death. Many have died and did not return. Since one comes into life on earth alone, it may be sensible to conclude that the answer we are looking for is only a personal and private one....

The search for meaning is human. It could be questions about the purpose of life, the necessity of death, and what happens after death, for instance. Admittedly, these questions can be sometimes unsettling because of their propensity to produce more unanswerable questions and trigger some existential anxieties. A natural coping strategy is to silence, suppress, and repress them – as constantly dwelling on them, arguably and invariably, makes life and living burdensome and miserable.

But beneath this temporary feeling is a constant pang of time-pressured emptiness. As beings unto death, according to the German philosopher, Martin Heidegger, we are very sure it shall end one day. Then we shall be lifeless, powerless, and helpless. However, we cannot accurately and definitely predict what happens after death, despite the oft-grandiose posturing of religion and people of faith. The only concrete reality is the faith we sometimes desperately hang onto, which can as well be an exercise in non-reality – at least because of the possibility of its equal emptiness. In that regard, faithful faithlessness, or faithless faithfulness – depending on where one is located in the nebulous spectrum of doubt and

belief – becomes a possible inescapable reality.

Notwithstanding, the presence or absence of faith does not completely annihilate the presence of lack and tremendous deprivation – another characteristic of being human. Wanting is essential to human beings and according to basic economics – that pretentious dismal science of the real, human wants are insatiable. This intrinsic state of human deprivation does one thing very well to survive and linger on. It needs hope.

Hope spurs us to imagine the unimaginable and see the unseen. That's why, for example, over time, arguably due to deprivation, we construct an exaggerated image of good governance and what we want our leaders to be. Sometimes, we come across as searching for saints as leaders. Unfortunately, there is no living saint. This presents a delicate dilemma, as we are constantly disappointed and disciplined by this unnatural aspiration. Given the degree of poverty in the land, it seems leaders who are authentic products of poverty are the only natural expectation.

Amartya Sen, one of the leading and living development economists, described poverty as unfreedom. In his view, a poor person is simply incapable of meeting his or her needs. These needs may range from the everyday basic needs of food, shelter, and clothing to the higher needs of belonging and self-fulfilment. One thing they all have in common is a basic lack – an emptiness of some sort.

There is no better metaphor for his lack than the desert. The desert appears both dry and lifeless. In its dryness and lifelessness, it remains barren. Even if it is naturally endowed, the endowment is concealed by the blatant aridity,

harshness, and forlornness it constantly exhibits. Flying over the Sahara Desert, for instance, focuses the mind on this perennial human challenge of poverty as a fundamental deprivation and material lack.

Notwithstanding, poverty remains a global scourge. It leaves an indelible mark on the soul. No one escapes poverty and remains the same. Either one is vain about it or remains humbled by the scorching experience. In between the two lies the danger of an unconscious overcompensation.

However, poverty is not a permanent state. Although some people are trapped in it perpetually, others can escape it if they develop the capability to do so. But where does this capability come from?

Obviously, education is one way to escape poverty. Metaphorically, education nurtures the head, hands, and heart. The head enables us to think well and make good decisions. The hands help us with coping with the technical demands of existence – basically the issues of production and consumption. Finally, the heart is the home of empathy and the recognition that we exist with others. In other words, the heart enables us to appreciate that we are not alone in the world and that to live well is to live well with others.

The usefulness of education in nurturing society can never be overemphasised. Tony Blair, a former prime minister of the United Kingdom, saw education as a way to avoid the devastating traps of poverty through social mobility; hence, he invested in higher education to encourage people to move ahead in life. Despite this, he is often criticised and remembered for his role in the Iraqi war, which epitomises the lack of empathy and

the devaluation of our common humanity in recent times.

Notwithstanding, poverty remains a global scourge. It leaves an indelible mark on the soul. No one escapes poverty and remains the same. Either one is vain about it or remains humbled by the scorching experience. In between the two lies the danger of an unconscious overcompensation.

Overcompensation is a psychological desire to fill a yawning gap in us. In the case of the experience of poverty, it is an exercise to mask the past and showcase a different present and future. For instance, a person who experienced severe poverty in early life and then makes money later in on, might be tempted to engage in the excessive display of wealth to compensate for his or her earlier life deprivations and humiliations. As such, overcompensation can be a lack and weakness often presented as a strength.

In the end, living and dying become private enterprises in the face of the seeming emptiness of existence. But we will not know until we eventually know that which we do not currently know – if that knowing is ever possible.

In masking, one is hollowed out and overtaken by the hubris of the ephemeral sense of worth and possession. One becomes the rich man of Jesus, who would find it harder to enter the kingdom than the camel passing through the eye of the needle (Matthew 19:24). Ultimately, masking the past becomes a grand exercise in hypocrisy and inauthenticity, which in turn cumulatively puncture one's self-worth, confidence, and public image. That's another form of death – an annihilation of our true selves.

Confronted by the reality and threat of death, no matter how

much we try, we become trapped in hypocrisy and inauthenticity. To be human, therefore, is to be hypocritical and inauthentic. We constantly suspend the reality of our death and emptiness. This epoch of (i.e., bracketing of) experience is in line with Husserl – the German philosopher – and self-entertainment is nothing but the constant estrangement of our endangered, contrived, fallible, and feeble humanity.

The lucky people of faith, nonetheless, appear to find a way out of this existential quagmire. Whether or not they succeed and are better off than the faithless ones is yet to be proven. Unfortunately, and strangely, the proof is only in death. Many have died and did not return. Since one comes into life on earth alone, it may be sensible to conclude that the answer we are looking for is only a personal and private one buried in the heart of subjective experiences of life on earth.

In the end, living and dying become private enterprises in the face of the seeming emptiness of existence. But we will not know until we eventually know that which we do not currently know – if that knowing is ever possible.

After all said and done, life on earth remains an exercise in futility and vanity! It is as good as being dead. So, why bother? Why strive for power, prosperity, and prestige when they are all vanity?

Kenneth Amaeshi is a public philosopher, professor of sustainable finance and governance at the European University Institute, Italy, and visiting professor of leadership and financial markets in Africa at the London School of Economics, United Kingdom. He tweets @kenamaeshi.

Empowering youths through digital literacy skills

By ZEENAT O. SAMBO

With many courses in Nigerian universities becoming less marketable in the work world and students lacking employable skills when seeking opportunities, the acquisition of digital skills is the right direction for the achievement of digital inclusion. For personal growth and access to job opportunities across the local and international tech ecosystems, students need to migrate to online study platforms and pursue their educational aspirations.

Recently, the Minister of Communication and Digital Economy, Mallam Isa Pantami announced that the Federal Government has signed partnership agreements with tech giants, Huawei and Cisco to establish 300 academies in Nigeria and to train 30,000 citizens in advanced Information Communication Technology (ICT).

This step again has underlined the scope of the Ministry to promote the acquisition of digital literacy and skills among youth as a strategy to push its digital economy agenda through partnerships with various global tech companies.

Speaking at the Cisco Safari International Conference 2022 organised by National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) in collaboration with Cisco, the Minister disclosed the agency's partnership with Microsoft to train about five million people in ICT skills, particularly in the area of Artificial Intelligence (AI).

While discussing the theme, "Digital Skills in the Fourth Industrial Revolution, the Impact on National Development", Pantami noted that digital skills and the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) have been highlighted as pillars of the country's National Digital Economy Policy and Strategy (NDEPS).

In actualising NDEPS for Digital Nigeria 2020-2030, which was unveiled by President

Muhammadu Buhari on November 28, 2019, the conference has enabled the capturing of the agenda of developing digital skills and literacy and enhancing the digital society, as crucial to enabling emerging technologies.

The signing of these agreements comes at a good time when Nigerian students are affected by the protracted Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) strike, as such the Huawei and Cisco digital skills programmes will provide them a new pathway to participating in the global business arena.

The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) embarked on a strike in February, demanding that the government should invest in the provision of university infrastructure and pay its members' salaries through the University Transparency and Accountability Solution (UTAS) system developed by Nigerians.

With the strike dragging into five months, many students and youths have been left stranded at home without vocational skills and at the risk of negative influences with disastrous consequences.

With many courses in Nigerian universities becoming less marketable in the work world and students lacking employable skills when seeking opportunities, the acquisition of digital skills is the right direction for the achievement of digital inclusion. For personal growth and access to job opportunities across the local and international tech ecosystems, students need to migrate to online study platforms and pursue their educational aspirations.

Cisco Systems, Inc., commonly known as Cisco, is an American multinational technology conglomerate founded in 1984. Cisco develops, manufactures, and sells networking hardware, software, telecommunications equipment, and other high-technology services and products.

Known for its expertise in specific tech markets such as the Internet of Things (IoT),

domain security, videoconferencing, and energy management, Cisco ranks 63rd on the Fortune 100 companies, with \$49 billion in revenue and it is a brand outfit with a global reputation in skills development and training.

Similarly, Huawei as a leading worldwide provider of ICT infrastructure through the organisation's platform and ecosystem development technique, and its new ICT infrastructure highlighting the "Cloud-Pipe-Device" synergy.

With its driving ability advancement system and certification guidelines, Huawei Certification encompasses three categories: ICT Infrastructure Certification, Platform and Service Certification, and ICT Vertical Certification.

As part of its focus on growing new ICT experts in the digital era and building a healthy ICT talent ecosystem, Huawei Certification has over time gained a reputation with its "CloudCampus" digital network which has been implemented on campuses the world over to bring academics and institutions closer to safer and faster network operations that save time, resources and investments.

According to Tolly Group research, Huawei platform offers intelligent operations and management (O&M) and provides more AI-enabled services, and ensures optimal service and user experience with automated network management across its entire lifecycle, including planning, deployment, maintenance, and optimisation.

Courses offered include the Internet of Things (IoT), artificial intelligence, network energy, finance, enterprise communication, and many other digital skills to engage Nigerian youths during the ASUU strike.

Others include medical and health, poverty reduction and agricultural development, trade promotion, investment promotion,

digital innovation, green development, capacity building, cultural and people-to-people exchange, and peace and security.

It will be recalled that earlier in the year the Federal Government and Huawei had officially begun the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to provide ICT skills to young people. The MoU inked the establishment of two core ICT projects in Nigeria: the Huawei ICT Academy Project and the Huawei ICT Talent Cultivation Project for the development of the digital economy in Nigeria.

It is estimated that this partnership will lead to the development of over 300 ICT institutes at Nigeria's top universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education. At least 10,000 university students from universities will be trained each year, with a total of 30,000 students in three years. This would include training, competitions, and other activities incidental to the operation of the ICT Academy.

Under the MoU, Huawei, Microsoft, and Cisco are expected to make available their technology and trainers to help curb the rate of unemployment in Nigeria by providing experience, opportunities, jobs, and ICT certifications to students each year to increase their market flow.

With the MoU targeting 100,000 Nigerians, Microsoft training about five million youth, and Cisco training about 30,000 Nigerians, it is believed that digital literacy and skills can be transformed into digital economic growth soon.

Amongst other empowering factors, the Federal Government initiative will provide an enabling environment for international companies to invest and do business in Nigeria and help multiply the number of indigenous tech-enabled innovative enterprises with digital skills to drive Nigeria's digital economy.

Zeenat O. Sambo writes from Abuja.

Feature

Reforming Nigeria's Civil Service for effective service delivery

By JULIUS TOBA-JEGEDE

IN the just-concluded celebration of the Civil Service Week, marked globally, the Federal Government expounded its quest to reposition the service with the unveiling of a Culture Change Video.

During the week-long celebration, the Federal Civil Service Strategy and Implementation Plan (FCSSIP) from 2021 to 2025, was also inaugurated.

The pilot phase of the Federal Civil Service Bus Scheme and the ground breaking ceremony for the Federal Integrated Staff Housing (FISH), award of the outstanding civil servants in MDAs, among others, were the high points of the event.

The theme of the 2022 Civil Service Week is "Performance Management System (PMS): Impact on Productivity."

The Head of Civil Service of the Federation, Dr Folasade Yemi-Esan, at her assumption of office, introduced several reforms to reposition the civil service for improved efficiency and professionalism.

Yemi-Esan said that the Federal Government underscored the need to introduce the FCSSIP 2021 to 2025, initiated by the office of the Head of the Civil Service of the Federation (HOCSF).

She said the FCSSIP was designed to reengineer the Federal Public Service for increased productivity and quality service delivery.

According to her, the scheme is also aimed at addressing some critical issues in the Federal Civil Service, focusing on capacity building and talents management, performance management system, IPPIS and human resource management, innovation, digitisation and staff welfare.

"The Federal Government, however, through the office of the HOCSF, has recorded some of the achievements in its quest to turn the civil service to an Efficient, Productive, Incorruptible and Citizen-centred (EPIC) world class service.

"This was achieved through some innovative and proactive programmes and policies under the flagship programme of FCSSIP," she said.

Yemi-Esan said the commemoration of civil service week provided a platform for African nations and Nigeria in particular to recognise the value and virtue of service to the community.

The celebration, according to Yemi-Esan, will provide opportunity to highlight and share best practices on how to reposition the service for enhanced performance.

She explained that the theme for 2022 celebration was adopted as an innovative way of not only getting more work done efficiently and effectively, but also ensure objective way of



Esan

measuring performance of individual civil servant across board.

"This is why far-reaching efforts are being made in the Nigeria Civil Service to replace the subjective Annual Performance Evaluation Report (APER) with PMS.

"Hence, the choice of the theme is informed by the need for us to highlight the importance of PMS and galvanise action towards its emplacement in the service."

President Muhammadu Buhari who also spoke at the event, said he was delighted to celebrate Nigerian civil servants at the occasion of civil service week, not only to symbolically commemorate the day.

He expressed delight about the ongoing efforts to return the civil service to its pride of place in delivering efficient and effective services to the nation.

Buhari described the present crop of Nigeria's civil servants as engine room of government and commended them for partnering the government in driving the implementation of its programmes, in spite of difficult economic situation.

"I want to specially appreciate your commitment and dedication during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, during which your professionalism contributed significantly to contain the spread of the virus to the wonder of the global community."

Speaking on the significant of the FCSSIP initiative, Buhari explained that the initiative was approved by the Federal Executive Council in 2021, with the aim of transforming the

nation's civil service into a world class service for accelerated development.

"The Culture Change Video will go a long way to reinforcing some of the competencies required for improved service delivery and it is a tool for sensitising the civil servants on the required attributes.

"The FCSSIP 2021 to 2025, which I am also going to launch today, contains the initiatives for transforming the civil service into a world class service for accelerated development."

According to him, the theme "Performance Management System (PMS): Impact on Productivity," is focused on a self-introspection of how the means of assessing what the civil servant "does on a daily basis" and would affect the generality of the public service and by extension, Nigerians.

The president, nevertheless, assured the civil servants of his administration's commitment to improve the civil service.

"Accordingly, I have set up the Presidential Committee on Salaries to harmonise salaries service-wide.

"It is my hope that the outcome of the committee's work will provide the impetus for an upward review of the salaries of deserving civil servants, having recently increased the Duty Tour Allowance of all civil servants as a starting point."

Some stakeholders have hailed the planned reposition of the civil service, saying it was long overdue.

They attributed the poor state of the civil service to years of poor remuneration.

They said that the civil service reform was necessary, as it would improve efficiency, effectiveness, professionalism and democratic character of the civil service.

A civil servant, Mr Emmanuel Usoh, commended the Federal Government for its innovative projects and reformation programmes, but called for urgent harmonisation of salaries and emoluments of all government agencies.

Usoh also appealed to the government to create conducive working environment for public workers.

"Yes, it is true that the present government through the introduction of reform programmes wants to strengthen the civil service.

"But my worry is that for how long shall we continue to work with out dated equipment in our offices?

"Some of us cannot boast of computer sets in our offices, let alone comfortable office spaces."

Another civil servant, Mrs Margaret Benson, also appealed to the Federal Government to fast-track the implementation of the salary harmonisation, adding that many civil servants are feeling disillusioned working in the system.

"With workers in organisations such as NNPC, CBN, NDIC among others, receiving better packages than the rest of us, how can we cope with the present high cost of living?

"It is discouraging seeing someone you are on the same level, the same academic qualification, but he is earning more than you, are we not working for the same government?"

"I will appeal, as we are made to understand that the FCSSIP contents will also affect staff welfare, let government do something about this harmonisation to boost the morale of other civil servants," Benson said.

Dr Boboye Oyeyemi, the Corps Marshal, Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), who spoke, described PMS as a 'pace-setting system' that distinguishes serious and forward-looking organisations aspiring to reach the pinnacle in a 21st century competitive world.

According to Oyeyemi, who was a guest lecturer, PMS clearly articulates the vision, goals and objectives of an organisation and stipulates ways of achieving them via strategic focus, without undermining human resource capacity as key variable to their realisation.

Using the FRSC as a case study, he listed planning, monitoring, development and improvement, periodic rating, feedback mechanism and continuous improvement as key elements to the successful implementation of PMS.

Commending the head of service for taking a bold step in the implementation of PMS, Oyeyemi viewed it as a right step in the right direction towards enhancing productivity.

In all, the strategic plan by the Federal Government is to reform and reposition the age-long institution for better service delivery to Nigerians. (NANFeature)

**If used, please credit the writer as well as the News Agency of Nigeria.

"With workers in organisations such as NNPC, CBN, NDIC among others, receiving better packages than the rest of us, how can we cope with the present high cost of living? "It is discouraging seeing someone you are on the same level, the same academic qualification, but he is earning more than you, are we not working for the same government? "I will appeal, as we are made to understand that the FCSSIP contents will also affect staff welfare, let government do something about this harmonisation to boost the morale of other civil servants," Benson said."

News

Conflicting reports trail boat mishap in Niger

From **MATHEW JWANTU, Minna**

NIGER State Emergency Management Agency (NSEMA) has confirmed the unfortunate incidence of a boat mishap in Kwata via Zumba community in Shiroro Local Government Area of the state.

The Director General of the Agency Ahmed Ibrahim Inga stated this in Minna, adding that the ill-fated boat was said to have loaded passengers and goods including foodstuff, other farm produce and livestock for the weekly market days in the area from NANSA Village by the river bank and upstream Shiroro Hydro Power Dam heading towards Kwata Saturday Market at Zumba.

While the other group said that the passengers were involved in the boat mishap as a result of hitting a tree stump while going to the weekly Saturday Market by water transportation.

He explained that midway into the water; the boat hit a tree stump and broke into two pieces, thereby leading to the drowning of passengers on board.

The DG further said that one person has been confirmed dead among the passengers, while another victim was said to have sustained injuries, saying that the dead body is yet to be identified male passenger has been recovered just as an injured male passenger has been rescued, taken to a nearby hospital in one of the neighboring communities around the scene of the incident, and to he has been treated and discharged.

Meanwhile, the NSEMA boss has said that the search and rescue operation was very slow as the communities around the scene of the



Bello

unfortunate incident have been described as a Bandits enclave.

According to him, one was convinced to believe that the passengers, mostly women and children were going to trade their wares which included foodstuff, other farm produce and livestock at the market, before the incident occurred.

"Incidentally, one of the livestock walked out of the mucky waters into safety while the other one was injured and it was rescued and slaughtered by the owners with the view that it didn't eventually die after the accident.

I have not been able to speak to authorities of the Marine Police in that area of the state in order to ascertain the fact about the claims of those citizens saying that the passenger left their community in large number on board the boat in order to avoid being attacked by some bandits in the nearby communities in Shiroro LGA of

the state", said Inga.

It was however learnt that most of the victims of the boat mishap were said to have swam into safety unhurt while several others were also rescued by local divers in the area.

Further checks also revealed that rescue operations were a bit slow, as a result of the fact that some rescuers were allegedly afraid to assist the victims of the broad day commercial boat mishap for fear of being kidnapped by some dare devil bandits lurking around in the rural communities in Shiroro LGA of the state.

Meanwhile the DG, NSEMA, Malam Ahmed Ibrahim Inga has said that in his interaction with the Sarkin Ruwan Zumba on Sunday morning near the scene of the Boat mishap that the figures remained the same, except that there were three cows in the boat, one drowned, and one swam into safety while another one was slaughtered by its owners.

A driver working with Katsina State Transport Authority (KTSTA) and three others were on Sunday afternoon shot to death by bandits along Katsina to Jibia Road.

"The 30 passengers were kidnapped by the same bandits and taken to the hideout of the bandits in the forest."

"The KTSTA bus was left by the roadside which made the management of the bus authority to evacuate it to

30 kidnapped, 3 others killed

From **SHEHU DANJUMA, Katsina**

their station.

An eye witness said that the bandits committed the offence at about 12:00 noon on Sunday.

The witness said the bandits came out of the bush and started shooting indiscriminately immediately after they sighted the

authorities' bus.

The witness further said that after committing the crime, the bandits bundled the passengers and took them to their hideout in Rugu Forest.

Contacted the Katsina Police Command PPRO, SP Isah Gambo, confirmed the incident and said that the police are on the trail of the bandits.

Mining operators raise alarm over ban

From **JIDAUNA YANUNG, Abuja**

OPERATORS in the mining sector have raised an alarm that the ban on mining by the Federal Government would render thousands of youths jobless and further worsen the state of insecurity in the country.

Speaking under the aegis of the Miners Association of Nigeria, the operators wondered what was the relationship between mining activities and the recent jail break in Kuje Correctional Centre, Abuja.

The National Secretary of the association, Dele Ayanleke, while briefing journalists in Abuja stated that though the association, was expecting details about the proposed ban by government, care must be taken not to worsen security in the country.

He urged government to



Adegbite

the think twice before taking such decision he added further that "before government will say that they must have done their due diligence and conduct

in depth investigations into what is happening. "But the fact is that it is not in every part of the Nigeria that this kind of situation is happening. We are aware that in the North Central, around Zamfara and Katsina there have been issues.

"And even as we speak, for more than two years now, mining activities have been banned in Zamfara. But we don't know the relationship between mining activities and the Kuje Correctional Center break. We don't know the relationship about between those two issues".

Monarch calls for return of displaced persons

From **AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja**

THE Attah Igala and President, Kogi State traditional Council, HRM Matthew Alaji Opaluwa has called on displaced people of Bagana communities in Omala Local Government Area of the state to return home as necessary measures have been put in place to ensure their safety.

The Monarch gave the charge in a meeting held recently in his palace at Idah with some royal fathers from Kogi East in a bid to permanently resolve the crisis.

He expressed his unhappiness with the failure of Onu Otutubatu, Chief Salifu Anyebe to build his palace at the tomb of Abutu -Aje, the progenitor of Attah Igalas.

And added that the absence of the palace at the shrine has made the gods/ ancestors to be angry with the land.

Meanwhile, he had directed the relocation of Onu Otutubatu and Ihanke Palaces from Bagana to their respective domains. The District Head of Bagana, Alih Haruna should return home to provide leadership for the people, even as Chief Salifu Anyebe should mend fences with Onu Ife, HRH Boniface Musa, for peace to reign.

He promised to visit the shrine soonest as part of the ascendancy rites.

He however, sounded a note of warning to the Agatu Militias



Opaluwa

from Benue state that are allegedly terrorising the people of Bagana and its environs to desist saying their continued attack on the people would amount to the declaration of war against Igala kingdom.

While disclosing the commitment of His Royal Majesty to the peace process, the Ojogba of Ife, Hrh Boniface Musa, assured that the latest intervention by Attah Igala is capable of returning lasting peace and security to the Communities.

Meanwhile, the stakeholders in attendance, agreed to adhere to the terms and conditions of the resolution.

Recall that the Bagana Crisis started in 2012 when Fulani herders and farmers clashed and it snowballed into tribal and clannish cleansing that has reduced the communities to rubble, with heavy humanitarian crisis.

Successive administrations from Gov. Ibrahim Idris, Idris Wada and the present administration of Alhaji Yahaya Bello have directed the Onu Otutubatu, Salifu Anyebe and Onu Ihanke clan, to relocate their palaces from Bagana to their domains as part of measures to end the crisis.

However, the directives have not been met with concomitant

sanctions.

He urged the Attah Igala to take proactive measure to ensure that his directive is implemented forthwith.

In their separate contributions, the representatives of Hausa/ Nupe /Fulani, Alhaji Ismaila Umar, Woman leader, Hajia Lami Audi, Pastor Peter Peace of Ihanke Clan, Alhaji Yusufu Abuh

commended HRH Onuh Ife, Boniface Musa and Attah Igala, HRM Matthew Alaji Opaluwa for their tireless efforts to resolve the communal and Chieftaincy crises.

They urged them not to stop at the mere dishing out directives but to enforce it no matter whose ox is gored to restore peace to the embattled Communities.

CBN consultants commend progress at RIFAN

From **WILLIE ATTAH, Gombe**

THE Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) consultants have commended the progress of work at the Rice Farmers Associated of Nigeria (RIFAN) project in some parts of Gombe State.

They made the commendation during a visit to some of the farms in Kurjele, Yamaltu Deba Local Government Area where some of the youth farmers expressed their joy over their engagement in the project.

The CBN Consultants and Farm Monitoring and Recovery Committee visited Kurjale Cluster Downstream for Farm Monitoring and Recovery.

Collins Andrew, Johnson O Adebayo and Grace Yakubu of Enterprano Limited, the CBN consulting firm said

they were impressed with the level of compliance from the farmers.

They also commended the youth farmers for their efforts in the recovery process.

One of the beneficiaries (farmer) who spoke to our correspondent noted the impact of the project on his farm saying, it has doubled his production and farming capacity.

He called on his fellow youths to engage in farming and take it as essential to food security and empowerment.

He further commended the effort of RIFAN Special Project Coordinator, Alhaji Abubakar Muhammad S. Bello, RIFAN National

President, Alhaji Aminu Goronyo, CBN Governor, Mr Godwin Emeifele, as well as all other stakeholders concerned.



Emeifele

News

FG holds Nigeria's diaspora in high esteem

President Muhammadu Buhari says the Federal Government holds Nigerians in the Diaspora in high esteem due to their immense contributions to national development.

Buhari, who was represented by the Chief of Staff (CoS), Prof. Ibrahim Gambari, made this known on Monday at the National Diaspora Day 2022 celebration in Abuja.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the National Diaspora Day is organised by the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NiDCOM), with theme: "Diaspora Engagement in a Globally Challenging Time".

The day is celebrated on July 25, annually.

Buhari said that the celebration was an opportunity to address over 17 million Nigerians in the Diaspora on the great occasion set aside to celebrate Nigeria's best in the world.

"This celebration is in recognition of your contributions to national development and networking them to ministries, departments, agencies of government, and states diaspora focal point officers and civil society organisations in Nigeria.

"Let me reiterate that our government has held and will continue to hold our citizens in the Diaspora in the highest esteem and this is evidenced the following.

"The passage of the Nigerians in the Diaspora Commission Establishment Act in 2017, the establishment and kick-off of the commission in 2019, the approval and abduction of the national Diaspora policy 2021.

"The presentation of the compendium of the '+ 600 Diaspora Icons at 60', which remains a historic record of the worth of our compatriot globally.

"This auspicious celebration of our national Diaspora Day in 2022 was birthed in the national Diaspora Policy 2021, which prescribed July 25, as a day to celebrate Nigerians in the Diaspora.

Buhari said this year's theme, Diaspora Engagement in a Globally Challenging Time for national development "is apt, considering our experiences with COVID-19 pandemic".

"And the ongoing Russian/Ukraine war and the general insecurity, which we are experiencing not only in Nigeria but across the globe."

Amb. Zubairu Dada, the Minister of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that Diaspora Day celebration was timely, even as the world stepped out from the painful devastation of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

"I am most impressed that you all took time out to participate in this event in spite of the distances most of you have to cover and the differences in the time zones.

"This simply testifies to your residence as Nigerians and your commitment to national



Buhari

unity and its development. I cannot forget to thank NiDCOM, the Directorate of Cooperation in Africa, Nigerians in Diaspora Organisation world-wide.

SMEDAN to support 3,330 entrepreneurs—official

The Director-General of the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN), Mr Olawale Fasanya, said that 3,330 entrepreneurs in the country would be supported with equipment.

Fasanya disclosed this on Tuesday during the official inauguration ceremony of the National Skill Development Initiative ((NBSDI) held in Katsina.

Represented by the Director, Business Skill Development and Promotions of the agency, Mr Monday Ewans, the director-general said that the programme was being implemented in all the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

He said altogether 3,330 entrepreneurs would be impacted with entrepreneur and vocational skills, as well as empowerment materials to the tune of 90 per cent of their required needs.

"As at today, similar programme is commencing simultaneously in all the states within the North-West

geopolitical zone of the country.

"Katsina State was chosen specifically for the official flag-off ceremony in the zone in view of the state's strategic support for Medium and Small Scale Enterprises (MSMEs) within the zone.

"At the end of the programme, the participants would have acquired improved knowledge on business practice and service delivery, increased access to finance, equipment and other business resources, among others" he said.

Fasanya noted that it was in a bid to support MSMEs in a practical way that SMEDAN developed NBSDI aimed at providing entrepreneurship and vocational skills, as well as providing equipment to the artisans.

He explained that the initiative would provide more professional knowledge to locally trained young artisans which would lead to a reduction in job losses to immigrants from neighbouring countries.



PLATEAU STATE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES AND ENERGY NIGERIA SUSTAINABLE URBAN AND RURAL WATER SUPPLY, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (SURWASH) PROGRAM-FOR-RESULTS

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FOR CONSULTANCY SERVICES TO CARRY OUT SURVEY AND DETAILED ENGINEERING DESIGNS FOR THE REHABILITATION AND UPGRADING OF EXISTING WATER SCHEMES AND SANITATION FACILITIES FOR URBAN, SMALL TOWNS AND RURAL COMMUNITIES

A. Introduction

- The Federal Government of Nigeria has signed a subsidiary credit agreement with Plateau State government towards the implementation of Nigeria Sustainable Urban & Rural Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene (SURWASH) Program-for-Results. Plateau State government now intends to apply part of the proceeds of the credit for the Construction of new and Rehabilitation of existing Water Schemes and Sanitation Facilities for Rural, Small Towns and Urban Communities.
- This request follows the Plateau State approved 2022 Budget Implementation for Nigeria Sustainable Urban & Rural Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene (SURWASH) Program-for-Results under the Program for Results (PforR) component.

Objective:

- The overall objective of the Program is to increase access to Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene services and to strengthen sector institutions in Plateau State of Nigeria.

B. Project Description

- Details of the consultancy is as follows:

S/N	BUDGET CODE	LOT NO	CONTRACT	LOCATION
JOS WATER SERVICES CORPORATION (JWSC) 025200100100 Plot BP 4097, Industrial Area, Old Airport Road. P.M.B 2198, Jos				
01	2302042	JS1	Detailed Engineering Design of Yelwa Water Scheme	Yelwa, Jos South LGA
PLATEAU MUNICIPAL WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION AGENCY (PLAMWASSA) 025200100100 C/o Ministry of Water Resources and Energy, No. 23 John Mark Samchi road, Adjacent Plateau State House of Assembly, Jos				
02	23030123	PM1	Detailed Engineering Design of Bokkos Water Treatment Plant	Bokkos LGA
	23030199		Detailed Engineering Design and Survey of Wase Ground Water Works	Wase LGA
	23030155		Detailed Engineering Design of Langtang Water Treatment Plant	Langtang North LGA
PLATEAU RURAL WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION AGENCY (PRUWASSA) 025200100100 C/o Ministry of Water Resources and Energy, No. 23 John Mark Samchi road, Adjacent Plateau State House of Assembly, Jos				
03	23020148	PR1	Hydrological, Geophysical and Groundwater Resources	50 Communities, 7 Schools and 8 Health Institutions in Bokkos, Wase, Langtang North and Jos South LGAs of Plateau State
MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES AND ENERGY (MWR&E) 100025201023 No. 23 John Mark Samchi road, Adjacent Plateau State House of Assembly, Jos				
04	23050128	MWR	Development/Preparation of Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) and Resettlement Action Plan (RAP)	All Project Locations

- Interested consultants are invited to tender for a lot. Terms of Reference (ToR) can be purchased and obtained for any of the Lot from the various Implementing Agencies as shown above.
- Consultants will be selected in accordance with the procedures set out in the Plateau State Public Procurement Laws (2018). Interested consultants may obtain further information from the Procurement Officers of the various Agencies between **9.00am. – 4.00pm. (Local Time) on weekdays, except on public holidays.**

C. Requirements

- All proposals must be accompanied with the following documents as requirement for consideration.
 - Evidence of registration with Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC)
 - Tax clearance certificate for 2019, 2020 and 2021 (Provide Tax Identification Number TIN)
 - Evidence of registration with SCUML
 - Company profile including technical qualification and experience of key professional staff and resources
 - Verifiable evidence of similar jobs executed in recent past and knowledge of the industry or project
 - Company Audited Accounts for 2019, 2020 and 2021 duly endorsed by an accounting firm.
 - List of relevant equipment owned or Lease Agreement.
 - Name and email address of contact person on company's letter head
 - Evidence of current registration with PENCOM, ITF and NSITF
 - Evidence of registration with Plateau State Bureau for Public Procurement and State Tenders Board.

Please ensure that documents for submission are arranged serially in the order herein.

D. SUBMISSION OF TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL PROPOSALS

- Interested consultants are required to submit sealed technical and financial proposals properly labeled in one envelope and marked **"SURWASH PforR Consultancy Services for lot....."** at the top left-hand corner. Proposals must be submitted in the tender box at the various Agencies not later than three weeks from the date of this advertisement. Proposals will be opened on the closing date.

E. CLOSURE

- All Proposals must be delivered in the tender box of the various Agencies on or before **12 noon on 16th August, 2022**, late submission shall not be accepted. Opening of Tender will commence thereafter at the various agencies.

NB: Interested consultants are eligible to bid for only one lot

Signed
Sa'ad Ibrahim Bello,
Honourable Commissioner.

CHANGE OF NAME

TONG

I, formerly known as **TONG YAKUBU MWANGONG**, now wish to be known and address as **TONG YAKUBU DUNG**. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.

NANKYER

I, formerly known as **NANKYER MUSA DALLE**, now wish to be known and address as **NANKYER SHWARJI WILLIAMS**. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.

Correction of date of birth

I **BARNABAS SHANGLE DANIANG**, wish to state that my correct date of birth is 27/5/1980 not 2/10/1989. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to take note.

CHINDAK

I, formerly known as **DIMWESH NANCHIN DAYAS**, now wish to be known and address as **CHINDAK NANCHIN MUTTANG**. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take

NANCY

I, formerly known as **NANCY NAANCHIN DADIYE**, now wish to be known and address as **NANCY CHRISANTUS DADIYE**. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.

FOR SALE

FOR SALE

FOR SALE

FOR SALE

Are we going the way of Arab spring?



BY KENNETH DARENG

THERE is no doubt, by now millions of Nigerians are accustomed to various kinds of human sufferings and have resigned to their faith especially when faced with the stark reality of poverty, unemployment, various labour strikes, insecurity, maladministration and other social vices that have over the years denied them the opportunity to enjoy the common wealth of their beloved nation.

The Afro-beat exponent late Fela Anikulapo Kuti, once described the plight of Nigerians as that of, "suffering and smiling" which vividly explains the kind of patience and "godly" people Nigerians are. Perhaps, it has to do with their rich cultures and traditions and that of Islam and Christianity, which the people have swallowed like what Karl Max referred to; " the opium of

the Masses" which might have stuck with their mindset to just say; "God dey" or it shall be well even when they know it will never be well.

For decades running, the country has witnessed different administrations right from the colonial days to date and yet, it is as if each successive government came with its style, policies and programs that ended up either as a failure or left worse than they met it.

Those who were born in the pre-Independence era up to the 70s would tell how prosperous the nation was and how peaceful it was living in any part of the country without any form of discrimination despite differences in tongues and other factors, yet the people remained resolute in standing side by side with each other under one united Nigeria.

Then came the period of oil boom with vast opportunities everywhere ranging from jobs, education, access to health, housing and other basic requirements of life that also promoted commercial activities and social interaction across the length and breadth of the country.

Unfortunately, these good fortunes began to decline with the involvement of the military in governance which between the 70s and the 90s became the nation's albatross where vested interests within the elite brought about massive corruption and retrogression in almost every fabric of the society which has

today grown to a hydra headed monster that has turned Nigeria from the economic power house of the African continent to a state of hopelessness and if care is not taken heading to the precipice.

The state of the nation today is like giving birth to a normal child but later in the cause of growing up, the child began to exhibit signs of an ailment that has affected its normal growth which required surgical operation but was neglected and now it has become a full-blown life-threatening disease. This is the pathetic situation the country has found itself with multiple problems it can barely contain.

Some of these challenges are majorly; insecurity bordering on terrorism, banditry, kidnapping and other criminal activities apart from raising an army of unemployed youths, a fractured civil service with an already exasperated labour unions and general public outcry of high costs of living with corruption hitting high volumes while government's institutions have almost collapsed coupled with nepotism, lack of equity, fairness and justice across board.

What constitutes a seeming national emergency now suggests that the government is bereft of fresh ideas on how to turn things round, most especially with the rising wave of insecurity which has heightened food insecurity with a resultant effect on all sectors of the economy whose devastating consequences can be felt on all spheres of the Nigerian society.



In what appears to be an act of insensitivity, the government had made good its resolve to privatize the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation [NNPC] as well as coming up with the more controversial policies like the one proposed by the National Security Council, such as the nation-wide banning of commercial motorcycles popularly known as "Okada" and what it termed "illegal" mining across the country.

Logically, the Federal Government needed to have weighed the implications of such laws which apart from begging for more answers, have drawn public condemnation from across sections of society. In the light of the present level of hardship and excruciating pains of the general living conditions in a country where nothing seems to work, where poverty is starring the masses right in the eyes, where Universities have remained closed for more than 5 months and where many are experiencing hell on earth could be a short cut to anarchy.

In addition to the costs of cooking gas, endless daily queues at filling stations with the costs of foodstuff and services beyond the reach of the commoners, and

where the cost of transportation has turned the poor of the society to perpetual foot soldiers and forceful marathoners, one wonders where the Government is heading to and what it is inviting to itself.

Unfortunately, Nigerian leaders are bad students of history, otherwise, they ought to have remembered that not too long ago, the Arap Spring that led to the downfall of governments in Libya, Egypt, Tunisia, Sudan and most recently in Sri Lanka, all started with public disenchantment over similar issues.

Although the Government's idea of banning illegal mining with operation of OKADA might be easier said, lest we forget, this is also one industry that absorb more than 40 percent the army of jobless youths including graduates. Therefore, any attempt to ban such without first and foremost coming up with requisite and realistic measures and palliatives may well be embarking on a risky maneuver with an intention to blow off the little patience left in the minds of majority of its populace.

SMS ONLY 08098181805
kennethd1966@gmail.com



By HOSEA NYAMLONG

Poor reading culture in Nigeria, among Primary, Secondary and Tertiary students has deteriorated over the years.

Research has shown that the causes of poor reading culture in Nigeria include defective education system, reading language problem, lack of well-equipped or functional libraries in schools and low patronage of school libraries, among others have contributed a lot to the poor state of reading in the country.

Recently, it was discovered that the decline in reading culture among the various ages and population segments in the country has reached an alarming state that reading is no longer interesting let alone reading for self-development.

Social media handles such as Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Tik

Imbibing reading culture

tok, WhatsApp, Instagram, Telegram, Snapchat, Skype, imessage, Youtube, LinkedIn etc. have taken the day, by pulling heavy traffic of viewers, chats, on the social handle, abandoning information from books and other relevant materials that have served as a major source for information and development.

Reading has been proven to stimulate imagination, encourages curiosity. Reading enhances acquisition of skills for handling complex ideas or issues. It is generally believed that readers are leaders, because of the information they have gathered through reading of books in their life time.

A reading society is a knowledge-based society, by extension, a developed society with adequate information that drives, the process of development.

People who read are more empathetic towards their fellow beings and more willing to be curious and open towards others in sharing information, knowledge, good decisions and the ability to think ahead to plan for the future.

Similarly, the way of life of a nation is influenced by the percentage of its citizens who are literate. Reading bridges the gap between ignorance and knowledge.

Nigeria is rated among countries in the World with the lowest reading culture where the vast majority of the population are non-literate and this has placed the country at the disadvantaged side, which is not good in this 21st century.

This calls for an urgent and pragmatic measures to be taken in order to revive the reading culture back in the country.

Most primary school pupils cannot read to comprehend, attention is not given to improve the capacity level of the pupils in primary schools. The public primary schools are suffering more from this menace.

On this note, reading increases understanding of our own identity, improves empathy, widen our scope to new information and gives us an insight into the world view of others.

In the past, what was common among citizens, students and youths was the number of books, novels, newspapers they were able to read. And many new words, building vocabulary and meaning through the process of reading.

Indeed, that was the era of reading culture that was invoked, where parents would ensure that they passed down newspapers, books they have read to their children to read and sometimes

children reading to their hearing, to really ascertain without comprehending the text.

Unfortunately, it seems we have migrated from that period to a new era that reading of books and other meaningful materials has become an enemy to knowledge.

Today, instead of how many books one has read, to how many likes, viewers, followers one has online.

Although, social media is a means of communication, but many citizens, students, youths, love to spent more time chatting, then using the platform to browse for new materials, books or research that would help in adding more knowledge.

There is a great benefit in building a reading culture in children, it is believed that it is important for children to develop the habit of reading early in their development.

Nonetheless, reading culture is a learned practice of seeking information, knowledge, or entertainment through written words.

However, it should not be limited to reading textbooks for academic purposes! It should involve the news, novels, or even online articles on topics of interest.

Reading, whether for pleasure or for academic purposes, is therefore an essential habit that

forms the bedrock of greatness in everyone, regardless of age, gender or status which is hardly disputable.

The truth remains that a nation whose citizens no longer read is sure to face an uncertain and endangered failure. Let us take steps today to save our future by practically reviving our reading culture.

To this end, reading culture can be enhanced through provision of suitable reading materials in schools, including public libraries and the use of readership promotion campaigns.

Parents should also own the campaign process of imbibing the reading culture in their children, instead of buying video games, Android phones. More books be bought and parents should be role models to their children.

Teachers are to be adequately trained on how to engaged pupils, students on how to read books and other materials of learning

Government should ensure that they set up programmes, policies that would help Nigeria to be among the literate society through partnering with authors, publishers to write and publish books that would be affordable, available in schools and public libraries in the country.

Information Communications Technology (ICT), should be used to promote the campaign of reading books.

God bless Nigeria!

By **BULUS GAMBO**

AFTER a long wait, the Inspector General of Police, Usman Alkali Baba in an extraordinary shrug much-admired by the citizens of Nigeria, a few months back promoted about 20,572 junior officers in the establishment. These were mostly police security personels who were last promoted about five years ago. In fact, many of them never gave it a thought that they will be promoted this soon. Some of them who have meritoriously served the nation and had not been encouraged through such promotions had even concluded that their rewards would perhaps eventually be in heaven. To their surprise, this time around, their promotions eventually came while they are alive.

This most recent effort was aimed at not only rewarding hard work but also ensuring that the affected officers were gingered towards standing the heat of the contemporary security challenges in the country. In the excise, about 20, 572 sergeants, 325 corporals and 143 constables were affected. Likewise, the Force High Command in liaison with the Police Service Commission also promoted other senior police officers who have continued to do the security organization proud in their anticipated obligations.

This is however not to say that the police in the country have an enabling environment to carry out their assignments efficiently. Aside the issue of poor salary and allowances which many of them struggle through in their lives, most of them who put their lives in harm's way are not encouraged to live the Nigerian dream and or die for their nation. Many of their barracks are left in shambles and not renovated to meet international standards. Also left in a sorry state are the present disposition of the archaic police armory that is presently negatively affecting their obligational performance. These are some of the problems which the incumbent administration must take into consideration so as to salvage the integrity of the force and for better performance.

Speaking in one of the forums, Alkali Baba while commending all the newly promoted officers for their resilience and invaluable commitment to duties also charged them to see their promotion as a call for renewed zeal, vigor, patriotism to duty and further re-dedicate themselves to professional policing standards.

Fair enough, officers of the Plateau State Police Command also benefitted from this laudable gesture as they continue to do their best in policing several vulnerable communities in the state to the best of its ability. Since the appointment of the incumbent Police Commissioner, CP Bartholomew Onyeka who assumed office as the 42nd of such security officeholder, he has not relented in his efforts towards getting rid of criminal elements. On several occasions, the Plateau State Police Commissioner has admonished his men to serve with sincerity of purpose as the end reward would eventually

justify their efforts. Therefore, the most recent promotion is seen as a morale booster for his men in the state.

Quite appreciative of the promotions, the Nassarawa Gwong community recently held a reception in collaboration with the police officers to rejoice with the promoted officers of the Division who have all these years also put in their best towards sanitizing the area. Most of the stakeholders who were thankful of the policing wisdom applied by the state commissioner of police are equally full of praises for the

Baba and the Police Service Commission for promoting all the officers involved.

The DPO also commended the Plateau State Commissioner of Police, CP Bartholomew Onyeka for providing a conducive environment for the security organization to excel here on the Plateau adding that since the assumption of the police boss, tremendous achievements have been recorded in the state.

He disclosed that his division has been able to record great success in the area following continuous fruitful discussions



Nassarawa Gwong Police Division Jos celebrates officers' promotion



SP Musa Hassan, DPO Nassarawa Gwong Police Division Jos, decorating one of the officers, Inspector Dopsal Nanbol



Newly decorated officers of the division

fact that peace is gradually returning to the state. But again, this reception would not have taken place if there was no cordial working relationship between the Nassarawa Gwong Police Division and the residents of the area.

For some time now, the Divisional Police Officer of Nassarawa Gwong Jos, SP Musa Hassan with his men have through their personal sacrifices and sincere commitment continued to carry along all stakeholders of the area in their day-to-day operational obligations which are all intended to sanitize the area and make the place crime-free.

It was as a result of this that the residents deemed it fit to rejoice with all the newly promoted police officers of the Division. Speaking during the occasion, the Divisional Police Officer of Nassarawa Gwong, Jos, SP Musa Hassan equally commended the Inspector General of Police Alkali

and deliberations between both sides further noting that, "we cannot achieve much without involving the residents of the area, as such only through a cordial working relationship that we will be able to overcome the complex security challenges in the area.

In the past, Anguwan Rukuba, Congo Russhia, Bulbula, Gadan Bako and Filin Ball were areas which were not easily accessible due to its notorious nature. These areas were completely held hostage by hardened criminals that had formed an enclave there.

Through the involvement of stakeholders, Ward Heads, Youth Leaders and Vigilante Groups, the police hierarchy in the area have been able to efficiently collaborate and synergize towards curbing the menace of criminality in the area. Interestingly, most of the black-

spots generating headache for the residents have been completely exterminated. One attitude of the DPO Musa Hassan which enabled him won the hearts of most residents of the area is his stance that bail is free and no kobo should be accepted in the division for any kind of services rendered. Indeed, many residents of the area see the incumbent DPO of Nassarawa Gwong Jos as a God send officer who has restored the dignity of the Nigeria Police and restored the magnificent confidence reposed on them.

In his words, one of the traditional rulers of the area, Chief Olawoyni Joseph noted that the promotion would no doubt ginger the officers to give in their best in securing our vulnerable communities in the state. According to him, "the police officers who benefitted from this promotions in Nassarawa Gwong

Police Division deserved it putting into consideration their sacrifices for the community.

"I must appreciate the Plateau State Commissioner of Police, CP Bartholomew Onyeka for working hard to ensure that acts of criminality in the state is curtailed. We in Nassarawa Gwong must appreciate him for posting SP Musa Hassan who has been doing a lot to secure the residents of our area. For the first time in many years, SP Hassan and his men have justified the confidence reposed on the Nigeria Police Force." He added.

Also contributing, one of the benefitting Police Officers, DSP Nura Alhaji Sani appreciated the Inspector General of Nigeria Police, Usman Alkali Baba and the Plateau State Commissioner of Police, Bartholomew Onyeka for the kindness extended to them adding that "we the benefitting Police officers will forever remain grateful for this promotion. We must also justify this promotion knowing too well that to whom such responsibility is given, much more is required from him."

According to him, "we are very happy with the police hierarchy over what they have done, we will ensure that we do not disappoint them in our expected obligations and also ensure that our communities remain safe. We also want to acknowledge the efforts of our Divisional Police Officer in the person of SP Musa Hassan who has severally encouraged us to live above board. We must also appreciate the community for synergizing with our DPO for proper policing of the area. We pray that such gesture should continue in the interest of the citizens of the area." He noted.

Highlights of the occasion witnessed the decoration of some police officers namely, DSP Nura Alhaji Sani, DSP Alexander Koshi, DSP Markus Dauda, ASP I Jibril Aminu and INSP. Dopsal Nanbol by the Divisional Police Officer of Nassarawa Gwong, Jos, SP Musa Hassan as well as by other traditional and stakeholders of the area.

IMAGES

LONG JAN NAMU INSTALLS VILLAGE CHIEFS

The Long Jan of Namu Chiefdom, HRH Miskoom Engr. Safiyanu Suleiman Magaji (111) recently installed village heads in his Palace in Namu, Qua'an Pan LGA. Below are pictorial moments captured by our lenses at the event



Long Jan of Namu Chiefdom, HRH Miskoom Engr. Safiyanu Suleiman Magaji (111) reading his speech



Cross section of the newly installed village heads supported by well-wishers listening to His Royal Highness



A cross section of some traditional rulers at the installation ceremony



HRH Miskoom Engr. Safiyanu Suleiman Magaji (111) listening keenly to responses from the newly installed village heads



One of the village chiefs being introduced at the occasion



HRH Miskoom Fidelis Attahiru, Long Kwo of Kwo Chiefdom, Kwande, Qua'an Pan LGA at the ceremony



A mammoth crowd watching the proceedings at the colourful ceremony



One of the village heads acknowledging cheers from the gathering

Odd World

Go to hell! Woman accused of dressing young, says

ANTONIA Fifi is determined to help other women over 40 feel confident in their skin and show them that they really can wear whatever they want - and should ignore any haters.

We all know that age is just a number - and nobody should tell women how to dress 'appropriately'.

But one 40-year-old is causing quite a stir online, with some haters nastily claiming she dresses 'too young' for her age.

This is because Antonia Fifi has taken the internet by storm with her glamorous outfits. From figure-hugging dresses to mini skirts - Antonia does not shy away from dressing exactly how she wants to.

Antonia, a fashion expert from

Toronto, Canada, refuses to conform to society's expectations of 'toning it down' when women get a bit older - and she looks fantastic for it.

There's been some haters round here so figured I had to bring this one back!

Although her wild wardrobe has helped Antonia gain a large following on **TikTok**, sadly she is a regular target for trolls who think she needs to dress differently.

She makes videos with negative comments pinned at the top, and then rocks the outfit they're telling her not to.

One person wrote: "To be honest, mini skirts suit no one unless your legs are like Naomi [Campbell] and you're 20..."

Source: The Mirror



Obi: Igbos should blame themselves for any failure

PAST few weeks have reasonably been thrilling based on the unfurling developments on the political topography of Nigeria. As it is; both the angels of God in heaven and demons from the pit of hell are venting their tempting squeamishness and other mouth-watering menu for Nigerians to munch. Many citizens are already carried away by the intricate recipe on the menu list of the dark side which has been fundamentally diversionary with devastating consequences.

It has over the years been a myth in Nigeria that during such moments of dramatic jamboree, citizens are provided with an opportunity to elect candidates who will administer them to the best of their abilities. On the other hand, those with voracious interest also come as wolves in sheep clothing to delude and cunningly bribe their way to leadership positions even when they have nothing to offer to the electorates in the nation.

It is during such a momenta that Nigeria's political terrain becomes bizarre with political stalwarts and candidates deliberately throwing money around to strategically guarantee that they woo unrestricted public support and accomplish their selfish interest to the detriment of the common man. During such times, politicians go to any, and every altitude to beg our traditional rulers and stakeholders with all the enthusiasm they have. Some of them who have for four years not returned home eventually do so in order to deceitfully corroborate with few cynics and sadists amongst us to remain afloat and relevant.

Back then while in secondary school, we used to call such largesse given the vulnerable in vernacular "Kayan Tzaki" literary meaning sweet things. When talking about displaying money to buy the conscience of the electorate, this is such a time for it.

The political calculations on the polity is becoming more intriguing as the days go by. Unexpectedly however, the past few weeks have been uneasy ones following the negative behavioral attitude of our politicians which has continued to heat up the system in it's entirety. This time around; it seems that the game plan is inherently to continue suppressing the weak in the midst of the calamities we as a people have found ourselves in at this particular moment.

No doubt, in the past decades, the marginalized ethnic groups in this country have not been integrated at all. While the widening gap in terms of wealth distribution is becoming an issue of serious concern, the common man on the street has been left the worse for it.

All these past years, Nigeria has continued to witness unequal development in terms of our quest for equitable distribution of our Commonwealth for the benefit of all. While some regions have continued to blossom as a result of uncountable number of physical and capital project, others have been left aloft without any concrete social amenities to show for it.

Though power has been shared amongst the two major political parties, the peoples Democratic Party, (PDP) and the All Progressives Congress since the advent of the present dispensation in 1999, the prospects of these two major political parties seems shaky at this particular moment.

For the first time after decades of power control, the hand writing on the wall is not enterprising and or convincing. Interestingly, lack of people oriented policies and or programmes have forced many to lose faith in the act of governance in the country. Many political commentators are equating Nigeria's situation to that of a

commercial bus moving at a high speed without any direction or a driver but full of passengers.

For a nation as such groaning under siege and held hostage by dare devil criminals and unpatriotic elements who do not wish the country well; it definitely connotes the dangers which lies ahead of us and our innocent children. Nigeria has never been in such a precarious situation in the annals of our nation's history. Never a time has our nation been cobwebbed by evil forces, greedy and selfish politicians including those who do not mean us well.

As the 2023 general election approaches, the citizens of this country are prayerfully hoping for a messiah to set us from captivity. The entire nation is presently saturated with prayers requesting for God's intervention before everything gets out of hand.

In the midst of these political uncertainty however, desperate political stalwarts in a do or die fashion have continued to inject more financial resources which they totally believe is the only true game changer. After buying off party delegates during party primaries, the time has come to put everything at work to ensure they record victory at all cost during the much anticipated secondary elections.

Obviously, Nigeria's political calculations has never before realistically in favour of an Igbo man than is clearly now. Initially, the Igbos themselves so frustrated about how the situation had turned out to be; carried arms to display their frustration. Most of them perturbed about the political exclusion of the people of the region had gone for the heads of other Nigerians. Though it's fundamentally true that the Igbos have been politically marginalized in this country, the emergence of militant groups did not justify their quest for political inclusion in the act of governance.

These groups have over time mercilessly and fruitlessly protested political exclusion through massive killing of innocent citizens to express their grievances to the leaders of the nation without any success. Many had thought that for many years to come, no Nigerian leader of Igbo extraction will become the president of this country.

Without any fight, history is about to be made with the kind of massive support, the Labour Party's Presidential candidate, Peter Obi is getting. Obi, a former Governor of Anambra State has not only found favour amongst men but the miscalculated of the two major parties is about giving him an upper hand. But again, Peter Obi's intimidating resume and unquestionable character has earned him more respect in all the nooks and crannies of the nation.

As each day passes-by, it is becoming more glaring that the time for Igbos to get a president has come and from all indication, this man is not a misfit.

All said and done, the ball is still in the court of the citizens of the South Eastern region whom I leant don't go out to vote. Time past, I have also heard that the Igbos are not interested in active political participation but only mindful of their routine business activities.

I have heard that a typical Igbo man cannot close shop to go to any polling station to cast any vote. In fact, they always shout it loud and clear to the hearing of all that time is money. Now that other regions of the country are without any financial inducement campaigning and endorsing the candidature of Obi, we will wait and see what the Igbos will do. The general consensus for now is; the Igbos will be blamed should Peter Obi fail to win the 2023 presidential elections in the country.

View Point

'My hands are clean as a true democrat'

Many well-spirited individuals and some influential All Progressives Congress (APC) stalwarts have started intervening over the feud between the Chairman of Jos North Local Government Area, Bala Usman and the Legislative Arm of the council. As it is, this political impasse which started after some members of the Legislative Arm turned against the council boss which has subsequently truncated developmental sustainability in the area. BULUS GAMBO writes.

THE Legislative Arm of the council had alleged that the Chairman, Hon. Bala Usman had gone neck-deep into acts of personal aggrandizement which was detrimental to the cooperative existence of the area. It was based on this premise that they allegedly served him with a letter of impeachment. As it is, the popular adage which says "when two elephants are fighting, it is the grass that suffers most" is gradually playing out in the local government area.

This is because, no progress will be achieved in a place where any rancor as such is dramatically unabatedly taking place. If for nothing else, the sustainable peace enjoyed in the area must be appreciated by all and sundry.

This aside, the administrators of the council are also mandated to endure the provision of the required basic social amenities which would midwife stability and harmonious peaceful coexistence of the people of the area. For some time now, many citizens of the area have remind thankful that at least, the peace presently enjoyed would also woo investors who are longing to invest in the state's capital.

Trouble all started after members allegedly decided to impeach the council chairman over gross misconduct and acts of personal aggrandizement. The feud aside destabilizing administrative proceedings had also consumed two members of the legislative cabinet in the persons of the Supervisory Council for Information and Research and Documentation, Silas Ibrahim and that of Water Sanitation and Hygiene, Christopher Nnajiogor.

The duo's appointments were terminated in a letter allegedly signed by the Secretary of the Council, Pastor Samuel Gyang Chollom. While relieving both of their appointments, the council chairman also thanked them for serving in that capacity before their job was eventually terminated.

"According to him,' those who are galvanizing people against Shehu Bala Usman are enemies of the area who are bent on ensuring that citizens do not continue to get the dividends of democracy. The purported impeachment of the chairman was an imagination of the enemy of Jos North circulated on the social media and it has no effect. The chief of staff further explained that' "other critical stakeholders of Jos North Local Government Area have thrown their weight behind the laudable works which the chairman is doing. We want peace and not rancor and we appreciate the efforts and inclusiveness of the chairman irrespective of our differences in the area. We hope that we will come over this in the interest of the citizens of this peace loving area."



Usman



Kwado

Ever since this imbroglio started, well-meaning individuals have continued to appeal for an amicable resolution of the issue. Some of these individuals have noted with great concern that anything short of this would spell doom for the entire council. No doubt, the local government area has for some time now continued to witness sustainable stability in the area of peace and harmonious relationship between all the heterogeneous citizens of the area.

This is unlike before when the communities were living on the edge of the wild side. The decade of ethno-religious crisis in the area had created distrust amongst the citizenry and polarized these communities along religious lines among others. As the years rolled by,

many interested stakeholders have tried to ensure that the stable peace enjoyed in the past is returned.

Reacting on recent development, the Deputy Chief of Staff, Government House, Alhaji Idris Kwado explained that "the Shehu Bala Usman led administration has done well in all spare of his administration especially in the area of infrastructural development, peace and confidence building amongst the inhabitants of the locality"

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The councilors and their sponsors whom I don't want to mention acted in ignorance as you don't impeach a chief Executive Officer of a federal, state or local government through the social media and "cautioned" these persons to stop any further move or he will be left with no other alternative than to reveal their true identity.'

Explaining his position on the matter, the Chairman of Jos North Local Government Area, Hon. Shehu Bala Usman noted that in all the contracts awarded, he followed due process as all the contracts were awarded when he was chairing the Management Committee of the council.

According to him,' never in my life did I connive with private money lenders to secure fictitious loans. For the purpose of public consumption, before any loan is received from a commercial bank, it is the responsibility of the Ministry of Local Government and

Chieftaincy Affairs to access the loans and give it to the council.'

Shehu noted that the council has no right to access any loan on its own and he had never diverted any asset meant for the council for his own gain and as a true democrat who believes in the principles of the Federal Republic of Nigeria he cannot therefore afford to cross the redlines in his expected obligations.

The council chairman further disclosed that he was at any point not served with an impeachment notice as speculated in the social media which was so surprising adding that, 'the Clerk never forwarded any such a letter to me. To the best of my ability, I have continuously worked with the Legislative Arm and will continue to do so. The beauty of democracy is that for anyone to be successful, there must be teamwork and sincere commitment to the wishes of the electorates in our constituency.'

Be that as it may however, all that which the citizens of the area are yearning for is for an amicable resolution of this impasse. This is because of the fact that the council time past had suffered from the devastating consequences of several conflicts in the locality.

For now, many citizens of the area are praying for the council to overcome these challenges in the best interest of the citizens of the area.



CSO's visit to Little Rayfield

ON Thursday, 14th July 2022, the Coalition of Civil Society Organisations (CSO's) in Plateau State were special guests to the Plateau State Governor Simon Bako Lalong.

Led by their Chairman, Gad Shamaki, the group had representatives of international and domestic CSO's operating in the State.

The Governor suggested self-introductions by the team in case anyone with a title among them is mistakenly not accorded his or her right title, and they gave a hearty laugh.

He said his meeting with them had been long overdue, and said he has always looked at CSO's as partners of government for development that was why during his tenure as the Speaker, Plateau House of Assembly, he had established a CSO desk which is in operation till date, despite being warned that they are activists who may bring him down.

"I decided to bring them closer to work with them. I said criticism doesn't destroy you but keeps you on guard". He said his administration has gained immensely from constructive criticism from CSO's.

He recalled how he got an award from UNICEF for being the first Speaker in the



North to domesticate the Child Rights Act when he was the Speaker, and head of Conference of Nigerian Speakers after he left office.

Lalong also recalled how CSO's were very vocal in support of him when some members of the House were conducting impeachment of the sitting Governor under stress and hotels. "It was the CSO's that were there to help us by writing against such actions to the Federal Government and other bodies to condemn the acts of injustice" he said.

The Governor appreciated the work of the CSO's in complimenting Government's work in different areas recalling how he created the disability Commission, the first in the country making other states and the Federal Government to follow suit and how the impact of the disability commission and laws is being felt in the country.

Stating their mission Shamaki, expressed excitement over the meeting which he said is a thank you visit to appreciate the Governor for recently passing the Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) bill into law. He commended the Governor as a progressive governor for establishment of Plateau Peace Building Agency which is also the first, in the country, making other states to follow suit, and putting Plateau on the spotlight of firsts. He said by passing the VAPP laws protecting women and vulnerable Groups, and for recently bagging a World Bank award in Open Governance Partnership (OGP), the governor needs an applause from the CSO's.

The CSO's spokesperson however called on the Governor to set up a Gender Commission before exiting office in 2023 to enable the Gender and Equal Opportunities (GEO) Laws, VAPP laws and Child Rights Law function adequately for the good of the citizens and vulnerable even as he gave an assurance that they are in existence to compliment and partner with government to bring development to the people.

After hearing their requests, the Governor promised to address the issues. Afterwards, the group took photographs and had personal interactions with the Governor before calling it a day.



News

Foundation tasks women on political participation

As 2023 general elections in Nigeria draw closer, the Executive Director, Renaissance Care and Empowerment Foundation, Ambassador Idris Ozoveha Muraina has called for more involvement of Nigerian women in politics. Ambassador Muraina made the call at a round table discussion on women participation in politics organised by the Foundation for selected Media Practitioners in Lokoja, the Kogi State capital on Tuesday.

He decried the prevailing poor participation of Nigerian women in politics

From **AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja**

describing the development as worrisome which he said the round table discussion is out to address and proffer solutions and strategies to tackle the trend.

He explained that there has been a worrisome downward slope in the participation of women in politics as evidenced by available data in 2015 Gubernatorial elections in Kogi where women only accounted for 35% of accredited voters, and by 2019 general elections, that number had slumped to 29% which

formed 17% decline from the 2015 elections.

The Executive Director said that the project is targeted at reducing the report of electoral violence against women in politics ahead of the general elections to be conducted in Kogi State come

March 2023.

He said that it also intends to increase the participation of women voters over the last 2019 Kogi governorship election voter figures by the end of 2023 general election. Ambassador Muraina enumerated strategies to be adopted in finding lasting solutions to remedy the trend to include; embarking on media enlightenment, advocacy visit and community dialogue in the media to get women to know their right to vote and be voted for.

In his presentation during the round table discussion, Hamza Aliyu of Initiative for Grass-Root Advancement, commended Governor Yahaya Bello of Kogi State for signing of the Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Bill into law which he said is a serious legal structure to help women to effectively participate in politics.



Tallen

SOME labour unions in Kaduna, Plateau and Oyo States on Tuesday held a protest over the delay in resolving issues that led to about six months closure of universities in the country.

The Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) called out workers for the protest in solidarity with labour unions in universities currently on strike over dispute on the implementation of a 2009 agreement with the Federal Government.

In Kaduna, the state branch of the NLC called for immediate resolution and opening of the universities.

The state NLC Chairman, Ayuba Sulaiman, who led some of the protesters to the State House of Assembly, solicited the support and intervention of lawmakers to resolve the impasse.

According to him, the Federal Government's paralysis and reluctance to take necessary steps to resolve the issues led to the prolonged strike.

He said that the NLC had taken steps to intervene, adding that, "although this elicited some response from government, it was tokenistic and not sufficient."

Responding, the Speaker, Kaduna State House of Assembly, Yusuf Zailani said the lawmakers were not happy with the situation and pledged to intervene.

Zailani, represented by the Deputy Speaker, Auta Zakari, said nobody was happy seeing the students at home losing valuable study time.

"We are not happy with the situation and hope the Federal Government will address the lingering issues in the shortest time possible," Zailani said.

In Jos, labour unions and students joined the protest

NLC protest over ASUU strike across Nigeria

organised by NLC and the Trade Union Congress.

Plateau NLC Chairman, Eugene Manji who addressed the protesters said there would be no future for the nation without education, hence the imperative to get students back to school.

"The fastest way to kill a nation is to first kill its education and that is what our leaders are doing."

"Some of our students are laying waste at home, while some only God knows what is happening to them."

"Virtually everybody in this country is affected by this prolong strike action, and nobody seems to feel that something wrong is happening in the country," he added.

According to him, if the government fails to heed to university workers' demands, the organised labour would shut down the country indefinitely.

Mr Timman Rimdap, Chairman, Senior Staff Association of Nigeria Universities, Plateau State University Bokokos, claimed that the government was not sincere in its negotiation with the unions.

Rimdap, who is also North Central Zonal Secretary of the union, said there was no meaningful progress in resolving the issues since the university workers embarked on the strike.

Chairman, Civil Liberties Organisation in the state, Mr Steve Aluko said education is a right and bedrock of development, as such all stakeholders must work to safeguard the future of the salvage the education sector youth.

He called on Plateau Government to resolve the crises in all its tertiary institutions that kept the workers and students at home.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the protesters submitted a letter on the matter to the Speaker of the state Assembly, Mr Yakubu Sanda.

Sanda commended the workers for the peaceful protest and pledged that the assembly would study the demands and also forward it to appropriate quarters.

In Ibadan, Oyo State, the protesters marched through Agodi-Gate, Total Garden and ended at the State Government Secretariat carrying placards with different inscription and singing solidarity songs.

Addressing the gathering, the state NLC Chairman, Mr Kayode Martins, called on government to accept ASUU's demand to avoid nationwide workers strike.

The state TUC Chairman, Mr Ogundiran Emmanuel urged the government to resolve all issues with regards to the 2009 agreement with ASUU, so as to quickly reopen the universities.

In his remark, Prof. Ayoola Akinwole, ASUU Chairman, University of Ibadan, said the organised labour was not happy with the way the government handled the ongoing 12-week strike.

According to him, ASUU's demands would reposition tertiary education in Nigeria and safeguard the future of the

Sports

Garcia to 'hold off' on quitting DP World tour

Sergio Garcia says he is "going to hold off on" giving up his membership of the European-based DP World Tour to see if he could still play in the Ryder Cup.

The 42-year-old is part of the breakaway Saudi-funded LIV Golf series.

He recently said he would be quitting the DP World Tour but European players need to be a member of it to be eligible for the Ryder Cup.

"I want to at least see what's happening when Ryder Cup qualification starts," Garcia told ESPN.

"See what kind of rules and eligibilities they have in there.

"If I agree with what they [are], I'll definitely keep playing whatever I can on the tour and try to qualify for that Ryder Cup team.

"And if not, then we'll move on. But it is definitely something that is in my mind."

The next Ryder Cup will take place in Rome in September 2023.

Americans need to be members of the PGA Tour, which is banning any of its members that have joined LIV, to be eligible. The DP World Tour has punished but not indefinitely banned LIV golfers.

"I told Keith Pelley [chief executive of the DP World Tour]: 'I want to keep being a member of the DP World Tour. I want to play my minimum, still support the tour, still have my eligibilities to make Ryder Cup teams,'" said Garcia.

Fans queue for CR7 shirts

MANCHESTER UNITED ran out of No7s in their club shop - despite Cristiano Ronaldo thrashing out his own transfer exit talks.

The Portuguese star returned to Manchester last night and was pictured arriving at Carrington this morning.

He drove into the training ground alongside agent Jorge Mendes to sit down for crunch negotiations with Erik ten Hag, Richard Arnold and even Sir Alex Ferguson.

However, six miles away at Old Trafford, his popularity remains sky-high, with fans queueing to get his name on the back of their replica jerseys.

So much so that the megastore used up all their No7s to go on the back.

The Manchester Evening News reported one young kid even asked his dad to get "Siiiu 7" for his kit - in reference to the famous

"He said: 'That's great, but we got to do what's best for us. We'll see what that is.'"

Swede Henrik Stenson was recently removed as Europe's Ryder Cup captain after deciding to join the



Garcia

controversial LIV Golf series.

"What they did to Henrik, it's a little bit sad," said Garcia.

The third event of the LIV Golf series will take place in Bedminster, at Trump National Golf Club in New Jersey from 29-31 July.

LIV Golf parade new recruits, including Europe's deposed Ryder Cup captain Henrik Stenson and English veteran Paul Casey, in the third event of their Saudi Arabian-funded existence this week.

It takes place at Donald Trump's place at Bedminster in New Jersey and will have to go some to match the quality of sporting narrative currently being generated at pretty much every level of the pro

Ronaldo celebration.

And it's also bad news for any big Fred, Alex Telles or Shola Shoretire fans who won't be able to get their heroes' 17, 27 or 47 shirts, either.

Ronaldo, 37, touched down in his private jet on Monday night after missing the pre-season tour to Thailand and Australia due to "family reasons".

There were suggestions Ronaldo could be shipped out on loan with Atletico Madrid and Sporting Lisbon both linked - as long as he agreed to extend his Red Devils contract.

As revealed by SunSport, though, the forward wants out immediately and will demand he is allowed to quit the club.

United have insisted over recent weeks that he is not for sale while Ten Hag has also maintained that the striker is a key part of his plans.

Ronaldo has NEVER played in the Europa League in his glittering career and has no intention to start now.

game. Wherever you looked across the golfing spectrum last weekend there was compelling, meaningful action to excite fans.

There was no hangover from Cameron Smith's epic Open win the previous week, just a seamless sense of continuity.

Brooke Henderson became a two-time major champion despite enduring a tortuous final round at the Amundi Evian Championship and Richie Ramsay's wild celebrations showed his Cazoo Classic victory meant more than just his £250,000 prize money.

At that same Hillside tournament, runner up Paul Waring advanced 88 places on the Race to Dubai to secure playing privileges on the DP World Tour for another season.

These are examples of raw sport with livelihoods on the line. They help form legitimate sporting pyramids, giving us reason to care whether a player makes a cut or not.

It makes us admire sporting bravery and delivering when pressure mounts.

With career earnings in excess of \$25m (£20.7m), Tony Finau has few apparent financial worries; but his ability to win had long been questioned, with a meagre return of only two PGA Tour victories in 15 years as a pro.

He was feeling the heat during a come from behind win at last Sunday's 3M Open in Minnesota, driving into the water at the last despite a comfortable lead.

Ultimately Finau recorded one of those victories that meant more than the value of the winner's cheque. "It's tough to win out here," said

Former United States goalkeeper Hope Solo has pleaded guilty to driving while impaired and says she is "slowly coming back" after undergoing an in-patient alcohol treatment programme.

Solo, 40, was arrested in March after she was found passed out in her car with her twin sons inside.

She was given a 24-month sentence, all suspended bar a 30-day 'active' period, which has been offset against time spent in rehabilitation.

"It's been a long road but I'm slowly coming back," Solo said.

Solo, a World Cup winner and double Olympic champion, added: "I pride myself in motherhood and what my husband and I have done day in and day out for over two years throughout the pandemic with two-year old twins.

"While I'm proud of us, it was incredibly hard and I made a huge mistake - easily the worst mistake of my life.

"I underestimated what a destructive part of my life alcohol had become.

"The upside of making a mistake this big is that the hard lessons are learned quickly. Learning these lessons has been difficult and,

Former United States goalkeeper Solo pleads guilty



Solo

and at times, very painful."

Solo, who won 202 caps for the US, was arrested in North Carolina on 31 March and then charged with impaired driving, resisting arrest and misdemeanour child abuse.

However the charges of resisting arrest and misdemeanour child abuse were voluntarily dismissed, her attorney told the Winston-Salem Journal.

Forsyth District Judge Victoria Roemer gave Solo a suspended sentence of 24 months which contained an active term of 30 days, although this has been set against time spent in the rehabilitation facility.

Solo requested that her induction into the National Soccer Hall of Fame was postponed in late April.

'LIV's parades new recruits

the 32-year-old American who rises one place in the world rankings to 16th.

"I think I'm about as good an example as any of how tough it is to seal the deal. Anytime you win one, it's awesome to get the respect of the guys that you're playing against."

And what of Scott Piercy, who led by four going into the final round and was still comfortably ahead until he buckled to an inward half of 41 -eventually finishing tied fourth?

It's a brutal game. Just ask this 43-year-old who has not won an individual PGA Tour title since 2015.

Piercy's heartbreak counter balances Finau's joy. It is a competitive knife-edge that makes champions and chumps.

And the sport such captivating viewing.

A rung below - David Kocher, a 26-year-old from New Jersey, went into last week's Korn Ferry Tour event in Missouri feeling like he was playing pretty decently but without a top-10 finish all year.

He proceeded to reel off 31 birdies as he won the Price

Cutter Charity Championship by six shots on 28 under par. The result sees him climb to 30th in the feeder circuit's standings and in the mix for the top 25 that gain a PGA Tour card for next season.

"I didn't think it was going to happen this week," Kocher admitted. "I didn't know if it was going to happen this year."

Uncertainty, another key aspect in making us want to watch professional sport.

Henderson was the dominant leader at the Evian and for long periods last week seemed nailed on for her second major success. But by the early part of the Canadian's back-nine last Sunday she was in a seven-way share of the lead with among others England's Charley Hull.

It turned into an enthralling scrap; Henderson birdieing three of the last five holes, including the last after pulling her drive into trouble, to edge home.

LIV, meanwhile, is promising to revolutionise the sport and make golf "louder" with its expensively assembled cast of players.

They maintain the new project is "a force for good".

It certainly does no harm to the players' bulging bank accounts and none of them have to worry about making the cut this week.

They know they are guaranteed at least \$120,000 (last place money) with the prospect of landing a \$4m first prize.

Greg Norman's operation has taken massive strides, their staging and marketing have been outstanding and they have upset the status quo like never before.

This week will have Trump backing their cause. Like Norman, the former US president bears a grudge against the PGA Tour after, in 2017, they moved their World Golf Championships event from Trump's beloved Doral.

The Miami venue stages LIV's season team finale in October.

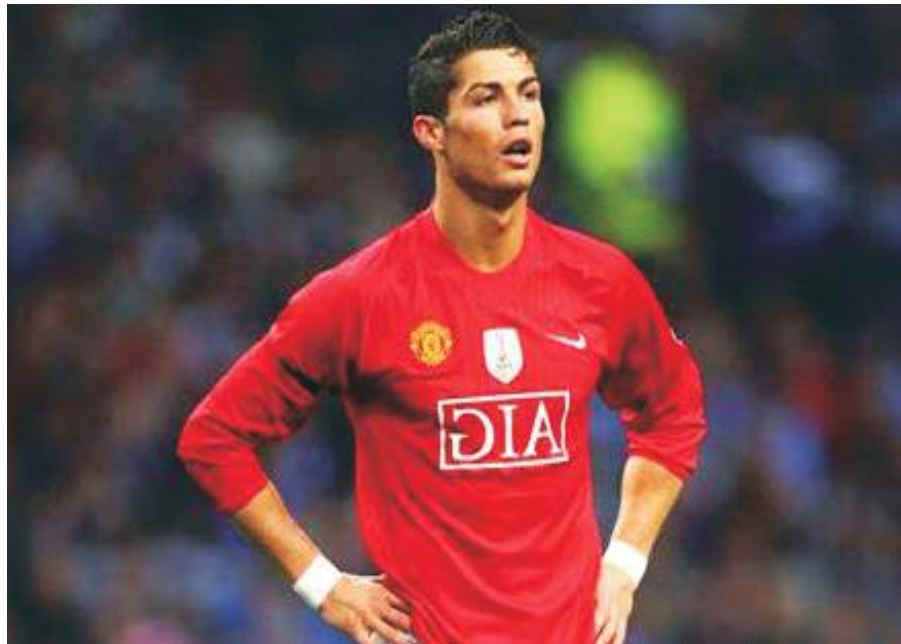
With many in this week's field having signed lucrative contracts, the vast prize money matters less than the inflated figures would suggest. But if the first two events are anything to go by, dollar signs will be at the heart of the storyline.

Armed with their newest commentary recruit, the renowned David Feherty, they will also seek to make the most of their team element, which is rumoured to be attracting billion dollar corporate interest for future backing.

But that is, surely, the biggest challenge for LIV and its 54-hole, 48-man shotgun start format - to give sports fans reason to care about an outcome beyond already wealthy guys getting even richer.



Sports



Ronaldo

Ronaldo returned to hold crunch talk

CRISTIANO Ronaldo rolled back into Manchester United's training ground on Tuesday for showdown talks over his future.

The flash of photographers' lightbulbs heralded his 10am arrival at the club's Carrington training complex, resplendent in his £168,000 blue Bentley.

Alongside him was his trusted agent Jorge Mendes who has been trying to engineer a move away to Atletico Madrid.

The sense of occasion was amplified by the arrival of Sir Alex Ferguson almost an hour later but the club's former manager was officially there for a pre-arranged board meeting with David Gill and chief executive officer Richard Arnold.

Carrington, of course, is not the accustomed venue for board meetings and many staff wondered whether their once great leader had arrived to play another hand in trying to convince Ronaldo to stay at his beloved club.

That though was left to Arnold and manager Erik ten Hag who has maintained that there is a place in his remodelled team for the 37-year-old who finished last season as United's top goalscorer.

Ronaldo has always maintained he will be professional throughout and the proof of that came at 11.30 on Tuesday morning.

Then Ronaldo joined his teammates plus new signings Christian Eriksen and Lisandro Martinez for over an hour as the manager and his staff debriefed what had gone on United's tour of Thailand and Australia.

Ronaldo had told United of his desire to leave last month. He has never played in the

Europa League during his glittering career and had no desire to start now; his wish is to move to a team fit to challenge for the Champions League. His passion has been to finish at the top.

The timing of his request left many nonplussed and United's stance has been he is not for sale and has a contract to fulfil.

Chelsea make sensational Kane transfer swoop

CHELSEA are interested in signing Harry Kane from Tottenham, according to reports.

The Blues wanted Kane last summer when it appeared he could leave the North Londoners.

The striker is happy again at Spurs, however, and is enjoying working under Antonio Conte.

But he is yet to be offered a contract extension, with his current deal having two years remaining.

Chelsea would still love to bring their rivals' talisman to Stamford Bridge.

Although according to Bild's Christian Falk, they recognise that Spurs would rather sell to Bayern Munich, if Kane was to make to it clear that he won't pen a new deal.

Football London report that Kane is settled at

Tottenham and that it is just a "matter of time" until the North Londoners open contract talks.

Bayern boss Julian Nagelsmann was vocal about his admiration for Kane last week, while the German side's chief executive Oliver Kahn claimed it would be a "dream" to sign him.

Conte, 52, hit back: "Honestly I didn't hear this. For sure I'm a coach who doesn't talk about players from other teams. I don't know why [this happened]."

"The situation at Tottenham is very clear. The plan is very clear with the club. Harry is a part of the project. He is a very important part of the project and yeah only rumours."

He then continued: "At the same time I repeat I

Raheem Sterling might only have signed for Chelsea just less than two weeks ago, but he already has a mural at Stamford Bridge.

Chelsea's official social media accounts have shared the image of the former Manchester City star celebrating in Chelsea's colours, in a mural planted on the West Stand inside the stadium.

The £50million signing will be able to get a good view of his mural when the Blues play Premier League rivals Tottenham, in their first home game of the new season on August 14.

Sterling, who was born in Jamaica, moved to London at the age of five where he grew up and played for Queens Park Rangers in their academy - before switching to Liverpool at the age of 15.

On Chelsea's Twitter account, they shared the image of the mural along with the caption 'back on home soil', in reference to the England star's move back to London.

Sterling enjoyed a highly successful seven-year stint at the Etihad, where he won four Premier League titles, alongside a host of domestic cup trophies.

Thomas Tuchel's side will be hoping Sterling can have a similar impact at Stamford Bridge, as the Blues look to close the gap on rivals

Chelsea unveil a mural for signing Sterling

Manchester City and Liverpool.

He made his debut off the bench during a penalty shoot-out defeat to MLS side Charlotte FC, before making his first start in their 4-0 thumping by Arsenal during their tour of the United States.

Chelsea have one further pre-season game to go against Udinese, before they kick off their Premier League campaign against Frank Lampard's Everton on August 6.

Sterling scored 131 goals in 339 appearances during his time at the Etihad, and without a notable number nine at Stamford Bridge, will

be heavily relied upon to score goals at Chelsea this season.

Though fans are excited about his signing, there has been a mixed reaction to his hero's welcome mural.

Matt Bentley commented: 'We serious? I'm a big Raheem fan but we can't be putting him on walls at this point?'

Another fan posted that it was 'too soon' for Chelsea to put a mural up of Sterling inside Stamford Bridge.

Other fans liked what they saw though, with one fan saying: 'What a painting! Welcome to the Bridge Raheem. Hopefully you bang in 20+ goals & 20+ assists this season & seasons to go!'



Sterling

don't like to speak about players from another club.

"If I want to do something I go to speak to the club, not through the media.

"I think maybe it's a bit disrespectful for the other club. This is my way. This is my way to face the situation with other players."

Kane, who turns 29 on Thursday, has been on fire in pre-season - notching five goals in three matches.

Antonio has probably taken fitness levels to another level for me

On working with Conte, he recently said: "Antonio has been fantastic. I've learned from every manager I've worked under. Antonio has probably taken fitness levels to another level for me."

"The mentality, being with

him every day seeing the way he prepares, the way he brings his passion and brings the best out of the lads, I've learnt from that.

"I feel like I'm learning every year anyway and getting more experience and getting better, but with someone like Antonio it's speeding up that process even quicker.

"I feel in good shape. There's still work to do in the next month in this pre-season. I feel like I've still got a lot more to give and hopefully I can show that next year."

Chelsea, meanwhile, are likely to go into the season with Kai Havertz as their first choice forward after the departure of Romelu Lukaku.

Having signed winger Raheem Sterling for £47.5 million from Manchester City, the Blues have switched their attention to strengthening their defence.

Kalidou Koulibaly has arrived from Napoli, while they have been working on deals for Jules Kounde and Presnel Kimpembe.

Barcelona 'promise Azpilicueta despite Kounde pursuit'

BARCELONA are still set on signing Cesar Azpilicueta despite their pursuit of Jules Kounde, according to reports in Spain.

Barca's LaLiga rivals Atletico Madrid are also keeping a close eye on developments with want-away Chelsea star Azpilicueta, according to AS.

A summer move to the Nou Camp for the Blues

skipper has long been in the offing.

But the Catalans' interest in Sevilla's similarly versatile defender Jules Kounde has raised questions over whether they will need Azpilicueta too.

Increasingly strained relations between Barca and the Blues following their tug-of-war over Raphinha and Kounde in this window have also put a deal for the 32-year-old in doubt.

So Barca boss Xavi has reassured the Spain star they still fully intend to sign him, according to AS.

Their report says: "Xavi has promised the international that he is not going to let him down and that the Kounde operation is independent of his.

"What's more, he ratified the agreement he has with Barcelona and asked for a little patience to calm the waters with Chelsea."

Apparently, Diego Simeone's Atleti are monitoring the situation

and ready to move for Azpilicueta if it fits into their own summer transfer merry-go-round.

AS say Atleti's interest will be dependent on their attempts to sign other stars including Udinese right-back Nahuel Molina.

Their report explains: "[Azpilicueta's] versatility and experience make him a guaranteed signing for Simeone."

"But we will still have to wait to see how the market progresses for the Rojiblancos."



Kane

Sports

Man United chases Barcelona's de Jong

MANCHESTER United have been after Barcelona's Frenkie de Jong since the start of the summer transfer window, a player who would be seen as an important individual in Erik Ten Hag's team.

However, the mixed reports from the English and Spanish media could lead for the saga to continue right until the end of the window.

Barcelona's financial issues have forced them to activate economic levers, two of the three levers that are available for approval by the members, which allows them to write off majority of their ongoing debts to make transfer signings and to register the new arrivals.

On the other hand, the Dutch international is reportedly not interested in leaving the club, particularly when he is being owed £17million in deferred wages after taking a pay cut during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The La Liga giants have the option to activate the third lever that is available to them, or force de Jong out of the club, which results in United playing the long waiting game for him.

To ensure United are not wasting their time waiting for a player who does not want them, the board should be preparing a list of candidates that could be seen as a backup option should a deal not go through for the main target.

The Red Devils have already been linked with both Ruben Neves and Yuri Tielemans, but there are other players in Europe who are more suitable to seriously consider.

Here are five midfielders that Manchester United can target if the de Jong deal does not happen...

The perfect backup option to have is Fabian Ruiz, especially when you understand how unique de Jong is an individual and that there are hardly any players that have a similar profile to him.

During his time at Napoli, and previously at Real Betis, he has been able to show his abilities as a deep-lying playmaker, helping the team through his passes between the lines and his calm ball carrying



Ruiz

ability.

He ranks in the 96th percentile for carries, in the 92nd percentile and 96th percentile for touches in defensive third and midfield third, when compared to other midfielders in Europe's top five leagues, making him a player that is not afraid of receiving the ball in any area of the pitch and is confident of progressing the ball from a deep position into the advanced midfield area.

Not only that, but his current contract also ends in June 2023, and he has no intention of signing an extension, which could force Napoli to sell him this summer rather than letting him leave the club as a free agent next year.

Recently linked with Bayern Munich, it is a surprise to not see Konrad Laimer linked with more of the well-known teams across Europe.

The Austrian international may not boast of the same strengths as de Jong, but he can be utilised as a ball-winning midfielder or as a box-to-box midfielder, which would allow Ten Hag to have a huge upgrade option on the likes of Fred and Scott McTominay.

Capable of playing the number six position on his own, it would allow the other two midfielders to push high up to help the team attack, whilst his physical ability and his intelligence to read the game would help the side to prevent a counterattack from being successful.

United are expected to spend most of the summer window focusing on de Jong, but they cannot forget the importance of a holding midfielder, especially when there are no natural players left in this specific department.

Ismael Bennacer is regarded as the complete package of a midfielder.

Known for his defensive work in midfield through his interceptions and tackles, he also has the agility, quick feet and ability to make fast decisions in tight spaces, to help his team on the attacking side of the game.

Although he does not play as the deepest midfielder for AC Milan, he has the intelligence and stamina to drop deep into defence to help progress possession and to effectively dribble with it high up the pitch.

Over the last 365 days, the 24-year-old has ranked in the 99th percentile of midfielders for dribbles completed and players dribbled past, making him a key individual to have when playing on the counterattack or against a side sitting in a low defensive block.

The recent reports are advising of

a potential swap deal between both clubs, with Donny van de Beek going the opposite direction, someone who may not receive enough game time ahead of Bruno Fernandes and Christian Eriksen.

Just like Ruiz, Mahmoud Dahoud is another player whose contract comes to an end in June 2023, and there is yet to be an indication of a contract renewal to take place with Borussia Dortmund.

Before heading into his qualities and his strengths, the main concern a team like United would have to look into before a possible transfer is his injury record, as he

has missed over 55 league games for his current and previous club, putting a huge question mark on his availability and reliability.

When in form and at the top of his game, Dahoud can influence the match in favour of his team, through his range of passing and his ability to control the game and take it up a notch when required.

Despite the lack of physical strength, he has the calmness to match along his technical ability, allowing him to use his body effectively to turn away from trouble and remain in possession.

His close control on the ball and his trickery makes up for not having the pace and power as a player.

Renato Sanches was once upon a time seen as one of the most talented players in Europe, during his time at Benfica before he had signed for Bayern Munich in 2016.

From winning the Golden Boy award in 2016, to a forgettable loan spell at Swansea in 2017, and now enjoying a couple of developing and progressive years at Lille, the 24-year-old looks more than ready for his big move once again.

He has already been linked to the likes of AC Milan, Paris Saint-Germain, and Liverpool.

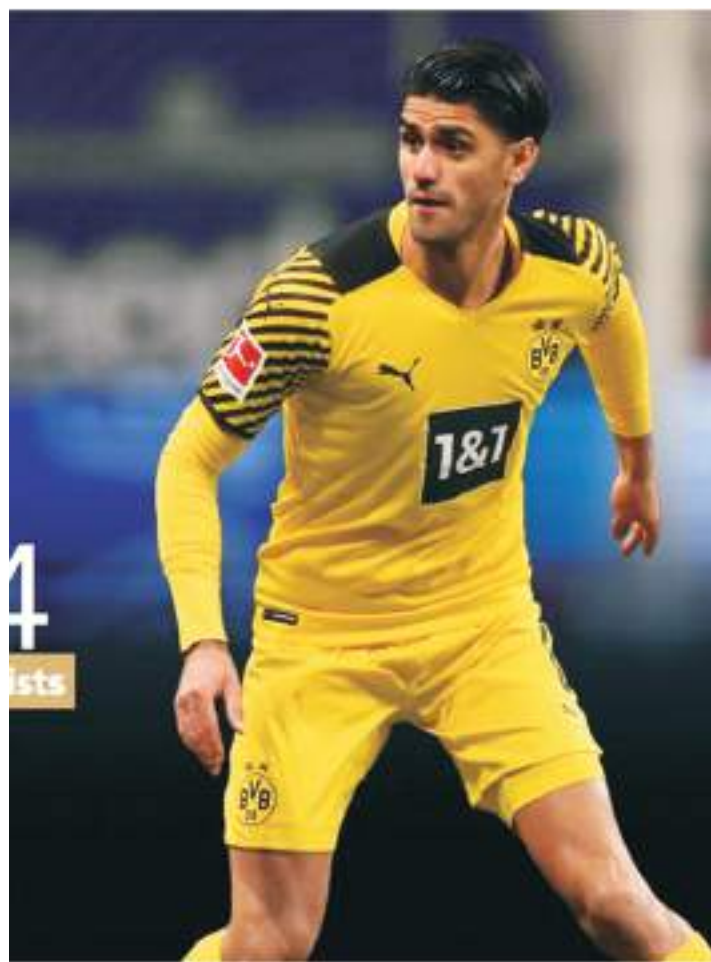
The Portuguese international ranks in the 97th percentile for shot-creating actions, for dribbles completed and for players he has dribbled past, when compared to the other midfielders in Europe's top five leagues.

He has grown a lot as a player and is someone who will be overlooked, because he failed to meet the expectations and high standards the first-time round.

However, he has shown his qualities to lead by example in midfield, with his ability to drive on the ball, physically and technically escape away from danger, and show a really good work rate on the defensive phase of the game.



Laimer



Dahoud



Quest



writer

ZERIHUN ADDISU

FRAGMENT

"In 2004, Addis Ababa University (AAU) awarded him a Doctor of Letters Honoris Causa in the presence of the-then President Girma Woldegiorgis, for his "seminal contributions to the study of Africa and his valiant struggles as citizen to promote Pan-African ideals. Mazrui has died but so many questions he raised are not yet answered. He was among the very few lived on the apogee of intellectual topography of the planet."

ZERIHUN ADDISU

Mazrui: An intellectual who spoke truth to power

HE, arguably, elucidates in what can be called controversial lines, "it is one of the ironies of history that this reluctant stimulant of Pan-Africanism in others should subsequently invite others to build Pan-Africanism on its soil. It was not a case of Ethiopia choosing Pan-Africanism. It was a case of Pan-Africanism choosing Ethiopia. Such was Ethiopia's inevitable destiny."

Seifudein Adem in his, "Africanity, African Intellectuals and the Study of Ethiopia," shares the moments when Mazrui gave a keynote address at Cornell University, United States, symposium on Ethiopia where leading Ethiopianist scholars, Ethiopians and non-Ethiopians, attended. Seifudein reports that in the symposium, Mazrui said "objectively, Ethiopians were black people, but subjectively they were in denial about their blackness until Emperor Hailesilassie redefined their identity in the twentieth century."

At the symposium, Mazrui's notion of racial self-denial caused so much infuriation and criticism from the scholars who did not welcome the idea. A heated debate happened but Mazrui who was well prepared anticipating such objections managed well the challenge from the audience.

As he was greatly influenced by Kwame Nkrumah's idea of pan-Africanism, Mazrui advocated continental integration of Africa. In his article, "The Bondage of Boundaries" written in 1994, he elucidates the next century's outlines of most present day African states in one of two main ways. These are ethnic self-determination and regional integration towards larger political communities and economic unions.

This is a case if the other scenario of return to colonialism in new form is null. He called for regional integration of post-apartheid era as, certainly, one of the possibilities of the 21st century.

Mazrui also had the same federalist ambition in East Africa. His criticism on Julius Nyerere partly emanates from Nyerere's decision to withdraw from the East African Currency Board in 1965. But he was hopeful that elsewhere in Africa, regional integration may be fostered by desperate economic realities.

But his important lines come when he states "yet another factor favouring regional integration in Africa is the example set abroad. If Europe had been Africa's tutor on the nation-state in the 20th



Mazrui

century, it may well become Africa's tutor on how to transcend the nation-state and form larger unions in the next century."

This is an important insight to take. As Africa is struggling to materialise its continental integration, the road ahead demands a Sisyphean task. Still on every corner and regions, the integration process is slow and the institutional framework is not that much promising.

The AU is not yet institutionally strong and political leadership and commitment lags behind when compared to the demands of 21st century Africa and its people as well as the steps headed by Europe and Asia. Inspiring figures like Nyerere, Nkrumah, Hailesilassie and Jomo Kenyatta are desperately needed in the continent.

But not only the political leadership is missed here, the towering intellectual pioneers like Mazrui are deficient, as well. Lessons from the European Union (EU) reveals intellectuals are at the heart of the integration in conceiving the idea and pushing forward to its realisation.

Mazrui called for Africa to have a nuclear power. He argued that only superpowers having the weapons he felt the non-proliferation idea is impossible. He advocated that Africa and the rest of the world have to acquire the infrastructure claiming "I want black Africa to have the

bomb to frighten the system as a whole," he said.

Since coming to the world stage of intellectual prominence, controversies and criticisms surround Mazrui's life. In 1966, by virtue of his article on Transition magazine about Kwame Nkrumah entitled, "Nkrumah: A Leninist Czar", Mazrui evoked a storm of outrage in Africa. The essence of the article was that, although Nkrumah had been a great African, he had fallen short of becoming a great Ghanaian.

He said "he began as a democrat but ended as a dictator". Before and after Mazrui, others had advanced the same thesis on impunity. Africans may have disagreed with Nkrumah on given issues, but they indeed appreciated his sincere commitment and devotion to Africa.

For this reason, it was objectionable to them that Mazrui had associated Nkrumah's name with the Russian leaders who are reminiscent of human exploitation and other horrors. On his 75th birthday, in an interview with the Institute of Global Cultural Studies, Binghamton University Newsletter, Mazrui responded that the African leader who influenced him most positively was Nkrumah. But the influence that Ghanaian leader made on him did not hinder him from

coming up with that bold and controversial piece. This was the unique quality and academic personality of Mazrui that exceptionally resonated throughout his career. Objectivity was the hallmark of his career.

Acclaimed globally as the world most influential scholars, Mazrui was a man whose life was dogged by contradictions, controversy and more contradictions. Another set off criticism emerged as a result of his view of advocating "African Liberalism". As a result, he was sometimes seen as a "neo-colonialist", or as an apologist for the system that had exploited Africa.

His 1986 television series also caused a storm of outrage. The series glorified the Libyan leader, Muammar el-Qaddafi, claiming he had inspired Africans to have a sense of destiny. The series was even called an "anti-Western diatribe".

Mazrui was a great friend of Ethiopia. In his book, "The Africans", he reveals the dilemma he was captured with, while he was in Ethiopia in 1973. The Congress of African Studies asked him to propose vote of thanks to the Emperor after the Emperor's speech opening the ceremony. Meanwhile, hundreds of thousands were starving due to a severe famine which was not publicised since it was regarded by the Royal Household as an embarrassment to the empire.

"Could we hold such a congress in a country with large-scale starvation without referring at all to those who were starving?" was the question Mazrui and his colleagues asked themselves. Imprisoned by the assignment to propose a vote of thanks to His Imperial Majesty, he felt to reconcile the courtesies of a dynastic empire, on the one hand, and to alleviate the suffering of the masses the obligation of modern nation state, on the other.

In his vote of thanks, he mentioned the taboo - the famine. But he also championed by conveying an open discussion of the famine at the Congress and the Congress to raise fund from the participants to show their solidarity to the Ethiopian people ravaged by the deadly famine in the nation's history.

Again as a true friend, he was involved in raising funds for the victims of famine of 1986 when he was here to film his television series. Yet again, the military regime did not want to see scenes that would expose its negative sides. In one of the episodes, he

narrates "it is one of the ironies of nature that Ethiopia, which so prone to drought, should, at the same time, be the birth place of one of the great rivers of the world... Ethiopia has contributed to Egypt's survival through the waters of the Nile".

In 2005, the American Foreign Policy and the British Prospect magazines named him one of the top 100 public intellectuals in the world. Morgan State University awarded him the Du Bois-Garvey Award for Pan-African Unity. He was also elected an Icon of the Twentieth Century by Lincoln University, to name a few of his achievements.

Indeed, Mazrui is an exemplary public intellectual. He spoke truth to power; a principal theme of his works is to identify and criticise abuses of political, economic, and military power whether by imperial power or leaders of the developing world. From Milton Obote to Idi Amin, he publicly criticised the gross human rights violations by governments to the extent of even risking his life. While he was critical of Salman Rushdie's 1988 novel, "The Satanic Verses", Mazrui was one of the few famous Muslims to publicly oppose the Ayatollah Khomeini's fatwa calling for Rushdie's death, defending the right to free expression.

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Mazrui has died but so many questions he raised are not yet answered. He was among the very few lived on the apogee of intellectual topography of the planet.

Africa, more than anytime, needs its true sons with thoughtful ideas - African philosophies to liberate it from the political, social and economic trepidations it lives in. As Kenya's President Uhuru Kenyatta said, indeed, death has robbed Kenya its greatest son but he was not only Kenyan but an African and a global tower.

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Concluded from last week