

Buhari congratulates Kenya's William Ruto
Page 10



FG to change Nigeria's Public Service

Page 22

Improved power, good leadership will boost economy

Page 6

IGP honours policeman for rejecting bribe

Page 2

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CNG to meet Northern Govs over insecurity

Northern elders, under the aegis of the Coalition of Northern Groups (CNG), have resolved to meet with governors from the region over rising insecurity in the zone.

The meeting will also investigate growing concerns over what they

called "rampant defence corruption" running into trillions of Naira.

According to them, the carnage bedeviling the zone has plunged 8.4 million people in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe into poverty and despair.

This was contained in a communiqué issued after a

2-day retreat in Bauchi State and signed by its Spokesperson, Abdul-Azeez Suleiman.

"On the security situation, the retreat resolved to meet governors of Northern states to present and discuss a comprehensive action plan put together by the CNG to check the situation.

"Demand an immediate, transparent and comprehensive investigation into growing concerns over rampant defence corruption running into trillions of Naira.

"Demand urgent government explanation on what is inhibiting the ability of Nigerian armed forces to

effectively tackle the insurgent threat in the North East, banditry and kidnappings in the northwest, as well as respond to the secessionist violence in the Southeast, oil bunkering in the Niger Delta, the conflict in the North Central, and the threat of maritime piracy in the Gulf of

Guinea", he said.

Suleiman stressed that they would resist the temptation and pressure to vote for a particular party, noting that only credible candidates with track records would be supported.

"The retreat resolved to call on the northern voters to

Cont'd on Page 2

You are forgiven
-Archbishop Audu Page 2

Sanwo-Olu applauded for returning history to curriculum Page 2



His Grace, Archbishop Mathew Ishaya Audu of the Catholic Archdiocese of Jos (middle) with Governor Simon Bako Lalong (left) and his Deputy, Prof. Sonni Gwanle Tyoden after the opening Mass of the 2022 General Assembly yesterday at the St. Louis Catholic Church, Jos
Photo: DANLADI DUK

Governors meet today over state of economy, security

The 36 State Governors under the aegis of the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF) will on Wednesday converge in Abuja to deliberate on the State of the economy and security.

The meeting according to the invitation issued by the NGF Director General, Mr Asishana Bayo Okauru, will commence at 2 pm "begins with the launch of the Primary Health Care Leadership Challenge Fund, followed by the launch of the World Bank SFTAS charter before the real conversation on the state of the economy begins.

"The state of the economy will dominate the conversation when the 36 Governors meet on Wednesday, 17th August 2022 at the Banquet Hall, of the Presidential Villa in Abuja."

"Worried by the economic woes that the citizenry has been complaining about and the hardship associated with it, several governors

Cont'd on Page 2

IPMAN set to import diesel to reduce scarcity

Following the energy crisis that has engulfed Nigeria, especially the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) and other states, the Independent Petroleum Marketers Association of Nigeria (IPMAN) has kicked-off plans to import the Automotive Gas Oil (AGO) diesel to cushion the scarcity.

The Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) petrol has been very scarce not for shortage of supply, but largely due to the inability of the transporters to fuel their trucks with the expensive diesel that convey it from

the coastal depots to Abuja and up north.

Besides, the highways are in a very sordid state, the IPMAN President, Alhaji Debo Ahmed, made these disclosures to The Nation on phone last night.

According to him, the association is already negotiating with its stakeholders on how to import diesel into Nigeria.

He was silent on the timeline and volume, which IPMAN is eyeing.

Ahmed noted that although the quantity will be large enough to cause a positive change in the ongoing energy crises in

Nigeria, the Russian and Ukraine war would

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News

CNG to meet Northern Govs over insecurity

Cont'd from Page 1 that could see the nation remain ever vigilant on the direction the coming round of fresh elections will take by: "Resisting the temptation to vote sole across a political party, region, tribe or religious basis and instead, choose to install a credible leadership



Northern Governors Forum

IPMAN set to import diesel to reduce scarcity

Cont'd from Page 1 country. "We are not the only persons other marketers are allowed to import diesel. So, we are looking at very soon. "It depends on what will be available because of the Ukraine war, there has been a lot of shortages across the whole globe because Ukraine and Russia are the suppliers of these products. "Not that they are at war it becomes difficult so it depends on the quantity available at the end there." Asked why the marketers have been fond of the excuse of lack of forex as their setback, while the Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC) is the sole importer of the PMS, he said the quest for forex is for importation of diesel and not petrol. He was emphatic that the Federal Government has adopted the NNPC Limited

development of the region and promotion of the protection of Northern interests around security and the economy.

"The retreat resolved to reiterate the CNG's position against undue interference by the international community, particularly the United Nations in the internal security affairs of the country, and to:

"Caution the UN to desist from allowing some of its officials to drag it into international disrepute by interfering in particularly the matter of the trial of the IPOB leader, Nnamdi Kanu.

"Caution the Nigerian authorities against succumbing to undue pressure from whatever quarter, so as to avoid setting a dangerous precedence in the country."

the only importer of petrol.

The President, however, noted that some members of the association had requested for forex for the importation of diesel that its market is open to them.

He added as an association, IPMAN is holding discussions with some major stakeholders on how to bring in the diesel.

Ahmed said "What they (marketers) are asking for, is forex for diesel. Diesel, too, is scarce. It is only for diesel because the Federal Government has taken upon itself that it is only NNPC that imports products into this country, especially the PMS. But the forex they are asking for is for diesel is not for petrol.

"But why is scarcity persisting in Abuja? The whole thing boils down to the availability of diesel. The cost of diesel is very high.

Cont'd from Page 1 reasoned that it is high time to tell each other the bare truth by confronting each other on the situation and brainstorming on it.

"This formed the basis for resorting to an in-person meeting which since the outbreak of the Covid 19 pandemic been relegated by the States' Executives.

"Two things will feature prominently in the conversation: the economy and security.

"This will be the first time

Governors meet today over state of economy, security

in the year, contrary to media reports that Governors had collectively advised the president on the wedding of fifty-year-old from the federal civil service and other spurious suggestions meant to impose further hardship on the people that Governors will collectively meet to consider a total overhaul of the nation's economy." According to the statement issued by the NGF Director, Media and Public Affairs, Mr Abdulrazaque Bello-Barkindo, "the Governors are also expected to receive regular updates on the CARES program and the Chairman's remarks. All Governors are warmly welcome."

IGP honours policeman for rejecting bribe

THE Inspector General of Police, Usman Baba, has commended SP Daniel Itse Amah for rejecting a bribe of \$200,000.00.

It will be recalled that SP Amah led the arrest and prosecution of one Ali Zaki along with some police officers, in a case of an armed

robbery involving the sum of N320,500,000.

But in an attempt to cover up the crime, the principal suspect offered SP Amah a bribe.

SP Amah was presented with the award by DCP Abubakar Zubair at the Kano State Police Command Headquarters on Monday.

The IGP, who was impressed by SP Amah's outstanding performance, recognised him for demonstrating sound professionalism and excellent work ethic.

DCP Zubair while speaking on the occasion said that "SP Daniel Itse Amah is hereby awarded for maintaining outstanding excellent work ethics, uncommon focus and dedication to duty."

According to him, "he is awarded for exhibiting sound professionalism leading to the arrest and prosecution of one Ali Zaki and some police

officers in a case of an armed robbery involving the sum of N320,500,000 as well as rejecting the sum of USD 200,000 offered to him as a bribe."



Alkali

Buhari congratulates Kenya's William Ruto

President Muhammadu Buhari has congratulated the President-elect of Kenya, William Ruto, on his victory in the general elections held on August 9, 2022.

The President also commends the people of Kenya for the peaceful and transparent outcome of the elections, which once again demonstrates that the democratic process, values and principles remain the best way for the people to select their leaders and hold them accountable.

In a statement issued by Femi Adesina, his Special Adviser on Media and

Publicity, President Buhari said Nigeria values Kenya as a strategic partner in the fight against terrorism and violence extremism, buoyed by a long history of friendship, economic and trade ties, and effective collaboration through international organisations such as the African Union, the United Nations and the Commonwealth.

While wishing Deputy President Ruto a successful inauguration and tenure in office, the President "looks forward to more fruitful and robust engagements between the two countries on shared priorities such as enhancing peace and security on the continent, democracy, and greater economic prosperity and social development.

"The Nigerian leader also salutes President Uhuru Kenyatta for his statesmanship and exemplary leadership to the people of Kenya in the past nine years and the profound legacies of his administration on infrastructure, education, healthcare reforms and tourism, as well as strong influence and support on regional security."

You are forgiven -Archbishop Audu

The Nigeria Police Force (NPF) has commenced the training of officers on election security management, ahead of the 2023 General Elections.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the training was organised by the NPF, in collaboration with Solar Security and Consult Company Ltd.

In a speech at the formal opening of the training for North East on Monday in Maiduguri, the Lead Facilitator and former Inspector General of Police (IGP), Mr Solomon Arase (rtd.), said the training was an initiative of IGP Alkali Baba.

Arase said the IGP, like other stakeholders, was impressed by the performance of the police in the recent staggered elections and wanted to sustain the tempo during the general elections by filling the gaps identified in past elections.

"IGP Alkali Baba felt that his officers and men have been doing very well in staggered elections but 2023 election is going to be more challenging because of the massive deployment the police have to do.

"He felt that his officers are acquainted with the new Electoral Act and also imbibed the tenets of working together with other organisations," Arase said.

He further said that the training would give room to the participants to give their views and challenges they faced to enable them to initiate measures to tackle t h e m .

Speaking on behalf of Borno Government, the State Solicitor General and Permanent

Secretary, Ministry of Justice, Mr Isa Izge, commended the initiative, describing it as timely. Izge said that the State Government was poised to support all the measures being taken to improve the police and other security agencies in the discharge of t h e i r d u t i e s . A representative of the Nigeria Bar Association, Mrs Zara Umar, and that of the Civil Society Organisations, Mrs Lucy Yunana, also lauded the initiative.

NAN reports that the theme of the training is: "The 2023 General Elections: Enhancing

national security capacity for a secure and credible electoral process in Nigeria." It is expected to broaden the professional knowledge and operational capacity of the police with a view to closing the knowledge gap that could inhibit their optimal delivery of election security mandate.

Sanwo-Olu applauded for returning history to curriculum

The National Council for Arts and Culture (NCAC) has commended Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu on the return of the History curriculum in Lagos schools, describing the step as a "timely initiative."

This was the statement made by the Director General of NCAC, Otunba Segun Runsewe, who noted that NCAC would host the 35th edition of the iconic National Festival of Arts and Culture (NAFEST).

According to him, "Lagos, come November, will host the 35th edition of the iconic National Festival of Arts and Culture (NAFEST), a cultural fiesta deep in the history,

The workshop will also discuss "Media relations and security functions - Toward effective public communication for election", "Effect of new social media during elections", Security of media personnel" as well as "Managing officers' mental health and stress during election". (NAN)

traditions and culture of Nigeria nation state."

Runsewe, who doubles as President, Africa Region of World Craft Council, disclosed that History of Nigeria back in schools study and teaching profile in Lagos, is a welcome strategic decision by Sanwo-Olu, promising to organise a history of Nigeria session for Lagos students during NAFEST in November.

"Strategically, we have school children competition on Arts, crafts and culture, and definitely History will be part of the subjects we shall introduce to complement this cheering milestone from Lagos State.

"We have established a



Business & Economy

Naira: The story of a once powerful currency

When writing this article, the dollar traded against Naira in the Black Market for #705/\$. What initially started from #2 to €1 in the United Kingdom and #1 to \$0.6 in the United States in 1973 has come down to this level. AS-SAYYIDUL ARAFAT writes.

INFLATION is no longer a strange economic jargon for the citizens of Nigeria. It has its pros and cons, but the cons overshadow the pros. Inflation is something which sometimes may not be entirely bad for the economy. Moderate inflation has a beneficial effect on production and is often preferred to deflation or falling price.

It encourages business people to invest their capital in productive enterprise. New industries are erected while the old ones are being expanded, leading to an increase in employment.

But in the worst-case scenario, moderate inflation can accelerate to become a "galloping inflation". It can become hazardous when prices skyrocket, and the purchasing power is persistently ahead of the supply of goods and services, and it may get out of control. One could say inflation and devaluation of a currency are interconnected.

Four decades ago, one could get less than #6.1 Million for \$10 Million. Then a dollar was equivalent to 61kobo which implies Naira has more Value than Dollar. The same cannot be said four decades after as Naira has lost 99.8% of its value against the dollar, going by how #7.5 Billion now exchanged for \$10 Million.

To explain how we got here, let's examine Nigeria's Economy from 1973. When Naira was introduced till date.

President Ibrahim Babaginda and Second-Tier Foreign Exchange Market (SFEM)

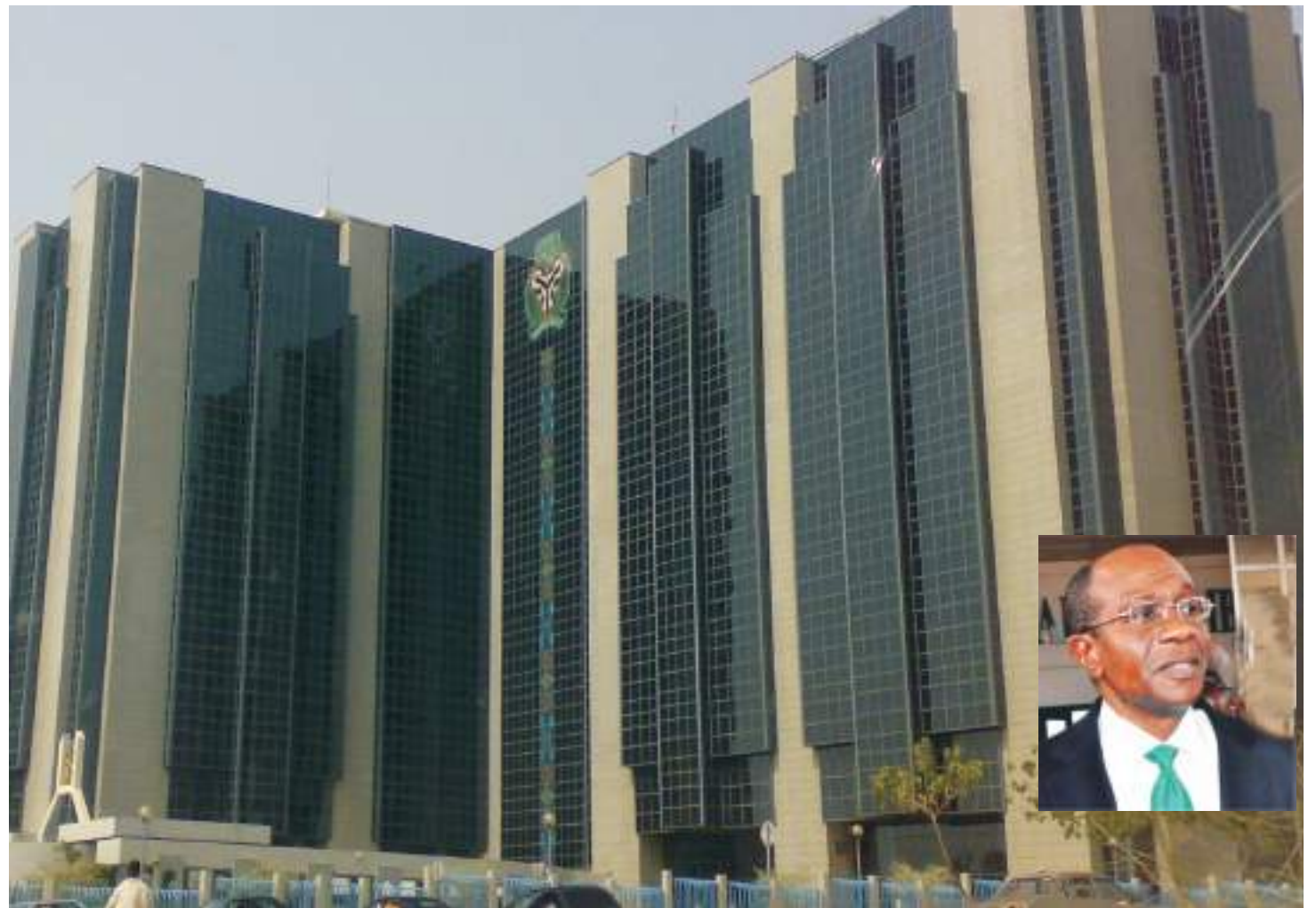
The fall of the mighty Naira can be traced back to the then Nigeria Head of State, General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida tenure 1986, he introduced the Second-Tier Foreign Exchange Market, sometimes known by the acronym SFEM. Until the middle of 1987, the initiative was effective. The market window was open to Nigerians and foreigners, and the initial plan was to find a market rate for the naira. The SFEM was the first time a Nigerian government floated a dual exchange rate system. But by the time his inglorious regime ended on August 26, 1993, the naira was exchanging for #17/\$1. During this time, the now famous "Bureau de Change" was introduced.

President Sani Abacha (1993-1998)

During General Sani Abacha's military regime (1993-1998), the official exchange rate of the naira to the dollar was stable at #22/\$1, but the market rate was #88/\$1. The Foreign Exchange Market was liberalised in 1995 by introducing an Autonomous Foreign Exchange Market (AFEM) for the sale of foreign exchange to end-users by the CBN through selected allowed dealers at the market-determined exchange rate. In addition, Bureaux de Change was once more accorded the status of allowed buyers and sellers of foreign exchange. A lot of banking fortunes were made from this arbitrage.

Joseph Sanusi (CBN governor 1999 to 2004)

When Joseph Sanusi became the CBN Governor in 1999, he introduced the Interbank Foreign Exchange Market (IFEM), a foreign exchange market where banks exchange different currencies. The banks can either deal with one another directly or through electronic brokering platforms.



Nigeria's reserves had been severely depleted two years before he became governor, and it was his solution to rescue the naira. The naira started trading at #85 within a year, and the gap between the official rate and market rate had reduced considerably to #105/\$1 compared to how it was under Abacha. Besides low oil prices, Nigeria was struggling to service its \$33 billion foreign debt, which was eating up the valuable foreign exchange. Sanusi later suspended the IFEM for six months when the naira came under pressure, and he introduced a limit to the margin, above CBN's rate, that banks could sell their forex for. The same is being done by the current CBN Governor, Godwin Emefiele.

Chukwuma Soludo (2004-2009) and the Oil Boom

In late 2003, rising oil prices increased Nigeria's foreign reserves and the Excess Crude Account. The CBN Governor Charles Chukwuma Soludo was able to harmonise the four different rates at the time: the CBN, Interbank, Bureau de Change, and wire rates. This converged the rates to within #1 of each other. This was when the naira gained about 20% against the dollar with no one explicitly trying to 'strengthen' it.

Unfortunately, oil prices dropped. Nigeria was in a good position to weather the storm, with reserves totalling around \$62 billion. Nevertheless, Soludo engineered some kind of artificial scarcity of forex to allow a devaluation of the naira. He also banned the Interbank market for six months. When Soludo took office, the naira was trading at 127 naira to \$1, and by

the time he left in 2009, it was around the 147 naira mark. But this masks the fact that in 2008, it went as low as 115 naira to \$1 at one point. Oil prices recovered quickly, so if Soludo had done nothing, it would have just cost Nigeria some of its reserves and normal service would have resumed after about eight months. But the temptation to 'do something' is always strong.

Sanusi Lamido Sanusi (June 2009-Feb 2014)

His successor, Sanusi Lamido Sanusi, in 2009, then restored the Interbank market that Soludo had banned because of the rise in oil prices, but faced stagnancy in Nigeria's reserves because of scarcity of dollars to defend the naira. His

solution to the problem was to remove the one-year restriction on foreign investors who wanted to buy government bonds. This move saw Nigeria being included in JP Morgan's index. Given that oil prices remained high throughout Sanusi's time in office, some measure of stability was achieved. The naira was trading at 148 naira to the dollar when he took office in 2009 and was 164 naira by the time he was suspended from office in February 2014. His era was known as the stability of the graveyard.

Godwin Emefiele Till Date

In today's economy, revenues have dropped much more than oil prices. Is Black Gold (Crude oil) a

"In today's economy, revenues have dropped much more than oil prices. Is Black Gold (Crude oil) a blessing or a curse to Nigeria? Because of our overdependence on it. What is worse is that Nigeria did not save during the oil bloom and our reserves are probably less than the \$30 Billion that was declared. Governor Emefiele has done the usual in response. He has banned the Interbank forex market and 41 items from being eligible for forex, directly undoing what Soludo did. Forex is now essentially being rationed, and the CBN is deciding who gets what and how much. The current debate continues to be around whether or not Nigeria should devalue the naira."

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What we learn from all of this is that Nigeria does not know how to spend oil money. What is expected of us is to save when the oil price is high and use the saved reserve when the price is low. This is not the case for Nigeria as we spend more when the oil price is high, and when the price gets low, we have little profit margin to work with. Our revenue drops then we question ourselves on why we import rice when we can grow it here.

Nigeria is so blessed to be dependent only on crude oil. Before the advent of oil, we were into Agriculture. Tourism is an untapped cash cow Nigeria is not using. We need to diversify our income.

Source: Economic Confidential.



Business & Economy

Nigeria's inflation rate increases to 19.64% -NBS

THE National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), says Nigeria's headline inflation rate increased to 19.64 per cent on a year-on-year basis in July. Prince Semiu Adeniran, the Statistician-General of the Federation and Chief Executive Officer, National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) said this in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for July 2022 released by the bureau in Abuja on Monday. Giving a breakdown of the report in a statement, Adeniran said that the CPI measures the average change over time in the prices of goods and services consumed by people for day-to-day living.

According to him, it is a core macroeconomic indicator used in the derivation of the inflation rate for policy, planning, and monitoring of an economy. Adeniran said the report showed that in July 2022, on a year-on-year basis, the headline inflation rate was 19.64 per cent.

"This is 2.27 per cent points higher compared to the rate recorded in July 2021, which was 17.38 per cent. "This shows that the headline inflation rate increased in July 2022 when compared to the same month in the previous year of July 2021. "This means that in July 2022, the general price level was 2.26 per cent higher than in July 2021.

He said increases were recorded in all Classification of Individual Consumption by Purpose (COICOP) divisions that yielded the Headline index. Adeniran said the increase in inflation was caused by an increase in food index attributed to the disruption in the supply of food products. The statistician-general also said the increase in inflation was caused by an increase in the cost of transportation



Adeniran

arising from the higher cost of energy.

According to him, the increase in the inflation rate was also due to an increase in import costs as a result of currency depreciation, as well as a general increase in the cost of production. He said on a month-on-month basis, the headline inflation rate in July 2022 was 1.817 per cent, which was higher than the rate recorded in June 2022 at 1.816 per cent.

"The percentage change in the average CPI for the twelve months ending July 2022 over the average of the CPI for the previous twelve months period was 16.75 per cent. "This is showing a 0.46 per cent increase compared to 16.30 per cent recorded in July 2021." Adeniran said the composite food index on a year-on-year basis was 22.02 per cent in July 2022, showing a rise compared to 21.03 per cent in July 2021.

He said the rise in the food index was caused by increases in prices of Bread and cereals, Food products, potatoes, yam, and other tubers, meat, fish, oil, and fat.

The statistician-general said on a month-on-month basis, the food sub-index in July 2022 was 2.04 per cent lower than the 2.05 per cent recorded in June 2022.

"The index for all items less farm produce (Core inflation), which excludes the prices of volatile agricultural produce stood at 16.26 per cent in July 2022 on a year-on-year basis. "This was higher when compared to 13.72 per cent recorded in July 2021. On a month-on-month basis, the core sub-index was 1.75 per cent in July 2022 higher when compared to 1.56 per cent recorded in June 2022.

He said the highest increases were recorded in prices of gas, liquid fuel, solid fuel, passenger transport by road, passenger transport by air, garments, cleaning, repair and hire of clothing.

Adeniran said on a year-on-year basis, in July 2022, the urban inflation rate was 20.09 per cent, 2.08 per cent higher compared to 18.01 per cent recorded in July 2021.

LATEST data from the Nigeria Inter-Bank Settlement System shows that Nigerians spent N1.69tn electronically on utility bills such as power, Pay TV subscriptions, and other everyday utilities in the first seven months of 2022.

This is a 32.06 per cent increase from the N1.28tn that was electronically spent on utilities in the corresponding period of 2021. This figure indicates an increasing acceptance of electronic channels for bills payment by Nigerians.

The NIBSS defines e-bill pay channel as an accessible and seamless account-based electronic bill payment channel with online real-time transaction reporting, biller notification, and easy reconciliation.

It says, "e-BillsPay is an electronic bill payment platform that facilitates the payment of Bills, Fees, Levies, Premiums and Subscriptions, etc. by the banking public through electronic payment channels provided and managed by banks."

It added that the payment gateway worked by allowing billers to validate data and notification of successful payments before connecting to the bank for customers to view a list of billers and payment receipts after a successful transaction.

Its touch points include: bank branches, internet banking, mobile banking and USSD, and agent network. While data reveal that payment value has increased, they also show that volume has decreased.

In the first seven months of 2022, the e-bill pay platform was

Nigerians' expenditure on utility bills hits N1.69tn



Emefiele

used 562,030 times, which was a 24.16 per cent decrease from the 741,081 times it was used in the corresponding period of 2021.

In an earlier interview, a telecommunication industry expert, who does not want his name mentioned, disclosed that mobile, convenience, and speed were the major drivers of the growth of e-bills payments in the nation.

The expert said, "When people make payments, they don't have to wait for a long while before it reflects. People can pay on the go and get the service immediately."

"Convenience and speed are the two key drivers for it. It is important now that we are talking about financial inclusion with PSBs and other mobile money where in areas without access

to banks, people can use phones to carry out financial transactions.

"Convenience and speed are driving this. Mobile is driving this adoption fast. As I have said, mobile enables on-the-go payment. It is not location-based. Mobile is the way to go, mobile is what is driving adoption."

Also speaking, the National President, Association of Mobile Money Agents in Nigeria, Victor Olojo, had also told our correspondent, "Primarily, the increase in mobile usage and mobile payment has helped very aggressively in e-bills payment as people now have access to mobile phones and are now able to do payments themselves."

'Arresting incessant grid collapse

THE incessant collapse of the national grid in Africa's Giant, Nigeria, is more than worrisome. Nigeria, as a country, is enormously endowed with diverse natural resources that can be utilised for generating energy.

But the billion dollar question begging for an answer is why does its national grid recurrently break down? Is it a case of gross ineptitude on the part of our leaders, the power generating and transmitting companies, and also stakeholders in the country's power sector?

According to data obtained from the Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN), the national grid has collapsed 108 times since the power sector was privatised in November 2013.

In the last 12 years, Nigeria has experienced 146 total national grid collapses and 73 partial collapses, regularly resulting in widespread blackouts.

This year, the first incidence of power collapse occurred on January 17, 2022.

Secondly, on the 4th of March, Nigeria experienced another grid collapse which led to another blackout across the country. Just within the recovery period of the second collapse another fall happened on 15th March making it the third grid collapse in the year.

When Nigerians had thought it was the end to total black out, another grid collapse bridged the hope on 8th April along the transmission line at Ikot Ekpen, Akwa Ibom State. It was reported that the quantum of electricity on the grid crashed from over 3,000MW to as low as 10MW around 21.00 hours the same day.

Similarly, the fifth, sixth and seventh time the grid would collapse this year, have all been witnessed.

These disruptions to power supply, absolutely, take a heavy toll on industries and small scale businesses. But as a solution to the menace, the federal government should consider decentralising the grid, which is not a new idea.

Prof Barth Nnaji, a former Minister of Power, had mooted the idea as far back as November 2019. Nnaji, in a lecture titled "Let there be light: Solving Nigeria's Electricity Puzzle for Sustainability" at the Second Distinguished Guest Lecture of Dominican University, Ibadan, recommended decentralisation of the grid as a way out of its frequent breakdowns in order to improve electricity supply in the country.

According to Nnaji, the chairman of Geometric Power Limited, the national grid should be made into smaller chops for regional supply of electricity with each being "autonomous for better control and invested in by different groups and not one national grid, although there will still be national control that aggregates power and gets power supply from one end of the country to another.

With this, each grid will be able to control itself and there will not be system collapse as we always have it now," he said.

Also, the House of Representatives at its plenary on March 1 passed a bill to allow states to generate, transmit and distribute electricity in areas covered by the national grid, and for related matters. The bill was voted for 298 to 2.

It is gladdening that the idea of decentralising the national grid is gaining currency in the country. The entire country does not have to be grounded when the grid collapses, with all the attendant consequences for both the economy and human comfort. Power, as we know, is pivotal to nearly all we do, especially in these modern times.

Nevertheless, decentralisation of the grid is only one of the options we have to attain a stable power supply. There are, indeed, other areas of energy that we can explore to achieve this objective.

Recently, the Minister of State for Power, Mr Goddy Jedy-Agba, hinted that the Federal Government was also ramping up solar energy supply to serve as backup during national grid collapses. The minister who spoke at a Rural Electrification Agency (REA) Stakeholders' Workshop in Abuja urged industry stakeholders to come up with innovative ideas to deal with the power conundrum. It is imperative that Nigeria should also explore other sources of power supply like wind power, especially in the farms.

Importantly, Nigeria should begin to tinker with the idea of institutionalising what is called Energy Democracy. Electricity should not be in the exclusive list, to be honest.

Let those who can provide power, be it states, corporate bodies or individuals, be allowed to produce power and sell to consumers. Overdependence on one omnibus, centralised power behemoth has failed. Improving access to reliable power supply is the key to reducing poverty. And also, unlocking economic growth in the country.

Refinery rehabilitation gulps N54.66bn

THE Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited latest data has revealed that the government subsidised Premium Motor Spirit, popularly called petrol with N1.593tn between January and June 2022.

It was also gathered that the NNPC's pumped N54.66bn into refinery rehabilitation during the six months period.

Figures obtained from the NNPC's presentation to the Federation Accounts Allocation Committee meeting for July 2022 showed that subsidies on petrol were implemented in June. The company transitioned from a public oil firm to a commercial entity last month.

It also made it clear in July that subsidy on petrol was now a burden of the Federal Government and not its own responsibility.

An analysis of the July presentation to FAAC showed that fuel subsidy or under-recovery/value shortfall, as

described by NNPC, rose to N1.593tn in the first half of 2022.

Figures from the report indicated that the amounts spent as subsidy on the commodity in January, February and March were N210.38bn, N219.78bn and N245.77bn, respectively.

A total of N271.59bn, N327.1bn and N319.18bn were spent as subsidy in April, May and June respectively.

On refinery rehabilitation, the oil company spent N9.11bn in January, made no expense in February and March. It invested another N9.11bn on the facility.

It spent N9.11bn in each of the months of April and May 2022 on refinery rehabilitation, while investing N18.22bn on the plant in June.

In April this year, the Minister of State for Petroleum Resources, Chief Timipre Sylva, said the April 2023 completion date for the rehabilitation of the Port Harcourt refinery was feasible and that the plant would refine 60,000 barrels of crude by early next year.

"This project kicked off second quarter last year and where they are now is quite impressive. It is on schedule. The commitment is to deliver 60,000 barrels per day from this refinery by the first quarter of next year, and, of course, we are quite happy," Sylva had stated while inspecting the facility.

The NNPC officially signed the contract with Technimont SPA for the \$1.5bn rehabilitation programme of the Port Harcourt Refining Company in April 2021 and had promised that the facility would be completed in 18 months.

Meanwhile the company's July presentation to FAAC stated that the sum of N391.529bn was the gross domestic crude oil and gas revenue for the month of June 2022.

It noted that the value shortfall on the importation of PMS recovered from June 2022 proceeds was N319.176bn while the outstanding balance carried forward was N1.01tn.

"The estimated value shortfall of

N1,490,413,402,007.66 (consisting arrears of N479,688,823,026.00 plus estimated June 2022 value shortfall of N1,010,724,578,981.66) is to be recovered from July 2022 proceed due for sharing at the August 2022 FAAC meeting," the company stated.

The Chief Executive Officer, NNPC, Mele Kyari, had during the unveiling of the newly commercialised oil firm, stated that the company was now a private outfit and had nothing to do with FAAC anymore.

Responding to a question on what would happen to NNPC's monthly FAAC contributions, Kyari replied, "We are now a private company. Would MTN go to FAAC?"

When probed further to tell if there would be no more FAAC remittances from the company going forward, he said, "We will pay our taxes, royalties and deliver dividends to our shareholders."



Business & Economy

Another recession looms as economy dips

Forex scarcity, galloping inflation, low oil production, burgeoning debt service, and worsening insecurity seem to be pushing Nigeria into another recession, BENJAMIN UMUTEME writes.

FOREX scarcity, galloping inflation, low oil production, burgeoning debt service, and worsening insecurity seem to be pushing Nigeria into another recession;

In what many have come to regard as recession bells tolling when Nigeria's inflation figures rose to a five-year high of 18.60 per cent, added to a negative Gross Domestic Product (GDP), ballooning debt service and a recurrent expenditure that continues to rise annually, it has become evident that except something is done without delay, the country might just slip into another recession.

This is coming at a time when the country is not getting much from crude oil production due to the high level of theft and vandalism of oil installations. And to make matters worse, the little that is got is all spent on debt service leaving fiscal authorities to borrow to augment payment of salaries and wages, as well as execute some projects.

In the face of headwinds, monetary and fiscal authorities continue to fashion out ways to turn the economy around, but alas, it does not seem to be working.

For instance, in a bid to arrest inflation, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) tightened the monetary policy rate to 14 per cent from 13 per cent. However, it has not had the desired effect as expected.

And experts are of the view that some of the economic challenges presently bedeviling the country were self-inflicted. For instance, the mopping up of the Dollars by politicians as the 2023 general elections have made it difficult if not almost impossible for genuine business men to access their businesses. This is after the Apex bank's policy to encourage dollar repatriation.

In his view, the managing director, SD&D, Gabriel Idakolo, said that it was only a matter of time before the country slipped into a recession.

"Despite all measures to save the economy by combination of monetary and fiscal policies it seems as if the situation is not abating as inflation continues to rise as well as food inflation and an alarming rate of insecurity across the country with the exchange rate at free fall, it is a matter of month before the economy will slip into recession," he said.

He said to halt the drift, the government is left with no option but to stop borrowing, reduce recurrent expenditure and strengthen the real sector.

"The major option left for the government is to change course, halt borrowing, reduce recurrent expenditure and negotiate if possible debt forgiveness, relief or tenor elongation to enable us save some money from debt servicing and salvage the economy. If economic activities can be strengthened and the government revives the exchange rate and increases revenue it could go a long way to avert the looming recession."

Likewise, Agaba Wilson Agaba, a business consultant, said that the action or inaction of the government will determine whether Nigeria falls into a recession or not.

"A recession is a term used to signify a slowdown in general economic activity. In macroeconomics, recessions are



Ahmed

officially recognized after two consecutive quarters of negative GDP growth rates. Some notable indicators of recession include a negative real GDP (indicating a sharp drop in productivity), a decline in real income (and hence reduced purchasing power), a decline in manufacturing and thus increasing trade deficit (negative balance of payment), a high rate of unemployment, a tepid stock market, soaring inflation, and rising interest rates among others.

"If you take a look at the Nigerian economy today, many of the above factors hold true. The question of whether the economy will slip into recession in the next few months is dependent on the action or inaction of the country's (Fiscal and monetary) policymakers and the heads of the various tiers and arms of the government," he said.

According to Agaba, a lot needs to be done to navigate Nigeria out of the looming recession.

Agaba, the managing director of Dreamheight Global Cpnslt Ltd., said: "For example, the government needs to quickly stabilize the exchange rate as it is having a serious impact on investments and hence production which is the heartbeat of the real sector. The government must also do all it can to improve the security situation in the country."

"Another low-hanging fruit is to quickly reduce the cost of governance and to go all out in the fight against corruption and waste of resources. There are also human capital development issues which require a lot more attention. Also, for sustainable economic recovery, the federal government needs to accelerate the full implementation of the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA), the foreign exchange policy and trade facilitation issues. These, among others, are some of the ways the

government can attempt to avert the impending recession."

As far as political economist Adefolarin Olamilekan is concerned, a lack of foresight by fiscal authorities is responsible for the present situation the country now finds itself in.

He said the indicators have been glaring for a long time, adding that rather than deploring empirical economic policies the country's authorities continue to implement ill advised economic policies.

"Although, many will still not agree we are heading to recession, going by the performance of the economy in first and second quarters."

"Nevertheless, we must take empirical economic action against such occurrences. More so, the global economic challenge is hitting hard on developed nations, as the majority of them are taking strict fiscal and monetary measures to avert any negative signs of recessions."

"The Nigerian state must not allow the economy to slip into recession by its lukewarm approach to changing the tide," he said.

Olamilekan said further that fiscal authorities have not been strategic in addressing the fundamental structural deficit in the economy.

"Regrettably, these structural deficits are the bane to our economic woes for many years by not factoring the vital elements to aid the real sector of the economy. The concern of the authorities over the years in this aspect is not proactive enough; hence, the option they have is to repeat what does not work, but a shortcut that has no lasting solution."

"In other words, just like in the last recession, authorities only focus on cutting down on capital projects, implementing recurrent components fully. The stagnant

productive sector and disrupt the productive sector as capital projects that are supposed to stimulate the economy are lacking.

"Chiefly, this takes us back to the issues around our structural deficit hampering our economic development."

That in fact would have been the best option to navigate us out of the looming recession if our productive sector is supported with required structure- electricity, road infrastructure, rail system, accessible forex, enabling security, export mechanism etc

"For me this is the right way and the best option to be taken. Going through the route of shortcuts that have no empirical economy factoring factors would not help."

Averting the danger To avoid entering the recession woods, Idakolo said the federal as well as state governments need to cut down on their recurrent expenditures.

"Both the state and federal government need to look inwards to generate revenue and reduce borrowing. The state also needs to critically reduce dependence on federal allocation and come up with ingenious ideas to run their states. The federal government should drastically take measures to stop oil theft and cut corruption amongst its MDAs which is the reason the little resources are not impactful," the financial analyst noted.

Wilson Agaba said the government needs to cut down on leakages.

"As I mentioned above, there is a need to cut down on recurrent expenditure. And this includes the cost of governance as well. Ministries and agencies should be right-sized. Wastage should be curtailed in all ministries, agencies and parastatal. While I agree that we should right size the civil service, I do not agree with the proposal of the governors that it should be based on age. We should rather base it on the usefulness of the role of the employee, their historical records and the relevance of their experience and qualification to the designation they hold. It is about time we ran the civil service like anyone would run the HR of a private organisation," he said.

What to do

Going forward, Olamilekan said the authorities require proactive decision by blocking leakages in government revenues and impress outlets.

"Another is, authorities must walk the talk of fixing the structural deficit in our economy, as this is the only way to prevent recession now and in future."

"In addition, cutting down recurrent expenditure has to be strategically done without creating industrial disharmony in the system. Conversely cutting down recurrent expenditure must happen at the sub-national government also."

"Furthermore, our economy must focus on exportation of finished goods so as to help in earning more foreign exchange and at the same reduce our importation that puts so much pressure on the naira."

"Lastly, the authorities must not shy away from charging government owned enterprises to rethink their business strategies. Just as authorities continue to give incentive to the private sector as a way of scaling up production."

"For instance, in a bid to arrest inflation, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) tightened the monetary policy rate to 14 per cent from 13 per cent. However, it has not had the desired effect as expected. And experts are of the view that some of the economic challenges presently bedeviling the country were self-inflicted. For instance, the mopping up of the Dollars by politicians as the 2023 general elections have made it difficult if not almost impossible for genuine business men to access their businesses. This is after the Apex bank's policy to encourage dollar repatriation."

Politics

2023 Presidency: optimistic of PDP's victory - Fintiri

GOVERNOR Ahmadu Umaru Fintiri of Adamawa state has expressed optimism that the party's presidential candidate, former vice president Atiku Abubakar, would win 2023 presidential election.

Fintiri stressed that 2023 was a take for PDP and Nigerians would not forgive the party if the party failed to win the 2023 presidential election.

Fintiri stated this recently in an interview with Journalists at the Yola International Airport, on his arrival to the state after his reconciliation mission between the Rivers state governor Nyeson Wike and the party.

"I think 2023 is for a take for PDP. Atiku by God's grace will become the president of this country and Nigerians will not even forgive us if we fail to produce president of this country in 2023.

"Everything under APC government is shattered, everything is in confusion, Nigerians don't seem to understand where they are.

"We wake up every morning at the mercy of God. So as leaders, we will make sure we put everything into this reconciliation to ensure that



Fintiri

Atiku and Wike camps are back as one and united party for the success of PDP in 2023," he said.

He further explained that he is now the chairman of reconciliation committee between Atiku and Wike, adding that his mission to Rivers state was successful.

"They have started talking and they will continue to talk until all the issues are resolved amicably," he said.

According to him, "politics is about interaction, discussion and understanding."

He assured that very soon

the reconciliation would be over and the party would be focused in their determination to rescue Nigeria and Nigerians from leadership failure of APC.

Fintiri further attributed the recent 78 percent successes recorded by Adamawa State in the West African Examination Council (WAEC) to his administration's massive investments and commitment to the education sector in the last three years which he said have started yielding results.

From AMEDU JOSEPH,
Lokoja

A political group, South West Agenda (SWAGA) for Asiwaju Tinubu in alliance with North Central Agenda For Asiwaju 2023 (NCA '23), Kogi chapter, has mobilised youth and women in the state to vote massively for Tinubu/Shettima APC ticket come 2023.

In his remarks in Okene recently, the National Chairman, SWAGA 2023, Sen. Dayo Adeyeye, appealed to the youth to vote massively for APC Asiwaju/Shettima in the 2023 presidential election. According to him, Nigeria needs a very dynamic, creative and imaginative leader at this time, and that is Asiwaju Bola Tinubu.

He stressed that Tinubu did well as Lagos State Governor and he would replicate same achievements across the country. "Asiwaju won the APC primary landslide, and that is what will happen again in 2023 presidential election by the grace of God. "All the attacks and terrible things people are saying now is because they have already realised that Asiwaju cannot be stopped, and that is why they are doing everything to

SWAGA-NCA mobilize youths for Tinubu/Shettima



Tinubu

bring him down but they cannot succeed.

"We have enjoyed the enthusiasm, passion and commitment of the people of Kogi State.

"We have seen HRM, the Ohinoyi of Ebera Land, Dr Ado Ibrahim, and he has given us his blessing and support for Asiwaju.

"We are very much convinced that Kogi people will vote massively for Asiwaju Bola Tinubu come 2023," Adeyeye said.

On his part, the NCA for Asiwaju Coordinator/Chairman, Alh. Ibrahim Raji, said the event was to sensitise and mobilise Kogi youths to support Asiwaju come 2023.

"We want to encourage the youth to follow the footsteps of Asiwaju because he started as a youth during NADECO, and became Senator as a youth. "We need a leader that can come up with a good template to salvage Nigeria, and it is only Asiwaju that can do that, and also think of the masses especially the youths. "We want Kogi youth to wake up, get their PVC and be ready to vote Asiwaju come 2023, so that the youth can assume that

seat after eight years," Raji said.

While expressing his satisfaction with the turnout of the youths at the event, Raji stressed that Tinubu remained a leader that can bring jobs, empowerment and development to Nigeria. Other dignitaries at the event were: the National Secretary SAWAGA-NCA, Hon. Bosun Oladele; National Conveyor, SWAGA, Hon. Ojo Oye; State Women Leader, Mrs Funmilayo Samuel, among others. In their separate comments, Oladele, Oye and Samuel, assured the youths that Tinubu is a leader of vision, passion and action who would make Nigeria better and curb its security challenges.

The women leader assured that Tinubu was hale, healthy and strong to deliver good governance to all Nigerians irrespective of ethnic or religious affiliations.

Nobody works with Tinubu and complain irrespective of religious or ethnicity, Nigeria will flourish under Tinubu as President," she said.

APM re-elects Dantalle as chair

THE Allied Peoples Movement (APM) has re-elected Yusuf Dantalle as its national chairman for a second term of four years after the party's delegates approved his aspiration through a consensus.

About 128 statutory delegates attended the national convention, where the decision was taken to re-elect him for another four-year term.

In his acceptance speech, Dantalle, who appreciated his party members for the confidence reposed in him, said his victory will serve as an opportunity to lead the party to victory in the various elective offices in which APM fielded candidates in the 2023 general election, including office of the president.

He said it was the 2nd national convention of the party, in which new national officers emerged in accordance with the party constitution registered with the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

"I am humbled by your overwhelming support and confidence in my leadership of our great Party in the last four years resulting in my re-election today as the National Chairman, along with other national officers of the party.

"I highly commend our esteemed delegates for your patriotism, political sagacity and tenacity of purpose in electing and re-electing national officers to pilot the affairs of our great party, APM in the next four years. I also applaud all leaders and members of Allied Peoples Movement for the confidence reposed in me to chart the way forward for our Party at

this crucial period in the nation's frail democracy.

"Esteemed delegates, the democratic, peaceful and orderly conduct of this election has reaffirmed our belief in constitutional governance and reinforced our hope for enduring democracy in Nigeria. The tasks ahead are enormous and call for patriotism, unity, diligence, purposeful, visionary and progressive leadership.

"As a leading political party in Nigeria, so much is required and expected of our great party, APM, to point the way forward to our long-suffering compatriots who have been impoverished, oppressed, suppressed and subdued by the present and past governments in the country," he said.

Expressing confidence that votes would count in 2023, Dantalle said: "Nigerians have suffered enough from recycled politicians who have nothing to offer except pains, depression and confusion that have impoverished our dear country and turned this giant of Africa into the poverty capital of the world besieged by terrorists, insurgents, bandits, militants and kidnappers.

"Allied People's Movement if voted into power in 2023 will turn around the destiny of our bewildered nation and restore its prestige in the comity of nation's. The Party promises a breath of fresh air in governance and compassionate leadership, a departure from the maximum dictatorship of the outgoing All Progressives Congress-led government. Power will be returned to the people on whom sovereignty resides. Nigerians shall be

free again."

He said, "it is obvious that the state of the nation is bad, so bad that citizens are killed, kidnapped and tortured daily as governments at all levels woefully failed to protect and secure the populace in clear violation of Section 14(2)b of the 1999 Constitution as amended, which states that the security and welfare of the people shall be the

'Improved power, good leadership will boost Nigeria's economy'

PETER Obi, the presidential candidate of the Labour Party, says the Nigerian economy can only receive a boost with an improved electricity supply and good leadership in the country.

Obi, a former governor of Anambra, said this in Owerri, at the Jamie Pajoel International (JPI) annual leadership conference.

According to him, the nation's economy cannot advance with the current state of poor power supply.

"If Nigeria can generate 20,000 megawatts of power, the country's economy will transform within a short period of time. Nigeria has borrowed \$500m in the last 20 years, if Nigeria had spent five percent of the money borrowed so far on entrepreneurship and power generation, the country will compete with advanced countries," he said.

The presidential candidate noted that 100 million Nigerians were currently living in poverty amidst the nation's huge resources.

He said Nigeria had all it took to be a great nation, adding that the country's greatest setback was bad leadership, corruption and poor policy implications.

"Our leaders have continued to talk about poor revenue,

primary purpose of government. Sadly, Nigerians have experienced more carnage than dividends of democracy since 1999 the nation returned to representative governance.

"The forthcoming 2023 general election provides another opportunity to save the nation from clueless leadership. Our great Party fielded credible candidates to contest various offices."

today we have 100 million Nigerians living in poverty and yet our leaders have not found a solution to our problems," he said.

Obi, however, advised Nigerians to remain steadfast and always be ready to contribute meaningfully to the growth of the nation.

Pat Utomi, a political economist, also speaking, said vision and ideas were the key factors to drive any economy. Utomi added that any leadership without a clear vision was bound to fail, stressing that Nigerian leaders failed the country due to poor vision and ideas.



Obi

According to him, a 21-century leader must be familiar with the system and understand properly the dynamics of leadership.

Linus Okorie, chief executive officer, CONE Leadership Centre, blamed Nigeria's poor economic situation on the maladministration of leaders.

Jamie Pajoel, convener of the conference and founder Legislative Leadership Education, said the conference was aimed at incorporating case studies, redefining leadership, governance, and bringing recommendations that would help sustain the system.

He said the 2022 annual JPI

leadership conference would also incorporate people of different professions across the nation and some international delegates.

Pajoel stated that internal limitation was a big factor that could work against the success of any nation or individual.

"Internal limitation is very dangerous, as a nation or individual, we need to learn how to manipulate limitations to address counter-productive syndrome.

"We must be ready to develop ourselves, our capital is the relationship we keep, we must be ready to utilise it.

"Generational curse is not spiritual but the human factor, what we are facing today in Nigeria is the actions of our past leaders, we must be ready to confront the situation in our time," he said.

He attributed negative interpretation as the major cause of setbacks saying "negative interpretation helps the mind to work against you.

"Don't allow fear to stop you, be positive-minded and confront every situation with faith," he advised.

Politics

'Campaign of columny will not deter me'

GUBERNATORIAL Campaign Committee of Ambassador Sadique Abubakar in Bauchi under the All Progressives Congress (APC) has vowed that no amount of campaigns of calumny would deter it from catching the state's plum seat come 2023 general elections in the country.

The Air Marshal Sadique Baba Abubakar Media and Publicity Committee Chairman, Hon Salisu Ahmed Barau described as false alarm the concocted story sponsored by the Bauchi state government that APC in the state has recruited 1000 political thugs ahead of Bauchi governorship elections slated for next February.

Reacting to what he described as 'Concocted Sahara Reporters' Story', Barau said that the story was ostensibly fabricated to mislead the average Bauchi voters who are increasingly showing interests in ensuring the success of the All Progressives Congress candidate in the 2023 gubernatorial elections.

He explained that owing to the colossal failure of the ruling PDP in the state to provide purposeful leadership and dividends of democracy in the past three years, this was a political mischief wrapped in a news garment as a dirty political hatchet job.

"To put the records straight, the publication in question, which publishers credited their sources to an unnamed Colonel of the Nigerian Army, who said it is in possession of a 'security signal' on the said recruitment exercise, without further presenting facts, but only quoted some anonymous 'politicians' who obviously funded the publication".

Surprisingly, said the media committee chairman, the newspaper in question only chose to replace the names of butchers, hunters, cobblers, blacksmiths, and barbers with 'militants and political thugs', mainly to give dog a bad name in order to justify its hanging.

As law-abiding citizens, we did not hold the meeting in question until we officially sought for and obtained the approval of the Bauchi State Police Commissioner who was represented at the meeting by an Assistant Superintendent of Police.

"The mere mention of 'militants and political thugs' in the publication gives away those behind the write up as some Bauchi politicians that are already scared, that since he secured the gubernatorial ticket of the APC, people from all parts of the state are shifting their support from various camps to the aspiration of Air Marshal Sadique Baba Abubakar. The new entrants being members of Butchers, Hunters, Cobblers, Blacksmiths, and Barbers Associations".

Barau recalled that it was in recognition of the outstanding military career of the retired Air Marshal Sadique Baba Abubakar in the service of the nation that President Buhari immediately appointed him as Nigeria's Ambassador to the Republic of Chad to check some of the most notorious sources of criminal insurgency that have ravaged the north eastern part of this country in the past ten years.

He queried, "It therefore baffles the reader that someone who spent the past forty years of his life defending his country, will now be accused of turning against it. Isn't not surprising that of all the retinue of media houses and state correspondents that are in

From Abbas Gungura, Bauchi

Bauchi State, only one outside online medium will report on matter with this magnified caption as the proceeding of a well-publicized meeting held on such a sensitive matter?

Barau also described the people of Bauchi state as the most politically sophisticated that cannot be fooled by this kind of dirty political



Sadique

Youth forum endorses Tinubu/Shettima

KATAGUM Youths Salvation Forum in Bauchi State has endorsed All Progressive Congress (APC) Presidential candidate, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu and Senator Kashim Shettima, whom they described as the most outstanding presidential flagbearer in the 2023 general elections.

They argued that if eventually elected onto the nation's plum seat, the former Lagos State governor would salvage the country from the doldrums of Nigerian economy, abject poverty, healthcare services, and curb the people from political chaos and social corruptions.

The chairman, Comrade Umar Idris Chinade said that they have evolved strategies aimed at awakening the political consciousness of the people, particularly the electorate as to who to vote or reject in the forthcoming general elections slated for the year 2023.

Comrade Umar addressed press in Azare, headquarters of Katagum Local Government Area on Friday where he said unless the electorates are adequately enlightened, educated and informed, the 2023 polls would witness the emergence of retrogressive leaders who would rekindle a pitch characterized by corrupt leadership, economic downturn and insecurity upsurge.

Chinade noted that the former Lagos governor who is economically triumphant would not in any way siphon public funds or jeopardize the Nigerian economy, but

undertaking in the name of journalism, as they know the crooks who sleep in the same bed with 'militants and political thugs' in their political sojourns.

He categorically stated that it is the dismal performance of the PDP government in Bauchi that prompted the entry of the retired Air Marshal Sadique Baba Abubakar into the gubernatorial race, as the APC remained steadfast and committed to its mission on winning the coming election and enthroning good governance in the state.

From ABBAS GUNGURA, Bauchi

promote and diversify the economy, develop the nation's infrastructure, secure the country for peaceful co-existence and foreign investments, arrest social disorder and salvage citizens from abject poverty.

"We are now conducting town hall meetings across our various polling units and electoral wards in Katagum zone comprising of seven Local Government Areas of Katagum, Shira, Zaki, Gamawa, Giade, Itas/Gadau, and Jama'are aimed at reawakening and educating the people generally on the dangers of having incompetent leadership", he said.

Comrade Chinade disclosed that the forum is synergizing with about fifty (50) registered clubs and associations at the local



Adamu

2023: Group tasks youth on nation building



Dare

THE White Elephant Social Development, in partnership with Connected Development (CODE) has called on the youth to unite towards building the country and work in synergy ahead of the 2023 General Elections.

The call was made in Abuja recently at a public dialogue and launch of an education intervention programme to aid students as part of activities to commemorate the International Youth Day.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the theme for this celebration is: "Intergenerational Solidarity: Creating a World for All Ages."

Mr. Hamzat Lawal, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of the group advised youths to have dreams, be humble, strive for a good name and serve humanity.

"My message to young people is to continue to work to provide value and service to humanity but before they can do this, they must get the right skill and the right mindset.

"I believe that young people of today are part of

the solution, the old people of today are also part of the solution, because the theme of this year's Youth Day talks about intergenerational solidarity.

"So let's stop the blame game and work together to take Nigeria to where we all want it to be," he said.

Mr Ismaila Babatunde, National Coordinator, White Elephant Social Movement, said that the theme for this year's Youth Day is apt, saying to achieve development in

Nigeria, there is need to leverage the full potential of all generations.

Babatunde said that it was time to work to address the gap existing among youths, government and older generation.

"Youths face a lot of challenges like ageism, unemployment, education, politics, difficulty in business areas among others.

"We need governments, religious and traditional rulers and the older generation to carry youths along and include them in policy making processes.

"We need an enabling environment to hone our skills and be able to compete at the global level just like our peers.

"We as youths also need to wake up and realise that change begins with us.

"Don't be an instrument of social vices, don't be induced by any politician to cause mayhem because you are also qualified to contest for the same position that the candidates are vying for," he said.

Mr Mubarak Ahmed, Senatorial Candidate for FCT on the platform of New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP) called on the youths to stand firm and take responsibility to shape their future.

"The reason is because we have not taken responsibility enough to be given that chance to participate.

"This is a chance given to me as a youth and I will not let youths down."

Rev. Akila Baba from First Ecwa Church Karu, advised the youths to embrace religious tolerance for a peaceful society.

According to Baba, the education system should adopt a style of teaching that impacts on youths; the attitude of dialogue, non-violence, value orientation, peace, human rights among others.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that highlights of the event was the launch of books for education intervention by the White Elephant.

The books are expected to reach out to over one million children in the pilot phase, and then extended to about 10 million children subsequently.

of democracy under the present dispensation. He stressed the need for elected representatives to constantly visit their constituents so as to know their problems or constraints.

Chinade unfolded that some of the complaints the forum usually received from the electorate included harsh living condition, abject poverty, economic strangulation and insecurity challenges, and called for prayers for the Almighty to guide the people elect credible leaders in 2023 polls that could salvage them from their predicaments.

The chairman therefore called on electorate in Bauchi State to vote the All Progressives Congress (APC) gubernatorial candidate, Ambassador Sadique Baba Abubakar in the 2023 polls, describing him as a patriotic citizen who is fully devoted to serve his country and his state of Bauchi.

Chinade however advised the APC governorship candidate to put his electioneering campaign team in good order as, according to him, there are those with multiple faces or divided loyalties who could neither assist subordinates in the struggle nor give any helping hand.

Chinade, while describing electioneering campaigns as money spinning exercise, called on committed stakeholders to assist the forum with means of transportation to ease members' movement now that whistle for commencement of politic campaigns is about to be officially kick off.

IMAGES

LALONG ATTENDS 19TH CATHOLIC GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Plateau State Governor and Chairman, Northern Governors' Forum, Rt. Hon. Simon Bako Lalong yesterday attended the 19th General Assembly of the Catholic Archdiocese of Jos for the year 2022 with the theme: The Eucharist our strength towards a better Nigeria with Mass at St. Louis Catholic Church, Jos



Governor Lalong on arrival at the venue of the programme



Hon. Meshach M. Chindaba, Guest Speaker at the 2022 General Assembly (right) with others at the opening Mass



Plateau State Governor, Rt. Hon. Simon Bako Lalong (left) with his Deputy, Prof. Sonni Gwanle Tyoden in prayer mood at the Mass



His Grace, Most Rev. Matthew Ishaya Audu delivering homily at the Mass



L - R: Barr. Edward Pwajok SAN, who chaired the 2022 General Assembly, Engr. Pam Bot Mang and the Governorship candidate of APC, Dr. Nentawe Yilwatda Goshwe



Governor Simon Bako Lalong (2nd right) and others listening to homily



Sir. Dr. Boniface Gwotbit KSM, Sir William Songkat and Sir Simon Abah, President, Laity Council at the General Assembly



A cross section of Rev. Sisters of the Jos Catholic Archdiocese at the General Assembly

Photos: DANLADI DUK

Politics

The Wike factor and PDP's quest for victory

Nyesom Wike, Governor of Rivers State, is not just a politician, but a well-known one in the country. His stands on national issues in the last few years has endeared him to many Nigerians, including political opponents CHURCHILL OKORO writes.

WIKÉ's contributions to the continued existence of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) is not debatable. And that appears to be the crux of the internal wrangling in the umbrella association. He believes that the natural course of "sowing and reaping" has not manifested to him in the party at the centre. He strongly believes that the party owes him a lot.

Today, his moves are not clear to many Nigerians, including members and leaders of his party. Although he has severally ruled out dumping the PDP for any other party, his recent fraternity is causing adrenaline rise in the leadership of the party.

Like the praying mantis (insect), the fragile legs of which make the insect to maintain a steady stand, Wike's fragile stake in today's PDP seems to have caused his outlandish romance with elements of a party he had said time and again he would never have anything to do with.

Few months ago, the chorus "Wike dey come ooo", became popular and resonated in the minds of delegates who stood up for a long period, cheered, applauded and anticipated that their favourite, Nyesom Wike, one of the presidential aspirants and Rivers State Governor, would triumph at the contest which held in the Moshood Abiola Stadium, Abuja, Nigeria's capital city.

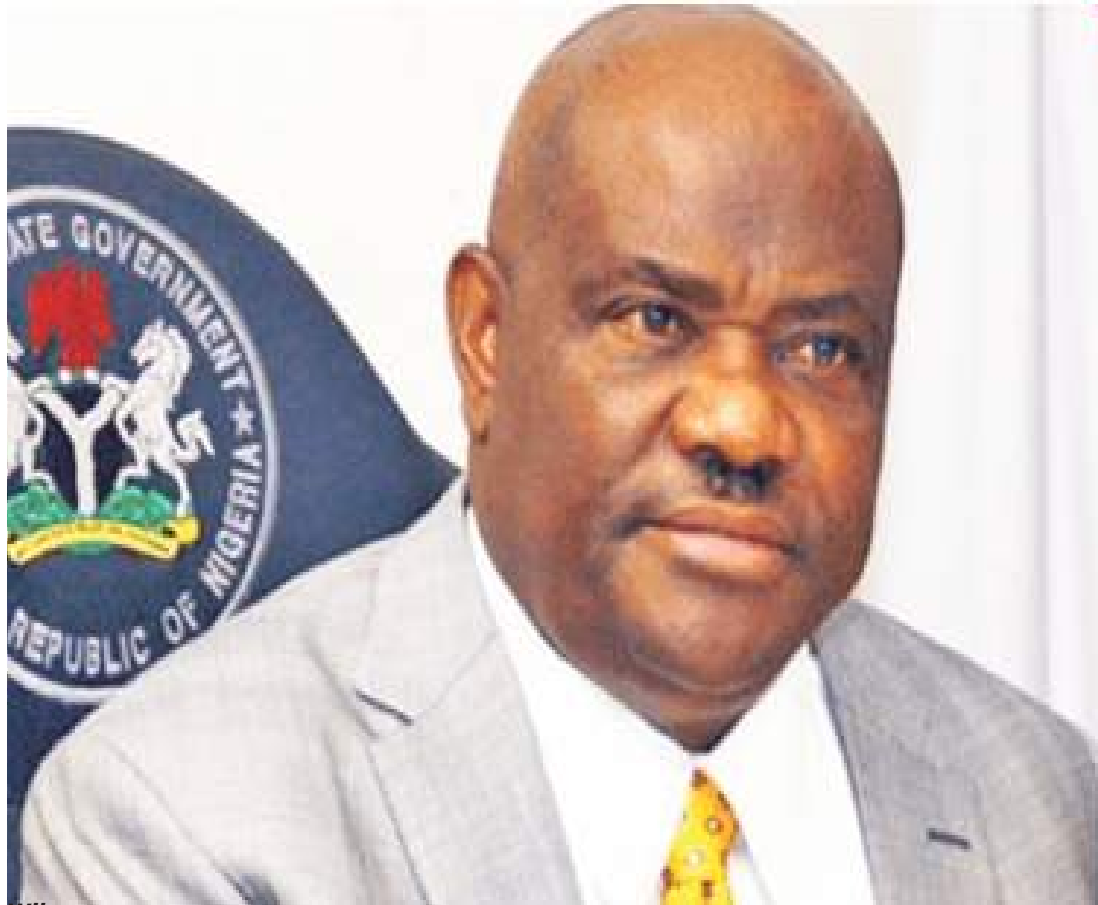
Interestingly, after many hours of voting processes for the People's Democratic Party (PDP) presidential primary election, the hope of the supporters was dashed as Atiku Abubakar, the foremost contender and former Vice President of Nigeria, clinched the ticket with 371 votes to defeat his closest rival, Wike, who scored 237 votes.

It is worthy of note that Atiku's journey through the primaries to the 2023 general election became smooth following the withdrawal of one of the aspirants and Governor of Sokoto State, Aminu Tambuwal, who aligned with his northern brother and urged his supporters to cast their votes for the Adamawa-born politician.

Prior to the choice of presidential candidates by the different parties, governors – irrespective of party affiliations – from the southern states of Nigeria declared that the region must produce the next president so as to ensure there is equity and fairness in the nation's political space.

However, the governors on the platform of PDP, couldn't walk the talk, they disregarded the clamour for the power shift of the 2023 presidency to the south, elected former Vice President Atiku Abubakar as its presidential candidate for next year's general election, a decision that has since elicited strong emotional reactions, manifested in several utterances and has placed the party's unity at stake.

Atiku's emergence as the party's standard-bearer, and his subsequent choice of Ifeanyi



Wike

Okowa as running mate, have seemingly unsettled Wike's camp and created a rift between him and the former Vice President, which many observers say may narrow the chances of the opposition party in the race to succeeding President Muhammadu Buhari.

"This crisis between Atiku and Wike calls for urgent attention or else the party may lose steam before the 2023 poll. No doubt, the Rivers State governor's contribution to the party is unparalleled; it was glaring to the eyes after the 2015 election when he held fort and preserved the party's flag from being blown away.

"I know things might have not gone the way he wanted because of what happened after the primaries but he needs to let peace prevail for the sake of the party so that his works, as a builder, will forever live in the minds of supporters," Augustine Yakubu, a keen observer, says.

Speaking on what the crisis portends for the party's fate in the general election, Matthew Edaghesse, a legal practitioner, said it would have a negative effect on the party's chances, explaining that "If I am not with you, then I am against you and a house divided against itself is bound to fall.

"Of course, it is a threat to the party's victory except anybody wants to live in denial. If you are a political analyst, you will observe that whenever there is a crisis within any organisation, political parties inclusive, you don't expect it to be a plus, it will be a minus.

"Wike wants respect, justice and he doesn't want people who betrayed democracy to be beneficiaries of the same process. It is in the public domain that Wike has placed his terms on the table, he wants Iyorchia Ayu, the party's

national chairman, to quit especially against the backdrop of the presidential candidate of the party who is from the North.

"The chairman cannot also be from the North, so, it is too lopsided and Wike has been a strong advocate of power shift to the south. Wike on his own ground principle has every reason to go against a northern candidate when he feels it has shortchanged his own region of the country," Edaghesse said.

Edaghesse further said, "Wike has strong reservations about the way and manner the primary was conducted as well as the role the chairman of the party played after the primaries; the comment he made declaring the person who stepped down for Atiku, Wike's rival, as the hero of the convention. What was the basis of declaring Aminu Tambuwal as the hero?"

"That statement coming from a supposed umpire who ought to have remained impartial and neutral was very provocative. It suggests that he was with Atiku all along. Such will not go down well with any contestant, it has removed the veil of impartiality and neutrality, making the umpire a participant in the contest.

"So, Wike, justifiably, is entitled to be very aggrieved and to feel insulted and betrayed, especially against the backdrop that he has spent so much and invested so much time, energy and goodwill in PDP when it was almost abandoned by others who deserted it soon after the party was no longer in power. Wike stood with the party through thick and thin."

Although the party's leadership has commenced moves to reconcile warring parties, Governor Wike is yet to take a

stance and has recently associated with members of the opposition parties, especially the All Progressives Congress (APC), hosting them at his private residence, and inviting them for the inauguration of different projects, which is now intensifying assumptions that he may dump the PDP.

Some of the recent visitors include, Babajide Sanwo-Olu, Lagos State governor and close ally of Bola Ahmed Tinubu, the APC presidential candidate, and Governor Dave Umahi of Ebonyi State who were invited to inaugurate the Orochiri-Worukwo flyover. Also, former Governor of Sokoto State and APC Sokoto North senatorial district candidate, Aliyu Magatakarda Wamakko was invited for the inauguration of the Ogbunabali Road in Port Harcourt.

Femi Gbajabiamila, Speaker of the House of Representatives, was a special guest who recently commissioned the new Rivers State House of Assembly quarters.

Apparently disturbed by the outstanding issues and the hobnobbing of the governor with opposition party members, the Board of Trustees of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), at a recent meeting, inaugurated a peace panel to interface with the key actors and find a way forward to resolving the disputes before the kick-off of campaigns.

After the meeting, former lawmaker and member of the board, Abdul Ningi, told journalists that, "We discussed the crisis between our presidential candidate and Governor Nyesom Wike and how to get it resolved, we set up a committee of the whole to urgently interface with the two of them.

"We have set up in this meeting of the BoT a committee to be able to interface between the factions,

particularly the acrimony that is taking place between the presidential candidate and Governor Wike and any other conflicts that is taking place within our party formation."

Corroborating that talks are ongoing and that there is no animosity between the pair, Dino Melaye, spokesperson of the Atiku campaign organisation, said the party has made substantial progress in the reconciliation process.

"Talks are ongoing and we are making progress. I believe that by the grace of God, PDP will remain one; strong and united. Definitely, after every primary election, there will be agitations and questions but I can assure you that we are making tremendous progress and we are all going to work together.

"Governor Wike is a fantastic party man, and one of those extremely tired of the satanic manifestations of the APC government. So, there is no way we will not work together. I can tell you on good authority that we are making serious progress and there is communication; there is direct discussion between Atiku Abubakar and Nyesom Wike," Melaye said during the politics today programme of Channels Television.

Amid efforts to settle the differences between the factions, the crisis took a new dimension as reports surfaced online last week that Wike and Newgent Ekamon, a chieftain of the PDP, allegedly filed a lawsuit against Atiku Abubakar and Aminu Tambuwal over the 2023 presidential ticket of the People's Democratic Party

It was learnt that the plaintiffs reportedly predicated their claims on the grounds that the PDP primary gave undue advantage to Atiku which they claimed aided his emergence as presidential candidate of the PDP in the primary election conducted on May 28 and 29, 2022.

Reacting to the allegations, the Rivers State governor, while speaking at the commissioning of the House of Assembly quarters in Port Harcourt, distanced himself from the purported suit, saying that the focus of the party should be on emerging victorious in the general election.

"People have called me that I went to court against Atiku Abubakar. I want to state categorically that I didn't go to court. I just want to say it for Nigerians to know. I have kept quiet. I am busy with delivering the dividends of democracy.

"If they lose election, nobody should call my name. I have told the candidate. If I wanted to go to court, I would have gone to court within two weeks.

"It is the candidate's group that are doing all these things. Let the world hear. They are the ones plotting all these things, thinking they will spoil my name. We are supposed to be talking about winning election," he said.

Culled from Business Day.

News

NEDC assures of jobs creation

From **ABBAS GUNGURA,**
Bauchi

THE North East Development Commission has assured that jobs creation which is part of its mandate will be aggressively pursued while absorbing gradually the vast number of unemployed graduates roaming the streets to fend for a living.

To this end, the commission is now fully committed to training of jobless graduates on how to fabricate energy efficient and environmentally friendly stoves that are globally accepted.

The job creation assurance came from the commission's Managing Director, Mohammed G. Alkali recently while declaring open a week-long training for artisans and scavengers on efficient stoves and briquette production from agricultural/domestic waste in Bauchi.

The Managing Director who was represented by the Head of Waste to Wealth Programme, Adamu Lawan, explained that the model was initially adopted in India, and the trainer was sometimes ago in Kenya where he emerged the best in West Africa for the fabrication of the model.

Alkali disclosed that the trainees after completion would be fabricating the model for sale to the public to earn a living. He explained that this was what prompted the commission to adopt the training.

He explained that most of the stoves in use emit carbon monoxide which makes them it friendly, as they have also been tested and found not prone to health hazards and would not negatively impact on the environment.

Alkali revealed that the commission selected five participants from each of the six states in the sub-region, and urged the training participants to be very serious in learning how to fabricate because, as he stated, they should take it as a rare opportunity having been selected from thousands.

"At the end of the training, we are going to empower them. We are going to give them starter packs. So from here if they do very well we can replicate, may be before the end of this year, we can do with more participants from the states in the geo-political zone".

He recalled that the humanitarian crisis in Northeast Nigeria spread over time and the commission has been making frantic effort of providing relief and robust lifesaving assistances alongside the National and state government to vulnerable persons in the following six states; Borno, Adamawa, Bauchi, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe. "There is need to build the capacity of individuals in areas/skills of utmost value which could preserve their deserted environment and provide the teaming



Mohammed

population with livelihood opportunities through production of briquettes (cooking energy) from renewable sources which are readily and sustainably available in the various communities".

The managing director pointed out that the orientation and capacity building training is targeted to revive economic activities and to build the skills and innovative capacity of selected persons to produce briquettes (cooking energy) from readily available biodegradable raw materials in their community.

The objective of the consultancy is to build the capacity of motivated but unskillful youths practicing charcoal and firewood sellers, as the training will cover several topics/techniques of production of carbonized briquettes from different raw materials, as well as develop or adapt training modules and manual on briquettes production using improved technology (mechanized methods with diesel operated engine).

Also speaking, the consultant to the commission, Engr. Saleh Yakmut further explained

that the training is on the fabrication of energy stoves and production of crickets from agricultural land domestically.

"The good thing is that these energy efficient stoves have been improved and modernized and they are called the greenlight efficient stoves. And every material hundred percent is locally available and locally sourced. So we won't have problem with materials at all".

Yakmut said the commission sought it wise to take directional approach towards enhancing livelihood of women and youths in the Northeast, saying, it is not just about an environment friendly stoves, but also about an environment friendly fuel, meaning an efficient stove not just using an efficient. Fuel but an alternative, renewable, available and sustainable fuel.

"Meaning that the fuel is going to be gotten from our rice source, sugarcane source, groundnut shelve, coconut shelve, sawdust, and so forth. So every available waste from the farm and the house is a potential raw material for the fuel, so there is going to be no more cutting trees".

BASG to collaborate with Federal agencies

From **ABBAS GUNGURA,**
Bauchi

GOVERNOR Bala Mohammed has said that Bauchi State government would collaborate with the Federal government agencies such as Pencom to leverage on soft loan to be able to defray all the gratuities owed by public service retirees in the state.

The Governor said that this feat could successfully be achieved with the establishment of Bauchi State and Local Government Contributory Pensions Law, 2022 which he assented to Friday as one of the twelve laws earlier passed by the State House of Assembly.

Assenting to the contributory Pensions Law, the Governor said that it has been enacted to replace the Define Pensions Benefit Scheme which, he argued, has been responsible for the lack or delayed

payment of pensions and gratuities to beneficiaries over three past successive governments in the state.

"As you all know, the Define Benefits Pension Scheme has been responsible for the lack of pensions and gratuities in the state public service over the years, especially gratuities which we have over N20 billion in arrears over the past three administrations in the state.

He said the objective of the contributory pensions scheme would among other benefits, ensure that any public servant who worked in the public service or who participated in the scheme receives his or her benefits as at when due at the time of exit.

Senator Bala Mohammed explained that seven of the twelve laws assented to have been enacted to provide for the establishment of new

KOGI State Police Command has confirmed the arrest of a father suspected to have kidnapped and killed his 15-year-old daughter. Police Public Relations Officer in the state, SP William Aya, who confirmed the incident on Friday in Lokoja, said a friend to the girl's father was also arrested.

He added that one other suspect has been declared wanted.

According to the police spokesman, the suspects work with the Federal Polytechnic Idah.

"Miss Sherrifah was reportedly kidnapped on Aug. 4, at the family residence in Okenya along Itayi street,

Igalamela/Odolu Local Government area of Kogi.. "The girl's remains were only discovered few days later already mutilated with some parts missing," he said.

Aya said that investigation had commenced, including efforts to apprehend the third suspect, whose name was given as Adah.

"The state Commissioner

Police arrest father over daughter's death

From **AMEDU JOSEPH,**
Lokoja

of Police (CP), Edward Egbuka has ordered for a thorough investigation into the case and manhunt for Adah, now at large.

"In compliance with the CP's order, the matter has

been transferred to the Criminal Investigation Department in Lokoja," he added.

Aya assured that the Command would conduct very thorough investigation into the matter to unravel the circumstances behind the girl's death.



Alkali

Kogi designs template to checkmate criminals

From **AMEDU JOSEPH,**
Lokoja

IN its task to improve on security situation, the Kogi State government is to design a template that will be binding on business operators and corporate organizations to checkmate the activities of bandits across the state.

Governor Yahaya Bello stated this during a meeting with owners of businesses and companies in the state at the Government House, Lokoja.

Governor Bello said the template will be put

together by their businesses are representatives from operating.

The Governor restated corporate organizations, miners, schools, manufacturers and other stakeholders to secure the state.

He stated that decisions taken will be binding on all concerned and be enforced for a more secured business environment.

According to him, the issue of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) will be made mandatory for business owners based on their capacity with a view to contributing to the immediate location where

Governor Bello declared that any company that refuses to comply with the conditions of operation will be shut down, pointing out that adequate compliance will lead to a safer Kogi State.

He urged the people of the state to be security conscious at all times, in all places and in their utterances, telling them to continue to give credible information to security agencies to assist them in the fight against crimes and criminality.

In their separate remarks, representatives from corporate organizations, companies, schools, manufacturers and miners commended government for its effort at protecting the lives and property of the people.

They called for the employment of technology in monitoring activities, creating more jobs and employment opportunities for the teeming youths.

News

KEEP empowers over 8,000 persons

From
ABBAS GUNGURA, Bauchi

The Kaura Economic Empowerment Programme (KEEP) in Bauchi has since its take-off sometimes last year economically empowered no fewer than 8, 000 persons with free N1.2 billion in cash or kind in the sixteen out of the twenty local government areas in the state.

The State Governor, Senator Bala Mohammed said that these were in addition to the distribution of 1,000 tricycles (Keke NAPEP) to the erstwhile commercial motorcycle riders, popularly referred to as 'Okada Riders' as revolving loan so that upon repayment other people would also benefit from the programme.

Launching the programme in the fifteenth and sixteenth local government areas of Ningi and Warji in the headquarters of the two areas weekend, the governor recalled that a total of 154 buses have also been procured and distributed during the formal launching to members of the public also as revolving loan.

To this end, it was learnt, the programme launching would be replicated in Bauchi with the free N75, 000, 000 in cash or kind, or even more having been the headquarters of the state with population concentration.

Governor Bala explained that under the programme, an average of seventy-five million Naira (N75,000,000:00) in both cash and kind has been distributed to some selected beneficiaries in each of the sixteen Local Government Areas where the programme has so far been launched.

Selected beneficiaries are being provided starter packs and N50,000 cash for each 500 persons per Local Government, and the provision of three motorcycles in each of the wards of the 20 Local Governments, with ward PDP Chairmen, ward coordinators and ward youth leaders as beneficiaries.

Others, the governor further enumerated, are the provision of N100,000 cash to women leaders and youth leaders in each of the 20 Local Governments, provision of five buses to each of the 20 local government councils in the state.

According to him, the state government under his leadership places high premium on empowerment through job creation as a testimony of its commitment towards poverty alleviation. Hence the putting in place of the Bauchi State Microfinance Institution Building Programme (MIFIN) to complement KEEP. This is aimed to develop and strengthen microfinance institutions and establish linkages among the



Mohammed

institutions and other financial institutions to create a viable and sustainable microfinance system.

"The programme is all about making the people of Bauchi State self-reliant by providing them with the wherewithal and conducive environment to be economically productive, as it was designed to boost economic activities in order to address the problem of unemployment and alleviative poverty among the people, especially the vibrant youth and women".

The ultimate goal, the governor said, is to enhance access of the poor to financial services so as to boost the

productivity of micro and small scale enterprises thereby reducing poverty. While KEEP has its main objective of encouragement and support to the people to engage in various entrepreneurship.

The Governor reiterated his appeal to beneficiaries of the economic empowerment programme to properly managing the cash and items given to them to boost their economic status and assist others who may not have access to the largesse. He assured that government will continue to explore more ways and means of poverty alleviation.

DG Media confirms theft at Government House

DIRECTOR- General, New Media to Governor Aminu Masari of Katsina State, Alhaji Al-amin Isa has confirmed the recent theft of funds in government running into millions of naira.

Isa confirmed the theft of the money to newsmen in Katsina on Thursday.

He however refused to disclose the amount that was stolen from the government finance department.

According to him, some months ago, similar incident of theft running to millions of naira happened which compelled the government to adopt a strategy to avert future occurrence.

From
SHEHU DANJUMA, Katsina

"We are surprised that another theft like this has happened," he said.

The DG however said if a thief wants to steal your property, he knows how to steal it.

Investigations by THE NIGERIA STANDARD revealed that some staff of the Department of Finance are assisting the police to recover the stolen funds.

Further investigation revealed that the amount in question is over N30 million while the former incident which occurred was over N20, 000 000m.



Masari



Is this the country we want?

SINCE the amalgamation of what became known as Nigeria, the country has been grappling with one problem or the other. From the outset, the introduction of different types of governments to the regions that make up the country was in itself a signal that the marriage was deliberately built on false foundations that would not stand the test of time. The contradictions that accompanied colonial rule was enough signal to tell the people that all was not well. Yet, it was assumed that something could be worked out to glue together the disparate nationalities that were forcefully brought together for the convenience of the colonial power.

With independence, things became worse as there was no unity of purpose in anything that would lead to true unity. The protectorates held different views and approached the pursuit of freedom differently. The contradictions became evident and even more glaring immediately after the British left. Our so called leaders were at best regional champions whose spheres of influence never transcended beyond their regions. All they did therefore, was to ensure their regions were at an advantage over the others. That was what led to the first coup and the confusion that followed and is still present in today's Nigeria.

What is even more vexing is the fact that we still play the ostrich with what is visible and continue to suffer. For things to work, we must sit at a round table and renegotiate the terms for us to be a country. We must, as a people, agree on what we want to achieve, how to go about it and set timelines before we can ever dream of building a united and strong country. Anything short of this is effort in futility.

A situation where one region is more Nigerian than the others is unacceptable. It shows that we have not learned

anything from history. Afghanistan and Lebanon are very clear case studies that should open our eyes to what selfishness and leadership failure can lead a country to. Unfortunately, Nigeria is the only country that is doing everything for the wrong reasons. That history has been removed from the curriculum of our schools is indicative of how shortsighted and small minded we are as nation. What serious country would not want to refer to its past so as to make its future better?

Can our country in all sincerity not relate to its past and hope to succeed? Is it possible to discard your past and carry on in a vacuum? What thoughtlessness are our policy formulations made of? No wonder we are plagued with a whole lot of problems and we do not have the creativity to provide solutions to them. The only thing we are specialists in is creating religious crisis. We have forgotten that religion is our personal relationship with our creator. Yet, massive religious centres are springing up on daily basis and are replacing industries. And we see nothing wrong in this?

It is no wonder then that our leaders hid under the

“ Our leaders for simple ailments run to other countries for treatment yet refuse to develop our health care systems. The saddest aspect is that they are attended to in those climes Nigerian doctors who, given the chance would have plied their trade at home. Our sense of shame as a nation and country has been completely lost and we do not think before we act. Yes, how can a country which wishes away her history not act in such a manner? ”

smokescreen of religion to hide their inadequacies. They appeal to base sentiments when their shortcomings are exposed. They tell their followers that their activities are being interrogated because they are either Christians or Muslims. They would rather keep the majority of the people uneducated so that they would resort to them each time they want to deploy them to do their biddings.

Maitasine, Boko Haram and other religious uprisings not only show the weakness in our systems but confirms our deliberate deployment of religion to cover our tracks. It exposes our failure to take advantage of the many opportunities available to better the condition of our country and its people. It shows that we are not a people who believe in our abilities but a people who rely on others to make things work for them.

Our leaders for simple ailments run to other countries for treatment yet refuse to develop our health care systems. The saddest aspect is that they are attended to in those climes Nigerian doctors who, given the chance would have plied their trade at home. Our sense of shame as a nation and country has been completely lost and we do not think before we act. Yes, how can a country which wishes away her history not act in such a manner?

It is time we go back to the drawing board and redesign our country. The present indicators all point to the country heading to a failed state. But with a bit of sincerity it can be redeemed and turned around. This will however, means that patriotic individuals must begin to fight and take up positions of responsibilities and not allow charlatans toy with our future. What we see and hear these days from our political actors is sad and unfortunate. They speak before they think and do not act in the best interest of the people. This cannot be allowed to continue.

News

NEDC trains on production Briquette

From
**ABBAS GUNGURA,
Bauchi**

THE North East Development Commission (NEDC) State Coordinator in Bauchi, Ibrahim Mohammed Bashir has said that the briquette being produced from agricultural and domestic waste is a big source of export and foreign earning for the country, specifically to the Northeast sub-region.

Bashir, who was speaking at the closing ceremony of a weeklong training for artisans and scavengers on efficient stoves and for briquette production organized by the commission held in Bauchi, explained that the briquettes being produced in the Northeast would generate huge foreign exchange for the country. Bashir said, "I have been privileged to see the briquettes being packaged in cartons for export to neighbouring countries. If you are able to export it to the outside world, it would attract a lot of money, so it is a very good source of economic empowerment".

"If anyone could be opportune to export at least a load of trailer of briquettes, I'm sure such a person would start manufacturing his own", he said, and appealed to the training participants not to play with the skills they acquired during the training.

Alhaji Ibrahim Bashir explained that 30 participants were selected for the training, five from each of the six states in the North East with a view to stepping down the knowledge for others to benefit and eventually become self-reliant.

He expressed satisfaction with the commitment shown by the trainees throughout the training programme, assuring that the commission would provide them with Starter Packs to efficiently and effectively run their businesses.

The trainer of the artisans and scavengers, Engr. Saleh Yakmut who also spoke during the occasion, noted that the training has proved that the mandate of the commission has come to be directly proportional with the mandate of the people of the North Eastern sub-region.

Yakmut said, "I have done this kind of training for the past 11 to 12 years, but this is the very first time I'm seeing an overall commitment and zeal to actually not only understand the training as a business and to pick up the contents, but one beautiful thing of it is all the six states are ready to go back and have a synergy on production".

"If I'm doing stoves in Gombe and another person is doing charcoal in Borno, I can call Gombe and say send me your stoves, send me more charcoal, I don't have enough. Right now we have an order from only Borno State of 27,000 bags, and for the past six months, we have only been able to give them 8,000 bags. Each bag is 30kg and it is being sold at N5,500."

"So what North East



Mohammed

Development Commission has done now is not only empowering the participants, but even empowered us the three companies as a business to have more people in the production of the briquette". He explained that if this trend continued, it is going to eradicate poverty in totality in the Northeast sub-region", Yakmut said.

One of the trainees from Adamawa State who spoke to the press shortly after the closing ceremony, Nuruddeen Ibrahim Ahmed

said that he is contented with the training and thanked the North East Development Commission for the gesture, saying they would use the skills they acquired to fend for a living while stepping it down to others.

Another trainee from Taraba State, Esther Jonah Febuins said that they have during the training learnt the practical aspect of stove fabrication through waste processing, and promised to extend the knowledge to respective members of their communities.

UNICEF commends Toro LG health initiative

From
ABBAS GUNGURA, Bauchi

UNICEF has commended the 1000 days integrated health services for pregnant women and under two children in Toro Local Government Area of Bauchi State.

A Global UNICEF office team, led by its associate director on Immunization, Ephrem Tekle, made the commendation when the team paid a courtesy visit to Governor Bala Mohammed in Bauchi.

On the UNICEF team for the visit were Phoebe Meyer, Consultant - Immunisation Flagships, HQ, Rushnan Murtaza, Deputy Representative, Nigeria, Eduardo Celades, Chief Health and HIV/AIDS, Nigeria and Nemat Hajebooy, Chief Nutrition, Nigeria.

The associate director noted that the integrated health intervention in Toro comprehensively addressed the needs of pregnant women from pregnancy up to the survival of the child under two years.

"We are advocating for a continuation of one of your best practices that has been carried out in Toro LGA in collaboration with our UNICEF office here (in Bauchi State)," he said.

"This has been done in Toro LGA. We have seen its success and we want to appeal to you to extend it to the other LGAs so that we put this state as one of

the champions that already started it.

Tekle told the governor, "This is a testimony of your leadership. We like to spell it out on a global level and we want examples that are doing well and we are lucky to be guided by your officials and the UNICEF team here in our office who have done a wonderful job of implementing it".

According to him, "We are taking this example forward globally but it will be good if you extend it to other LGAs in the state". Adding, "The political will of the administration made the difference in the success in Toro".

"We are here to show our appreciation for a long time partnership with the state government, which has been excellent," he said.

Tekle also praised the administration for paying over N109 million as its counterpart funds and the state government's plan to disburse N160 million.

Governor Bala Mohammed has while responding, said he was delighted to welcome the UNICEF team to the state, saying the agency had over the years made tremendous impact in lives

of the people of the state, particularly women and children.

The Governor however pleaded for a stronger partnership aimed at continuous promotion of economic growth and livelihood towards reducing poverty.

According to him, the administration was facing challenges of solving problems in the critical areas of health because 40 percentage of the population is poor while under nourished children is put at a staggering 13 percent.

"We are working with the African Development Bank to provide human capital development solution to some places like Azare Machema, Dagauda to breach the gap in human capital development for health".

"The state government has approved the recruitment of 100 medical doctors to man our facilities. We have also engaged 160 medical and para medical students".

Senator Bala Mohammed called for the support of UNICEF to retain medical personnel employed by the administration.

"We trained many of them but they ran away. We have bonded them. If we build health facilities but there are no medical personnel, then it is as if we have not done anything," he lamented.

"The human capital is a huge challenge because of our lean resources. We need your support in the area of retention, area of expertise, area of welfare and what have you to regain our doctors.

The Executive Chairman of the Bauchi State Primary Health Care Development Agency (BSPHCDA), Dr. Riwanu Mohammed had earlier while introducing the UNICEF team, disclosed that the UNICEF was happy with the success recorded in Toro and was in Bauchi to understudy it with a view to replicating it in other countries of the world.

"Recently, we included the Ministry of Health in the health sector annual operation where the Ministry of Budget and planning tracks every activity and funds quarterly".

"UNICEF has been carrying out activities in education, WASH, rural water supply, environmental protection agency and the ministry of health". We have MoU partner with UNICEF. They used to give three hundred thousand dollars in our basket every year to support Bauchi".

Desist from giving titles to questionable characters

From
AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

-Ata Igala

peaceful country.

Ata Igala who relive the love and bravery of the queens of the kingdom of the old which led to the victory from the invading enemies, urged the Igala of today to imbibe that virtues and secure the land with their capacity from any invading forces of disunity in any guise.

While he emphasized on the importance of unity as a great tool of development, His Royal Majesty warned those selling ancestral or family land to caution themselves and stop such bad habit that is capable of provoking crisis, hardships and disaffection within the family set up in the nearest future.

"If your ancestral parents had put the land on sale before you were born, you would not have anything to inherit as children. Think of what your grand children would stand to inherit tomorrow, if you sell the

family land today", he said.

He therefore warned some monarchs who are into such practices to retract their steps in the interest of their unborn grand children and to avoid curses of the ancestral fathers.

The event which was observed with traditional fanfares saw to the beading of about sixteen OnuIgala for some states in the country.

Earlier, the chairman of Onuh-Igala in the country, His Royal Highness Joseph Idaikwo told His Royal Majesty that they will strive to uphold the ethics associated with Igala ethnic nationality, with their host communities to enhance the good name of the stool.

While he wished HRM a peaceful reign, he thanked him for his advice and blessings, promising to enthrone and express it in all its dealings, both in their character and with other ethnic tribe in the domains for peaceful coexistence.

Insecurity: NDA trains 106 cadets

From **ABBAS GUNGURA, Bauchi**

IN an effort to address waves of security challenges blowing across the country, the Nigerian Army has trained 106 cadet officers of the 69 Regular Course of the Nigerian Defense Academy (NDA) on mechanized operations in Bauchi.

This was made public recently by



Alkali

the Commandant, Nigerian Defense Academy (NDA), Maj.-General Ibrahim Yusuf during the closing ceremony of the training exercise held at Victor Kure Armoured Range in the state.

Major General Yusuf explained that the week-long training exercise which was tagged "Exercise Battle Crime", was to expose the cadet officers to various mechanized operations in tackling security challenges.

He stated, "This exercise here today is the final phase of mechanized operations which is the phase four of the cadets exercise".

"The objective of the exercise is to expose the cadets to mechanized operations in order to prepare them for dealing with the current security threats," Yusuf said.

He explained that the cadets would be graduating from the academy in October, 2022, adding that there were seven female officers amongst them.

The Commandant also stated that the exercise was a joint operation and a collaboration between the Armoured Corps, the Corps of Artillery as well as the Special Operations Command of the Nigerian Air Force.

Yusuf revealed that before the training, the cadets were at the Nigerian Army School of Military Engineering, Makurdi, where they participated in an assault river crossing operations across River Benue and proceeded to the Citizenship and Leadership Training Centre, Jos, Plateau State, where they went through the adventure phase of their training.

The Commandant however, commended the Chief of Army Staff (COAS), Lt.-Gen. Faruk Yahaya, for his resolve in making the training possible.

"All these couldn't have been possible without the overwhelming support from the Chief of Army Staff. All the tanks, the Artillery guns that took part in this operation were courtesy of the COAS.

"We appreciate Army Headquarters for this outstanding support and I also want to appreciate the Chief of Air Staff that has authorized the Air Force to provide close air support during this phase of the operation," he said.

The Commander, Armoured Corps, Maj.-Gen. Suleiman Idris who also spoke at the occasion, said that this is the first time that the NDA cadets would be coming to Bauchi state to have this kind of training exercise.

Idris said that due to threats and security challenges experienced in the country, the Nigerian Army felt that this kind of training was extremely necessary.

"This is because when you are giving training to cadets that are going to become officers who will be leading men to war, it is ideal to expose them to this kind of situation," he said.

Also speaking, one of the trainees, Officer Cadet Maryam Wawu, said the training was an eye opener.

According to Maryam, the training had broadened their knowledge on how effective the Nigerian Army can be in tackling insecurities, and how they could bring synergy and cooperation between the combat arms, Combat Service Support Arms and Sister Services especially the Nigerian Air Force.



Ehanire

Foreign Commentary

Afghanistan: Taliban new government, are women inclusive?

Exactly one year ago, when Joe Biden, President of the United States of America (USA), made the pronouncement that the US troops and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), would be leaving Afghan at the end of August, 2021, after fighting war with the Taliban for twenty years, Biden believed that the future of Afghanistan and Taliban is tied to political solution not military combat. He said that it is ripe for the citizens of the country to decide on what would be the best solution that would bring an end to the conflict. As the country celebrates 103 years of independence, after a long struggle from August 19, 1919 till date, the Taliban last year finally took power over from the government of Ashraf Ghani, and promised citizens that they would run an inclusive government, including the rights of Afghan women which would be protected. HOSEA NYAMLONG with Agency reports writes.



AFGHAN conflict continued to escalate within the period that Joe Biden made the pronouncement that the US troops would be leaving Afghanistan, after twenty years of war with the Taliban.

Biden had to extend the withdrawal of troops, which started in May to August, 2021. This was to follow due process to allow the Afghan government come to negotiation with the Taliban on a peaceful dialogue that the Taliban should uphold its promise not to allow al-Qaeda and other militia groups to operate in the country.

Taliban went ahead with their earlier plan to mobilise troops to seize power, by not participating in the peace deal with President Ashraf Ghani.

Before taking over of power, the Taliban had intensified their military force to capture more regions. And when US and NATO troops started leaving the country on grounds that Afghans don't need military solution, but rather a political solution which would be for the interest of the citizens.

Twenty years war in the country has not yielded any much results to the effect that the war has not come to an end as he curfew imposed by the Afghan government in major cities, to restrict movement of citizens and to monitor, stop the activities of the Taliban continues to gain more grounds day by day.

Talibans took the advantage of the failure of Afghan government for not deploying military personnel to most of the rural areas to maintain peace, protection of lives and property of citizens.

Similarly, the Afghan citizens were not happy with Biden's decision to withdraw his troops in Afghanistan by the end of August, 2021. They felt that the presence of US military personnel was a cover to them and they were not sure that Taliban would give them the assurance of protecting their lives and property.

On this note, President Ashraf Ghani left Afghanistan in order to avoid any bloodshed of innocent lives, which to him was more important than the power.

Immediately after Taliban took power from the former government of Ashraf Ghani, the Taliban spokesman, Zabiullah Mujahid made the first broadcast on August 17, 2021 with the assurance that they were going to run an inclusive government and promised to respect the rights of the Afghan citizens, including women.

Mujahid said that Taliban government framework of Sharia law would allow women to work and access education, as long they wear hijab within the public space.

"The judicial system would operate within the laws of Sharia law. Freedom of media would be tolerated with limit and courts would decide on punishments

like execution and stoning of offenders, etc".

"We're working to establish an inclusive government that represents all the people of Afghanistan," promised Taliban leader, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar when he recently arrived in Kabul to start talks aimed at forming a leadership to move the movement from guns to government."

"We would like to live peacefully," vowed Taliban government at the first press conference in the capital after the Taliban suddenly swept into power on August 15, 2021.

"We don't want any internal enemies and any external enemies."

In addition, the Taliban government declared an amnesty to offenders and asked citizens to go about their legal duties and assured citizens of a peaceful transition of government.

Seven months after, March 23, 2022, the fate of Afghan women went into oblivion, especially the girl, child were not allowed to continue with their school education. They were sent back home pending the final decision of the government. The irony still remains that Afghan boys are allowed to go to school, while the girls are not allowed to school.

The big question remains that, what would the future hold for the Afghan women? Following the successive restrictions imposed by the ruling government to close female

secondary schools.

Afghan women are disappointed with the Taliban system of government and they are demanding for their rights as citizens of the country.

Despite making promises to provide women with equal rights in education, jobs and other sectors, the Taliban led government is planning to make Afghan women as second-class citizens, according to multiple reports.

In Afghanistan, second-class citizenship for women means that they would not enjoy all the rights that a man would. According to media reports published in different news outlets, Afghan women would be under unabated suppression in their own country in the name of their "monopolised version of Islam", which would take away women's rights and freedom in Afghanistan.

For this purpose, Afghan women protest against Taliban's anti-education policy in Kabul, capital of Afghanistan against its decision to ban female students from attending educational institutions.

Expressing their displeasure a group of women staged a protest demanding for reopening of female schools that were closed by the Taliban led government.

They added that there is no legal, religious, political and social justification to ban women from acquiring any form of education in the country.

Coupled with the ban, every

day is a struggle for the Afghan women to survive, especially the displaced women and children. No food and medication for sick persons.

Millions of Afghan families across Afghanistan are facing hunger and poverty as the country's economic and humanitarian crisis deepen.

Today, Taliban government has difficulty in raising enough money and food to meet up with its population. The country has substantial mineral resources of petroleum, coal and gas.

To this end, what would be the fate of Afghan citizens, especially the women, as the country is set to celebrate its independence day in August 19, 2022?

Last year the new government celebrated independence in the midst of chaotic situation after the Taliban's had taken control of the country. While protesters hosted flags of their country, the Taliban were against hosting the Afghan flags during the celebration.

What the citizens want from the Taliban government is for them to fulfil their promise made to the citizens that they would run an inclusive government and guarantee the protection of lives and property.

Education is key, Afghanistan girls are hungry for knowledge. They should not be deprived from acquiring knowledge. And they have the equal right, because they are humans and citizens of Afghanistan.

Foreign News

Kenyan group says projections tally with official results

AN independent observer group has said the results of Kenya's August 9 presidential election as announced by the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC), are in line with its own projections.

At a news conference on Tuesday morning in Nairobi, the capital, the Elections Observation Group (ELOG) said it received data from over 5,000 observers deployed across 290 constituencies in the country's 47 counties.

"Of these, 1000 Parallel Vote Tabulation (PVT) observers were carefully recruited, specially trained and deployed to a nationally representative random sample of polling stations," Anne Ireri, the group's chairperson said.

"ELOG's PVT estimates are consistent with IEBC's official results for the 2022 presidential elections," she added. "In light of our assessment of the Election Day processes and given that IEBC figures fall within the projected ranges, the PVT projections, therefore, corroborate the official results."

The August 9 elections were neck to neck with Deputy President William Ruto just ahead of former Prime Minister Raila Odinga in results announced by IEBC chairperson Wafu Chebukati late on Monday, August 15.

The group's projection gave William Ruto 50.7 percent to the IEBC's 50.49 percent with a margin of error of +/-2.1 percent; for Raila Odinga, it was 48.7 percent for the IEBC's 48.85

percent with a margin of error of +/-2.1 percent.

Projections for the two other candidates George Wajackoyah and David Mwaure were 0.44 percent and 0.23 percent respectively, compared with the IEBC's 0.5 percent and 0.2 percent.

ELOG is a coalition of more than a dozen organisations including the Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA), the Institute for Education in Democracy (IED) think-tank and the influential National Council of Churches in Kenya, an umbrella body for Protestant organisations in the country.

At the news conference, ELOG also said it noted improvements in the voting mechanism and transfer of results but that "administrative and external problems persisted such as postponement of some elections" in some areas.

There was controversy

before the announcement of the results on Monday, with four of the IEBC's seven electoral commissioners leaving the national tallying centre to stage a news conference in another part of Nairobi.

Led by its vice chairwoman Juliana Cherera, the quartet said they could not support the "opaque nature" of the final phase. "We cannot take ownership of the result that is going to be announced," she said, giving no other details.

In response, ELOG said it was also waiting for more details as promised by the commissioners, but was certain its scientific methodology was in order.

"We had ours two days before [IEBC announcement]," Reverend Elias Agola, a representative of the nonprofit Legal Resources Foundation, another ELOG member.



Ruto

PM hopefuls pledge to confront Beijing if elected

THE ill-tempered leadership election to determine the United Kingdom's next prime minister has seen Rishi Sunak and Liz Truss clash on a range of issues, from how to fix the country's ailing economy to each other's political records.

But on one issue, the Conservative Party hopefuls appear to be in harmony – the need to confront what they say is the rising geopolitical threat posed by China.

Both have promised to take strong action against Beijing should they succeed outgoing leader Boris Johnson, with each vying to adopt the toughest line on how best to restrain its burgeoning international influence.

Their stance, analysts said, suggests the "golden era" for Sino-British ties heralded by UK politicians less than 10 years ago has finally drawn to a close after increasing friction in recent years over the fate of Hong Kong, [espionage](#), cybersecurity and human rights concerns, among other issues.

"The fact that both Sunak and Truss have tried to do

their best to look as hardline towards China as possible is a sign of the direction travel, regardless of which of them becomes prime minister," Rana Mitter, a professor of the history and politics of modern China at Oxford University, told Al Jazeera.

"It would appear that the security element is probably going to be stressed more under Sunak or Truss and that the trade element is probably going to be downplayed," he said.

China is the UK's third largest trade partner, accounting for nearly seven percent of the country's global commerce.

That is up sharply from the figure of 58 billion pounds (\$70bn) recorded in 2015, when former Conservative Prime Minister David Cameron and his then-Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne pushed to build stronger ties with Beijing, saying the UK would be China's "best partner in the West".

However, despite an uptick in trade, the "golden era" in relations predicted by the pair at the time has failed to materialise.

Instead, successive Conservative Party governments have clashed

with China amid concerns over Beijing's tightening of its grip on the former British colony Hong Kong as well as alleged cyberattacks on an array of international targets and human rights abuses against the minority Uighur group.

More recently, London has also taken issue with the Chinese government's outwardly sympathetic approach to Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine and military posturing around Taiwan.

Mitter said ties had reached something of a "median point" under Johnson's leadership, during which London moved to ramp up its security related to Beijing, but also attempted to promote trade links with China as it ushered the UK into a post-Brexit era.

"But I think we are moving into an era where the relationship between almost all Western countries, including the UK, and China are going to become chillier," he added.

The two candidates in the running to succeed Johnson have indicated that will be the case under their watch.

Sunak, the outgoing prime minister's former chancellor, has warned China and its ruling Communist Party leaders now

THE United States Justice Department has opposed efforts by media organisations to unseal the affidavit that backed the search warrant for former President Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago home, saying the document contains sensitive material.

In a court filing, prosecutors said that they will not oppose the release of other sealed documents tied to the recent search of Trump's Florida estate, such as cover sheets and the government's motion to seal.

But releasing the affidavit itself could harm the ongoing investigation, the department said.

"If disclosed, the affidavit would serve as a roadmap to the government's ongoing investigation, providing specific details about its direction and likely course, in a manner that is highly likely to compromise future investigative steps," prosecutors wrote in their filing.

The government's opposition came in response to court filings by several news organisations, including The Associated Press news agency, seeking to unseal the underlying affidavit the Justice Department submitted when it asked for the warrant to search Trump's estate earlier this month.

Trump's Republican allies in recent days have ramped up their calls for Attorney General Merrick Garland to unseal the document.

It would reveal the evidence that prosecutors showed to demonstrate they had probable cause to believe crimes were committed at Trump's home the standard they had to meet to secure the search warrant.

A property receipt unsealed on Friday showed the FBI seized 11 sets of classified documents from Mar-a-Lago, with some marked not only top secret but also "sensitive compartmented information", a special category

US Justice opposes Trump search affidavit



Trump

meant to protect the nation's most important secrets that if revealed publicly could cause "exceptionally grave" damage to US interests.

The court records did not provide specific details about information the documents might contain.

The search warrant, also unsealed on Friday, said federal agents were investigating potential violations of three different federal laws, including one that governs gathering, transmitting or losing defence information under the Espionage Act.

Deposed Aung Suu Kyi convicted

A court in Myanmar has convicted deposed leader Aung San Suu Kyi on charges of corruption, adding six years to her prison sentence, according to a legal official.

She had already been sentenced to 11 years in prison on sedition, corruption and other charges at earlier trials after the military detained her in February 2021 as it seized power from her elected government in a February 2021 coup.

Aung San Suu Kyi, 77, was convicted of misusing funds from the Daw Khin Kyi Foundation – an organisation she founded promoting health and education – to build a home, and leasing government-owned land at a discounted rate.

The trial was held behind closed doors, with no access for media or the public. Her lawyers have been ordered not to speak about the proceedings.

In the four corruption cases decided on Monday, Aung San Suu Kyi was alleged to have abused her position to rent public land at below-market prices and to have built a residence with donations meant for charitable purposes.

She received sentences of three years for each of the four counts but the sentences for three of them will be served concurrently, giving her a total of six more years in prison.

Aung San Suu Kyi denied all the charges and her lawyers are expected to appeal.

Zin Mar Aung, the foreign minister for Myanmar's National Unity Government, set up by the politicians ousted in the coup, said the decision was "yet another act of (the) junta's desperate attempts to discredit those democratically elected" and called for Aung San Suu

Kyi's release. The condemnation was echoed elsewhere with the European Union's top diplomat Josep Borrell calling for the release of all political prisoners and urging the coup leaders to "respect the will of the people".

Analysts say the numerous charges against Aung San Suu Kyi and her allies are part of the military's attempt to legitimise its power grab and remove the hugely popular politician from politics ahead of an election it has said it will hold next year.

Aung San Suu Kyi and her co-defendants are expected to file appeals in the coming days, said the legal official, who asked not to be identified because he was not authorised to release information and he feared punishment by the authorities.

Other top officials from Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy party and her government have also been arrested and imprisoned, and the authorities have suggested they might dissolve the party before the next election.

Malaysia's Foreign Minister Saifuddin Abdullah, who has been pressing the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to take a firmer line on Myanmar, which is a member of the 10-member group, also condemned the latest jail term.

"The additional sentencing of Aung San Suu Kyi and the recent execution of four democracy activists proved that the junta repeatedly disregarded calls by ASEAN leaders for concrete and inclusive dialogue for national reconciliation in Myanmar and to fulfil the ASEAN 5PC," he wrote on Twitter, in reference to the Five Point Consensus to end the crisis that the military agreed to shortly after the coup.

Feature

Now that governor Lalong has apologized

The Social Media space is a harbinger of sorts. It is a double edged sword likened to the sword of Damocles, depending on the issues at stake and depending on the mind deploying it. Mindset here is key. DAN MANJANG writes.

PROGRESSIVES mindsets deploy it to build but retrogressive minds find it a fertile ground to promote their stock in trade: falsehood, misrepresentation and above all, hatred, which as they believe, amounts to heroism. Our values and attitudes have since been lost while deploying the use of the social media space.

Just recently, pundits took a swipe on His Excellency, the Rt. Hon. (Dr.) Simon Bako Lalong, a Papal Knight of Saint Gregory the Great (KSGG) and by the grace of God, the indefatigable Chairman, Northern Governor's Forum and recently, Director General, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu/Kashim Shettima Presidential Campaign Team.

What was his sin? He accepted to head this Campaign Team against the wide uproar and resistance of the composition of the Tinubu/Shettima combination as President and Vice President was a widely perceived as a deliberate attempt to shortchange Christians and Christianity thereby relegating it (Christianity) in the political life of the nation.

Although the rejection, criticism, fear, apprehension, anxiety, commendation and hullabaloo that greeted the Muslim Muslim ticket is quite understandable going by the current state of the nation and the various attacks that have been visited on Christians by some criminals under the guise of religion, the matter has definitely been grabbed by people who are either not in APC nor sympathetic to it.

Even within the APC, Champions of Christians who worked for the emergence of Tinubu (knowing fully that he was a Muslim) as Presidential candidate against their fellow Christians including Pastors who also sought to be President, suddenly woke up from



their slumber to be heroes of Christianity organizing groups to kick against the seed they had planted, due to their selfish reasons.

It was in a bid to explain how he (Governor Lalong) emerged as Director General of Tinubu/Shettima Campaign Team and his acceptance that generated so much heat calling for his head, likened to the Barabas of yore.

Explanations and counter explanations were advanced by the Governor himself, aides and people that meant well to no avail, the peak of which culminated in a strongly worded letter addressed to the Governor and signed by Rt. Hon. Dame Dr Esther Uduehi, National President, Association of Papal Knights and Medalists in Nigeria (APKMN).

Governor Simon Bako Lalong

having realised that his innocent reference to the Holy Father has angered many Catholics decided to step back and reengage.

In his character, tendered and personally signed a letter of unreserved apology addressed to Archbishop Luclus Iwejuru UGORJI, Archbishop of Owerri and President, Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria, dated 12th August, 2022. That apology was widely circulated in the social media and is still trending.

Let me put it on record that this is not the first time that Governor Lalong has swallowed his words. This is the greatest mark of servant leadership and a great source of strength. Well done our leader.

There are great lessons to be learnt from your humble disposition.

Now that the Governor has tendered an unreserved apology I hereby submit as follows:

That pundits should temper justice with mercy by burying this matter and let us move forward.

That in brotherly love, the Association of Papal Knights and Medalists in Nigeria should find a place in their hearts to forgive the Governor as it is often said to err

is human and to forgive is divine.

That the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria will wade into the matter both in Nigeria and in the Vatican.

That the entire body of Christ will see in Governor Lalong an uncommon leader and see in him a rallying point by constantly praying for him in his new assignment for the benefit of humanity and to the glory of God as ALL leadership is ordained by God, Romans 13:1-2.

Besides, the decisions by Nigerians to choose their leaders from the array of candidates and political parties is one that every eligible voter will make without intimidation or pressure. If some Christians think that Governor Lalong is wrong for accepting this role in a party he belongs and has done so much to build, the best they can do is to pray for him and allow God and posterity to judge him since he has conviction that his political decisions do not amount to sin against anyone or his creator.

Dan Manjang, anipr is the Honourable Commissioner of Information and Communication, Plateau State.

Governor Simon Bako Lalong having realised that his innocent reference to the Holy Father has angered many Catholics decided to step back and re-engage. In his character, tendered and personally signed a letter of unreserved apology addressed to Archbishop Luclus Iwejuru UGORJI, Archbishop of Owerri and President, Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria, dated 12th August, 2022. That apology was widely circulated in the social media and is still trending..

EYE'S WORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Living

Keep yourself warm this season

THE year is characterized by change in weather, one of which is the rainy season. The rains this year is different due to the cold weather. People dread the thought of leaving their warm beds and going out due to the cold. The Cold associated with the rainy season this year is common in most places but a bit severe in some. For those who find it difficult to put up with the cold, the city of Jos has become so unfavourable for them.

Interestingly, many people prefer the cold than the hot weather. They believe that a jacket can protect you from the cold but when the weather is hot, nothing works even if you sleep with your windows open. For those who detest the cold, wearing a jacket under the heat of the sun is not funny at all in addition to the many side effects the cold could have on health.

A simple cough and a runny nose could be frustrating especially if it gets to the level where food becomes tasteless in your mouth. For those who are already having respiratory challenges, the cold situation now could worsen the situation. Staying outside during the cold especially when using a motorcycle could cause wet, itchy and discoloration of the eyes. The season demands that we give more attention to our skins by applying moisturisers that keep the skin soft and warm. Some people can not scale through this period without having cracked or broken lips due to the effect of the cold. So it's only safe that we use a cream with high moisturizing capacity and



always have a lip gloss handy.

For some people, a little exposure to cold causes body aches or joint pains and for arthritis patients their condition gets worsened and so they prefer to stay indoors. Just as the cold stiffens our hands and feet and we become sluggish or

relent in doing our chores, the blood seems to equally become sluggish in its circulation which could lead to a heart attack for those dealing with high blood pressure issues.

However, the cold will not delay when it's time comes simply because we prefer hot weather, it is important then to take precautionary steps in order to stay healthy this



period. It is common for people to develop pneumonia at this time so we should learn to wear protective clothes before going out and even when we are at home. Children will have to be kept warm despite being on holidays. Regardless of how severe the cold may be we must ensure they are kept warm both outside and indoors.

To stay afloat, one needs to go out daily and work but when you have nothing significant doing outside then return to the house because prevention is far better and cheaper than cure. The outbreak of the pandemic (covid 19) has made us wear face masks even against our wish but a face mask does more than just protecting us from the virus, it controls the intake of air through the nostrils and in this period when we are experiencing cold air face mask will be useful in protecting us from cough, runny nose and other respiratory problems. Whether wearing a

mask or not we must avoid staying out in a cold environment.

During the day when the cold seems to take a break, one could be tempted to have a bottle of cold drink but it is a trap, if you must take something cold then wait for the hot season. It is safer to take hot drinks this period.

A little break from fashion will not kill. A sick man can not be moved by what is trendy therefore, our hairstyles matters a lot this season both as men and women. When you go to the barber, make sure that every strand is not taken from your head so a low cut is perfect. If your head is cold it can easily transfer and get to the body. You can use this period to plan your hairstyles for the approaching season meanwhile try to avoid hairstyles that expose your scalp in order to keep the head warm. Whether we like the weather or not we need to stay healthy every day.

THEY'RE SOWING WORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Living

The secrets of contentment

TOO many women are so focused on what they have not yet accomplished or become, that they suffer and devalue their present. To feel fulfilled is a choice.

What are the secrets of true fulfillment for women in the 21st century? By fulfillment, I mean contentment -- being at peace with your life choices and how you have expressed yourself in the world.

In this age of fascination with celebrities and the acquisition of great wealth, too many women tell me that they feel unfulfilled or like a failure if they are not famous or multi-millionaires, even though their lives are gems filled with creativity, love, and purpose.

Fulfillment has a quality of completion or being finished about it. Yet, women who are truly fulfilled keep growing and tackling new challenges, and often complain of not having enough time to "finish" or even start all their dreams. True fulfillment is learning to balance the paradox of feeling content and complete today, while simultaneously aspiring for advancement in our personal, professional, and spiritual realms.

Too many women, are so focused on what they have not yet accomplished or become, that they suffer and devalue themselves

To feel fulfilled is a choice. Women who sparkle with a sense of fulfillment adhere to another set of guiding principles than do women who feel like victims, or martyrs, or



dis-empowered. Despite our gains in the "outer world," women still struggle internally with a lack of self-confidence, which research has shown to be the key component of happiness. One of my missions as a writer and a coach is to help women feel complete and rejoice in what they have created in their lives. I guide women to embrace new challenges, scale higher heights, and raise the bar of excellence,

possibility, and prosperity. But that all begins with their ability to appreciate where they are today in their life journey. Before we can move on, we must embrace the truth of where we are in our individual process now.

Each of us has a unique destiny and a particular path to fulfillment to discover. Women who feel loving toward themselves can more comfortably take the risks required to become their true and authentic self. It's time to blow up the confining patriarchal and outmoded definitions of "success for women" and evolve into a society of women that celebrates freedom, balanced living, strong values that reflect our feminine power, and validation for our spirit. As women, we are surrounded by pressure, criticism, judgments, and condemnation for our choices.

No wonder we feel the self-loathing that is projected upon us by a culture that is driven by advertising, corporate profits, workaholicism, and old stereotypes of beauty and feminine roles. We need a salve for the disease of self-loathing and tools for self-acceptance and action.

One of the secrets to contentment is to be able to enjoy the journey by celebrating the milestones along the trip.

Creativity is a dance between yourself and a medium, like oil paint, or a calling, or a social

cause. The ability to feel fulfilled and content with our lives is vital to the health of our mind, body, and spirit. Negative stress, such as feeling dissatisfied with our life choices, undermines our sense of well-being and our conviction to keep moving forward.

A second secret is to stop comparing ourselves to others, which is dangerous game. Yet women are notorious for focusing on their "lacks." Highly fulfilled women have mastered immunity to all the hype and filter out such toxic mind-control. I want women to stop inflicting pain upon themselves for who they are not. I want women to remember to cherish and live their own life-not someone else's.

Women must master the trick of letting go of other people's expectations for them. Women need to feel free to express themselves, not strive to look like the woman on the cover of Cosmo or feel devastated that they missed the Internet boom and their opportunity to purchase stock worth millions.

A third secret is to know what you truly want. Start by answering the following questions:

- 1) What is your definition of fulfillment? Do you feel fulfilled now?
- 2) What are your guiding principles or spiritual beliefs that help you to feel fulfilled and in charge of your life?
- 3) What are you most grateful for in your life?
- 4) What life lessons have been most powerful for you?
- 5) How do you deal with adversity or regrets?
- 6) How do you maintain your contentment as you strive for more?

Let your answers be a starting place for today and your future. You deserve to feel complete and triumphant about your life right now.

Fulfillment begins with making peace with reality. To feel fulfilled, we must choose who we are as raw material. Notice how you are blessed in spite of your limits. If you focus on your gifts, you move forward.

Fulfilled women feel much more in charge of their lives as they chose their own pathway.

They write down goals and are continually redesigning their lives to reflect their creativity and ambitions.

They know what is in their heart and feel motivated by their passions, whether it's for parenting, partnering, or painting. Instead of just complaining or talking about doing "it," they actually do "it."

They know if they chicken out on life, their life, they will feel cheated and unhappy. If they don't know for sure what's best for them, they experiment. Experimentation is how we get to the truth.

It gives us practice and clarity. By celebrating fulfillment in a myriad of moments each day, we live with gratitude and reverence. That is the true experience of fulfillment.



Editorial

Please, halt crude theft

IT has been reported that Nigeria loses about \$1.9 billion monthly to crude oil theft. If this is left unchecked, it would endanger the economy of the nation. This was stated by the CEO of NNPC limited Mallam Mele Kyari, when the federal government delegation for anti-oil theft led by Minister of State for Petroleum Resources, Chief Timipre Sylva visited Delta and Imo States. He lamented the loss of 400,000 barrels of crude daily to crude oil theft saying it was responsible for Nigeria's inability to meet daily production quota of 1.8m barrels per day sanctioned by OPEC.

WITH the on-going Ukrainian – Russian war, it is expected that Nigeria should have taken this opportunity to increase and boost its revenue by meeting the present challenges since it depends largely on oil revenue to improve the economy of the nation.

SADLY Nigeria's inability to meet its daily production target is denying Nigerians of the necessary benefits accruing from the quota that has been approved by OPEC and other revenues accruable from crude sales. This huge economic loss is capable of crippling the nation's economy if not given due attention.

WHILE it is startling for a nation to be swindled by its own citizens, it still remains a riddle that must be cracked in order to entrench transparency in the oil sector. It thus becomes compelling to look inwards and find ways of curbing the theft. Could there be high level conspiracy by some top government functionaries or, are our politicians double speaking and allowing the pilfering of our commonwealth to continue or are they being complicit?

IT will be difficult not to point accusing fingers at the government, security agents, host communities and highly influential citizens for the stealing of our crude. This, surely, is an organized crime that is well planned and carried out by official and wealthy people who have the wherewithal to break pipelines, load, ship and sell off crude oil at high sea.

PIPELINES are located in areas known by the oil companies and NNPC which pass through different communities within states that produce or benefit from oil derivation revenue. And to strengthen security the oil companies have contracted or hired security personnel to watch over these pipelines to prevent vandalism or theft using technology at the central control rooms. In spite of all these, pipes are broken or opened up at will to allow for pilferation without being found out.

IT takes the collaboration of security operatives, members of host communities who are in cohort with oil merchants, and highly placed Nigerians in government to organize these theft.

WE totally condemn this act and call on government to rise to the occasion by sanctioning whoever is involved in stealing crude from our shores. We advise that MDAs responsible for handling sensitive documents for certification should fish out staff involved in this dastardly act and punish them.

ALASO, government functionaries and National Assembly members involved in this cartel should be identified and prosecuted so that it deters others from engaging in same. Government has what it takes to curb oil theft but it must show commitment in tackling the situation and not treat it with kids' gloves.

EDUCATION can be defined as the field of study that is concerned with the pedagogy of teaching and training. Other definition include the process of training and developing the knowledge, skill, mind, and character of an individual. In a nutshell, education is the process of gaining knowledge.

In recent times, education has been faced with diverse challenges, ranging from insecurity, cultism, bullying, lesbianism, gayism, and a host of others. This has greatly retarded the wheel of progress and thrown the sector into a state of comatose and disarray. Parents, guardians and care givers are in a state of dilemma as to what to do next. With huge resources budgeted for the education, sector, the downward spiral has remain unabated, with the sector begging for rapt and urgent attention.

Covid-19 is also a contributory factor contributing to the nose diving standard of education in Nigeria. In the year 2020, schools were shut down for almost a year in a bid to contain the surge of the dreaded Corona virus pandemic. Resources in the hands of parents are quite lean, forcing them to withdraw their wards from schools, to new ones with a lesser school fees. The challenge on the part of parents is quite enormous with little options at their disposal, they struggle to make ends meet with ever increasing school fees and other basic amenities in the market, and this has become apt in other to avert imminent collapse of the education sector.

Discipline has been eroded in our institutions of learning as parents are ever ready to go and fight teachers and school administrators, in view of that, school management is likewise reluctant to instill discipline in this wards so as to avoid confrontation. Obviously, there is a trust deficit on the part of the parents and the school management. This has linger for so long which if not properly addressed, it can lead to the burial of education in Nigeria.

Furthermore, students on their part challenge teachers and school authorities any time the rod is used. Some even come to school with dangerous weapons to challenge their teachers. A similar case was reported in a state in Nigeria, where a

female student brought a gun to school to shoot a teacher that flogged her. This dangerous trend is taking different dimensions that might possibly escalate if not properly tamed.

Moreso, the teachers become the albatross of some of this students' they engage in illicit affairs with this minors and naïve set of students, taking advantage of their exuberance, which has led to teachers impregnating students and

Education and its dwindling fortune in Nigeria

students impregnating their female teachers. This dirty and displayable act takes place in the education sector. What then is the future of education in our country?

Looking at the recent case at Downen College in Lagos, it leaves much to be desired, cultism among high school students, increasing rate of truancy and bullying have become a source of wrong. A lot of parents will be discourage to adopt the boarding facility of schooling because it led to the death of the boy in question.

In addition, lesbianism and gayism is on the increase in boarding houses, translating into monsters that will become albatross of others. This definitely negate the morality instill in them by their parents and wards. A lot needs to be done urgently.

Government, through the affected agencies need to draft laws that will restore



the trust deficit currently been experienced among school administrators and parents. Parents needs to know that their children are in safe hands and not teachers praying on the students like the recent case reported in Kano State where a 5 year old Hanifa was murdered and buried in a shallow grave. It is a matter of national public importance to arrest the degrading and deplorable situation.

Charity begins at home so, parents need to start the discipline from home before handing their wards to the school management, if both parties are playing their part concurrently, frictions will be greatly averted. Parents must inculcate the right values into their children.

Government must provide a secured environment that will be conducive for learning. Without security,

little will be adhered. In the world today, Nigeria has the highest out of school children with over 10 million students roaming the street or in IDP camps, wasting away. Security is paramount if we must stem the tide and change the narrative. Nothing can be achieved without proper security.

Deliberate efforts must be put in place to achieve the desired goal, students must be thought skills that will support the knowledge they are acquiring in school. Certificate is given in character and in learning. The students must be molded both in character and in learning. By so doing, generations unborn will benefit from this laudable step.

By Ajang Ajiji John, Rikkos, Jos.

Insecurity and delay in response to attacks

IT is obvious that the most unfortunate stories that Nigerians often go to sleep and wake up with on daily basis are these unprovoked attacks that are being unleashed on innocent Nigerians without any reason.

These heinous and senseless attacks often meted on our people are always observed as a well calculated plan before carrying out the attacks.

More offending than not, it always lead to loss of lives and destruction of property.

Infact, what sometimes baffles some of us is the issue of non arrest of perpetrators by our security outfits. Indeed, some of the things that always give some of us concern is the fact that the assailants cannot disappear

into the air. This, however, has clearly shown that Nigeria's security are suppose to be trained more on tracking offenders for effective arrest of any gang or terrorist attack.

Again, why the arrest of those criminals who have become heartless in their human thinking is sometimes difficult can be attributed to the security's delay in prompt response to any distress call connected to such attacks.

It is also unfortunate that our security sometimes end up arresting people who know nothing about the attacks, especially those within some of the attacked communities.

It doesn't make any sense for security to arrest

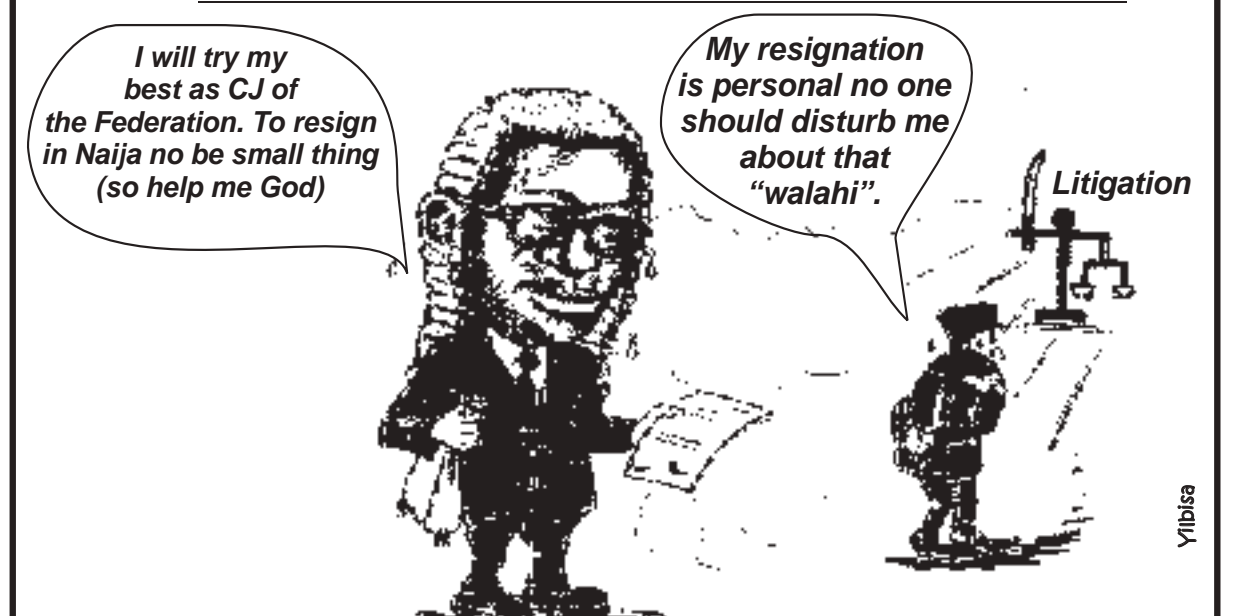
innocent people under attack. The question is: how can a family member who is counting the loss of his beloved and has suffered destruction of property during an attack be arrested?

When the real perpetrators are not always arrested so as to make them face the full wrath of the law of the land to serve as deterrents to others, cases of criminality instead of reducing would be increasing in number. It is a minus for everyone if they attack and go back freely into their respective homes. When we don't call a spate we shall never get it right.

JIDAUNA DARING.

Standard Cartoon

NEW CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE FEDERATION SWORN IN



Ylibisa

Opinion

Success is a state of mind

By FATAI IBRAHIM

DOCTOR Joyce Brothers. The above illuminating quote of this versatile and prolific American great thinker and scholar Dr. Joyce Brothers' succinctly captures the unique personality of Distinguished Senator Ike Ikeremadu, a lawyer, a great parliamentarian and politician, whose vision is geared towards service to humanity and the common good of all Nigerians. In line with the postulations of late Mother Theresa who asserts "There is no greater service like the service to humanity" Interestingly, Norman Vincent Peale went further to adumbrate "people become really quite remarkable, when they start thinking they can do things, when they believe in themselves, they have the first secret of success "Distinguished Senator Ike Ikeremadu who believes in the immortal words of former British Prime Minister Winston Churchills who said " The

glory of the future is better than the history of yesterday" he is a man of the future, who looks into the future with great expectations hails from Amachara Mpu in Aminri local government area of Enugu State.

A Distinguished member of the Nigerian Senate from 2003 to date, a member of the People's Democratic party and he serve with distinction as Deputy President of the Nigerian Senate for three Consecutive (6th, 7th and 8 Senate without blemished, and his intellectual prowess and sagacity was brought to bear in making sound laws for the common good of all Nigerians, inline with the Latin maxim Salus populi suprema ex-lex. meaning - The good of the people is the

supreme law. Distinguished Senator Ike Ikeremadu's Political sojourn started in 1997, when he was appointed The Executive Chairman of Aninri local government Council of Enugu State under the auspices of the then United Nigeria Congress Party (UNCP) and to the glory of God as a man of faith won the best Council Chairman of the Year (1997) and later became the Chief of Staff to the then Governor of Enugu State in 1999 until 2001.

He subsequently had a stint as the Secretary of Enugu State Government up till 2002. Distinguished Senator Ike Ikeremadu an intellectual giant and Colossus, his an indefatigable Scholar who believes in Education as a tool for societal development as enuciated by Foremost South

African President late Dr. Rohilala Mandela when he Mandela asserted at the University of Witwatersrand in South Africa in 2003 " Education is the greatest weapon we can use to change the World" Hence, Distinguished Senator Ike Ikeremadu holds both Bachelor's and Master degree in law from the prestigious University of Nigeria, and was called to the Nigerian Bar in 1987, crowning it with Doctor of Philosophy degree in law from the University of Abuja, Nigeria .As in the immortal words of the first indigenous lawyer in Nigeria Sapara Williams who once said " A legal Practitioner lives for the direction and welfare of his people as well as advancing the cause of his country" In this regards, Distinguished Senator Ike Ikeremadu's dexterity in law making and intellectual acuity was recognized at the regional level with his appointment in 2009, to the lead the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) ad hoc committee working for the return of constitutional order in the Niger Republic as well as elected first Deputy Speaker of the ECOWAS Parliament and emerged the Speaker of the regional parliament in August 2011.

Distinguished Senator Ike Ikeremadu is a responsible family

man, CFR, Knight of the Good Shepherd, and holds the traditional title of Nkeoha Ndigbo.

His passion and commitment to strict observance of rule of law and Constitutionalism is legendary. His love for the promotion of national unity and integration is a feat, he is known for by every Nigerian that comes across him. His simplicity and knack for Excellence are virtue he is respected for, couple with his open door policy.

Urging Distinguished Senator Ike Ikeremadu to continue to have solace in the words of Sidney Brewer who once said " No tyranny of Circumstances that can permanently imprison a determined mind, because where there is a will, there must always be a way"... Victory assured!

In finality as 2023 Guber and other elections gathers momentum. Distinguished Senator Ike Ikeremadu should listen to the voice of reason by making himself available come 2023 for the exalted position of Enugu State Governor in order to bring the desire accelerated Transformation of Enugu State, his wealth of experience as a great Parliamentarian, Community leader, mainstream Politician, regional leader all these qualities combined together will help in steering the affairs of Enugu State to the eldorado.

Ibrahim can be reach on fataiib5@gmail.com.

"There is no greater service like the service to humanity" Interestingly, Norman Vincent Peale went further to adumbrate "people become really quite remarkable, when they start thinking they can do things, when they believe in themselves, they have the first secret of success "Distinguished Senator Ike Ikeremadu who believes in the immortal words of former British Prime Minister Winston Churchills who said "

WE witness everyday how a girl child is abused on a daily basis, some as a result of tradition, exposure to the environment. Girls are been discriminated because of their gender and their achievement are not considered as priority in the society over the years the government, non_govermental organization and individuals have heard the plight of a girl child and are taking action over this physical, mental and sexual abuse. There is reduction of child marriage and society has started seeing the importance of education for a girl child because awareness have been created.

But the boy child has been neglected in the name of freedom because the boy is seen as a stronger vessels especially in African homes, men are to bear pain and are not expected to show any sign of weakness even at the point of great discomfort. So often the attention is less on the boy child but they expect the boy child to become a perfect man. In some families girls are not allowed to go outside the house for errands because of what might happen to them, so the boy is been sent for errands because there is this perception that boys can not be victim of rape or will not be noticed by the "bad guys" .But male children are suffering from sexual abuse and it has end up with a trauma, depression, suicidal thoughts and drug abuse especially those without parental supervision and most times they don't understand that they have been sexual abused. These issues are hardly talked about because of the conception that a male child is supposed to be strong. The society has already constructed this notions in our heads today. Most times we say things like " stop behaving like a girl or stop shedding tears or Area you a girl? or you are the man of the house you are supposed to be strong for your family" And this leave them with Shame and stigma. men in our society should be allowed to grief and heal, shed tears make mistake , talk about their problems too.

The 2014 report of violence against children survey showed that 25 percent of female and 11 of male experienced sexual

Neglect the boy child

By TEBRIMAM SIKA

violence in childhood and also the National Crime Records Bureau Statistics for 2018 recorded 21,605 child rapes, out of it which 204 were of boys. Unicef in it's 2015 report also stated that one in four girls and one in ten boys experienced sexual abuse. We see that a male child is also a victim of rape in our society today.

A boy-child and girl-child should be treated equally when it comes to upbringing in our homes today it is not freedom, I see it as Neglect. Girls are given more attention than the boys because possess unique traits and characteristics which make them not only women but also a support system in the family to the men.

Boys are imitators compare to girls, they imitate any thing they see whether good or bad that is why most a times we say " Boys are very rough" because of how the play , Act and do things. Whenever children watch or listen to things on the radio or television, they imitate the characters they see especially the boys most a times we hear things like I want to be like spider Man or I want to learn how to fly like Batman and. we see them practice things at home or school And this reflect in their lives.

"In some instances were a boy and a girl are in school they needs of the girl is taken care of more than the Boy because the parents don't want a situation were the girl will start sleeping around to get money to cater for her needs so she gets more money from her parents but boy is been neglected because he can not go sleeping around. This boy can indulge himself in cult, drug abuse, Robbery so that he can cater for his needs And that is why we have many cases of ritulaism in Nigeria " blood money " And most atimes is the male children that are involved."

ANONYMOUS I remember when I started smoking 15 years Now I'm 21 and I have been smoking for about 6 years now. Me and peers back then whenever we are going back home from school we usually follow the short cut so that we can get home on time. We usually see some group of people smoking and we imitate them for fun, we would roll papers so that it looks like a cigarette and we act as if we were smoking. From using papers, we started using the left over of real ciggarates, we find on the ground; it felt somehow cool to smoke And then we started contributing money to buy cigarettes to smoke it all started from making fun of smokers to smoking it for real. It has affected my life in many ways and I have made bad decision but up till date non of my parents knows that I smoke.

In some instances where a boy and a girl are in school, the needs of the girl is taken care of more than the boy because the parents don't want a situation where the girl will start sleeping around to get money to cater for her needs so she gets more money from her parents but boy is being neglected because he can not go sleeping around. This boy can indulge himself in cult, drug abuse, Robbery so that he can cater for his needs And that is why we have many cases of ritulist in Nigeria "

blood money " And most atimes is the male children that are involved.

This are reasons why a boy child should be given attention too because boys get misled easily than the girls . They get influenced and carried away easily. In the Northern part of the country where there is the Alamajiri system. Parents and guardians have shifted thier responsibilities of caring and educating their male children to religious teachers. Who in turn send them out to beg for alms to cater for their upkeep. They become the that politicians use to achieve their political ends and use for destruction during the period of crisis. In other parts of the country the case is not different as the street or area boys, Now including boys as young as ten are used to causing havoc and they become nuisance to their parents and I he society.

Our society will be a better place if children in respective of gender be equally taken care of. It is time for parents, government, non-governmental and individuals to take noticed of the boy child and take proper action. Because the experience they get from Neglect it makes them more prone to violence as they grow into adults. Because they are expected to be the society they should not be part of neglected.

NEWS

Gombe lifts ban on some suspended health institutions

From WILLIE ATTAH, Gombe

GOMBE State Government has lifted the ban on 7 out of the 17 private health institutions of learning earlier closed down over lack of accreditation, poor physical and instructional environment.

The chairman of the committee on the review of the sustainability of private health institutions of learning in the state, Barrister Zubair Muhammad Umar made the disclosure after the State Executive Council meeting.

Barrister Zubair, who is also the state Attorney General and Commissioner for Justice, said those given the nod to resume academic activities include Fountain College of Health Science and Technology, Tunfure; Conformance College of Health Science and Technology, Billiri; Garkuwa College of Health Science and Technology, Lamido College of Hygiene, Liji, Ummah College of Health Science and Technology, Dukku; International College of Health Science and Technology and Haruna Rasheed College of Health Science and Technology, Dukku.

He also gave the list of those still under suspension to include Ilimi College of Health Science and Technology,



Yahaya

Gombe; Barunde College of Health Science, Kumo; Legacy College of Health Science and Technology, Gombe; College of Health Science, Filiya; College of Health Science, Deba and Bormi College of Health Science and Technology, Bajoga.

Others are Bajoga College of Health Science and Technology; College of Health Science and Technology Bamam; Standard College of Health Science and Technology, Kwami and College of Health Science, Lailaipido.

Barrister Zubair Umar, also explained that Government's action was not aimed at witch hunting anyone but to

checkmate professional quackery.

While placing emphasis on the position of the chairman to ascertain the sustainability of private health institutions in the state, the Commissioner of Health, Dr. Habu Dahiru said the decision forms part of government's decision to ensure health safety and efficiency in the state.

Speaking earlier, the overseeing Commissioner for Information and Culture, Mr. Meshack Audu Lauco, who coordinated the post SEC press conference, said all decisions taken by the State Executive Council were done in the best interest of the people of the state.

Group empowers youths on solutions to electoral challenges

Nigerians, under successive governments, have played victims of imposed leadership.

"As we speak, our democracy is verging on a state of emergency due to sustained disinterest in active politics and political participation.

"The average Nigerian, youth especially, is politically numb. Years of electoral violence, vote buying, and rigging have stoked deep feelings of betrayal and mistrust in governance and election.

"Since Nigeria's return to democracy in 1999, the

country has recorded massive voter apathy because of unhealed wounds of electoral malpractices.

"The trend has fluctuated over two decades, falling to an all-time low in the last general elections which saw only 35.66 per cent turn out (28,614,190 cast votes out of 84,004,084 registered voters) in spite of the excitement that distinguished the 2019 general elections," he said.

According to Olasupo, within a short time of announcing the CivicTech competition, the group received 30,252 applications from the 36 states of the federation.

He said that the team with the most promising solution will be awarded 2 million naira to execute their proposed solution.

The cash prize would be disbursed at every project milestone so that the funds are utilized effectively.

Olasupo added that the first and second runners-up would receive support from NITDA to mentor, incubate and fund their respective solutions.

"To make the game a win-win for all, we are looking at merging the 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th positions with the first three if that will bring a stellar result."

Olasupo said that this was done in the interest of the country and so that everyone would be winner so as to achieve a common goal.

Mr Kashifu Inuwa, the Director-General, National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA), was represented by Mr Yau Garba, National Director, National Centre for Artificial Intelligence and Robotics commended BBYDI for the initiative.

Inuwa said that their effort was in the right direction because the initiative would help to discover lasting solutions to the prevailing challenges in the electoral system and ensure the active participation of Nigerians in the process.

BRAIN Builders Youth Development Initiative (BBYDI), a non governmental organisation (NGO) says it is empowering Nigerian youths to enable them to develop applications to proffer solutions to challenges affecting the country's electoral system.

Mr Abideen Olasupo, the Executive Director, BBYDI, made this known at the grand finale of the Yvote Naija CivicTech Hackathon 2022, an initiative of BBYDI with support from Christian Aid on Monday in Abuja.

Olasupo said that the hackathon in addition to addressing Nigeria's major election concerns of vote buying, voter apathy and electoral violence, aims to explore civic-tech solutions to improve public participation in the political process.

He said that the hackathon also was aimed at bringing together young social innovators and developers between the ages of 18 and 35 to develop ideas, build skills and connect with others.

This, he said was to work towards a shared goal of strengthening the electoral process and civic participation in governance in Nigeria.

"My diagnosis is that the biggest obstacle to Nigeria's glory is the lack of courage to change things we can.

Instead of acting as captains of their fate,



Mahmood

Buhari's govt has reduced terrorism to 'almost nothing'

SPOKESPERSON for the All Progressives Congress (APC) presidential campaign, Festus Keyamo, has said the party-led federal government has reduced Boko-Haram's dominance to "almost nothing."

Mr Keyamo, who is also the Minister of State for Labour and Employment, said this on Monday in an interview with Trust TV.

He was defending the performance of the APC-led government in the last seven years that it has been in power.

The programme also featured Daniel Bwala, a spokesperson for the PDP Presidential Campaign Council who was paired with the minister.

With President Muhammadu Buhari as its flag bearer in 2015, the APC had promised to ensure a buoyant economy, fight insecurity and corruption to reposition the country.

Despite the overwhelming deadly attacks on communities by terrorists in some parts of the country, particularly in the North, Mr. Keyamo said the government had reduced terrorism significantly when compared to what it was under the PDP-led government.

He alleged that the news highlighting the failures of the current administration were sponsored by the opposition to discredit the ruling party.

"The cliché that the government has failed has become a song that the opposition has virtually

rammed down the throats of everybody without looking at the details of what we have done, the statistics and put them in a context. What the opposition has done in the last few years is to memorise some highfalutin words and those are the highfalutin words that the press repeats - government has failed, security has collapsed.

"What did we inherit? We inherited the Boko Haram problem. At that time, they had taken over more than 14 local governments in the North-east and hoisted their flags. We inherited the farmers-herders crisis that had been going on even before Obasanjo's time. These are existential problems.

"What have we done about those two problems? A club like El-kanemi Football Club of Borno that were playing their football matches in Bauchi because of insecurity—nobody could gather in one place in Maiduguri to watch a football match - now El-kanemi is back to Maiduguri, that is success.

"Boko Haram has not been totally wiped out, but it has reduced significantly because

we constructively engaged our neighbours. We reduced them to almost nothing. I am not saying these things have totally wiped out, but on the scale of what we met and on the scale of what we have, it has reduced significantly," Mr Keyamo claimed.

The minister faulted the past PDP government for the lingering strike action of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU).

The union has been on strike since February.

He said the past government signed the 2009 agreement with the union without

-Keyamo

fulfilling it thereby boxing Buhari's government into a corner to renegotiate.

"Imagine how irresponsible a government can be when they went into agreements with ASUU and signed conditions that they couldn't fulfill and that is why ASUU is on strike.

"So let us tell Nigerians that ASUU is not on strike because APC signed an agreement with them. It was the PDP that signed the agreement," he said.

CSO tasks political gladiators on issue based campaigns

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

offer to Nigerians.

Your capacity to deliver democracy dividends and good governance" He warned against vote buying and selling by Nigerians and politicians alike.

He further called on the Youth Development Initiative, Okutepa Aminu made the call while speaking at the Panel Discussion organised for youth leaders selected from the 21 Local Government Areas of Kogi State in commemoration of the year 2022 International Youth Day, held in Lokoja on Tuesday.

Aminu also cautioned politicians against the use of hate speech, fake news and vulgar language in their campaigns.

"Your campaign should be issue based on what you can

young people who are using their platforms to campaign for egalitarian society to strengthen Nigeria's democratic institution and electoral processes.

"We, therefore, appeal to young people to go and get their permanent voters cards and not to sell their votes during the 2023 elections.

"We, call on the federal government to take immediate steps to address the lingering ASUU Strike" Aminu urged participants to strive to make meaningful contributions to the discussion as part of the agenda setting for effective participation of Nigerian youths in politics.

The panel discussion was focused on how we can increase voters turn out for the 2023 general elections and political strategies to adopt on winning elections.

PUBLIC NOTICE

KACH THE LIGHT FOUNDATION

The general public is hereby notified that the above named has applied to Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) for registration under part C of CAMA 2020.

THE TRUSTEES ARE:

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. KACHOLLOM DALYOPFOM | TRUSTEE/CHAIRMAN |
| 2. GASHADALYOPFOM | TRUSTEE/SECRETARY |
| 3. BENJAMIN SIMON GYANG | TRUSTEE |
| 4. DALYOP MARYFOM | TRUSTEE |
| 5. RUTH DALYOPFOM | TRUSTEE |

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. Strengthening communities through skills acquisition and girl child empowerment
 2. Medical outreaches and reformative music, movie and discipleship
 3. Awareness on youth sexual and reproductive health
 4. Carrying out charitable and relief work in co-operation with Government and other organisations for the less privileged
- Any objection to this registration should be forwarded to the Registrar-General, Corporate Affairs Commission, Plot 420, Tigris Crescent, off Aguiyi Ironsiri Street, Maitama, Abuja within 28 days of this publication.

SIGNED: SECRETARY

CHANGE OF NAME

ABUBAKAR

I, formerly known as **ABUBAKAR YAHAYA**, now wish to be known and addressed as **YAHUZA YAHAYA ABUBAKAR**. My correct date of birth is 01/07/2000 not 01/01/1996. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

News

PLSG provides enabling environment for manufacturing

By DUMAH RADONG

THE Plateau state government said it would continue to provide the enabling environment for the manufacturing industries to thrive in the state.

Governor Simon Lalong stated this while declaring open the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) for Benue, plateau and North Eastern States which took place in Jos, Monday.

The Annual General meeting of the manufacturers Association of Nigeria, Benue, plateau and the North Eastern states was held in Jos to charts a way forward on the implication of New Tax regime on the growth of the Nigeria economy.

The governor through his Deputy, Professor Sonni Tyoden said tax was a constant responsibility for tax payer because of its importance to the functions of government.

Lalong said government will continue to give more incentives to the manufacturing industry to ensure confidence and viability of the business.

He added that the state government has partnered with organizations and created the one stop shop initiative. And that it has no draconian policies against the manufacturing industries in the state.

Guest speaker and former Vice-chancellor of the University of Jos, Professor Sabastine Maimako who spoke on the Theme: "Tax Regime in the manufacturing sector, its implications on the growth of Nigeria's Economy", said no African



Lalong

country made the top list of Tax payment because of their poor policies and regulations as well as cost of production in the country.

He said agriculture, manufacturing industry and services have made Nigeria highest contributor in Gross Domestic product (GDP) in Africa but that multiple taxation has limited its position in the list of ease of doing business environment.

President Manufacturers Association of Nigeria, Mansur Ahmed represented by the Vice President of the Association, Benue Plateau and North Eastern states, Ahmed Mai Abba said to ensure the stabilization of the Nigeria economy, relevant stakeholders in the manufacturing industry must be carried along in decision making by government.

Plateau State Chairman of MAN appreciated guests and participants at the AGM and

urged the federal government to look into the issue of high exchange rate and its policies which encourage multiple taxation to reduce the implication of the new regime on industries in Nigeria.

High points of the event was the award of excellence for development and restoration of peace which was conferred on Governor Lalong and some best performing industries in the state.

G O M B E State Government has approved N8.8 billion for the construction of 17 township roads in some parts of the state capital.

The state Commissioner of Works, Engineer Abubakar Bappa, disclosed this to newsmen at the end of a State Executive Council meeting held at the Government House, Gombe.

Engineer Bappa said the 17 township road projects will traverse areas like K a g a r a w a l , Pantami/Gabukka, old GRA and Civil Service Commission's office to Science Secondary School Gombe to link up with Shongo among other locations in the state capital.

He said, some of the roads which were awarded by the immediate past administration of Ibrahim Hassan Dankwambo in December, 2017, were abandoned.

He explained further that Messrs Triacta Nigeria Limited who were originally awarded the contract but later abandoned the

Gombe to expend N8.8bn on 17 township roads.

From WILLIE ATTAH, Gombe

construction for lack of payment, have already been mobilized to move to site.

The Commissioner disclosed that the State Executive Council also approved 1.2 billion naira for emergency repairs of some washed out roads in

Gombe Abba town in Dukku Local Government Area and Dukkul town of Kwami Local Government Area.

Other roads to receive attention due to the threat of being washed out are in Biri town, N a f a d a L G A , Bajoga/Ashaka Gari road in Funakaye LGA and two others.



Inuwa

Police neutralise bandits in Zamfara

From ANENE AIKE, Gusau

THE Police Command in Zamfara on Sunday said several bandits were neutralised in the state on Saturday night when criminals attempted to attack Magami village of Gusau Local Government Area.

This is contained in a statement signed by the Police Public Relations Officer of the Command, SP Shehu Mohammed, in Gusau.

"Yesterday night, the command received a report that bandits in their large numbers stormed Magami town in Gusau LGA with the 3 men to attack the

community.

"The Commissioner of Police, CP Hussaini Rabi, directed Police Tactical Units, comprising of PMF/CTU/Special forces and Operation Puff Adder based in the area to synergise and ensure protection of lives and property of the people.

"The tactical units moved in courageously and engaged the assailants to a gun duel. As a result of the encounter, the attack was successfully repelled, while unspecified number of bandits were neutralised with many of them escaping with possible gun shot wounds," Shehu said.

He however said "two of our operatives paid the supreme price while defending the innocent members of the communities, but there was no loss of live in the

communities".

He also disclosed that the CP had further deployed additional tactical operatives to the area to complement ongoing bush combing operations aimed at forestalling further attacks on the nearby villages.

"The CP reiterates his warning to all recalcitrant bandits in the state to either surrender their arms and embrace peace or face the consequences of their actions.

"The CP also urged police operatives in the Command to aggressively defend themselves and the community in any engagement with bandits and ensure that they dominate the ungoverned spaces on a continuous basis," the statement added.

Gunmen invade market in Kogi

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

SUSPECTED gunmen on Sunday invaded Orié Market at Agbedo-Akpanya community in Igalamela/Odolu Local Government Area of Kogi, killing one person during the incident.

One person was also abducted during the raid while the kidnapers have demanded for N20 Million

ransom.

Our Correspondent gathered that the suspected hoodlums in their large numbers stormed the market on Sunday at 2 pm and started shooting sporadically to scare the people in the market.

The shooting by bandits, it was learnt caused pandemonium in the market and people were running for safety as one Johnson was hit by the bullets and died, while another person was abducted.

Sources hinted that the suspected gunmen have demanded for ransom of N20 for the release of the

abducted person.

It was reliably gathered that the incident was the third time in a row when suspected gunmen attacked the market and abducted people and later demanded for ransom.

Investigations further revealed that the suspected hoodlums are taking advantage of the thick forest between Apayan in Kogi State and the boundary of Enugu State to perpetrate their evil acts.

Sources further revealed that the people of Agbedo community in Akpayan have continued to appeal to the state government and security agencies in the state to come to their aid from the incessant attacks on the defenseless people on market days in the area.

When contacted for confirmation, the Kogi State Police Public Relations officer, William Aya said that it was a case of invasion on one Johnson's shop after being killed, one Edwin was abducted along many others on the market day.



Sir. Dr. Boniface Gwotbit KSM, Sir William Songkat and Sir Simon Abah, President, Laity Council at the General Assembly



Alkali

News

FG to change Nigeria's public service

THE Director-General, Bureau of Public Service Reforms, Mr Dasuki Arabi, said the Federal Government was committed to transforming the public service to provide world class services to the people.

Arabi said this when he interacted with a Lagos State Government delegation that was at the Bureau in Abuja on Tuesday, to seek ways of strengthening the state public service.

Arabi, who spoke virtually with the delegation, said the reform initiative was to ensure effectiveness in policy implementation.

He added that it would also boost professionalism, integrity, excellence and passion to secure sustainable national development.

The DG also informed the team on the reforms strategies and how they operated.

He stated that the National Strategy for Public Service Reforms (NSPSR) has three main goals.

The MDAs are to achieve a world class PSR by 2025, they are to transform and reinvigorate the service.

"The national strategy for public service reforms has four pillars.

"Pillar one is coordinated by the Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation with an enabling institutional and governance environment.

"Pillar two is coordinated by the Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning to create an enabling economic environment.

"Pillar three is also coordinated by the Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning for public financial management reforms.

"Pillar four is coordinated by the Office of the Head of the Civil Service of the Federation (OHCSF) for civil service administration reforms," Arabi said.

Arabi listed the challenges facing the reform process and mitigation measures taken.

He said that the challenges include "weak implementing capacity in MDAs, emergence of reforms fatigue such as "we are tired of reforms".

"Resistance to change for fear of loss of privileges or just fear of the unknown

"Poor budgetary provision for implementation of reform measures."

Arabi, however, said measures had been taken to address the challenges.

"We established reform coordination departments in key MDAs; and created strong information, education and communication programmes.

"We made available a robust monitoring, evaluation and reporting system and decentralized responsibilities to create more passion by implementers or drivers of the reforms."

He added that the bureau had established reforms coordination, service improvement and innovation departments, in liaison with SERVICOM and OHCSF.

The DG further explained



Folashade

that the departments served as focal points for driving all changes and reform initiatives, as well as areas for improvement.

He said that adequate funding was necessary to drive reforms and ensure efficiency in service delivery.

Arabi said, "it was also important to improve working relationships and engagements with the Bureau to act as guide and enhance its effectiveness."

Earlier, AbdirRaman Lekki, Assistant Director, Lagos State Management Service Department, Office of Transformation, Creativity and Innovation, said the team was on a study visit to the bureau, as part of efforts to strengthen the public service delivery system in the state.

"The aim of the visit is to study how the reform operates

and also the fact that Lagos State currently wants to establish a structure for reforms in all MDAs.

"Since the federal government had implemented something like that, we decided to come and see what was the story that led to that and how it has fared over the years.

"So, then we can understand how it was done, what has worked well, what can be improved upon and to see how we can replicate the same and see how we can improve on it in Lagos State."

He said that part of their plan was to create a reform unit in all MDAs to address challenges in the implementation.

"We decided it's better we help to create a reform unit within all MDAs so that reforms can be proactive rather than being reactivated," Arabi said.

Law prescribes death sentence for banditry,

ANYONE found guilty of "banditry, kidnapping, cattle rustling, cultism, or serving as a bandits' informant and other related offences in Zamfara", will henceforth face the death sentence, according to a new law, signed by the State Governor, Bello Matawalle.

This was announced by Governor Bello Matawalle in a broadcast to the people of the state on Tuesday morning Matawalle, on June 28, 2022, signed the bill titled Prohibition and

Punishment for Banditry, Cattle Rustling, Cultism, Kidnapping and Other Incidental Offences 2022, passed by the state legislature into law.

The Governor had said the law formed part of measures to tackle banditry, kidnapping and cattle rustling in Zamfara.

But in a broadcast on Tuesday, Matawalle said, "On the 28th of June this year, I assented to the bill on Prohibition and Punishment for Banditry, Cattle Rustling, Cultism,



Matawalle

NIGERIA'S electricity supply crisis could worsen from Wednesday as the organised labour has directed workers in the power sector to down tools and commence an indefinite strike over pending labour issues with the Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN).

The National Union of Electricity Employees on Tuesday picketed the headquarters of the Transmission Company of Nigeria in Abuja.

They complained about the alleged failure of the Federal Government to pay the entitlement of former staff of the defunct Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) in December 2019.

The aggrieved workers under the aegis of the national union of electricity employees NUEE said this is a prelude to an indefinite strike action expected to commence on August 17.

In a circular entitled "call to action", the general secretary of NUEE, Joe Ajaero, directed them to ensure total compliance, vowing to paralyse operations of TCN nationwide over anti-masses activities.

This means the nation's electricity supply crisis could worsen from Wednesday following this impasse.

"You are hereby enjoined to mobilise immediately

Blackout looms as electricity workers threaten strike

for a serious picketing of TCN Headquarters and stations nationwide over the directive by the TCN Board that all PMs in acting capacity going to AGM must appear for a promotion interview," the circular read.

"This directive is in contravention of our conditions of service and career progression paths, and unilaterally done without the relevant stakeholders.

"This action takes effect from Tuesday 16th August 2022 and total withdrawal of services commences on

Wednesday 17th August 2022. Ensure full compliance in all the stations nationwide."

On May 18, the union issued a 14-day ultimatum to the Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer, MD/CEO.

In the circular titled "Unresolved issues on the year 2021 promotion exercise and others," the union threatened to down tools at the expiration of the ultimatum if its grievances were not addressed.



Ngige

ten years in prison, without the option of a fine."

The Governor stated that the measures were part of his administration's unrelenting efforts to tackle the problem of banditry that has plagued the state and the neighbouring northwestern states for more than a decade.

He maintained that he has been developing strategies to stem the tide of banditry across the state ever since the inception of his administration.

"Gladly, the latest measures are beginning to

yield the intended results despite the pockets of attacks here and there by the bandits "With regards to the issue of informants, which is the major impediment in the fight against banditry, I am glad to inform the peace-loving people of Zamfara State that we have succeeded in apprehending many of them.

"They are currently being interrogated before being prosecuted in accordance with the fullest extent of the law", Matawalle added.

Hope rises as ASUU, FG meet over strike

BARRING any last-minute change in plans, representatives of the Federal Government and Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), met, August 16, to continue negotiations with the hope of achieving a consensus on lingering issues that could herald the reopening of universities nationwide.

ASUU leadership had listed seven major issues that led to the withdrawal of their services on February 14, 2022.

Speaking during a live

programme on Monday, ASUU President, Prof Emmanuel Osodeke, said the strike was prolonged because of insincerity on the part of the Federal Government.

Osodeke noted that the government's plans to placate its members into calling off the strike with salary increments instead of holistically addressing the issues affecting university education in the country are "unfortunate."

He noted that the Union has not had any serious communication with the FG and added that ASUU is seeking the re-negotiation of

the 2009 agreement, which has to do with funding, structure, autonomy and other issues relating to how funds can be raised to fund Universities in Nigeria.

Osodeke said: "The government is not sincere in its dealings with us. This has been the issue all along. What we are doing is the sacrifice we have to save this country and its youths. A collapsed university system is a collapsed country and we are almost there. We will not be tired, we will ensure that our university system works.

Telecommunication shutdown palaver



By HOSEA NYAMLONG

TELECOMMUNICATION in Nigeria includes radio, television, mobile phones and internet. The advent of mobile telecommunication in the country about two decades ago has continued to enhance communication and other business activities even faster.

Sadly, the activities of banditry and kidnapping in recent times had compel the government of Zamfara and Kaduna states to shutdown their telecommunication services in some parts of their states in order to checkmate the activities of bandits.

Recently, in Kaduna State, telecommunication services were shutdown in some parts of Kaduna South, particularly in Chikun, Kajuru, Birnin Gwari and Kachia Local Government Areas while residents have continued to witness a surge in activities of kidnapping and banditry that have left citizens of those states to live under a perpetual fear.

Even though, that of Zamfara State was

restored four weeks thereafter, the order that was put in place, the Kaduna State Government lasted for more than a month in order to curtail the menace of the bandits and other criminal activities in the states.

However, the law enforcement agencies have not rested on their statutory obligations and yet the activities of bandits appear to be on the increase day after day and the lives and property of the citizens are also under threat. The decision to curtail the air space out of the reach of bandits and kidnapping was by putting a partial shutdown of telecommunication services within these states which is a welcome idea but these have continued to cause more hardship on the residents thereby affecting economic activities rather proffering solutions to the challenges.

Needless to say that bandits and other criminal gangs have continued to engage in nefarious operations in these areas despite the lack of network, thereby making the residents unable to communicate or to make distress calls in times of emergency. They find it difficult to give information to the security agents, on the whereabouts or movement of the attackers.

To this end, some citizens are of the opinion that the shutdown of network communication services in these states has not yielded tangible results, rather it is seen as an attempt to further worsen the state of insecurity in those states, which is making life unbearable to the residents.

The fight against insecurity is Nigeria, requires government to deplore modern day communication technology to adequately leverage or mitigate the challenges bedeviling the country.

The persistence of insecurity has on

daily basis been claiming precious lives of the citizenry therefore, government must redouble its efforts in order to put an end to these menace through the adequate funding of security apparatus, such as the police, military, vigilante and the local hunters which needs to yield more positive results.

Recently, bandits had abducted more than fifty worshippers in Kakau Village in Chinkun Local Government Area in Kaduna State during a Sunday worship service leaving the worshippers helpless without any form of communication to draw the attention of the security agencies in the area.

In addition, another incident occurred along the Kaduna Kachia Road, the outskirts of Chikun Local Government Area where bandits were said to have operated on the high way for several hours without any call or information to draw the attention of the security on that fateful day which portends another challenge for the Federal Government in its fight against insecurity which clearly demonstrates the lack of coordination with the security agencies for optimum results.

Meanwhile, the telecommunication services in Nigeria need to be reviewed in order to checkmate and monitor the activities of subscribers.

The Nigeria communication Commission, (NCC) has recently announced that they have more than one hundred and ninety million registered subscribers of GSM Networks in the country. Even with the partial shutdown of telecommunication services, kidnapers have also mastered and perfected the use of GSM phones to communicate and demand for ransom, from families of their victims

without any trace from the network providers.

Therefore, the compulsory registration of Sim Cards by NCC was intended to stop the criminal use of such lines, but seems to have made little impact in arresting the culprits either by tracking down such people with the lines or crippling their operations.

It is common knowledge that security of lives and property is a prerequisite for progress in any nation and time has come for the security agencies to implore and adopt modern technology including the use of telecommunication network in arresting the menace of those criminals who are tormenting Nigerians in different parts of the country.

Nevertheless, it is possible to embark on cell phone surveillance which normally involves tracking, monitoring, interception, recording of phone conversations and text messages on mobile phones, instead of the outrageous shutdown of telecommunication services.

Modernization of the state of the art equipment gadgets can be implored to monitor the movement of these criminals by tracking their mobile phones signals. It is believed that once the criminals know that they can be tracked down from any location. It would certainly put some kind of check on their operations.



By VICTOR GAI

I have never been a fan of BBnaija despite the temptations around that could have lured me into getting addicted to the reality TV show. My neighbours are very good fans of the show but I don't give a hoot. Bring on football, especially EPL and serious political discussion programs and you will pin me down.

However, I recently got attracted to BBnaija as a passive listener and observer to the news that a Taraba born ex-beauty queen, Beauty Etsayi Tukura, was expelled from the show for violating the house rules and for being violent to her housemates. For the first time, I found a BBnaija story interesting because it involves a former beauty queen from Taraba where I spent the greater part of my journalism career. By the way, proximity and prominence are two factors that influence one's choice of news.

BBnaija: From beauty to ashes?

Since the news broke out early this week, it has been one bizzare controversy after another as we watch this charming and promising lady fall into disrepute. The local social media space here in Taraba is awash with unpalatable messages about their own daughter who has made the State proud some years back.

The 2019 Miss Nigeria even had the privilege of being hosted by His Excellency, Gov. Darius Ishaku when she won the crown. She even embarked on some humanitarian activities and was on the path to stardom.

The 25 year old budding international entrepreneur hails from Kurmi Local Government Area of Taraba State, which is the most endowed local areas in the State in terms of natural resources. In fact, the land is blessed with some of the most charming women (it is not an exaggeration, find out yourself if in doubt)!

Meanwhile, I have read through all the drama concerning this very episode and my take is that, beauty must have shot herself on the foot. She allowed her enemies, chief amongst them the devil, to destroy her. Her enemies could have bewitched her (after all Kurmi, her local area, is famous for tales about witches and wizards), they could

have kidnapped her to earn cash, in fact, they could have ended her life the way they did that promising female airforce pilot in Kaduna. They didn't do all these but chose to lure her into an unfamiliar terrain and where from all indications, she shouldn't be.

For heaven's sake, what is an ex-beauty queen doing in a reality TV show. Does she lack work to do? I doubt it. Is it the money? Is it fame?

I guess that her modest success must have propelled her to fame and wealth.

Doesn't she have good advisers? she should be consolidating on those successes, planning on building a family and helping up coming women on how to discover themselves.

Unfortunately, Taraba State has some of the worst HIV prevalence rates in the country and young ladies are the worst affected. What hope is she giving to those young ladies looking up to her by involving in sexual escapades on international tv? The same Taraba is faced with teenage pregnancy, female out of school children and prostitution. These are issues needing attention and nobody of her type is speaking about it.

Anyway, I became interested when I read about the sex scandal between her and one of the

housemates, Groovy. It is no secret now because the beans has already been spilt. It is now true that she was provoked under the influence of alcohol by the actions of Groovy. She couldn't control herself, she resorted to violence. As a result she was expelled from the house. Then she ramped up her frustration, with a "small penis" label on her one time lover. Na wa! Groovy then responded by denying the claim saying she was only being "petty". What Groovy was implying was that she was only being sentimental about the whole thing.

But what could have driven a former beauty queen to be jealous under that particular scenario? Mind you she was gallivanting with persons not her status.

The only explanation or answer I can give to this question is that she was after all, at the wrong place. She does not have any business being in that house.

Now that her reputation and integrity is under the test, it is only hoped this scandal would not destroy all that she has built, because it is indeed massive.

By JIDAUNA DARING

IT is important for people to know their roots and culture. This is because, culture is a way of life of a particular group of people or ethnic nationality practiced to distinguish themselves from others in our society.

What seems to be missing is lack of sustaining our cultural heritage which paves way for languages to go extinct because people do not accord any value to it. It is also obvious that, in many given ethnic nationalities, there are set rules and regulations that govern the way of living that are peculiar to such groups or communities, but in most cases, cultural norms are a standard that are set by our culture which were inherited from our forefathers.

It may interest you to also know that culture is also a principle standard set to sustain an existing norm and helps bind certain members of a group as well as guides them. In addition, this also includes; the way people dance, dress, the type of food they eat as well as the type of drinks they take as far as their culture is concern, which may be based on what they inherited in their culture.

It was also in the spirit of keeping its rich culture and tradition alive that the Mupun Cultural and Development Association (MUCDA) has continued to ensure that its people are always reminded of the need to do the needful in this regard. No doubt, MUCDA has through educative and entertaining programmes showcased their culture and tradition to the outside world. Today, the body through successive leaders have continued to play a significant role in unifying the people of the area to attain greatness. In other to sustain this legacy, a new executive members were elected who are mandated to run the affairs of the body in the next three years.

Interestingly, the polls which was transparently conducted in a peaceful atmosphere led to the emergence of Mr. Alpha John Dakwak as the National President while Dakom Yakubu Jwak was elected as Vice President.

Others include; Dasen Sunday Damiyal, Secretary; Daniyop Emmanuel, Assistant Secretary; Mrs. Lydia Danjuma, Treasurer, Luther C. Dagin, Financial Secretary; Katlong Simon, Public Relations Officer (PRO); and Pyelshak Yusuf, Director of Socials. In fulfilment of the association's constitutional provision, the new executive members were last Saturday sworn into office.

Speaking after the swearing in ceremony, the HRH Mishkam Mupun, Da Yusuf Wale during the inauguration held at Tambal Hill Resort, Lankan District, Pankshin Local Government Area (LGA) of Plateau State noted that they must embark on programmes which would have direct bearing on the lives

of their people.

Da Wale charged the new EXCO to make transparency and accountability their watchword as they pilot the affairs of the association. He urged them to always remember their oath of office while discharging their expected obligations.

He called on all Mupun people to be their brothers' keeper by embracing one another wherever they find themselves

is the ongoing electrification of some communities within Mupun land.

He commended the Electoral Committee (ELCOM) for conducting a peaceful election which was done by delegates. He added that because of the fairness of the ELCOM while preparing for the conduct of the exercise, aspirants presented their manifestoes

As MUCDA executive members hit the ground running



in the world and challenged them to give the new EXCO the desired support and cooperation, so as to enable them succeed in whatever good plan they have for the progress and development of the land.

Da Wale also congratulated the new EXCO and appreciated the outgoing EXCO for all the achievements made during their tenure, especially the ongoing electrification project in some communities of Mupun land. He described the gesture among others as a laudable and welcome development for the people.

Da Wale also condemned the vandalization of cables of the ongoing electrification project by some bad elements and urged all benefitting communities of the project to watch over such facilities at all times.

In his farewell remarks, the outgoing MUCDA National President, Engr. Pedro A. Dafur expressed happiness and thanked God for seeing them through their tenure that recently elapsed. He appreciated the entire MUCDA family for the support and cooperation accorded them.

Dafur said that, during their tenure, they were able to initiate some projects, one of it

which was the first in the history of MUCDA even as the election was telecast via zoom, praying that such would be sustained in subsequent elections.

ELCOM Chairman, Mr. Dangan Y. Mangtu who spoke on behalf of his members, first appreciated God for making the election, a huge success and thanked the MUCDA congress for finding all of them worthy to have served in the ELCOM.

Mr. Mangtu while thanking the delegates for the maturity exhibited during the exercise said it was largely through their support and cooperation. He pointed out that the ELCOM has also recommended MUCDA constitutional amendment, adding that if such is done, MUCDA may have electronic voting in its subsequent elections, saying that the association would continue to remain a pace setter for others.

In his acceptance speech shortly after receiving handing over baton from the outgoing President, the new MUCDA National President, Mr. Alpha John Dakwak appreciated God for the opportunity and privilege to be elected as President of the association.

Mr. Dakwak, who could not hide his joy also thanked the Traditional Council of Mupun Development Association, (MUCDA) branches and delegates for finding him worthy to serve as President of Mupun Nation.

He appreciated all those who contested for one position or the others but could not make it, saying, "let measure you, we all have won and we will work together towards building our nation and serve for purposeful and impactful leadership".

According to Dakwak, MUCDA is a body where President and EXCOs are elected to coordinate the activities of the entire Mupun nation, adding that it is not his inheritance but it is a home and system where Mupun is govern.

He noted that their task is not to fulfil the agenda or legacy of any particular persons, stressing that their task is to make sure that they work towards building the confidence of their people to see the need to come home and improve on the economy and developmental needs of Mupun people. He said that, the EXCO have been entrusted with continuity, the legacy of their people.

Dakwak disclosed that the

new EXCO has promised to vigorously defend their people and see the best way to develop their human capital and our land. "We will do our best in putting in place systems in coordinating ourselves (Mupun nation) as we have been known for".

He remarked that, as EXCO, their task is to also harness from the great human intellectual, deposited in their land to make sure that they succeed as a united people., not to dominate it, adding that their doors are wide open for good advises and suggestion that would further move the association to a higher pedestal.

THE NIGERIA STANDARD reports that the epoch making event featured traditional dances, presentation of certificates of return to all newly elected EXCO. Certificates of service were presented to the immediate past EXCO as a mark of recognition for their sacrifices and contributions during their tenure. The oath of office was administered to the new EXCO by Barrister Sunday Panwal.

IMAGES

LALONG ATTENDS 19TH CATHOLIC GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Plateau State Governor and Chairman, Northern Governors' Forum, Rt. Hon. Simon Bako Lalong yesterday attended the 19th General Assembly of the Catholic Archdiocese of Jos for the year 2022 with the theme: The Eucharist our strength towards a better Nigeria with Mass at St. Louis Catholic Church, Jos



Governor Simon Bako Lalong delivering his speech at the General Assembly



Plateau State Governor, Rt. Hon. Simon Bako Lalong KSGG (left) with former Governor, Sir Fidelis Naanmiap Tapgun



A cross section of Knights and Ladies of Saint Mulumba during the 2022 General Assembly



CAN Chairman Plateau State, Rev. Fr. Polycarp Lubo (middle) in a photograph with Governor Lalong and his Deputy, Prof. Tyoden



Prof. Danladi Abok Atu, SGS (left) with Hon. Noel Dongjur, Chief of Staff Government House, Jos



L - R: Sir Fidelis Tapgun, Dr. Nentawe Yilwatda Goshwe and Comrade Jibrin K. Bancir at the opening ceremony of the General Assembly



Archbishop Matthew Ishaya Audu, Governor Simon Bako Lalong, Prof. Sonni Gwanle Tyoden in a group photograph with Reverend Fathers and delegates at the General Assembly



His Royal Highness, Dagwom Rwei Zawan, Da Christopher Mancha (middle) his wife, Lady Agnes Mancha exchanging greetings with the CWO President, Mrs. Evelyn Dantak at the ceremony

PHOTOS: DANLADI DUK

Odd World

Pregnant woman in disbelief over boyfriend's packed items

PREGNANT woman Holly Bolton was left gobsmacked after her boyfriend - who was in a hurry - packed her hospital bag last minute and she was in disbelief to what she found inside

At the height of pregnancy, many women are forgiven for the common and slightly aggravating baby brain - a term which often refers to easily forgotten memory and poor concentration. However, there is no such excuse for their partners.

Sharing her disbelief online, expecting new mum Holly Bolton revealed her utter shock at the hospital bag that her boyfriend packed for her at 33 weeks pregnant. Revealing what happened on popular social media app TikTok, fellow users were also in absolute dismay about the man's choice of items, which the video detailed.

She wrote: "Rate the hospital bag my boyfriend packed for me 33 weeks pregnant - he tried his best."

The clip showed items which the mum - who is in the third trimester of pregnancy - pulled out of the bag to show budding users on TikTok.

"Toothbrush and a very empty tube of

toothpaste," she said. "Trackies in the 33 degree heatwave.

"Contact lense case but no solution, face wipes and deodorant.

"His clothes - at least I have shorts and old thongs, which are too small."

Sharing their thoughts on the gobsmacking packing in the comment section, follower TikTokers rushed to the comments - with some even sharing shocking experiences of their own.

"My husband packed me a denim mini skirt to leave the hospital.....there was no way it was gonna fit.....it was also December!!!!!" One user wrote.

"He packed exactly how he would if he was traveling," another joked beside a laughing emoji.

A third wrote: "Thongs? You're joking, right? I'd tell him to get out of his boxers right then and there."

Coming to his defence, Holly quickly came to her boyfriend's defence after stumbling across the long list of comments.

She said: "Guys, he was panicking okay, he left work, rushed home, and tried to get to me as quickly as possible."

Source: Mirror



Are our politicians not betraying Christ?

ONE of the heartrending and moderately thought-provoking Bible stories which have continued to prick our spiritual life as Christians is how Apostle Peter denied knowing Christ and was subsequently betrayed by Judas Iscariot during his physical ministry here on earth. These two disciples according to scriptural records were both great men who started their promising journey in the vineyard of our Lord with extraordinary enthusiasm.

Both Peter and Iscariot were men of high integrity and possessed unquestionable characters but at a point; let go all they had to be with our Lord, Jesus Christ in furtherance of His ministry. For the fact that they were with our redeemer for years witnessing his heart-touching miracles and listening to his life changing simons, some of us still wondered what really got into them to afford them behave in such a manner they did when it mattered most? As the treasurer of the team, Iscariot was knowledgeable enough, even as quite too Peter was appreciably knowledgeable. Nonetheless, never did the scriptures mentioned that both lived in want and or were in any precarious situation as such; they were obviously comfortable.

When the ministry of Christ was nearing a historical end and Jesus Christ was in the garden of Brook Kidron, a detachment of troops and Pharisees came asking who amongst the disciples Christ was. Much earlier, Judas had betrayed our lord with a kiss trying to isolate him for immediate identification. As the situation further got complicated, after Peter was asked three times to confirm whether he was part of our lord's team; he vehemently refuted. In fact, Apostle Peter subsequently denied knowing Christ three times and after which, his eyes met with Christ and he remembered the promise he earlier professed of not going contrary to this.

In 2019, when I had the opportunity of visiting the Promised Land, Israel, we got ourselves engaged in snapping several shots as a reminder of such a rare opportunity to travel thus far. At each biblical historical point, we had to snap these shots with our android phones. Our guide was always on hand to intimate us of where we were and the significance of such places.

On fateful day, our guide took us to one of this strange garden and in my usual manner, I subsequently ask of where we were. Responding, our guide noted that "if I must tell you, this tree was where Judas Iscariot hanged himself after betraying Christ". On hearing this, most of us pocketed back our android phones as we became uninterested about having snapshots there. While many Christians will argue that the place also has biblical historical value, for me, there was nothing quite phenomenal about the place.

To be more specific, I was left with no other feeling than to completely detach myself from any curse which may generationally have a symbolic link with me. Since this incident took place, I have continued to ask God to help me not to betray him in my journey of life. We have also encouraged many other Christians not to go the Iscariot's way no matter the difficulties they may find themselves in

our contemporary society.

Surprisingly, what is in vogue in Christendom today are unending stories of Christians not only betraying Christ as it is but significantly, their other brothers in the Lord. This issue has become more pronounced during this democratic dispensation which has left some of us to wonder whether Christians in this country are really in unionism.

One of the crucial issues on the table of discourse today is whether accepting the Muslim Muslim ticket by Christians as proposed by the All Progressives Congress, (APC) to the detriment of the church is not to some extent betraying Christ? First of all, as a free moral agent, any Christian can chose where he or she belongs in the politicking of a nation. In fact, any Christian has the fundamental right to getting involved in the governance of a secular state like Nigeria.

In the spirit of fair play, justice and equity however, the concerns and reservations many Christians are having in the aftermath of the party primaries in Nigeria is; though the nation based on constitutional provisions is a secular state, Christians in most recent times have not been carried alone in the act of governance.

Basically, since the advent of President Mohammed Buhari's regime, the exclusion of Christians in some sensitive top ranking government positions have left much to be desired. This incomprehensible development is coming on the heels of several unpalatable attacks against Christians, their places of worship including other strategic edifices in the country. No doubt, this most recent ugly unfolding pathetic situation has continued to traumatize significant Christian population in Nigeria. This development has forced many to lose confidence on the efficiency and capability of the government to protect all irrespective of religion and or creed.

As hardship continue in the land, imminent hunger, starvation and absolute lack has equally pushed many innocent citizens against the wall. This is not to also forget other excruciating consequences of dreaded acts of criminality which have negatively continued to affect the innocent citizens of this country. Left in the middle of this circumstances, many citizens are still not convinced that this country as polarized as it is would overcome these difficulties.

Unfortunately, most of our Christian politicians are seeing nothing wrong about these sad developments. In fact, many of them have refused to come to terms with the reality of the fact that it has not been easy with Nigerian Christians in the past couple of years. Today, though Christians have managed to endure lopsided appointments, and all sorts of persecutions, our Christian politicians still are of the opinion that it is not yet time for the sons of Jacob to liberate themselves from these shackles of mental enslavement. Therefore, what would be the stance of a Christian politicians who do not refuse to accept a system's strategic policies grossly unfriendly to Christians? For me, this class of politicians are obviously betraying Christ and or the Christendom.

Feature

St Luke's College graduates students

It was an overwhelmingly joyous moment as parents of the graduands of St. Lukes Anglican College Jos, the Plateau State capital gathered together to celebrate their children who withstood the pressure of learning; overcoming it all in flying colours. Their joy knew no bounds even as many of these upcoming leaders did not disappoint their parents who toiled all through these years to pay their school fees including other necessary financial requirements. BULUS GAMBO write.

FOR the management and staff of the school, it was a historic occasion which propelled each of them to with great nostalgia and a sober reflection recall the energy and candles burnt to ensure that their wards do not derail from their prudent educational anticipations. Indeed, it was a day for all the students, parents and staff to count their blessings and name them one by one to the glory of the Almighty God.

Consequently, all the students were at hand to dance and celebrate this epoch making event characterized by the usual eating of rice and meat recalling both the sweet and bitter memories they had in school. It was also a moment to appreciate God their creator for granting them long life and favour in achieving this great feat. No doubt, it is always a ground breaking event in the annals of the school's history of existence.

Delivering her speech during the event, the acting Principal of St Luke's College Jos, Mrs. Olufunke Ojo explained that "the graduating ceremony is as a result of the extended hard work of all graduating students. While there are certainly varying degrees of academic success, everyone walking across that stage has achieved something great. The completion of secondary school education is another milestone in the academic pursuit of the outgoing SS3 students. Over the past six years you have collectively worked and studied, practiced, played and grown in many ways. The results of our coming together, keeping together, working together as parents and staff to bring out the best in



Ojo, School Principal

these students in spite of all obstacles that we may have faced along the way is the graduation class of 2022. Let me therefore heartily congratulate the graduands who have toiled day and night to come this far."

According to her, "the theme of this year's graduation ceremony is "Rooted". To be rooted means to be fixed in one position, unable to move, implanted, firmly fixed, being based on or depending on something. Just as roots are essential for plants to have a life; you must be deeply rooted to grow and bear fruits."

Mrs. Ojo noted that "As you enter the next chapter of your lives, note that the right decisions you make in life may

not always be the popular ones. Do not forget that what a man sow he shall reap, so be careful of what you sow. It is important to impress upon your hearts to always see yourselves as ambassadors of this school and never allow selfish interest tarnish your integrity. Be focused, dedicated and purposeful as you go into higher institution. Remember the motto of your alma matter which says, "heading to higher heights". Let this be your guiding principles. It is my prayer that the Lord will go ahead of you, grant you grace to be more rooted in Him and bless you in Jesus name."

This achievement basically would have been possible



without the school's strategic planning and foundational experiences in the rooted scriptural principles of God. Over the years, the school has proved that it is an institution which is a place where knowledge is pursued with tremendous excellence, faith is rooted in Christ and character is exemplified through service. Thus, the school has all this while been passionate about spiritual things therefore at any point of the student's lives, be it in the chapel, during assembly and meals, in class or even during fellowship hours, (Girls Guild, FCS, Boys Brigade and disciples class) the word of God is preached. The school's philosophy geared towards releasing ardent crusaders of the gospel of Christ into the society is also intended to influence the world as ambassadors of change and transformation.

In his lecture, the Guest Speaker, Dr. Oladele Frank Anjorin explained that "My counsel for you is simple and straightforward: Just go ahead with what you have been given. You received Christ Jesus, the Master; now live Him. You are deeply rooted in Him. You know your way around the faith. Now, do what you have been taught. School's out: quit studying the subject and start living it! And let your living spill over into thanksgiving.

Speaking on the topic, Rooted, Dr. Anjorin noted that, "Roots refer to the part of the plant which attach the whole to the ground and carry water and nourishment to the rest of the plant via system of branches. When seeds are sown in the soil,

they germinate sprout, send roots downward and branches upward, and produce fruit. The vital thing about plants is that they are to have strong roots to survive adverse environmental conditions. In order to be fruitful and actually produce something, a plant has to be healthy. In order to be fruit, it needs to gain sufficient nourishment. It needs water, it needs healthy soil, it needs food (which it gets from the soil) and it needs sufficient light. Everything, except the light, is provided to the plant by its roots. Although, the plants starts out with flimsy roots, if it grow correctly, its roots will run deep into the ground and make for a firm foundation."

The Guest Speaker said, "digging our roots into anything other than Christ will only leave us vulnerable. These grounds are sinking and ephemeral. However, that is where exactly enemy want us to put our confidence. It should be noted that a strong tree does not just sprout roots overnight and flourish it takes time for lasting, sustainable roots to form. But when it forms, it becomes a shelter to the oppressed and bulwark in season of crisis and trouble. So, don't be discouraged when this process becomes hard, tedious and even trying."

In this remarks, the outgoing Head Boy of the school, Abraham Bot noted the contributions of the management and staff of the school towards making a positive impact on their lives. Bot also promised to be good ambassadors of the school wherever they find themselves.





Lalong visits Dariye and Nyame

ON the evening of Thursday, August 11, 2022 was the day Plateau Governor, Simon Bako Lalong led some of his state executives and other stakeholders to the residence of former Plateau and Taraba Governors, Chief Joshua Dariye and Rev. Jolly Nyame, days after their release from prison.

The former governors were indicted over 6 years ago and jailed on corruption charges. But they were granted state pardon almost 4 months ago in April 2022 by the National Council of State (NCS) and President Muhammadu Buhari alongside 159 convict. And since the pronouncement of their release, they were still being held in detention until their final release on August 8, 2022.

Among stakeholders on the visit was the Governor's wife, Regina Lalong, Senator representing Plateau Southern Zone, Senator Nora Daudu'ut, House of Representatives members, Rt. Hon. Longgap Koomsol and Rt. Hon. Yusuf Gagdi, Head of Service of the State, Engr. Sunday Hyat, Secretary to the Plateau State Government, Prof. Danladi Atu, Commissioners, party stalwarts.

Dariye who was in company of his wife and former First Lady Valentina was so elated to receive the guests at their Maitama home Abuja and with the humorous character the former is known for, he displayed funny gestures and comments on some of the personalities as they were being introduced to him by the Director of Protocol, Mr. Joel Dimka.

Dariye told the visitors that he was overwhelmed by the visit and went further to appreciate Governor Lalong for offering prayers and support to him during one of the greatest trying periods of his life.

He expressed sadness that while he was away, he had lost his dad who was gruesomely murdered by kidnappers, his uncle, and other loved ones but was however grateful to God for



coming out of prison alive.

On his political ambition, he said contrary to rumours being peddled around by overzealous people, he is not nursing any political ambition. He advised the governor to do his best for the state and remember that he cannot finish everything. And for all things he does in good faith, if he is not appreciated now, posterity will judge him when he leaves office in 2023.

He said he had learnt positive lessons from his difficult moments and bitter experience and promised to support the Lalong led administration to the expiration of its lifespan.

The delegation after leaving the Dariyes moved to the residence of Rev. Jolly Nyame. The former governor also displayed great excitement as he received the Plateau people. He appreciated Governor Lalong for being of assistance to him and his family especially during their trying time of need.

He described Lalong as a 'brother' who showed him love when he needed it the most, assuring that he will not forget such a great gesture in a hurry. Nyame then promised to visit Plateau State to show appreciation to the people for their show of care and concern with numerous encouraging visits while in his challenging period.

Nyame also thanked Lalong for working to secure their pardon and thanked God for making the President to consider clemency for them. He also thanked President Muhammadu Buhari for considering and granting them state pardon.

While praying for solutions on the present insecurity bedeviling the nation, Nyame prayed for peace and tranquility in Plateau, Taraba and the entire country.

Lalong had at both residences appreciated God for their release, freedom and for showing mercy on the two former governors.

He said he had taken the move to lead the stakeholders to come and pray with them on behalf of Plateau State and appreciated the president for his the favour.

Lalong also urged them to treasure the lessons learnt from the experience, and prayed that God will continue to use them for his purpose and glory, and for the development of their states, based on their bulk of experience.



News

Troops neutralise scores of terrorists

TROOPS of Operation Forest Sanity have neutralised scores of terrorists after a fierce attack around the Galbi Forest in Chikun local government area of Kaduna State.

This is coming three days after same troops neutralised many of the terrorists in the area.

According to a report by Eons Intelligence, the terrorists were said to have returned to the same spot looking for the dead bodies of their fellow fighters earlier killed on Saturday, by troops, when they suffered another defeat.

"Troops of Operation Forest Sanity neutralised scores of terrorists after a fierce fire attack as they return searching to pack the dead bodies of terrorists earlier neutralised by troops around the forest in Galbi, Chikun Local

Government Area, Kaduna State", the report read.

The Kaduna State government had on Saturday, said security forces recorded a major success in the ongoing Operation Forest Sanity against terrorists in the State, as scores of bandits were neutralised by ground troops and air assets.

Commissioner, Ministry of Internal Security and Home Affairs, Samuel Aruwan, in a statement on Saturday, said the terrorists were killed in Galbi, Chikun LGA of the State.

Aruwan said the security report was conveyed in an operational feedback to the Kaduna State government from the security agencies.

He further explained that two General Purpose Machine Guns (GPMGs), three AK47 rifles and

seven motorcycles, were recovered from the enclave of the neutralised bandits.

The statement said: "According to the feedback, troops of the Operation Forest Sanity supported by assets of the Nigerian Air Force conducted clearance operations on an identified terrorist enclave in Galbi general area.

"During their advance, the security forces crossed River Kaduna and ran into stiff resistance from the insurgents. After a fierce firefight, scores of terrorists were confirmed neutralised as the military forces prevailed."

The State government expressed excitement at the feedback, and praised the troops for their tenacity "in this significant victory against the enemy forces."

The government thanked the troops, Air Force crews, police personnel, intelligence operatives, and local vigilante members, who contributed to the success of the mission, even as it urged the security forces to increase the momentum and vanquish the terrorists for good.

Aruwan added that troops will continue the clearance operations in the general area, and other identified areas of interest across the State.

"The Kaduna State Government hereby encourages residents to volunteer useful information on activities or movement of terrorists to security agencies. Citizens may also contact the Kaduna State Security Operations on 0903400060 or 08170189999", the statement added.



Irabor

MEMBERSHIP of the All Progressive Congress (APC) in Gombe State got a boost on Saturday when 616 card carrying members of the opposition Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) switched loyalty to the APC.

At the reception ceremony for the PDP decampees in Dukku Local Government Area of the state, Abubakar Umar-Goro, Gombe State Secretary of the APC, said the large number of people being received into the party showed there is no hope for any opposition parties in the state come 2023.

According to him, with the calibre of decampees received in the LGA, the APC in Gombe has "been further fortified and this means that our chances in 2023 are getting brighter."

He added that this was possible because the APC led Government of Muhammad Inuwa Yahaya had entrenched good governance in the state. Speaking for the decampees, a former PDP chieftain in the Local Government, Alhaji Kwairanga Dukku, who led the 616 PDP members from different wards within the Local Government, attributed their decision to join APC to the good and purpose-driven leadership style of Governor Inuwa Yahaya.

Those who joined him into the APC included women and

Gombe APC sure of victory, receives decampees

From WILLIE ATTAH, Gombe

youth leaders in the area.

A member of the PDP Elders' Forum in Dukku LGA, Alhaji Bappah Maru, while giving reasons for joining the APC said the efforts of the present administration in addressing water challenge in Dukku convinced him to join the APC.

Maru said their decision to join the APC was to appreciate the Governor Inuwa Yahaya-led administration for its people-oriented policies towards improving the wellbeing of the people of the local government and the state.

Vice chairman of the APC in Dukku LG, Alhaji Yahya Kole, thanked Governor Yahaya for delivering on his mandate to transform the state. He added that is why we have become a party that everyone wants to join and we will keep receiving decampees as more are coming."

In an interview with newsmen shortly after the event, Governor Inuwa Yahaya said the large

number being received showed that his administration was meeting the expectations of the people.

Governor Yahaya, who was represented by the state's Commissioner of Finance and Economic Development, Muhammad Gambo Magaji, said the addition would add value to the APC.

According to him, the addition would encourage his administration to deliver more dividends of democracy towards improving the wellbeing and welfare of the state.

He urged supporters of the party to remain strong and united going into the 2023 general election. He pointed that the unity of the party must be preserved by all stakeholders in the party.

He said all members of the party would be treated fairly in line with the principles of fairness and justice which the APC was known for.

"We are all brothers with equal rights in the party and everyone's voice would be heard and we will carry everyone along in the task of developing the state," he said.

Sports

Ukrainian Premier League set to restart



One of the football pitch hit by Russia's missiles

On 22 February, Sydorenko's team, Metalist 1925 Kharkiv, were taking part in a regular training session during the Ukrainian Premier League's winter break. Two days later, everything stopped. Russia had invaded.

Now, six months into the war, Ukraine is preparing to resume its domestic football competitions - despite the constant danger the ongoing conflict brings.

The decision to cancel the remainder of the 2021-22 football season was finally taken in April. Shakhtar Donetsk were leading by two points with just over half of the matches played.

In July came word that the new campaign would go ahead from 23 August - Ukraine's Day of the National Flag - following an order from president Volodymyr Zelensk.

"Restarting football is a big step for the country," says Andriy Pavelko, head of the Ukrainian Football Association.

"It's a sign to the world that Ukraine can and will win. It's also a sign to society that we are confident."

Since Russia's invasion, many teams have relocated to cities such as Lviv in the west of the country - considered safer than other regions that have been more heavily targeted. Dynamo Kyiv are among those who plan to play in the capital or its surroundings.

Sydorenko's team have been training in Uzhhorod, on the border with Slovakia, about 1,300km from the city they call home. Parts of Kharkiv have been totally devastated by the war, with residents **likening it to Chernobyl**.

"When the players met up again we talked about everything - where everyone was when the war started, what they were doing," says Sydorenko, 33, who in February fled to western Ukraine with his girlfriend. They were married soon

after. "Now, we are working hard at training. We want to make our fans happy and win every match."

Ukrainian FA president Pavelko says discussions are continuing with the Ministry of Defence over how best to hold matches this season. For the moment it's expected spectators will not be able to attend. Approved stadiums will be equipped with air-raid sirens and bomb shelters.

"It's good that all leagues will play. This will raise everyone's spirits," he says.

Anna Myronchuk, who plays for Dynamo Kyiv's women's side, says her team is thrilled by the prospect of football's return. She says it helps takes their minds off the war - if only for a while.

"For every player it's a big joy to get back on the field, to play, to score a goal, to win," she says.

"But then we get back to our phones, look at the news and see what has happened."

After Russia's invasion, a number of Myronchuk's team-mates were forced to live in a bunker for two weeks.

"No-one knew what would happen to football," says Dynamo's women's coach Volodymyr Petrenko.

"But our director did not abandon us, he paid us our wage. We had lessons on Zoom and gave the players individual tasks. We had a yoga teacher, but of course training alone is not the same."

Over the months that followed, Dynamo's men's team - plus Shakhtar and the national side - played a series of friendlies outside the country to raise aid money in a 'Global Tour for Peace'.

"During the first matches some of us cried after the national anthem," says Shakhtar goalkeeper Anatoily Trubin, who has twice played for Ukraine.

"Shakhtar raised me. I'm always

happy when I put the Shakhtar shirt on."

Shakhtar have already spent eight years in exile because of conflict, having been forced to leave the eastern city of Donetsk when fighting broke out with pro-Russian separatists in 2014. Donetsk is now on the front line of the war with Russia.

As they were leading the league table when last season was cancelled, Shakhtar have already earned a place in the group stage of this year's Champions League, with Dynamo hoping to join them, while SC Dnipro-1 have a chance of reaching the Europa League.

Uefa requires Ukrainian sides' home ties in European competition be held outside the country - Dynamo will play the first leg of their qualification play-off against Benfica in Poland on Wednesday.

But while some teams are already back in the thick of it, two of last year's top-flight clubs are unlikely to return soon.

Desna Chernihiv were seventh in

the table when Russia invaded in February. A city in the north of Ukraine close to the border with Belarus, Chernihiv had by March been completely surrounded by Russian troops.

The city was besieged night and day, with tens of thousands of people trapped. Some described civilian buildings and residential areas as being **deliberately targeted**.

Desna's home ground - formerly known as the Yuri Gagarin Stadium after the famous Soviet cosmonaut - was badly damaged. Members of the coaching team took up arms and joined in the city's defence, while the club helped raise funds for thermal imaging equipment and drones. The Russians withdrew in early April but there is much work to be done to rebuild.

Oleksandr Drambayev was playing for Mariupol FC when the invasion happened. The city was left in ruins after almost three months of relentless assault and is now in Russian hands.

"Mariupol FC doesn't exist now," says the 21-year-old defender, who was on loan from Shakhtar.

Drambayev was overseas when Russian tanks first rolled over the border in February. Just 15 minutes before boarding a flight back to Ukraine, he was told his country had been invaded.

Other team-mates started sending messages saying that missiles had struck buildings near their homes. Reality hit. He would not be going back. He was told to find a new team and is now on loan at Belgian side ZulteWaregem. But he still thinks fondly of his former club.

"I miss Mariupol with all my heart," he says.

"I'd fallen in love with the city. We had a beautiful pitch, it was just recently done with new grass. I brought my Mariupol shirt here and wear it."

"It's an act of bravery to restart football in Ukraine. I'm happy about it, but at the same time, I'm very worried."



Sports



D'Tigers

FIBA World Cup Qualifier: Brown invites 15 to camp

AHEAD of the fourth window of the 2023 FIBA World Cup qualifier, the D'Tigers coach Mike Brown has invited players to the camp, BSNsports.com.ng has gathered.

D'Tigers currently sitting fourth in group E of the qualifier will hope to hit the ground running to secure their place in the competition next.

Josh Okogie of the Phoenix Suns, Miye Oni and Ike

Nwamu of BC Samara of Russia headline the list of the invited players.

Chimezie Metu who was part of the last qualifier in Rwanda also made the list alongside Uche Iroegbu, Michael Okiki among others.

The team's opening game will be against the host Cote d'Ivoire before facing Guinea and Angola later in the qualifier which is slated for August 26th-28th.

The 2023 FIBA World Cup

will take place between August 25th to September 10th in Japan, Indonesia and the Philippines

Full list

Josh Okogie, Like Nwamu, Chimzie Metu, Ike Iroegbu, Ibe Abuch-Agu, Michael Gbinije and Armanze Egezeke. Others are Mathias Iduh, Christian Mekowulu, Abdumalik Abu, Miye Oni, Michael Okiki, Michael Oguine, Ben Emelogu and Keith Omoerah.

GANON Baker, an international high-performer basketball trainer has called for more technical basketball academies in Nigeria to raise the standard of the game.

Baker made the call on Monday in Abuja at a week-long training clinic for Nigerian coaches and players organised by Sports Renaissance Africa Partners (SRAP).

The renowned U.S certified coach with over three decades of experience in the game, stressed the need for technical and systematic coaching to nurture the abundant basketball talents in the country.

He said his visit to Nigeria was to teach kids, players and coaches the rudiments of the game and how to win basketball championships.

"I see a lot of talents in Nigeria but they are unpolished, they are inexperienced, they are not secure, unbelievable talents, but it comes down to coaches, to nurture them that is why we are here.

"If you have good coaches, you are going to have good players, if you don't have good players may be coaches don't give them enough information.

"My experience with African players is that they're very

Baker wants more basketball academies



Ganon Baker in a basketball coaching clinic

humble and hungry to win," he said.

Baker said with proper coaching and exposure, a lot more Nigerian players can make it to the U.S National Basketball Association (NBA).

Earlier, the Chief Executive Officer of SRAP, RelindisMbu said the clinic is aimed at leveraging on the wealth of tactical experience of Baker to help develop young talents and Coaches in Nigeria.

"The real goal of our project is to give tactical training to coaches so they can transfer it

and build eco system of basketball in the world, Africa and Nigeria.

"The end goal is technical expertise that will bring our athletes to international standard so that they can excel locally and internationally in any where they are," she said.

Baker is one of the most respected premier basketball skill coaches in the World, he is renowned with working with the NBA, WNBA, CBA, Euro League, NCAA, NJCAA, U Sports among others.

I am aiming for Olympic gold – George

Patience George, Commonwealth Silver Medalist and Gold Medalist in



George

the All African Games said she has her eyes in winning Olympic gold before quitting the sports that brought her fame.

Newsnow said that, George, who placed 6th in the last Commonwealth Games in Birmingham, stated this in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on Monday in Calabar.

George, who is currently the 400m title holder in the National Sports Festival (NSF), said she also aimed to break the Africa record before quitting the sport.

The athlete, who spoke on a wide range of issues affecting Nigerian athletes in big events, attributed her success story so far to her passion for sports.

George, with a personal best of 50:71 seconds in 400m, said she remained optimistic of breaking the 48:54secs Africa record set by Namibia's teenager, Christine Mboma, as she was already working towards achieving the feat.

She, however, called for support from government and corporate organisations for her to achieve her dream. According to her, "All that I achieved thus far is majorly through personal efforts and

nothing more.

"My state, Cross River, has been the most disappointing of all. There is no form of support coming from my state as regards my trainings and other logistics.

"As for the Federal Government, it is only when there is a major championship that some of us get to see and feel its presence.

"Personally, I feel Nigeria will do better if the government does not wait for competitions before remembering their athletes," she said.

She urged the governments to always ensure that they put the athletes in a competitive mood even without any competition in sight.

George attributed Nigeria's inability to win a medal in the women 400m race to the absence of Imabong Uko in Birmingham.

She praised the Federal Government for its support for athletes at the just-concluded Commonwealth Games.

Meanwhile, the Cross River Government has denied that it does not support its athletes.

Emmanuel Elom, Chairman, the Cross River Sports Commission, said Gov. Ben Ayade's government had always made it a point of duty to offer support to athletes from the state whenever the need arose.

According to him, the athlete must notify the government in writing about such competition because there are processes of making this support available.

"During the last Olympics in Tokyo, we offered support to athletes who are from the state because they notified the government," he said.

NGO tasks FG on development of para-sports

The Gabify Initiative, a sports Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO), has tasked the Federal Government to put in place policies that will fast track the development of para-sports in Nigeria.

Ifeanyi Amaobi, Founder of the NGO, told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) that para-sports was a veritable platform to engage people with disability and win laurels for Nigeria.

Amaobi who commended the feat of Nigerian para-athletes to the just concluded Commonwealth Games in Birmingham and the Tokyo Olympics, stressed the need for more attention for them.

"When you talk of the

para-athletics in Nigeria, so far so good they have made giant strides and they are doing good pushing so really well to conquer the world.

"We had huge representation in the para-athletic games both in Commonwealth and the Olympics.

"We have a strong community and bright ideas but there is still a lot that can be done for their training and welfare," he said.

He stressed the need for the Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports Development to collaborate more with the private sector in developing para-sports from the grassroots across the country.

"So far, government has

been helping to sponsor various international games but we will love it if the government and the private sector can collaborate to increase the outreach and awareness.

"There is need for government to help train people living with disability and also create more awareness at the grassroots so as to be able to harness their talents," he added.

Amaobi therefore called for the immediate inclusion of para-sports into the bi-annual National Sports Festival and the National Youth Games.

He described para-soccer in particular as a sport Nigeria is endowed with immense talent, and can rule the world, if the talents are properly

harnessed and the right structures/facilities put in place.

The Gabify Initiative CEO said the foundation would continue to work with government and relevant stakeholders to ensure capacity building for people living with disability.

NAN reports that the NGO helps para-athletes to achieve full potential in their chosen sports and careers by providing training, equipment, coaching, counseling and final assistance to the athletes.

The boards of six para-sports federations were recently inaugurated by the Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports Development with the mandate to reposition the sports



Nigerian Paralympians with Minister of Youth and Sports Development, Sunday Dare.

Sports

Heartland petitions Dare, wants NFF to confirm club

HEARTLAND FC management has taken its case to the Honourable Sports Minister Sunday Dare in the Aiteo Cup crisis.

The Naze Millionaires in a statement said it wants the Sports Minister to wade in and ensure that she is not unjustly made to go and replay the quarter-final match against Katsina United which had been won and lost on the field of play.

The NFF had after its Abuja meeting last week surprisingly inserted a clause in which it said Heartland and Katsina would be reimbursed with #5 million should they choose to replay, a clause which they have rejected. The club said the only way the NFF would clear any doubt of foul play is to make an unambiguous statement confirming that Heartland is through to the semi-final while awaiting the quarter-final matches billed for August 20.

"The only way the NFF would reassure us that they are not up to anything



Dare

sinister is to make it clear that Heartland is through to the semifinal."

Heartland's Acting General Manager, Promise Nwachukwu in the release stressed that no club should be given an undue advantage in the Aiteo FA Cup race, especially now that the competition is in its crucial stage, even as the sponsors, fans, stakeholders and the Nigerian football community

are watching to see how the oldest cup competition in the country is being organized.

Recall that clubs in the top flight staged a protest owing to the undemocratic manner in which Kwara United was unduly rewarded with a continental ticket at the expense of the winner of the Aiteo Cup.

Heartland is demanding that justice be done stressing that it will be unfair to change the goal post in the course of the game.

MANCHESTER United could let Cristiano Ronaldo leave Old Trafford during the current transfer window amid concerns about how the striker's mood is affecting morale in the camp.

Manager Erik ten Hag's public stance has been that Ronaldo, 37, is not for sale and is part of his plans.

However, senior figures have been alarmed at how quickly the overwhelmingly positive feelings around the camp generated during a successful pre-season tour to Thailand and Australia have disappeared.

The Portuguese has a year left on the contract he signed when he returned to the club from Juventus less than 12 months ago. but wants United to let him leave this summer.

While successive Premier League defeats to Brighton and Brentford have clearly shaken United badly, part of the overall picture has been put down to Ronaldo.

The Portuguese is said to be a negative presence at the club, hardly communicates with his team-mates in the canteen and has made no secret of his desire to move

Man Utd could leave Ronaldo in transfer window



Ronaldo

away.

Sources have told BBC Sport they fear there will be no change to United's current issues until Ronaldo has gone and there is a belief amongst some that even if the forward left and there was no replacement, the general uplift would trigger a significant improvement in overall performances.

It is this issue Ten Hag, chief executive Richard Arnold and football director John Murtough are wrestling with before the transfer window closing on 1 September.

Winless United are bottom of the Premier League and play Liverpool on Monday 22 August.

Speaking on Sky Sports on Monday, former United defender Gary Neville said: "There is a massive decision

to make on Ronaldo. He is obviously not happy, the problem is if they lose him there is nothing left in the goalscoring part of the pitch. I genuinely think if he leaves and they don't bring people in they could finish bottom half of the table."

Five-time Ballon d'Or winner Ronaldo was United's top scorer last season - and third in the Premier League - but the club finished sixth and missed out on Champions League qualification.

Chelsea ended their interest in the player last month, while he has also been linked with Bayern Munich and Atletico Madrid.

Atletico fans have urged their club not to get involved in discussions around signing Ronaldo.

U-20 World Cup: Falconets beat Korea, qualify for quarter-finals

NIGERIA'S U20 girls, Falconets have reached the last eight of the 10th FIFA U20 Women's World Cup finals ongoing in Costa Rica after another gutsy performance saw them collect all three points from Korea Republic in a 1-0 win in Alajuela.

The top-of-the-table clash was highly anticipated as both teams knew a win would take them to the tournament's quarter-finals, both having won their respective first games of the tournament. Korea Republic were top of the log on goal difference, having defeated Canada 2-0, after the Falconets had beaten France 1-0 on Friday morning.

There was little to choose between the two teams until midfielder Esther

Onyenezide's fierce curling shot flew past Yoonji Do for the only goal of the match in the 83rd minute.

Hayeon Mu missed from a corner kick and Garam Chun hit the upright from a free-kick, but Nigeria managed to keep things tight at the back even as energetic Mercy Idoko, Onyenezide and BashiratAmoo worked tirelessly in the middle.

In the 54th minute, Onyenezide's rasping shot from the right side was parried away by Do, and 10 minutes later, it was the turn of OyonoOmini, in goal for Nigeria, to parry away a fierce 25 -yard shot unleashed by Eunyoung Lee.

Effervescent midfielder Onyenezide would have the last word, curling a fierce shot past Do with only seven

minutes to go to send Africa's best team into the quarter-finals.

The Falconets still have to play Canada in the early hours of Thursday, but they

Bayelsa United refuse to return Aiteo/FA Cup

THE drama that has continued to evolve in the 2022 Federation Cup sponsored by Aiteo Group has taking another twist on Sunday as Champions Bayelsa United have allegedly refused to return the trophy they won last year, Bestchoicesports.com.ng can report.

The Yenagoa-based Nigeria National League, NNL side won the 2021 Aiteo Cup on August 8, after defeating NPFL side Nasarawa United via penalty shoot-out following a 2-2 draw at the end of extra-time.

Played at the Samuel Ogbemudia stadium in Benin City, Edo State, Bayelsa United

surely would already be looking at possible quarter-final opponents from Group D.

Cup holders Japan, The Netherlands, USA and Africa's other flagbearers Ghana make up Group D.



Bayelsa United

won the penalty shootout 4-3 to win the trophy for the first

time ever in their history.

However, more than a year after, with controversy surrounding the continuation of the current competition, Bayelsa United have reportedly refused to return the trophy claiming that it had not received the #25, 000, 000 (twenty-five million naira) prize meant for the cup.

According to OsasuObayiuwaana, the 2021 champions refused to return the trophy to the NFF over the latter's failure to pay the prize money.

"Is Bayelsa United, winner of last year's Nigeria Federation Cup sponsored by Aiteo Group, refusing to return the trophy to the NFF because it is yet to be paid the prize money io #25 million#

Findings by Best Choice Sports indicate that the Nigeria Football Federation, NFF has not paid the champions their prize money. A competent source in Bayelsa United told our

correspondent that the club have not been paid their prize money for winning the 2021 Aiteo/Federation Cup.

The source who spoke in confidence denied knowledge of the "refusal to return the cup" however stated that the NFF three weeks ago requested for the club's bank account details adding that till date they have not heard from them.

"Am not aware of the refusal to return the trophy but what I can tell you is that they requested for our account about three weeks now. I believe that this money has been paid but someone held on to it," the source said.

The 2022 Aiteo/FA Cup has been engulfed in controversies as clubs recently boycotted the quarter-final matches. However, following a truce brokered between the affected clubs and the NFF, the competition is expected to continue on Saturday this week.



Falconets



Quest



writer

JOSIAH MUTIHIR

FRAGMENT

"The first republic politicians were selfless politicians, but over the years, politicians have gone from bad to worse and the next decade can only be imagined. The tactics politicians now use to win elections or stay in power is nothing but a panacea to politics with bitterness. It was Alhaji Ibrahim Waziri of the then Great Nigeria Peoples Party (GNPP) who for-saw the evil of politics with bitterness, cautioned fellow politicians and advised on 'politics without bitterness' between 1977 and 1978. Political campaign was not a do-or-die matter, and that there was life after politics. Elections were to be won or lost in good faith. He likened genuine campaigns to sports or competitions where contestants win gold, silver, bronze or nothing at all. He saw politics with bitterness coming with full force. Other Nigerians did not see it. He would have committed suicide, if alive today, to see what politics is today – politics of 'MUST win' - politics with bitterness; or is it politics of bitterness?"

PROF. JOSIAH MUTIHIR

Politics without bitterness: Moving against the tide

YEARS have rolled past since anything other than ideal politics has been the practice. One grew up in the sixties, observed the practice of politics - something to be admired. Politicians we saw in the sixties were humane, cared for the populace they ruled, and we lined up the streets on both sides of the road waving the national flag as they slowly drove past in open vehicles, with them in turn waving us. They built schools, employed qualified teachers to teach us, and there were no industrial disputes as salaries were paid. Good desks with drawers and locks were provided to sit on and to write. We had everything given to us free of charge like textbooks, notebooks, novels and so on. We sat in classrooms well built and roofed, with large windows for good ventilation. Thirty of us were in a class. We knew each other very well though very young and tender. Our only contribution to our education was to trek to the school, spend the whole day hungry and trek back home in the evening. Our parents paid no school fees. If school fees had been introduced, the writer would not have had the privilege of attending school and same for most of my peers and contemporaries. When I imagine what we had those days, and what our primary and secondary schools, even the universities had as support for education, tears flow from my eyes, onto the cheeks and onto my clothes even today at the age of over six decades. Yes, the old still cry, and yes they cry for the country Nigeria.

The first republic politicians were selfless politicians, but over the years, politicians have gone from bad to worse and the next decade can only be imagined. The tactics politicians now use to win elections or stay in power is nothing but a panacea to politics with bitterness.

It was Alhaji Ibrahim Waziri of the then Great Nigeria Peoples Party (GNPP) who for-saw the evil of politics with bitterness, cautioned fellow politicians and advised on 'politics without bitterness' between 1977 and 1978. Political campaign was not a do-or-die matter, and that there was life after politics. Elections were to be won or lost in good faith. He likened genuine campaigns to sports or competitions where contestants win gold, silver, bronze or nothing at all. He saw politics with



bitterness coming with full force. Other Nigerians did not see it. He would have committed suicide, if alive today, to see what politics is today – politics of 'MUST win' - politics with bitterness; or is it politics of bitterness?

So how did we get to this frightening state of affairs? It has been a gradual process of cumulative, inter-related or a combination of numerous factors, amplified in Nigerian democracy with each passing year.

Ethnicity, regional sentiments: It is clear that the first *coup-de-tat* had ethnic and regional colorations. Ethnicity has been clearly demonstrated in subsequent regimes where at one point in time, all service chiefs in the country were from one ethnic and/or religious group.

Religion: Down the line, religion has taken the centre stage in political discourse in Nigeria. This has been seen clearly in the executive and legislative arms of government. Employments are no more based on merit but on region, ethnicity and religion.

Winner takes all: It is no news that the winner of an elective position goes 'home' with all the

bounties of the office and much more. All others become beggars at the table of the winner. The same thing goes with the political parties. The party takes all there is to take even where there are experts in the other camp that can better deliver the goods to the country. Gone are the days where political parties extended a hand of friendship to other parties in appointments into vital offices in the country.

Absolute power of elected politicians: Power they say corrupts, and corrupts absolutely. This is seen nowhere else in practical terms than in Nigeria. Unfortunately, measures are in place to checkmate absolute powers of every political office holder but this is not done for 'unknown reasons'.

Absolute control of available resources: This is seen mostly at the state and local government levels. The accounting officer controls all dollars, naira and kobo that come into the coffers of government. This consolidates the power of the politician be it the governor or chairman. I remember vividly when there was a transition of leadership from the military to politicians. One of the first things the incoming governor did was to

take over payments of emoluments of all workers in the state. Vouchers of workers were transferred to government house and all salary alerts were from there and not the organization that had and oversaw the workers. The accounts departments and staff were now rendered jobless and idle in the name of controlling expenditure. This was not true. It was a frantic effort to control funds as money is power and everyone had to bow down low to get it. In other climes, it is a ploy to gain the loyalty of all subordinates. The same thing was replicated at the federal government level where all payments of remunerations came from the federal ministry and not the organization or institution. I am reminded it is still ongoing.

Corruption: Nigeria prides itself as the 150th most corrupt country in the world, a fall out from Nigerian democratic process. With each electioneering cycle, corruption worsens in all quarters.

High cost of eligibility for elective positions: The cost of 'intention to contest', and the 'form' is highly segregative to say the least. All persons unable to get this sum breed bitterness

against the "rich". It must be stated clearly here that effective leadership/governance has nothing to do with being wealthy. Examples abound to show that the rich are bad leaders as they live in the aura of affluence and totally forget the populace they govern. They cannot imagine someone going without food for the whole day. The horrendous cost of the party delegate system of electing party flag bearers is another issue worth addressing.

Extremely high and baseless wages of politicians: The emoluments of the legislators, political office holders, fixed by them, are at variance with the realities on ground. This immediately prompts bitterness amongst fellow contenders, and the public in general.

Imposition of candidates by god fathers and incumbent office holders: This creates bitterness in the polity. This is usually painful and results in decamping to other political parties and 'protest voting' for other candidates at the time of elections.

Servants turned into 'the served': One has heard too often claims of prospective political office holders to serve the people if elected. This is usually just rhetoric. As soon as the deed is done, the winners metamorphose into demi-gods and seek to be served or worshipped by the electorate instead. Anyone failing to prostrate before the elected politician is considered an enemy, or being disloyal with dire disproportionate consequences.

Politization of civil service and public service jobs and positions: Unfortunately, this has become the order of the day causing confusion, disaffection, dissatisfaction and enmity within the rank and file. Junior officers are perched over senior ones and the rest is known like incompetence, indiscipline, poor performance, bigotry - to mention but a few, become the order of the day.

The list of factors fueling politics with bitterness is increasing daily as politicians become more desperate to occupy elective positions to satisfy their appetite of absolute power, control of all resources and to be worshipped and served by the same public that elected them into positions.

Mutihir is Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology, University of Jos.