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TRUTH EXALTS A NATION

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2023 election: Media and accurate political reportage

The Independent National Electoral Commission, (INEC) in Nigeria recently had course to debunk an erroneous media reportage indicating that the body had resented its decision to continue with its earlier arrangement of conducting the 2023 general election via the electrical collation of results. While debunking the reports, INEC further noted that it had never decided at any point in time to renege from its earlier arrangement by resorting to the manual process of results collation as reported by the said media organization.

2023: Politicians waste billions on political meetings abroad



Nigerian hospitals lament insufficient personnel





The Edo mortuary saga

Nigerians are currently going through perilous times given the wave of criminality, banditry and ritual killings taking place in the society. Every day, horrifying developments occur and trust has become a scarce commodity that can hardly be found even in holy places like Churches and Mosques. The days are evil, as forces of the kingdom of darkness seem to be spreading their tentacles in all directions.

The recent gory and unpleasant discovery of about twenty mummified bodies in an alleged "ritualist's den" along Asoro slop, Ekehuan road of Benin City, Edo State on August 17, 2022, is not only shocking but incomprehensible. The corpses were said to have been kept in particular positions close to the wall, with others in lying position in an uncompleted building that could hardly be regarded as a morgue.

Indeed, this ugly episode has raised a lot of questions begging for answers. How could an uncompleted building be used as a mortuary with no facilities required for a modern-day morgue. The alleged presence of shrines all over the places with fresh blood of animals dotting the area makes it even more suspicious.

This episode if true, should serve as a poser to both the government, the security agencies and, indeed, to the common Nigerian living in the society. The concept of owning of private mortuaries by individuals and running them as business ventures is a welcome development that will promote economic development. There is nothing wrong for individuals to own these types of businesses, so long as the needed licenses and protocols are granted by government. One of the obvious advantages is that it helps in decongesting the mortuaries owned by government hospitals in addition to offering employment opportunities to many job seekers.

As good as this type of business may be, government must not only issue the license but must frequently do the necessary checks and inspection of available facilities that should meet up with international standard. The character of persons involved in this business and the availability of the needed facilities and manpower should serve as vital factors before any approval is granted. We live in a time where ritual killings and fetish practices are on the rise in our society and caution must be the watch word, not to mistake ritualists for real mortuary owners.

It is not only the security agencies that should be on the watch for criminal elements in the society, but people in every community owe it a responsibility to be on the watch. There should be no public or private morgue that can be located anywhere that the immediate people in the community will not know about. Even at that is not enough, should be raised when suspicious objects are found around such facilities

It behooves on the police to quickly and thoroughly investigate to confirm whether any part of the mummified bodies in the Edo saga were removed for ritual purposes. The outcome of such investigation should also be made public with punitive measures taken to serve as deterrent to others operating same in yet to be identified places.

While it is gratifying to note that the Edo State government under the leadership of Governor Obaseki had acted swiftly by giving the police in the state a seven-day ultimatum to unravel the truth of this issue, Nigerians are watching and waiting patiently for the outcome of such an investigation and hope it would not be swept under the carpet. The security agents should henceforth also beam their searchlight on the operations of mortuary operators, as nothing can be left to chance since the days are evil.

While Nigerian hospitals continue to suffer from insufficient doctors and other health personnel, over 13,000 healthcare workers left the country for the UK in the past year.

A new report by the UK government showed that the 13,609 Nigerian healthcare workers granted working visas within the period are second only to the 42,966 from India.

According to the UK immigration report released, Nigeria is second only to Indians in the number of visas granted for the 'Skilled Worker - Health & Care' with 14 per cent (13,609) of the total.

India has the highest in this category with 45 per cent (42,966) of the total while The Philippines is third with 11 per cent (11,021).

However, it is not only healthcare workers that are leaving Nigeria to work in the UK.

Nigerians are also the second highest recipients of the 'worker visa', second only to Indians.

In the year ending June 2022, Nigerians made up 15,772 of the 'worker' visas granted; a 303 per cent increase when compared to the 3,918 worker visas granted in 2019.

India, which ranked first, received 102,981 work visas grants. The Philippines ranked third with 12,826; Zimbabwe fourth with 8,378 and the United States fifth with 7,748.

According to the report by the UK Home Office, "in the year ending June 2022, 'Worker' visa grants increased by 96 per cent (+108,794) to 222,349 compared with 2019, and now represent 67 per cent of all work visas."

It added that there were 87,266 grants of 'Skilled Worker' visas and an additional 96,249 grants of 'Skilled Worker - Health & Care'

Nigerian hospitals lament insufficient personnel



Dr. Ehanire

visas.

The top three nationals granted 'Skilled Worker' visas are Indians, accounting for 39 per cent (34,186), followed by United States nationals with 6 per cent (5,637) and South Africans with 4 per cent (3,578).

"Grants for 'Skilled Worker' visas have grown every quarter since they were first introduced in December 2020, and together represent over half (55%) of all work visas granted in the latest year," the report said.

There has been public outcry on the mass exodus of health workers from Nigeria including from Vice President Yemi Osinbajo.

In January, the Medical and Dental Consultants Association of Nigeria (MDCAN) lamented the exit of more than 100 of its members who left the country in 2021.

The president of the association, Victor Makanjuola, while speaking at a briefing in Abuja said the medical officials left the services of

17 tertiary health institutions in the country.

Mr Makanjuola said the mass exodus of medical and dental consultants to more developed countries has brought significant disruptions to Nigeria's health care ecosystem.

A 2017 survey by the Nigerian Polling organisation (NOIPolls) in partnership with Nigeria Health Watch, revealed that about 88 per cent of medical doctors in Nigeria were seeking work opportunities abroad at the time.

As of 2020, Nigeria had a doctor-patient ratio of 1:2,753, in sharp contrast to the World Health Organisation (WHO)'s minimum recommended ratio of 1:400-600.

However, in 2019, Chris Ngige, Nigeria's Minister of Labour, said Nigeria had 'surplus doctors' and he was, thus, not worried about Nigerian doctors leaving the country to go practice in other climates.

2023: Politicians waste billions on political meetings abroad

Nigerian politicians, especially state governors, have recently adopted Europe as venues of their political meetings towards the 2023 general elections

As Nigerians groan under the nation's severe economic crunch, their politicians and top public office holders, especially state governors, have taken to flying to Europe for their horse-trading over next year's general elections.

Since the end of party primaries in early June, some politicians have flown to different European countries almost weekly for strategic meetings and negotiations over the presidential election.

At least three of such meetings were held in London this week, all of which involved Rivers State Governor Nyesom Wike who is leading a rebellion in the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), arising from the nomination of Atiku Abubakar as the presidential candidate of the party and his choice of Delta State Governor Ifeanyi Okowa as his running mate.

The latest saw Mr Wike and his associates in the PDP, including Oyo State Governor Seyi Makinde, Benue State Governor Samuel Ortom and Abia State Governor Okezie Ikpeazu, meeting with Atiku over dinner at the pricy Park Lane Carlton Hotel in London.

This came three days after a meeting between representatives of Atiku and Mr Wike's group in Port Harcourt ended in a deadlock.

The guests at the London dinner included Adamawa State Governor Ahmadu Fintiri, who had led Atiku's delegation to the failed reconciliation meeting of Friday in

Port Harcourt.

Before their dinner with Atiku, Mr Wike and his friends also on Thursday in London met with former President Olusegun Obasanjo and the presidential candidate of Labour Party, Peter Obi.

That meeting came after the group had met with the presidential candidate of the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC), Bola Tinubu, on Monday in the same city.

Before the latest series of meetings in London, Mr Wike's group was in Turkey in June for what an aide of the governor described as a strategic session, as the crisis between the winner and runner up in the PDP presidential primaries blossomed.

PREMIUM TIMES reported how Mr Wike had shunned an emissary of Atiku, Adamu Waziri, whom the presidential candidate had deployed to the Eastern European country to seek audience with the Rivers governor.

Since June Mr Wike and his associates have been seen in different European countries several times. But they are not the only Nigerian politicians involved in the new political tourism escapades.

Mr Tinubu was hosting political meetings in the United Kingdom and France even before he announced his presidential bid early this year, while Atiku had also been hosting his in Dubai where he relocated after his defeat in the 2019 presidential election.

The politicians are indulging in these escapades despite the high costs in hard currencies, as a result of the collapse of the value of the naira.

As allocations from the Federation

Account shrinks, many state governments are depending on loans and bailouts from the Federal Government to pay salaries while mostly defaulting in payment of pensions to retired workers.

A report last month by The Nation newspapers showed that almost all the 36 states of the federation have a backlog of pension and gratuities to clear.

According to the report, apart from owing retired workers 20 year gratuities and 38 month pensions, Mr Ikpeazu's Abia State Government has also not paid lecturers in Abia State University (ABSU) for 10 months and those in the State Polytechnic for 30 months, while Benue, Lagos, Ekiti and Adamawa are among states also owing huge amounts of gratuities.

Nigerian state governors usually pass the bills for their political activities to their states, mostly drawing hundreds of millions of naira from their treasuries to cover the costs of air tickets, hotel accommodation and shopping for themselves, aides and political hangers on.

This has led to many Nigerians on social media and news platforms decrying the development. Reacting to a report by The Punch on the meeting of Thursday between Atiku and Mr Wike, a commentator, Lanre wrote:

"What are these people doing in London, for pete's sake? The cost of lodging at The Carlton, Jumeirah where these guys are is about =N=500,000.00 per night. These are not leaders but dealers."



With
**Katdapba
Y. Gobum
On Sunday**



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"There is no way we can continue in this fashion. If we hope for the best and for the country to have a future, justice must be seen to be given in all circumstances; otherwise, we shall continue to walk in the same circle with nothing working for us."

Backward north, and a developing south

It is no longer in contention that we are sadly in the worst of times in Nigeria; just as we know that poverty has become domiciled in our communities. It is a fact that we are indeed a backward country, yet stupendously endowed but all being taken away from the commonwealth by its leaders.

Mallam Nasir el-Rufai, Kaduna State Governor, has a style that is combative without being ignored. It is not always that one agrees with a position he has taken on governance. It is not always that his controversial style is acknowledged. His statement about two Nigeria; one the backward North and second the developing south needs our attention.

A few months ago's stirring of the hornet nest by the Governor of Kaduna State, Nasir el-Rufai; to the effect that 'Nigeria is made up of a developing South and a backward, less educated and unhealthy North, with the highest number of poor people in the world', brings to the fore the challenges that stare us directly.

Rightly for me, the governor is of the that the problems of the region must be addressed collectively as a group of 19 northern states governors, not as individual states, yet, it should be stated that he easily took his eyes off what the leaders of the region have done to bring us thus far.

Someone recently alluded to the fact that 'it is a fallacy to say that the south is developing. Every part of Nigeria is at best yearning for development. At worst we have a profound reality, an uneven pace of development across states around which Nigeria has been divided since 1967. We have one large underdeveloped country which calls for the attention of all of us be it North or South. I know and I can assert that the neglect of many years has come to haunt both the North and the South'.

We have come a long way. The journey has been tedious and suffocating particularly for the led in most of the states in the north; however, by a major of indication rewarding to most of those we have had to represent us over time. Time has come to put a stop to it; the region has a huge task ahead to rid itself of the malaise.

Quickly, el-Rufai answers the poser about what should be done to stem off the sad development if the future of the north is anything to go by. Truth must be stated, there is something we all that is latent which needs to be awakened. In his words 'when we talk about awakening the spirit, it means the spirit is either sleeping or dead'.

The development indicators are damning and threatening to Nigeria, particularly to the north such that they can be compared to what is obtainable in Afghanistan, a country still at war. This, to me is disappointing, yet it does appear that, there is need to wake up from our complacency.

'But, looking at the statistics,



el-Rufai

Nigeria appears to be a middle-income country. But, if we segregate those statistics across states and zones, you will see that in terms of human development indicators, Nigeria consists of two countries; there is a backward, less educated and unhealthy northern Nigeria and a developing, largely educated and healthy southern Nigeria.

'We have the largest number of poor people in the world, most of them in northern Nigeria. Nigeria also has the largest number of out-of-school children, virtually all of them in Northern Nigeria.'

'Northern Nigeria has become the centre of drug abuse, gender violence, banditry, kidnapping and terrorism. We have also been associated with high divorce rate and breakdown of families. These are the challenges that confront us. This is the naked truth that we have to tell ourselves.'

'We must, therefore, as leaders at all levels have a conversation about the way forward for our part of the country. Because increasingly, as many of you must have seen on social media, we are being considered as the parasite of the federal economy, even though, that is not entirely true. Because northern Nigeria still feeds the nation. The richest businessman in Nigeria is still Aliko Dangote, not someone from southern Nigeria, thank God for that.'

'So, we still have a lot to be proud of. We should be proud of our culture and tradition, as well as unity. You hardly can find someone from northern Nigeria convicted of 419 or being a Yahoo boy. That is something we should be proud of.'

'We are generally considered to be more honest and less corrupt than other Nigerians. That is something we should be proud of. In addition, our demographic superiority gives us a very powerful tool to negotiate in politics. And that is something we should be

proud of, and we should preserve. So, we have every reason to unite and not be divided.'

'I, therefore, call on you the youth; you account for 80 per cent of the northern population and the future of this region lies in your hands, not in the hands of Dinosaurs like me. I'm 59 and among the oldest five per cent of the northern population. I shouldn't even be governor; I should have been governor ten years ago. But 'na condition make crayfish bend,' so we are here.'

'But, why are we here? In my view, we are here to prepare the next generation of leaders. That is why the agenda for this summit is

"Individuals in Nigeria are far richer than the country. Civil servants and politicians steal from the public till as if our currency naira is going out of fashion. Such are rarely apprehended and dealt with. The famous story that has made headline is that of the former Accountant General of the Federation, who is in court for stealing about N109 billion in dubious deals while in office."

very important. So, you should take the panel discussions very seriously and come up with very clear and implementable decisions that you will circulate to all of us elected to lead in northern Nigeria'.

Senator Babafemi Ojuda however counters in an article he titled: El Rufai is wrong: The average southerner wants an office job, and there are not enough to go around! In vast areas of our land, young people roam the streets with half bottle filled up with codeine and hard drugs, when they grow despondent and dangerously educated.

'In the past four years there has been a near revolution in the agricultural production and processing in the North. The landscape of Kebbi, Kano, Jigawa, Sokoto and many other northern states have been turned to huge plantations of wheat, rice, and sugar cane. This is being followed up with huge processing plants put in place by the private sector in collaboration with the Central Bank.'

'These programs were on willing state, willing partner basis. After all, the CBN Governor is Igbo and we cannot claim discrimination. Over three hundred billion has been disbursed through Anchor Borrower Program and NIRSAL was originally capitalized to the tune of \$500 million to work with states that have leadership and capacity to engage.'

'El Rufai knows the truth. He is too clever not to. I think he may be saying what he said to ginger his brother governors to do more for their people or at best humoring our people for political advantage. Least of course and very unlikely was that he sought to lure the South of the country to a false sense of accomplishment.'

'Yet our governors live in affluence, appointing several assistants with no defined or productive functions. All they are after is making money from government. This for me is not an indicator of development. We have too many gods rather than governors. This may not be pleasant to some of my friends who are governors. My apologies. I am saying this because it time we must say the truth to ourselves. It is kidnapping and banditry we are seeing now. If we don't take actions rebellion may knock on the door.'

In poverty ranking, while the impact of a more diversified economy is felt in lower poverty rates, the Southwest especially continue to house the highest numbers of the urban poor who continue to depend on welfare from remittances to stay afloat. Poverty better measured in the number of people living their best life will reveal a very different measure I suppose.

'Truth is, a fair comparison will reveal that we are jostling for position among laggards. Let our governors, both in the North and the South, come up and reassess themselves and govern in the true

sense of the word. The accoutrements of power are so much more than the responsibility. They should begin to do away with the meretricious and opt for the things that will uplift their people. They should not abandon their role to the omnibus Federal Government.'

'Nigeria as a whole cries for development not a part as expostulated by my dear friend Governor el Rufai. The devil is in the details. We must rise up and demand good governance across board.'

Whether it is el-Rufai or Ojuda's we know that Nigeria is still in the quandary needing surgical operation to free us from the malaise built over the years of neglect and lack of planning.

Our governors all have a responsibility to dare to rise above what they are doing now. They know that we are in this state because of the profligacy of their colleagues and including them.

All over, we are poor because some of our leaders are bereft of ideas to do what is right. A lot of things about us are not right. Corruption is our first name, but beyond that in some cases, we have allowed poverty to be our middle name.

There cannot be anything more to it than to agree with the position. After all, was it not recently that Nigeria was described as the world's headquarters of poverty? Was it not us that we were also described as 'fantastically corrupt' without any rebuttal of such?

All of the above are truthfully so as we have failed to carry out certain surgery on ourselves. It is difficult to know why we are so poor in the midst of abundance; a situation that many countries would have loved to be in our shoes. We are corrupt by choice, despite the fact that government has tried to fight the malaise without success.

Individuals in Nigeria are far richer than the country. Civil servants and politicians steal from the public till as if our currency naira is going out of fashion. Such are rarely apprehended and dealt with. The famous story that has made headline is that of the former Accountant General of the Federation, who is in court for stealing about N109 billion in dubious deals while in office.

That may be an exception; there are many walking the streets and corridors of power in Abuja and other metropolitan cities as free men and women. There are many serving politicians who should have been in jail today, but are not on account of the fact that they are being 'shepherded' from prosecution; or that they know those who should protect them from the law.

There is no way we can continue in this fashion. If we hope for the best and for the country to have a future, justice must be seen to be given in all circumstances; otherwise, we shall continue to walk in the same circle with nothing working for us.



Parents aiding the enemy

THE heart of man is desperately wicked as the Bible says, rightly describes human nature in the times we are in. And desperate times call for desperate measures.

If you are a parent who still operates as if the world is an extension of heaven, then you are shooting yourself in the leg. We are in an era where female children are not even safe with their fathers talk more of relations or neighbours.

Daycare centres are gaining popularity, not because parents and or guardians have money to throw around. But for the fact that it is safer to keep one's children among several other children under the watchful eyes of several nannies than to have one's child with a nanny alone at home when one is at work. So many atrocities take place when your eyes are not on the caregiver.

Sometime ago in Abuja, a family went out leaving their 10 year old girl in the company of an almajiri who always came around to help out in the house in exchange for food and some stipends. He had become like family since the family discovered he could not retrace his steps to his original family even after the Federal Government had ordered every almajiri to go back to his root.

On that particular day, the parents came back and met their daughter in an unconscious state, lying in the pool of her blood with her private part torn to pieces.

After several surgeries, her life was saved but she suffered irreparable damages to her womb. The parents cried tears of regret when their daughter informed them that she was mercilessly raped by the almajiri they had taken in as one of their own. He had disappeared into thin air since the incident.

A family here in Jos have been made to treat everyone as a suspect or child molester because of what happened to their children. This young couple then had 3 children, 2 boys and a girl age around 10, 8 and 6. The girl was the youngest.

The wife's younger brother was living with them. And for some reasons, the children feared him more than they feared God. He was a disciplinarian that never spared the rod. Any time the children went out of line, the mere mention of this uncle's name was enough to turn them around.

It was a shocker to most of us when one day it was discovered that this uncle had been molesting his nephews and niece who were sleeping in the same room with him. For obvious reasons, the children did not say a word. The only thing that everyone noticed was that the children became reserved and very unhappy.

And how was it discovered? An uncle of theirs on their father's side who used to keep late night and could only access his room through theirs stumbled upon it several times but was not sure. It was until he caught him right in the act on 2 occasions when he woke up in the middle of the night to use the toilet he shared with them.

Unfortunately, he was not handed to security operatives. The sister almost lynched him when she was told. The punishment he received was being banished to the village where he is till today. God only knows how many more innocent souls, minors have been defiled by this pervert.

In a similar case, a boy of 12 became sexually active because the nanny who was taking care of him since he was 8, had introduced him to some unwholesome attitudes. Anytime they were alone, she

would undress him and standing naked before him, she would either keep him on her lap or put her breast in his mouth, asking him to suckle, or lie him down and direct his hands.

The boy said she used to finger herself using his hands and caress herself, her breast, using his hands. It was not until he was 12 years that she actually started guiding him to caress her and have sex with her.

The nanny has been dismissed but the problem is that this boy who is in his early teens is wreaking havoc in his area, molesting children. He confessed that he can't do without sex.

Unverified reports have it that in a very similar case, the nanny was impregnated by the 14 year old boy she had been molesting for years. And has vowed to keep the baby to the horror of the boy's parents who wanted her to give it up for adoption. She explained that it was the first time she was getting pregnant as her marriage ended because she was said to be barren.

The stories are endless. So many of us are familiar with the story of the driver that took his master's daughter's innocence and turned her into his sex slave. Almost on regular basis, he would park the car in an isolated area on the way to school and have his fun before dropping the girl off at school.

If it is not sexual molestation, it could be spiritual attack. A mother was informed by her neighbours that every time she went to office, at a particular time, her toddler would begin to cry so hard and in a terrifying manner for more than 30 minutes.

The mother decided to discover things for herself. She arrived at that particular time, and true to her neighbours warning, her baby was crying in a terrifying manner, and squirming. But the nanny did not lift a finger to end its misery. Instead she was standing before a mirror and doing some funny things.

This mother approached with the intention to beat her. But the reflection she saw in the mirror held her bound and sent fear to her. The lady was changing from one animal to another and looking straight into the mother's eyes. The mother just picked her baby and asked the nanny to leave her house in the name of Jesus. All the while the nanny wore an arrogant look with an ugly smile.

Out of desperation, some parents just employ the service of any one that comes around to serve as their babies nannies when their maternity leave is over. One of our neighbours in Rikkos, Jos North fell into this category. Unfortunately, her nanny was immature, irresponsible, insensitive and adventurous.

Anytime this mother who was a banker went to office, the moment the child slept, the nanny would lock him in the house and take off to God knows where. The baby would wake up along the line and cry for more than an hour. I used to leave everything I was doing to go behind the window to speak comforting words to the baby and it would stop crying before resuming again at high pitch due to hunger or discomfort.

We would send people around to look for this nanny but it never yielded anything and she kept on repeating herself. There was no way we could keep quiet, so we informed the mother who sent her packing after giving her a thorough beating.

Over the years, Daycare centers have gained acceptance. For most mothers, it is better to have several eyes on their baby than to regret.

NEWS

FG invests \$2.5b in power transmission, distribution

From
JIDAUNA YANUNG,
Abuja

THE Federal Government has said it has invested over \$2.5 billion in power transmission and distribution through the Siemens Presidential Power Initiative and others.

Vice President Yemi Osinbanjo said this recently, at the Presidential Villa, Abuja, while virtually inaugurating the National Council on Infrastructure, which he chairs.

Speaking further, he also called for collaboration with the private sector in order to bridge the nations's infrastructure deficit.

According to a statement by his spokesman, Laolu Akande, Osinbanjo said: "The Administration is investing more than \$2 billion in distribution and transmission through the Siemens Presidential Power Initiative, the Transmission, Rehabilitation and Expansion Plan, the CBN financed transmission distribution interface programme and the recently approved \$500 million World Bank DISREP programme for the distribution segment."

On need for collaboration with the private sector Osinbanjo pointed out that the estimated \$2.3 trillion resource required to bridge the nation's infrastructure could not be provided solely by



Buhari

the government but with the partnership with the private sector.

"For efficient and effective implementation of enrapture projects, the National Integrated Infrastructure Master Plan recommended the establishment of the National Council on Infrastructure and its Technical Working Group (TWG)," he disclosed.

He added that the plan was developed to provide "an

integrated view of infrastructure development in Nigeria with clear linkages across key sectors and identifies enablers for successful implementation in line with the current economic realities.

According to him, the plan took stock of existing infrastructure and specifically set out the goal of raising Nigeria's infrastructure stock to at least 70 per cent by the year 2023.

Institute of Building confers fellowship award on Gov Inuwa

From **WILLIE ATTAH,**
Gombe

GOMBE State Governor, Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya has been conferred with a fellowship award by the the Nigerian Institute of Building (NIOB) in recognition of his contributions to the building profession.

The award was presented to the Governor during the Builders Conference/Annual General Meeting, which took place in Akure, Ondo State.

The Governor was represented at the occasion by his Special Adviser on Project Monitoring and Evaluation, Professor Keftin Namala Amuga.

good governance, prudent financial management and uncompromising posture for excellence in execution of projects.

Also in attendance was the Ondo state Governor, Oluwarotimi Akeredolu who was also a recipient of the same award.

Meanwhile, the Gombe State Chapter Chairman of the NIOB, Bldr Mahmood Yusuf has described the award on Governor Inuwa as a well deserved one.

He said, "We are proud of this feat and we are happy that we now have the State chief executive as a fellow of the our institute, FNIOB in recognition of his outstanding performance".

The Nigerian Institute of Building (NIOB) is the professional body for builders and those who are about to be engaged in the building Profession in Nigeria.

This year's conference had the theme: "The Role of Building Profession in the Maintenance of National Assets".

It brought together government functionaries, seasoned industry practitioners, experienced academics and building environment stakeholders to discuss asset management practices for buildings, skills requirements and frameworks for building assets management.



Inuwa

POLITICS

KSHA probes state shares in Dangote Cement, others

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

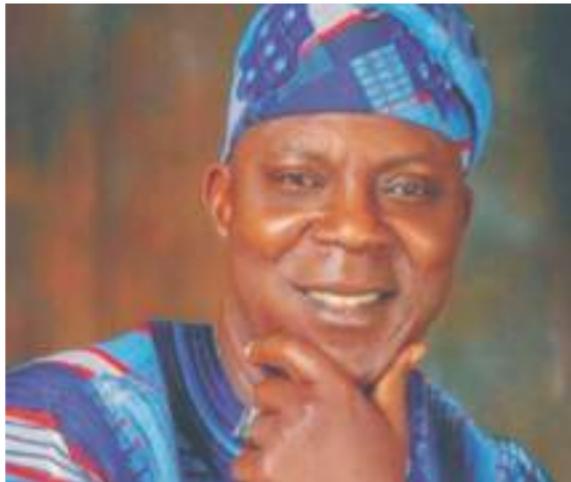
Kogi State House of Assembly has set up a 7-man Ad-hoc Committee to investigate the Shares of the State in the establishment of Dangote Cement and other Companies.

This followed a motion moved by the Speaker, Prince Matthew Kolawole on resumption of Plenary on Wednesday.

Prince Kolawole said despite the abundant natural resources in the State, it is still unclear the ratio of revenue accruing from companies operating in the State.

He noted that though investors are welcome to the State, Government will not relent on its oars checking non-payment of tax to the State by the Companies.

According to him, the move was not to witch-hunt anyone, but to ensure total compliance with State laws.



Kolawole

The Speaker then Set Up an Ad-Hoc Committee to Investigate State Shares in the Establishment of Dangote Cement, Other Companies.

The Committee is to be chaired by Musa Tenimu, while Cosmos Atabor, Collins Musa, Seidu Amodu, Ademola Bello and Dahiru Ahmed are to serve as members with

Muhammed Bello as Secretary.

The Secretary to the State Government, Mrs Folashade, Commissioners of Commerce and Industry, Gabriel Olofu as well as his Solid Minerals counterpart, Bashir Gegu are to appear before the ad-hoc committee.

PLSG has debunked rumours making the rounds of the establishment of an emirate in Yelwa, Shendam LGA of the state

A statement by the commissioner for information and communication, Dan Manjang stated that its attention has been drawn to fake news circulating in some conventional and social media platforms alleging that there are plans by the State Government to establish an emirate council or install an emir in Yelwa, Shendam Local Government Area, Government hereby states categorically and unequivocally clear that such stories are unfounded and should be disregarded while at the same time condemns such behavior in its entirety.

The Government said that there has never been any time that such idea was contemplated or even discussed. To say the least, this is the imagination and machination of mischief makers aimed at throwing the State into the dark old days thereby drawing the

PLSG debunks emirate rumours



Lalong

hands of the clock retrogressive tendencies. backwards and making According to the nonsense of the peace we statement, Lalong has have achieved since the already directed security coming of the rescue agencies to go after the administration ably led by mischief makers and bring His Excellency, Rt. Hon. them to book.

(Dr) Simon Bako Lalong, Government hereby KSGG. advises the public to

Government is therefore always cross check their warning such mischief facts from constituted makers to desist from their authority and seek for evil intentions as it will not dialogue rather than taking take it kindly with anyone the laws into their hands. found to be behind such

Dandereng bags LOGEXA Award 2022

By DANLADI DUK

THE executive chairman of Jos South Local Government Council, Ambassador Gideon Dandereng has bagged the Nigerian Local Government Excellence Award, LOGEXA for the year 2022 at a ceremony recently held at the National Merit Award Headquarters Maitama, Abuja.

Giving an overview of the LOGEXA project coordinator, Olayoriju Ilesanmi explained that out of the seven hundred and seventy four Local Governments in Nigeria, only ten Council Chairmen qualified for the award after rigorous voting following publications on National dailies calling for nomination of outstanding Local Government across

the Federation. Speaking further, the project coordinator maintained that the awardees stood tall in terms of providing visionary and purposeful leadership to the people at the grassroots, stressing that the award is a symbol of responsible governance and encouragement for recipients to do more."the reward of hard work is more work" he said.

In a statement made available by ShamakiGyang, SSA, Media and Publicity to Ambassador Gideon Dandereng, executive chairman of Jos South Local Government Council said that his Boss made the top list of LOGEXA Award of Excellence for the second

time from Plateau State said that the chairman is delighted with the recognition,as it will spur him further deliver dividends of democracy to his people.

In his words,"I feel happy,this shows that people are appreciating what we are doing, it is a true revelation that Jos South Local is functioning and we are being observed not only from within the state but also at the national".

Ambassador Dandereng who is the All Progressives Congress,APC Candidate, Jos South/ Jos East Federal House of Representatives Abuja was crowned the overall best performing Chairman and presented with a Medal.

The ceremony climaxed with a special edition of medals and magazine which is packaged to permanently record and showcase the awardees.

Reform in electoral process incomplete without sanction

From JIDAUNA YANUNG Abuja

THE independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) said the ongoing reform in the electoral process could not be complete without sanction on violators of the laws.

INEC chairman prof. Mahmood Yakubu, at a public hearing on National

Electoral Offences Commission has been part of all national conversations on constitutional and electoral reforms for the last 13 years, regretted that out of 125 cases of electoral offences filed in various court since the 2015 general election, only "60 convictions have been secured so far, including the most recent one in Akwa Ibom State."

The National Chairman who noted the establishment of National

ACReSAL Holds planning Meeting

By EZEKIEL DONTINNA

THE Acting National Project Coordinator, Agro-Climatic Resilience in Semi-Arid Landscape (ACReSAL), Engr. Anda Ayuba Yalaks, held a meeting with Project Lead Implementing Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) to discuss implementation strategies and the next steps to take.

This was contained in a press statement signed by the plateau state communication officer of the project Mathew Bawul, and made available to SUNDAY STANDARD in Jos, the Plateau State capital shortly after the meeting held in Abuja, the Nigeria's Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Thursday.

In his opening remarks,

Acting NPC, disclosed that, ACReSAL was a six-year multi-sectoral project that cut across many sectors in Nigeria which was domiciled in the Federal Ministry of Environment and co-led by Federal Ministries of Agriculture and Water Resources and replicated at the states.

He said, " The Project Development Objective (PDO) is to increase the implementation of sustainable landscape management practices in targeted watersheds in Northern Nigeria and strengthen Nigeria's long-term enabling environment for integrated climate-resilient landscape management.

"The project will also help reduce the vulnerability of millions of the extreme

poor in northern Nigeria, officers in Project strengthening their own activities as a succession capacity in the management strategy amongst other of their environment. issues.

ACReSAL is officially The Planning of the effective and awaiting meeting which was both disbursement. physical and virtual has in attendance the

According to the statement, the meeting representatives of deliberated on some critical National Space Research issues such as, the Development Agency, development of quality Nigeria Integrated Water terms of Reference (TOR), Resources Management Commission, Federal approved work and Ministry of Women Affairs, of Memorandum of Nigeria Hydrological Understanding (MOU), Services Agency, National Information Flow and Parks, Nigeria management, Project Meteorological Agency, communication and Federal Ministry of Visibility, Environmental Environment, Federal and Social Safeguards Ministry of Agriculture and Screening MDAs, scoping of Rural Development, all projects before Federal Ministry of Water implementation, need for Resources, State MDAs, Federal Project MDA to involve younger Management Unit etc.



Dandereng

SUNDAY POLITICS

The 2023 elections and anti-party politicians

With one month to the campaigns as prescribed by the Independent National Electoral Commission, political parties have been hit by a gale of defection and anti-party activities. ADEBAYO FOLORUNSHO-FRANCIS examines how influential politicians appear to be untouchable by their parties despite their brazen involvement in alleged anti-party activities.

Understandably, some members of the governing All Progressives Congress and the Peoples Democratic Party seem to be the biggest culprits.

Several party chieftains and ward chairmen have reportedly jumped ship at the grass roots level. Before their recess, some aggrieved members of the House of Representatives and Senate defected to other parties over unmet demands and perceived injustice.

However, there are some influential politicians who are not interested in jumping on the bandwagon but seem content in giving their parties sleepless nights. They also do not show remorse for their perceived anti-party activities.

The examples are many. A former Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Babachir Lawal, and a former Speaker of the House of Representatives, Yakubu Dogara, recently threatened to mobilise northern Christian electorate to vote against their party, APC, for fielding the contentious Muslim-Muslim ticket.

The party's presidential candidate, Asiwaju Bola Tinubu, had named a fellow Muslim, Senator Kashim Shettima as his running mate, a development considered insensitive and unacceptable by several Christian bodies and many prominent politicians like Lawal and Dogara.

Two weeks after Tinubu named Shettima as his running mate, Lawal, Dogara; a former minister of Youths and Sports Development, Solomon Dalung; and Senator Ishaku Abbo (representing Adamawa North), at a gathering of northern Christian leaders said Tinubu made a fatal error by agreeing to run on a Muslim-Muslim ticket.

A livid Lawal, who was the chairman on the occasion, exclaimed that it was a grand conspiracy against northern Christians. A few days after the outburst, he and Dogara held a closed-door meeting with Rivers State Governor, Nyesom Wike, at his private residence in Rumueprikom, Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of the state. The visit came barely 24 hours after Wike broke the silence following the disagreement between him and PDP's presidential candidate, Atiku Abubakar.

The reaction that greeted the m When asked to comment on the drama, the Director of Media and Communications, Tinubu Campaign Organisation, Bayo Onanuga, said his principal would not want to take issues with the two, adding that they would rather "leave them to their conscience."

Onanuga said, "We don't want to go into that. We are not interested in cautioning anybody. We leave them to their conscience. God has a way of punishing people who are hypocritical and go about telling lies to the people."

A former Deputy National Publicity Secretary of the APC, Yekini Nabena, however, called on the party to expel Dogara over the embarrassment he and the others had caused the party. He however urged the party to reach out to Lawal, whom he said had shown an appreciable loyalty and commitment to the party over the years.

He stated, "Dogara, to me, is a very inconsequential politician. His first address is the PDP; the APC is just his second home. People like him should not be talking because they are political vultures that jump from one party to the other to see what they can benefit. He is only



Amosun

reacting because things didn't favour him.

He came to the APC when things didn't go his way and returned to the APC again. He wanted to be national chairman, but it still didn't favour him. That is to tell you that all he does is for selfish interest. Who brought him from the grass roots? Is he a Christian? He is very inconsequential."

He stated, "As a former Speaker of the House of Representatives, how many votes can he garner? In the case of Babachir Lawal, I will advise the leadership of the party to find a way to talk to him, because even at the height of his travail, he showed maturity by remaining in the APC.

"When Babachir Lawal had problems with the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, the party didn't stand by him but he went through and remained in the party. That's why I said you can't compare him with Dogara, who was jumping from one place to the other. He is just seeking an excuse to say the party was unfair to him to be able to move to the PDP. If he wants to leave, let him just go quietly."

Meanwhile, Wike is unperturbed over the outrage that greeted his romance with the ruling party. Even at the height of the anger that surrounded his invitation of an APC governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu of Lagos State to inaugurate a project, Wike didn't give a hoot. This perhaps explained why a socio-political group, PDP New Fora, accused him of anti-party activities and called on the party's national working committee to suspend him.

The group's pro tem leader, Mohammed Adamu, said the governor was ungrateful given his unguarded utterances and for projecting the PDP in a bad light. Adamu also urged the party to caution and punish Wike before his excesses would jeopardise the party's chances in 2023 elections.

When contacted, the National Publicity Secretary of the PDP, Debo Ologunagba, in an interview with Saturday PUNCH, said people should not buy the narrative that Wike was planning to dump the party.



Dogara

He said there was nothing strange in the governor's recent fraternity with an APC delegation that included Sanwo-Olu; his counterpart from Ondo State, Rotimi Akeredolu; Kayode Fayemi of Ekiti State and other chieftains of the ruling party.

The meeting, which took place at Wike's private residence in Port Harcourt, also had a former governor of Ekiti State, Ayo Fayose, in attendance. Wike's continued silence after he lost the PDP presidential and running mate tickets to Atiku Abubakar and Governor Ifeanyi Okowa of Delta State, respectively has unsettled the party and pitted his supporters against the chieftains.

He said, "What is disturbing about governors' meetings? Does it mean governors can't meet again? They have a progressive forum, so a simple meeting should be turned into something else? I don't understand."

"Let us concentrate our attention on issues facing Nigeria today; the killings, the insensitivity of Mr President; his lack of capacity and competence, which he himself has admitted to by saying he is disappointed with the security agencies. We can only play politics when there is peace. I am not sure anybody is playing politics today in Ukraine. We all need to step up and do the right thing in this country, which is by voting the APC out of power."

Ologunagba's position was echoed by his predecessor, Kola Ologbondiyan, who affirmed that the Rivers State governor was free to meet or associate with anyone.

Speaking on Arise Television, the former spokesperson said, "He's allowed. When Bukola Saraki left the APC and joined the PDP or when Aminu Tambuwal left the APC and joined the PDP, did it just happen? No, you go and consult. No matter the consultation, no matter the discussions, until Governor Wike goes out and picks the membership card of the APC or he goes out to pick the membership card of the Labour Party, there are no issues as far as I am concerned. People can come and see him, they can hold parties, discuss and analyse things. They can discuss all manner of things. He

remains a member of the party."

Amosun, others' rebellion

On the other side of the divide, disgruntled members of the APC in Ogun and Osun states raised the dust over alleged anti-party activities respectively championed by former governor Ibikunle Amosun and the Minister of Interior, Rauf Aregbesola. While the Aregbesola group was accused of colluding with the opposition in a move that saw the ruling party lose Osun State to the PDP, Amosun has been labelled a 'disaster' waiting to happen in Ogun State.

To avoid what it called an impending danger, a pressure group under the aegis of Ogun Renaissance Movement appealed to the leadership of the APC to expel Amosun, who has been under fire over his recent comment that the 2019 governorship election in the state was rigged in favour of his successor, Prince Dapo Abiodun.

Amosun, who spoke at an event in Abeokuta, pledged to work towards removing Abiodun from office (in 2023). The group warned that failure to sanction Amosun would embolden him to carry on with his anti-party activities.

Is there a party where people don't disagree over issues or during negotiations? The good thing is that none of those people you mentioned insinuated that there was rigging during the APC presidential primary. Is anybody saying that? Amaechi's outburst, just like those of a few other noticeable ones, was obviously done out of frustration. I understand that when one loses an election, one is bound to hold grudges. You can't rule that out, after all, we are human beings and Nigerians," Shittu added.

National Publicity Secretary of the APC Felix Morka explained that he was unmoved by pressure from APC supporters and pressure groups, saying expulsion or punitive measures for recalcitrant party members were not the solution. He disclosed that the party was instead looking to reconcile every aggrieved member ahead of the 2023 elections.

He said, What is anti-party activity in people expressing their opinions? This is democracy. Even party

members are entitled to their opinions. I mean everything people say in the realm of their individual liberty does not have to amount to anti-party activity. The APC is more interested in reconciling people who are aggrieved and have reasons to be dissatisfied with one another. We are not looking to remove people from the party. We are trying to unite the party and make it stronger. That's our priority as we go forward."

On whether Amosun, who is also threatening to remove his successor from office, would be left off the hook, Morka said the aim was to carry everybody along without grudges.

"I am not interested in discussing any individual case. As a party, even when you believe that someone is not getting along well with another person for one reason or the other, our goal is to bring our leaders together. Whatever we do on that score, we do it internally. We have a mechanism that we are trusting can help us bring the people back to the path of loyalty to the party, rather than dwell on why they need to be penalised," he stated.

However, while some members of the APC and the PDP had at one time or the other been suspended or expelled for their involvement in acts detrimental to the progress of their political parties, the bigwigs who have also fallen short of expectation in terms of their conduct within and outside their associations appear to have gone unscathed.

On December 16, 2020, three members of the Lagos PDP were axed by the State Executive Committee for alleged anti-party activities. The affected members are Secretary of the party, Muiz Shodipe; Publicity Secretary, Taofik Gani; and ex-officio member, Nurudeen Adewale.

The chairman of the party, Adedeji Doherty, told journalists that the trio was suspended for "consistently and flagrantly breaching major provisions of the party's constitution and had been found to have involved themselves in anti-party activities, which could cause disunity among the party faithful."

In Kwara State, the leadership of the state PDP clamped down heavily on nine party members on December 30, 2021, expelling four and suspending five for similar offences in the Adewole Ward of the Ilorin West Local Government Area.

The 'fantastic four' kicked out by the party were Nureni Omooyoba, Yakubu Agodi, Alao Hakeem and Tunde Muhibudeen, while the five suspended members were Musbau Agodi, Tunde Odo, Tunde Khalifa, Alagbon Fatimoh and Moshood Elere.

The party leaders announced that the victims were tried at the ward level and found guilty of gross misconduct, and making crude and disparaging commentaries against the party, especially on several radio stations.

In a related development, the membership card of Mohammed Kumalia was withdrawn on August 10, 2022 by the Borno State Chapter of the ruling APC following an allegation of anti-party activities.

Also, a ward chairman of the APC in Umudomi area of the Onicha Local Government Area of Ebonyi State, John Ogojoi, was expelled on August 15, 2022 after he was said to have been found guilty of alleged anti-party activities.

His ward members claimed that he was expelled for his alleged disagreement with the party leadership over the purported expulsion of an aspirant, Mrs Ann Agom-Eze, who is laying claim to the senatorial ticket of the party for the Ebonyi South zone.

SUNDAY POLITICS

Rivers political firmament on fire

Rivers State, which has been under unabated political crisis since the then Minister, Nyesom Wike, swept away the ruling party structure from then governor, Chibuike Amaechi, is now witnessing what looks like the fiercest political fire in Nigeria. Whereas some other states may be witnessing some cross-carpeting of allies of governors in power, in Rivers State, what seems to be an earthquake is rocking the oil-rich state, threatening a political tsunami never witnessed in any part of Nigeria in recent times, IGNATIUS CHUKWU writes.

THE gathering storm seems to be one that may end the endless Wike-Amaechi wars that seems to have wearied the nation's political circles as it has crippled the economy and political growth of both the state and the south-south.

Three other forces have also risen from the camps of the two warring brothers to make the Social Democratic Party now led by Amaechi's strongest ally, Magnus Abe, as the place where most strong members of the All Progressives Congress (APC) are heading to, thereby creating a power bloc outside Amaechi, who is no longer a minister.

Power is also gathering at Accord Party (AP) where a strong man, Dumo Lulu-Briggs, who has always insisted on contesting for governorship for the Kalabari interest, has gone to pick the guber ticket, taking away a chunk of the Kalabari supporters of the APC.

The latest departure that seemed to mop up the remaining allies of Amaechi and other Kalabari political guns as well as intellectuals and bureaucrats in the state is that of George Ibietela Dawari, a former commissioner and the man who seemed to rally the Amaechi political front to remain united and loyal to Amaechi. He has picked the ticket of the African Alliance (AA).

The departure of George and formation of his front in AA seems to hit the Amaechi camp hardest going by the big reputation capital that the well heeled political bureaucrat brings to Rivers political firmament.

He seemed to confirm this on Thursday, August 11, at the First Baptist Church on Aggrey Road where he dedicated his guber ticket to God. He said: "I come to the race with character, competence and commitment to work for the rapid and wholesome development of our dear State, where everyone can aspire to achieve their dreams in a serene environment with the support of a responsive and responsible government."

"Rivers State must get back to the path of planned development and peaceful coexistence. This was the course charted by His Royal Majesty, King Alfred Diette Spiiff, the first governor of the old Rivers State. We intend to progress this course and build the State of our collective dream through programmes that promote inclusive governance by offering equitable and unhindered access to government services.

"Development is a function of programmes, which define the appropriateness of projects. A major deviation from global best practice, which has been the bane of effective governance in our clime, is the execution of projects as an end in itself. This focus on immediate results without a clearly articulated programme that serves the long-term benefits of our people is ultimately, a disservice and a setback in the development trajectory."

This seems to be what the Rivers people are hungry for, at the moment, after about 10 years of steady acrimony caused by the Wike-Amaechi wars where the state is always at war with the centre, denying the state its age-old benefits from the Federal Government.

Few hours ago, the state's political firmament witnessed a rocking event, the apparent departure of the best media manager of the APC for almost a decade, the Opobo chief, Chris



Amaechi



Wike

Finebone. He was seen in a photograph with Wike, Sim Fubara (Wike godson for governor come 2023 who is from Opobo, too) and former APC state chairman, Ibiamu Davies, who since joined Wike's PDP.

Responding to a rash of calls, Finebone said, 'it is what it is'. He was quoted to say the PDP guber flag-bearer is his brother, an indication that Opobo solidarity had forced him to ditch the APC and Amaechi that picked on Kalabari's Tonye Cole.

Highly influential Kalabari son, Tonye Princewill, who vowed to remain with Amaechi, ditched the party few weeks back after Amaechi lost out at the APC presidential primaries and as a result, lost his ministerial post.

Other big departures in recent times are those of two former commissioners of Information under Amaechi, Ogbonna Nwuke from Etche and Ibim Semenitari from Opobo/Okrika axis. Being persons that spoke to build Amaechi's image and cause, their departure created huge credibility gaps in the party they defended, just as that of Finebone seems to have sealed it.

Several persons who fought the Wike-Amaechi wars on the side of Amaechi such as Tony Okocha (his Chief of Staff), Igo Aguma (the Ogbunabali kingpin), Chioma Golden, etc, have since left, waiting for Abe to show the next move.

Yet, the APC says it is unshaken. The party said it was better to work with those it can trust than have a crowd of persons who have other plans. Other APC chieftains said most of those departing are those who benefitted the most from Amaechi and the APC, only to quit at the slightest sight of the desert.

The mass defection and rejection of Amaechi seems to be triggered by two quick events: failure to win the APC presidential slot, and loss of post of minister. The fact that Amaechi nominated his successor in the federal executive cabinet rather seemed to work against him because of those who expected such nominations felt bitter and left. Some hint that Amaechi may no longer be in a position to do any follower any major favour: He has served as governor twice, speaker twice, minister twice. He has no hope of being president or vice in the foreseeable future, did not pick senatorial seat. Some say in politics, he has come to retirement doorstep.

Whereas APC and Amaechi were

witnessing crisis and departures, Wike and the PDP appeared calm and united, though some observers feared it could be peace of a graveyard.

Wike, as minister, had what many saw as the full support or empty cheque of the presidency especially Patience Jonathan. With this, Wike became a force that decided the fate of men. He nominated himself for governor and silenced the grumbling of a few, saying the situation required only a hire tension like him to bulldoze Amaechi and APC out of power. This worked.

All through the eight years, Wike as governor dispensed favours and power with which he kept Amaechi and APC in check in the state, winning members from Amaechi camp and making kings out of mere men. The APC was fought to a standstill to the point of not fielding a single candidate in the 2019 general elections. Amaechi as a mere minister in a kind of government Muhammadu Buhari ran could not match Wike money for money or power for power.

This power on Wike seemed to get obvious such that when it was time to get his successor, none of those who angled to be noticed got it. Wike openly picked the accountant-general and allegedly dared any PDP member who did not like his choice to dare him.

Dagogo Fubara, a federal lawmaker, dared him and found himself in jail for months and never saw where the primaries was won and lost.

After that the PDP delegates were allegedly forbidden to meet other presidential aspirants at a time dollars were said to fly about in tens of thousands. Wike lost.

Before that, Wike had ensured that another Rivers man, Uche Secondus, was removed as national chairman of the PDP. Anger seemed to be welling up in the hearts of Rivers PDP lords.

Now, the PDP henchmen found that all the power was with Wike, probably all the financial muscle too: the governorship ticket was in his chosen pocket, access to the presidential flag-bearer was blocked, etc, they seemed to be choked.

The peace has shattered. Wike has boasted openly that he controls the massive votes of Rivers people and would deliver it where he wants and use it to punish those that he said hurt him during the primaries.

His allies understood this to mean that they have no powers anymore.

Meanwhile, they watched him drift to the rival APC, inviting their henchmen to commission projects in the state.

Their plea for reconciliation so they could together work for Abubakar Atitu to reap from the Muslim-Muslim ticket crisis of the APC seems to fall on deaf ears. Instead, they find their leader taking Atiku and the PDP to court. The likes of Celestine Omehia are said to have been stripped of state recognition as former governors. Former Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives has also been kicked out.

Apparently knowing Wike's high success rate in courts, they seemed alarmed that PDP may be destroyed through the court. They seem unhappy that Atiku may be hurt or may be made to lose Rivers. They have reacted.

The first to speak out is Lee Maeba, former senator from Ogoni axis. Something provoked the outburst. Gov Wike sacked the boards where the suspected Atiku loyalists serve.

Maeba, speaking like a confident man that has the mandate of a group and top persons outside the state, said what no man would have said before now about Wike. "We have a candidate of the party who has the capacity to lead Nigeria out of the crisis. So nothing can deter us from supporting Atiku to save Nigeria."

"Wike is not hiding that he is fighting Atiku. Yes, he said so. He called a meeting of Ogoni people who are with him and told them that he will see who I will campaign for Atiku in this state and he is ready to fight to the finish. This is a joke taken too far."

Maeba also revealed that Wike removed Omehia and Opara as leaders of their party in Ikwere and Port Harcourt City LGAs respectively.

He accused the Rivers State governor of humiliating the duo before their people because they went to pay a solidarity visit to Atiku.

"All of us knew Atiku before him. Austin Opara has been in the House of Representatives since 1999. He was the deputy speaker when Atiku was Vice-President. At that time Wike was struggling to be local government chairman. So, if Austin Opara has to take permission from him today to go and see Atiku, then something is wrong," he stated to a national newspaper.

On Wike's vow to deliver all Rivers votes against his detractors, Maeba said: "Why are you in charge of votes? Everybody has individual

votes to cast. If Adegboyega Oyetola was in charge of votes in Osun, he wouldn't have lost the election.

"So, for somebody to be boasting he is in charge of votes, people should ask him where do you want to get the votes? How many voters cards does he have?"

According to Maeba, Austin Opara, Omehia, and himself do not need the permission of Gov Wike to visit the former Vice President.

"Let me tell you something, when you apportion so much right to yourself, then you are superhuman. Austin Opara was the deputy speaker of the House of Representatives when Atiku Abubakar was the Vice President. They attended caucus meetings together and National Economic Council Meeting.

"So, does it mean that Austin Opara who has been friends with Atiku for over 20 years will now start to beg Wike to go and see Atiku? So, he (Wike) is the one who doesn't have respect for citizens.

"So if you don't have respect for the rights of senior citizens of the state, you don't have respect for their right to survive and self-sustenance, then something is wrong with your own system."

Despite all these words, Maeba told newsmen he is yet to speak. He said Rivers State will shake when he speaks. Wike and most of his allies are believed to share deep confidantilities. They alone know how the late Ake was removed as state PDP chairman to hand it to Felix Obuah; they alone know how court stops other parties and clears the way for a particular party to win elections; they alone know how political leaders end in crisis and ruin; they alone know how contracts are awarded to lone bidders and how the budgets of the state are put together and justified. Observers think they are the last persons to begin a firefight from within.

Wike, like Amaechi, may be a sitting duck. He is concluding his last term as governor, he is not presidential candidate or vice (except the courts say otherwise), his attempt to be senator has been blocked by the new Electoral Act, etc. If he hands over power, many of his aides say, he may not be the power merchant of the state anymore. They say that is why he wants a particular candidate to succeed him. He could wield power indirectly. He could also be made minister by a candidate he wants to support, possibly Bola Tinubu of APC.

A deep source told BusinessDay that should both Wike and Amaechi crash out in the firebombs raging in the Rivers political firmament, that it could create the peace that has eluded the state for 10 years. The source said the emerging power blocs emerging in the state around Abe, Dawari George, and Lulu-Briggs may have to create a new political atmosphere devoid of acrimony and usher in some stable development by working with the centre and allowing all Rivers intellectuals to work together like in the days of old.

Then would Rivers State have taken back its place as a state that leads and others follow a state that cannot be left behind when major decisions are taken, as the likes of Peter Odili and the late Alfred Dikibo use to say.

SUNDAY PEOPLE

TYODEN RECEIVES MWANRET RELEASED FROM BOKO HARAM

Plateau State Governor, through the Deputy Governor, Prof. Sonni Gwanle Tyoden recently received Mwanret Daspan, a released social worker, abducted by Boko Haram terrorist group in Borno State some years ago, was received at the Government House Rayfield, Jos



Prof. Tyoden, Deputy Governor (right) putting heads together with the SGS, Prof. Danladi Abok Atu



A cross section of family and relations of Mwanret



Prof. Sonni Gwanle Tyoden, Deputy Governor (right) with the Secretary to Government of the State, Prof. Danladi Abok Atu and member, representing Mangu in the State Assembly, Hon. Bala Fwangje



Mr. Monday Daspan, (standing) commenting at the occasion



Chief of Staff Government House, Hon. Noel Dongjur (right) with Hon. Gyang Musa Dung, Commissioner of Science and Technology and Mr. Silas Vem, Deputy Chief of Staff Office of the Deputy Governor



Commissioner, Women Affairs and Social Development, Hon. Rebecca Adar Sambo, (middle) handing over Mwanret Daspan to the Deputy Governor, Prof. Sonni Gwanle Tyoden (right) at the occasion



Rev. Fr. Godfrey Gopep, Chaplain, Government House Chapel praying for Mwanret Daspan



A cross section of those that accompanied Mwanret to Government House Rayfield, Jos

PHOTOS: OFFICE OF THE PRESS SECRETARY, DEPUTY GOVERNORS' OFFICE, RAYFIELD, JOS

IT is no longer news that we are witnessing a deteriorating level of insecurity in the country. What is most worrisome is the fact that the security challenges are threatening our existence as a nation and if nothing urgent is done about it, one doubts if this entity called Nigeria will still be standing in the next few years. From the North, West and South, the story is the same. Acts of terrorism, kidnapping, banditry, resulting to killings have become the order of the day. No where and no one is safe anymore. The most frustrating part is that the perpetrators seem to be having it their own way.

Recently, the Senate passed a bill seeking to amend the Terrorism (Prevention) Act 2013, which prohibits the payment of ransom to kidnapers. This is coming on the heels of a report by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). For those who are oblivious of what it is all about, a mutual evaluation report was conducted of Nigeria's Anti-money Laundering (AML) and Counter-Financing of Terrorism (CTF) by the ECOWAS Inter-Governmental Action Group Against Money-Laundering in West Africa in collaboration with the FATF, where Nigeria fell short and was rated below par.

And so for the National Assembly, the passage of this bill will save Nigeria from being included among countries in the FATF grey list with its attendant negative consequences, which might in the long run result in certain international sanctions that would affect the country's image particularly before the comity of nations. As such, the Senate first thought towards reversing this was to come up with a legislation that will repeal the act. A proposed repeal and act will put in place a set of standards and regulatory framework aimed at preventing terrorist groups from laundering money through the country's banking system and other financial network.

In the lawmakers opinion, the bill when signed into law will complement government's effort in the fight against insecurity. However, majority of Nigerians are not in tandem with the lawmakers point of view. It is viewed that this bill which seeks to criminalise the payment of ransom by victims of kidnapping or their families, does not add much value in the efforts to curb the crime. The long and short of it is that if the amendment becomes law, Nigerians who pay ransoms to kidnapers risk spending fifteen (15) years in prison. In other words, families of victims will no longer be able to help their loved ones who are kidnapped and held captive.

Sponsored by Senator Francis Onyewuchi from Imo State, section 14 of the bill reads: "Anyone who transfers funds, makes payment or colludes with an abductor, kidnapper or terrorist to receive any ransom for the release of any person who has been wrongfully confined, imprisoned or

kidnapped is guilty of a felony and is liable on conviction to a term of imprisonment of not less than fifteen (15) years".

The question is if the Senate gets this legislation through criminalising ransom payment for kidnapped victims, what punishment has it proscribed for the perpetrators who commit such heinous crimes. As far as one can remember, no offender has been caught and brought to book yet. While it is agreed that payment of ransoms help in fortifying these criminals and terrorists who see this act as an avenue to enrich themselves, government must also share in the blame for failing in its



On the terrorism act amendment bill



responsibility to protect and safeguard citizens. Government must also show responsibility by looking at ways of managing these incidents when they occur and ensure that victims are rescued safely.

Fortunately or unfortunately, the bill is generating so much outcry with some members of the society calling on the Senate to step down the bill. Among those who reacted to the issue is a group under the auspices of Southern Kaduna Peoples Union (SOKAPU) who warned the National Assembly on the decision to outlaw payments of ransom to terrorists without any effort or attempt at rescuing kidnapped victims. The body who faulted the passage of the bill, blamed the government for not doing enough to curb the security challenges being faced.

Addressing a press conference on the matter, President of SOKAPU Jonathan Asake said: "We are surprised that the National Assembly are contemplating to criminalise payments for ransom to bandits who kidnap their victims. The question is, has the government or lawmakers made alternative measures in securing victims or

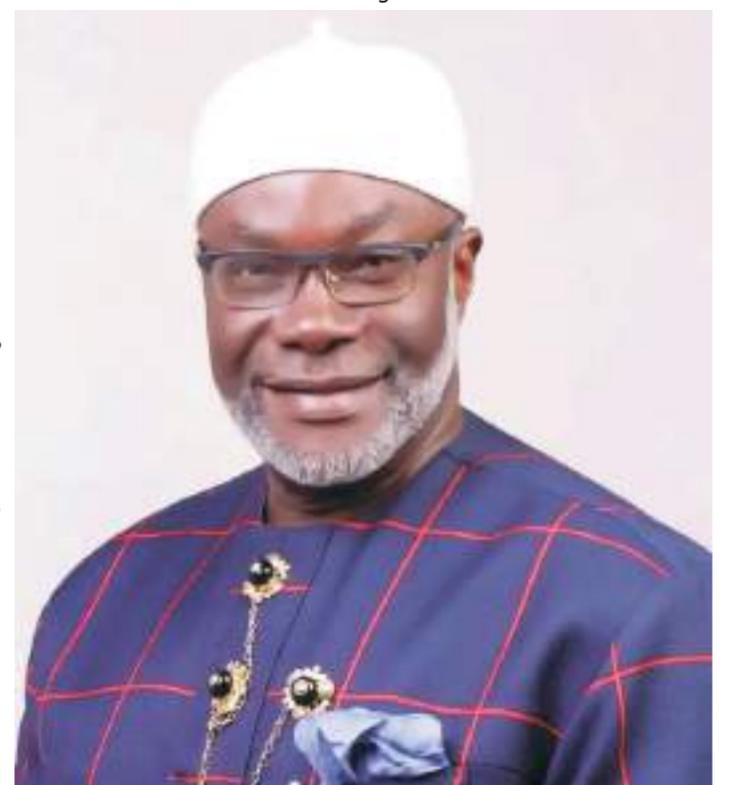
hostages from the hands of terrorists? Another body known as the Pan Yoruba Socio-Political organisation, Afenifere has also faulted the Senate over the bill's passage.

In a statement credited to the body's Publicity Secretary Jare Ajayi, he stated that the terrorism amendment act left the substance to chase shadows as well as further punishing victims and their families. He further added: "According to those behind the bill, the intention is to block the source of money, which seems to be the motivation for kidnapers but what happens to the victims? Without advocating the continuation of this destardly act, is the Senate saying that families of kidnapped victims should fold their arms and watch their person's life wasted?"

It will interest you to know that the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Nigerian Navy had both during the public hearing for the bill, put together by the Senate Committes on Judiciary, Human Rights and Legal Matters as well as that of Anti-Corruption and Financial Crimes rejected the

bill. The Navy had proffered that instead of criminalising ransom payments to abductors, such negotiations should be subjected to security vetting. While applauding certain

provisions of the bill, the anti-graft agency on its part suggested that the penalty be narrowed down to receivers of the ransom rather than the givers.



Onyewuchi

SUNDAY MAGAZINE



Buhari



Mamood



Okoye

2023 election: Media and accurate political reportage

The Independent National Electoral Commission, (INEC) in Nigeria recently had course to debunk an erroneous media reportage indicating that the body had resented its decision to continue with its earlier arrangement of conducting the 2023 general election via the electrical collation of results. While debunking the reports, INEC further noted that it had never decided at any point in time to renege from its earlier arrangement by resorting to the manual process of results collation as reported by the said media organization. BULUS GAMBO writes.

IN the report proliferated by the national media organization, it had reported that the national electoral body in the country had said that the collation of results of the 2023 general elections would be done manually despite its earlier adoption of the electronic transmission of such results.

In the report, it claimed that the INEC's National Commissioner and Chairman of its Information and Voter Education Committee, Festus Okoye had stressed that the commission would transmit results-viewing portal, IReV, as witnessed in recent elections, but that the Electoral Act was clear on how collation should be done.

According to the report, "There is a marked difference between the transfer/transmission of results. Section 50(2) of the Electoral Act gives the commission the absolute discretion to determine the mode and procedure of voting in an election and the transmission of election results."

"Section 60 and 62 of the Electoral Act govern post-election procedure and collation of elections results. Section 60(1) of the Act provides that the presiding officer shall count the votes scored by each candidate in a form to be prescribed by the commission."

Section 60(5) of the Act makes it mandatory that the presiding officer shall transfer the results of the ballot in a manner prescribed

by the commission. Thereafter, the presiding officer shall after recording and announcing the results deliver the same along with election materials under security and accompanied by the candidates or their polling agents where available to such person as may be prescribed by the commission."

By implication, according to the report, "the collation process of results is still essentially manual, but the collation officer must collate subject to his verification and confirmation that the number of accredited voters stated on the number of accredited voters recorded and transmitted directly from polling units."

While subsequently debunking the entire report however, INEC in a more clarified disposition in a press statement equally signed and made public by the National Commissioner and Chairman, Information and Voter Education Committee, Fesus Okoye disclosed that "The Independent National Electoral Commission's (INEC) attention has been drawn to a misunderstanding arising from a recent short interview granted to a national newspaper on the procedure for results management during elections. Some have interpreted the explanation on result management procedure to mean that the commission has jettisoned the electronic transmission of result and reverted to the manual process.

This is not correct."

For further clarity, the commission in this statement issued on the 21st August 2022 while debunking the earlier reportage notes that "the procedure for result transmission remains the same as in recent Governorship elections in Ekiti and Osun States. There will be no change in all future elections, including the 2023 General Election."

Accordingly, the INEC explains that "We wish to assure Nigerians that the electronic transmission of results has come to stay. It adds to the credibility and transparency of the process when citizens follow polling unit level results on the INEC Results Viewing (IReV) portal on real-time on Election Day. There will be no change or deviation in subsequent elections.

The entire gamut of results management is provided for in Sections 60, 62 and 64 of the Electoral Act 2022. In line with the provision of the law, the commission, in April this year released a detailed clarification of the procedure for transmission, collation and declaration of result which was shared with all stakeholders and uploaded to our website. We appeal to all Nigerians to avail themselves of the provisions of the Electoral Act and the commission's detailed explanation of the procedure and not reach a conclusion on the basis of media headlines."

No doubt in recent times, efforts have been reportedly made to pressure the electoral body to return to the manual process of results collation which is easily usually tempered with by selfish politicians. For some of these shameless politicians who have erroneous notions of the game of politics to be that of a "do or die affair", the new mechanism may not favour them this time around.

In any case, all these years, stakeholders and the citizens of this country have and continued to call for a standardized and contemporary electoral reforms which would reduce the increasing menace of electoral malpractice in the country. As the nation continue to sanitize its electoral processes, some of the major challenges have been those of building voters confidence, getting rid of vote buying and instilling concrete and more transparent voting system on the polity.

Be that as it may however, it is also of great significance to acknowledge the tremendous role of the media towards ensuring free, fair and peaceful elections come 2023. Basically, the success of the much anticipated polls this time around and as always reemphasized would be hinged on the way and manner the political class behave the conduct of the electorates and by and large; the ability of the mass media to fundamentally play its role as the watch dog of

the society more effectively and efficiently. Therefore, it is relevant for media organizations in this country to come to terms with the fact that anything short of this anticipated obligations would spell doom for the nation.

As has been the tradition, the role of the media has been that of educating, enlightening and entertaining its target audiences on crucial issues affecting our society. In most cases however, the media also tries to interpret to the general public some basic government policies and documents intended to ensure that such policies are well understood in the interest of national development and integration.

As elections approaches however, added responsibilities are inevitable as far as the required role of the media for a better and more pragmatically transformed society is concern. This cannot be more achievable without these media organizations knowing their onions and doing the needful.

But basically, the role of the mass media during electoral process cannot be overemphasized in the country. In fact, according to Fidelis Chuka Aghamelu in his submission on the topic, "The Role of the Mass Media in the Electoral Process", "The history of elections in Nigeria generally afforded us the golden opportunity of assessment of the

Continued on page 31

NEWS

Karu LG Chairman to fight malaria to zero level

From DORCAS PANKYES, Abuja

Executive Chairman Karu LGA, Hon James Thomas has intensified efforts at eradicating Malaria. He made this known while receiving the Chief Consultant of Seasonal Malaria Chemotherapy, (SMC). Mr Charles Nelson from Mozambique on a courtesy call to Karu Sunday.

The Executive Chairman outlined measures and methods that have been adopted by the council through the help of traditional rulers in their domain towards eradicating Malaria. He appreciated the SMC for their intervention to eradicating Malaria to zero level in Karu LGA urging them to extend the programme to enable the council to achieve the desired result considering the population density and its proximity to the nation capital Abuja.

On his part, the ESU Karu and President Traditional Council of Karu LGA



Thomas

Pharmacist Luka Panya Baba appreciated the chief consultant and his team for choosing Karu LGA prevent the spread of Malaria from

children 5 year to zero, where he conferred a traditional title on Mr Charles Nelson, the chief consultant SMC-icare as Zhebe Zakoyi of Karu chiefdom.

In his remarks the state commissioner of Health Pharm, Baba Yahaya who led the team gave an overview of SMC in Nasarawa State by commended the health workers for their sacrifices in making sure children from 5 years to zero are free from malaria cases in Karu LGA and Nasarawa State.

In his respond, the Chief consultant of Seasonal Malaria Chemotherapy (SMC) Mr. Charles Nelson, thanked citizens for accepting the prevention methods which had recorded more success towards zero Malaria in Nigeria. He promised to continue supporting the fight against the spread of Malaria in Nasarawa state and Nigeria at large.

Those in attendance, were Dr, kolawale Maxwell West African representative, Dr, Chibuze Country Representative, Hon lawal yakubu karshi Deputy Chairman Karu LGA, Hajia Hafsat state Coordinator, Hon Hamza Sani Supervisory Councillor for health, other directors from state, local government and coordinators.

Gombe converts School of Nursing to University Campus

THE proposed Gombe State School of Nursing and Midwifery situated in Dukku LGA of the State has been converted into a campus of the Gombe State University (GSU)

Contract for the building of the school of Nursing was awarded by the immediate past administration of Ibrahim Hassan Dankwambo in 2013 with 70% payment and work delivered by the contractor but abandoned many years ago.

However, the overseeing Commissioner for Information and Culture, Mr. Meshach Audu Lauco, while briefing news men shortly after the State Executive Council Meeting said the school of Nursing and Midwifery Dukku did not exist in the first instance.

He said, council in its wisdom felt the need to decongest the current campus of the GSU in Gombe, the state capital by converting the long abandoned school of Nursing project in Dukku to a campus of the GSU.

Mr. Lauco, who is the Commissioner for Higher Education, explained that the conversion was prompted by the fact that the Dukku structure did not meet certain criteria, more so that the school did not have the backing of a law establishing it.

He explained further that the council has now reviewed the Dukku project. He explained further that, "in order to facilitate that as a true campus of the Gombe State University, council decided to award and approve a revised contract sum of 3 billion, 280 million, 214 thousand 180.48 naira.

"This means the only addition that this

government is making in order to have that project completed and put into use, is 837 million, 318 thousand, 402.62 naira for the completion of that project, within a period of 16 weeks," Mr. Lauco said.

Highlighting details of the

NEPZA directed to pay FG unremitted funds

From JIDAUNA YANUNG, ABUJA

HOUSE of Representatives has directed the Nigerian Export Processing Zones Authority, (NEPZA) to pay the Federal Government the sum of N13.3 billion unremitted revenue.

The House Ad-hoc Committee on Unclaimed Government Funds, led by Unyime Idem (PDP, Akwa Ibom) gave the directive when it resumed sitting in

Abuja. The committee also asked NEPZA to provide copies of validated receipts of financial transactions including its remittances to government before the ad-hoc committee. However the Director of Finance and Administration, NEPZA, Mr. Oyesola Oyekunle insisted that the agency was not in any way indebted to the government as all revenue

contract, the Commissioner of Housing and Urban Development, Alhaji Idris Abdullahi, said the initial contract sum was N2, 442, 895, 777, 86 kobo.

According to him, because of the time difference and cost of materials then and now, the

contractor brought a bill of 885 million, 878 thousand, 841 naira 80 kobo, which the ministry analyzed and made savings of N18, 560, 439.18m

He said when completed, the reviewed contract would be N3, 280, 214, 180.48b.

generated over time have been paid to the government up to date.

Oyekunle, however, contradicted himself when he told the lawmakers that since NEPZA was not fully funded, it remitted its only 25 percent generated revenue to government and has paid N3.93 billion to the government, making it to be up to date in payment between the periods under review, which is the year 200 to date.

Former DSS boss gives out daughter in marriage

By SHEHU DANJUMA, Katsina

DAURA town, Katsina State was agog on Friday as a former Director-General (DG) of the Department of State Services (DSS), Alhaji Lawal Daura, gave out his daughter's hand in marriage.

The Chief Imam of Low Cost Juma'at Mosque, Daura, Sheikh Abdulkarim Ibrahim, performed the wedding Fatiha between the groom, Malam Abdullahi Lawal and his bride, Maryam Lawal after the Friday congregational prayers

Ibrahim said that the groom, Abdullahi, had presented N100, 000 as dowry for the union between

the duos to be solemnized.

He said that, in accordance with Islamic injunctions, the responsibilities of feeding, shelter, clothing, healthcare, among others, would henceforth, lay on the shoulders of the groom

The Chief Imam then prayed for a peaceful home for the couple and blessed their marriage. **SUNDAY STANDARD** report that Abdullahi is a security engineer based in UK while Maryam is a civil engineer. **SUNDAY STANDARD** further observed that People from all walks of life attended the ceremony.



PLSG approves replacement of 133 exiting staff of Specialists hospital

Plateau State Government, has signed and approved the replacement of over one hundred and thirty-three (133) exiting staff of the Plateau Specialists Hospital Jos, after the Memo forwarded by the Management of the hospital and the Hospital Management Board which attracted strike action since February this year.

The Chief Medical Director of Plateau Specialists Hospital, Dr. Filimon Golwa, disclosed this while in an interview with SUNDAY STANDARD in his office shortly after the suspension of a six months strike action embarked upon by staff and that of the board Wednesday.

Member's assault: NAWOJ Demands ex-husband arrest and Prosecution

The Nigeria Association of Women Journalists (NAWOJ) has raised an alarm over the insensitive and brutal treatment given to one of its members demanding the immediate arrest and prosecution of her ex-husband in Adamawa State recently.

This was contained in a press statement signed by NAWOJ's President, Ladi Bala, and made available to THE NIGERIA STANDARD in Jos, the Plateau State capital yesterday following report of physical and domestic violence against women by their spouses.

APC-SMT drums support for DG-Tinubu/Shettima Campaign Team

The All Progressive Congress Strategic Monitoring Team (APC-SMT), has thrown their weight behind the choice of Governor Simon Bako Lalong as the Director General of the Tinubu/Shettima Campaign Team as a round peak in a round hole and it would foster equity and justice and also strengthen national cohesion.

This position came when the APC Strategic Monitoring Team led by its Coordinator, Golepi Wambutda, addressed Journalists in press briefing at the State Headquarters of the Nigeria Union of Journalists in Jos, the Plateau State capital Friday.

Mupun Youths endorse Dr Nentawe ahead of 2023

The All Progressive Congress Grassroots Mobilizers for Dr Nentawe in Jiblik Federal Ward of Pankshin-South Constituency of Plateau State, have unanimously endorsed the APC Candidate, Dr Nentawe Yilwatda, as the credible candidate for the 2023 governorship election.

The endorsement took place the Miskom Manna hall in Abwor Dyis of Pankshin Local Government Area of Plateau State, where the youths came out in a large number during a town hall meeting to throw their weight behind the candidate.

The Convener of meeting, Mr Bizuum Yadok, said, all the groups have unanimously endorsed the Governorship candidate of the APC due to his blueprint for the youth in the state and appealed to the Governorship candidate to give the needed attention to the lingering challenges of the Youths which includes unemployment and lack of skills if elected Governor of the State.

INEC dispels reports of jettison electronic transmission for manual

The Independent National Electoral Commission's (INEC), has dispelled news reports in some national dailies on the procedure of result management during elections that, the commission has jettisoned the electronic transmission of results and reverted to manual process.

This was contained in a press statement signed by the INEC National Commissioner and Chairman, Information and Voter Education Committee, Festus Okoye Esq, and made available to **THE NIGERIA STANDARD** in Jos, the Plateau State capital Sunday.

Plateau girl regains freedom from Boko-Haram The abducted Plateau girl and a Social Worker, Mwanret Daspan, has regained her freedom after spending 20 months in the hands of Boko Haram terrorists.

Daspan, a Mwaghavul from Mangu Local Government Area of the state, was abducted in Maiduguri, the Borno State capital sometime in December, 2020 by the insurgents and later moved to Chad Republic by the terrorists group before regaining her freedom two weeks ago.

Compiled by EZEKIEL DONTINNA

SUNDAY FEATURE

Unreported impact of lingering ASUU strike

Nothing can be more shocking than learning that the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) has embarked on not less than 16 industrial actions between 1999 and 2022.

For those who may not know, a major factor triggering our university lecturers to be laying down their tools, intermittently, is the failure of the government to fulfill an agreement it once entered with the academic union.

Another factor is the failure of the lecturers to reinvent themselves and face current realities, and find fresh ways of resolving their incessant disputes with the government.

Each time the ASUU strike rears its ugly head, one is forced to conclude that both the government and our lecturers lack empathy for us the students. Better put, they don't have our interest at heart.

The recurrence of ASUU strike has numerous negative impacts on us, something the government and ASUU don't consider when they fail to come to an agreement. We lost a whole session to this same madness two years ago. The same thing is already happening now, with the ongoing strike.

Since an idle mind, as they say, is the devil's workshop, it goes without saying that idle students, forced to remain at home by the ongoing ASUU strike, can be instigated to joining criminal activities such as cyber crime, kidnapping, armed robbery and the likes of it.

It is however good to note that during ASUU strikes, some students devote their time to relevant learn vocational skills. And learning a skill is crucial especially now that there is no hope in securing a sustainable job after graduation. However, a skill is just a bonus to getting quality education.

According to Nelson Mandela, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." If the strike persists and if future strike actions are not averted, there is every possibility that more students

Nothing can be more shocking than learning that the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) has embarked on not less than 16 industrial actions between 1999 and 2022. For those who may not know, a major factor triggering our university lecturers to be laying down their tools, intermittently, is the failure of the government to fulfill an agreement it once entered with the academic union. RASHEEDAT SHUAIB writes.



when will universities open for students to resume?

will lose interest in higher education.

Sadly, too, some young ladies have been forced into early and unprepared marriage by their parents during this course of this painful strike. It is not all parents that will agree to let ASUU waste their children's youthful age. That is why they won't mind marrying off their daughters, as the needless industrial action festers.

Meanwhile, what the lecturers' union demand from the government is for it to honour its own promises made in 2009 for improved funding of the university system and working condition of the lecturers.

Though the government has now devised means of strategically disowning the 2009 agreement signed between its representatives and ASUU, it should be reminded that government is an institution and not persons. Change of administration should not be an excuse to renege on binding commitments made by the government especially

that relating to a critical sector like education.

Underfunding of the education sector, over the years, has had collateral effect on country. Our universities, hitherto exemplary centres of excellence that attracted academics from far and near, have now become grotesque carcasses of their former selves.

In a shameful development, Nigerians from lower and upper classes fall over themselves to leave the shores of the country for studies. A report released last year put the figure of what Nigeria lost to overseas studies at N1.5 trillion per annum. It could be higher.

Embarrassingly, countries like Ghana, Uganda, Togo, et cetera – that were hitherto considered far below ours in all respect, have now turned to our preferred destinations. Ghana alone is estimated to be benefitting from about N160 billion from hundreds of Nigerians trooping there to pursue university education.

While those who should act to better the system of

education send their children to choice universities around the world, the result at home is a further nose-diving of what remains of quality in the universities. Last year, a committee headed by erstwhile Executive Secretary of the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), Prof. Mahmood Yakubu, which conducted a need assessment of universities, came up with a report that unearthed the odious rot in the system.

The report, which was commissioned by the government itself, bared it all on the appalling condition of the universities both in human and infrastructural terms. While the teacher-student ratio stands on the average at the embarrassing figure of 1:100, basic teaching tools in laboratories, workshops and libraries were discovered to be either grossly inadequate or nonexistent.

In most, if not all, the universities, students have no adequate boarding facilities while some defecate in the open, due to absence or inadequacy of toilet facilities. These same students, according to the report, take lectures in jam-packed lecture halls and theatres.

The consequence of this criminal neglect of the education system is the soaring number of half-baked graduates coming out from these institutions. Though the teachers could not be absolved of blame in this, it is however fair to expect a good

result when the condition for good performance is set.

Under the decrepit condition of our university system today, expecting well-refined graduates to come out of it is like sowing a maize seedling and expect to harvest wheat.

This round of strike is another sad reminder of how successive governments have relegated education to the lowest rung of its ladder, to the detriment of the much desired human capital development for the country.

While money is being spent on frivolous and self-satisfying ventures that would have no benefit to the average citizen, education is being left to suffer with only occasional handouts in the name of budget, which is also rarely implemented to the latter. The lecturers cannot be spared of blame earlier. Patriotism is not supposed to be reserved for government officials alone. What level of sacrifices are they willing to make to resolve the ongoing impasse? How reasonable are the demands they are making now in the face of current economic realities and the fact that having shut the schools for six months, it is debatable if they are deserving of salaries for the period they have not been working. Both ASUU and the Federal Government must stop this childish bickering and consider our plight. Our lives must matter. Our future matters. Our aspirations matter.

"Sadly, too, some young ladies have been forced into early and unprepared marriage by their parents during this course of this painful strike. It is not all parents that will agree to let ASUU waste their children's youthful age. That is why they won't mind marrying off their daughters, as the needless industrial action festers."

SUNDAY FEATURE

Infidelity: Gender biases in sanctions

It is really sad to consider any offence committed with a bias mind deliberately ignoring the other vital side of the issue which if and or when considered could be a game changer on the entire outcome of the matter. With all sense of responsibility, one question we must really ask ourselves is; should infidelity be treated with kid gloves on the man's side but with iron fist on the woman's side? Ask JENNIFER YARIMA.



THERE is a trending story around town of a married woman who was suspected to have had an extra marital affairs which the husband later got wind of. The husband of the woman who got wind of this information reportedly cleverly set a trap for his wife by arranging with his friends which she allegedly fell into. As soon as she was caught according to a source close to the family, she came back home and packed her belongings from his house and quietly left. Her action might not be unconnected to the fact that her problem had attracted the attention of people around the neighborhood and beyond which might likely aggravate mishap.

The other side of the story has it that the man was already known around the neighborhood to be flirting around with ladies where he spends his money but no one raises any eyebrow against it. He according to another source pays little or no attention to his family which had kept his wife in a tight situation.

One is then tempted to ask why the woman quietly left the house without anyone driving her out. It is simple; she already knew after the incident that her chance of staying in her matrimonial home as a woman who has committed such an offence was slim or none at all even when virtually everyone understood why she had to venture into such act. An anonymous person said adding his voice on this very important issue said, the society always tag such an offence by women as 'unpardonable' but for the man can be excused. Only God knows the fate of this woman.

Close to this sad story was the incident of another woman who frowned at her

husband's separation with his girl friend whom he had been dating for over five years. The narration according to a close confidant of the woman disclosed that the husband hadn't been meeting up with his family's responsibilities at all which has left the wife struggling to meet up with challenges at the home front. This man according to our source jumps from one girl to the other. He spent his hard earned money on earthly pleasures as such to the detriment of his family.

The story revealed that the lady he dated asked if he had a family and he confirmed to her he has. As the journey into their relationship progressed, she noticed how much the man spends on her and decided to be in close touch with his family which he didn't know. On getting closer to the wife, she noticed that the woman was just struggling for survival as the man pays no attention to her needs or that of the children. This left her restless and in deep thought of how best she could help the woman.

The lady after giving the issue significant thought eventually resolved that each time the man buys anything for her; she would also compelled him to buy same for his family without knowledge of why she was doing so. She deliberately did that to give the man's wife the opportunity of benefitting from everything he purchased for her. It was disclosed that the items ranged from food stuff, clothing and money. These made the woman in the house picked up to some extend and appreciated the gesture of the lady outside.

Frankly, the lady had to explain to the man's wife of the relationship that existed between them. In pains, the woman had

no choice than to let the correlation be because of the assistance emanating from this "unhealthy" relationship. Ironically, the wife and the girl friend of the man came from the same ethnic background. This as soon as she got wind of their roots, she quitted the relationship immediately.

Guess what, when the woman heard about the separation, she went round looking for the girl and appealed to her to stay in the relationship because her own paid off. She regretted that she wouldn't get anything as she used to from her husband. All these years, the man never knew the deal his girl friend had with his wife which has improved her life.

Yours sincerely was deeply touched by this confession which came from the woman herself. If a woman prefers her husband to remain in a relationship with a mistress, it shows that she has been either dumped by her husband or she is probably fed up with no hope for improvement.

What do you think is keeping this woman in this marriage? The children are the reason why most women languish in such pains. A lady disclosed that she has been married for twenty two years now, even though they stay in the same house with the man, they have been separated for more than ten years. She hangs around just for the sake of her children who pleaded that she should not leave them alone.

In some cases it's the strict tradition that does not permit one to freely take decision as it relates to divorce for fear of stigma. Many men and women are going through emotional torture in the name of a union that has since locked God out of it. Coming home after a failed marriage is far better than coming home in a coffin as a result of pains you have to gone through with no respite.

Why are men's offences at family level attracting lesser sanction than women? Offences generally are unacceptable and each one should be treated fairly.

"In some cases it's the strict tradition that does not permit one to freely take decision as it relates to divorce for fear of stigma. Many men and women are going through emotional torture in the name of a union that has since locked God out of it. Coming home after a failed marriage is far better than coming home in a coffin as a result of pains you have to gone through with no respite. Why are men's offences at family level attracting lesser sanction than women? Offences generally are unacceptable and each one should be treated fairly."

LAST week, our topic was on cultural literacy and its importance to peace and harmony. We discussed the importance of cultural literacy to interpersonal and cross cultural communication and interactions. Today we shall discuss some elements of cultural illiteracy so that we know exactly what we are doing wrong in our interaction with others.

Cultural illiteracy can negatively shape our behaviour and reaction to others, just as cultural literacy can do the reverse. The most prominent features of cultural illiteracy are self-reference criterion and stereotyping. As usual, we will let the experts speak to us on these. These are ethnocentric, cultural illiteracy, self-referencing and stereotyping. We cull from research-methodology.net/self-reference-criterion-introduction-and-illustrations:

What is self-referencing

According to John Dudovskiy in his article titled *Self Reference Criterion: introduction and illustrations*, published on research-methodology.net: As globalization of world rapidly changes, today's global managers, whose company operates in many parts of world, face many challenges in securing their business interests in other countries. When a business decides to enter the foreign market there are a several factors that a company should take into consideration before deciding to expand their product or service into foreign market. Among these factors are the cultural differences the company faces.

Cultural differences exist between different countries and these differences must be known and evaluated by the marketing firm. According to Lancaster et al (2002) a number of factors contribute to a country's overall culture including religion, education and aesthetic appreciation.

In last twenty years, learning cultural differences among nations and need for greater cross cultural awareness have been seen to be a very important factor in improving and facilitating marketing activities of a company outside their country of origin as different cultures has different ways of doing business, different cultural assumptions, values and attitudes. Therefore, culture is important and has to be appreciated by the managers running the company. It simply can make or break relationship and even may cost the business millions of dollars.

Moreover, adaptation to the environmental differences from one market to another is seen as the key to successful international marketing. It is vital for international marketer being able to anticipate the uncontrollable factors of both the foreign and domestic market that have great influence on a marketing mix, so he or she can adjust the marketing mix to minimize the effects.

After all, due to globalization of markets and products, today increasing numbers of international marketing staff have to deal with ethical issues in cross cultural global economy. As a result, it is claimed by many international marketing researchers that the concept of "self-reference criteria" has become the fundamental importance to cultural understanding and cross-cultural analysis.

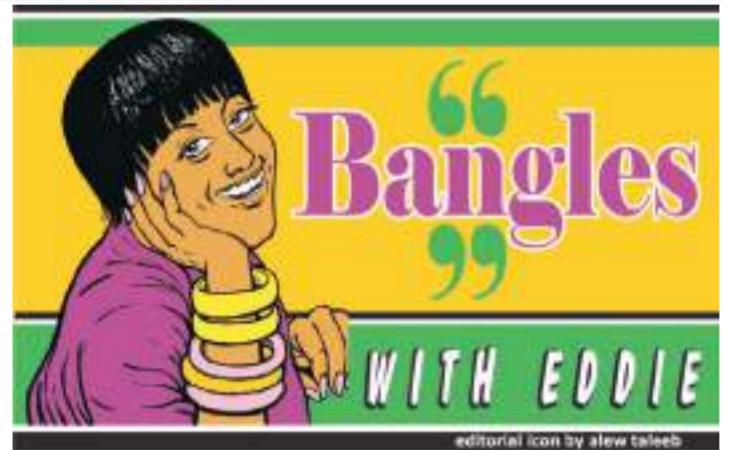
It is common that after selling a product or service successfully many firms assume that the product or service will, without adaptation, also be successful in foreign markets. Therefore, one of the primary barriers to international marketing, particularly for those firms approaching international marketing first time, is self-reference criterion.

Self-Reference Criterion is often defined as an unconscious reference to one's own cultural values, experiences and knowledge as a basis for decisions. That is to say that one's own culture or company knows the best how to do things (citeman.com). For example, people may make the wrong business decision in foreign country by thinking how they would handle the same situation if they were

in their home country. It also refers to the assumption that what is suitable for domestic market will be suitable for foreign markets too, that is to say there is no need to test whether the product or service has to be changed.

Moreover, Professor Lars Perner (consumerpsychologist.com) also notes that self-reference criterion refers to the tendency of individuals, often unconsciously, to use the standards of one's own culture to evaluate others. He gives a couple of good examples to prove his point. According to him, many Americans perceive more traditional or conservative societies to be "backward" or "unmotivated" because they fail to adopt new technologies or

consider misunderstandings or conflicts can happen between people of different cultures as the meaning of time, the attitudes towards the other people can be perceived different in different cultures. For example, in some cultures distance between individuals very close whereas it is much uncomfortable for Americans. When someone from different culture approaches an American too closely, without knowing that is normal behaviour in other cultures, American reacts adversely and tries to keep the distance. This results in confusion for both parties. Foreigner assumes American cold and unfriendly while American thinks that foreigners are pushy. It is clear that both sides react



Elements of cultural illiteracy



Lai Mohammed

social reforms in order to preserve their traditional values. In 1960s, a well-educated American psychology professor referred to India's culture a sick, because the Hindu religion did not allow eating cows despite the severe food shortages.

In addition to Self-Reference Criterion, closely connected is ethnocentrism. Ethnocentrism is the tendency to view one's culture to be superior to others (Lars Perner). Ethnocentrism has been particularly a problem for American managers in the beginning of 21st century due to America's dominance in world economy during the late 1990s. The main issues here are to consider how these biases and stereotypes that may come in the way when dealing with members of other cultures can be avoided or minimized. Both the Self Reference Criterion and ethnocentrism reduces the ability to assess a foreign market in its true light, which could result in serious mistakes and consequences.

The instinctive nature of Self Reference Criterion

When faced with set of facts or problems, people tend to react naturally on the basis of the knowledge that they acquired over their lifetime. That knowledge is product of one's culture. One never thinks about a reaction or how to react but simply instinctively reacts. Therefore, when faced problem or situation in another culture, the tendency is to react too instinctively and refer to one's Self-Reference Criterion for a solution.

However, this reaction is based on meanings, values, symbols, norms and behaviour relevant to one's own culture rather than rational thinking. Unfortunately, as we know, the values and norm of behaviours one's reactions based on are usually different from, those of foreign culture. As a result, such decisions and reactions are often not good ones (citeman.com).

Illustrations of Self Reference Criterion in different cultures

To demonstrate effects of Self Reference Criterion we can simply

Criterion effects when entering into international markets

As we seen above, perception of market needs can be blocked by one's own cultural experience and knowledge. To reduce this perception and isolate effects of Self Reference Criterion Lee in 1965 (fao.org) suggested a four-point approach:

A) Define the problem or goal in terms of home country traits, habits, and norms

B) Define the problem or goal in terms of foreign culture traits, habits and norms

C) Isolate the Self Reference Criterion influence in the problem and examine it carefully to see how it complicates pattern

D) Redefine the problem without the Self Reference Criterion influence and solve for the foreign market situation...

Conclusion

In summarizing, it is clear that adverse effects of Self Reference Criterion can be prevented and turned into benefits by being aware of cultural differences and recognizing the importance of those differences. Firms that entering into international market for the first time need to carry out in-depth marketing research into the concept of "self-reference criterion" and its importance. They must follow procedure of marketing research step by step to get feasible and intelligent decisions in the international marketing (Kotler et al, 1999).

The forgoing is from Business Research methodologies. The fact is that if self-referencing criterion can have an impact even on local and international businesses, we can be sure that it will have an impact on our interpersonal and cross-cultural interactions. Business is people. As such, the forgoing can be adapted to suit our local and individual contexts.

In our offices, communities, and neighborhoods, how has self-reference criterion affected our relationship with people around us? It is very common to see bias in our relationship with people because we believe in a certain set of norms and beliefs that are peculiar to our culture. For example, I have a friend who eats snails because this is a stable where she comes from. I do not eat snails. She knows this and will never cook any food with snails that she intends for me to eat. This is respect for our cultural differences. I also do not berate or criticize her for eating snails because I respect her culture. We respect our differences. I do not say that I will not be her friend because she eats an animal that is considered a culinary taboo in my culture.

On the other hand, in my culture, we start drinking from 5:00am. Alcohol is water and water is alcohol. We make no difference. My friends tease me sometimes about this, but they do not call my people drunks because their culture or religion says that drinking is a sin. They understand the difference between my culture and theirs and they respect it. Another illustration is this. My Domestic assistant of almost ten years is a Muslim from Kano state and I am a Christian from Plateau state. He is my brother. One thing I never do is cook my food with anything that is taboo to his religion because he partakes in our meals. I do

not say to myself, that because I eat this or that as supported by my culture, so therefore, anyone around me should find it interesting to eat or drink same. He does the shopping for food better than I do and I am comfortable with that. No gender or cultural bias. This is just in the area of food. It could be clothing and customs, ceremonies, and many areas of life that our different cultures speak into.

Our ability to stop ourselves from engaging in the use of self-reference criterion is very vital to understanding other people's perspective. If we go around believing that our culture is the best in the world, we close our eyes and our ears to the culture of others. This hampers our knowledge and understanding of them and prevents us from developing skills in the area of human interaction with them and breeds disrespect for their own culture. In essence self-reference criteria do not help us in being considerate and respectful of others and our differences. This often leads to misunderstandings.

Self-referencing criterion is harmful to human interaction because one man's food is another man's poison in all spheres of life. It is in respecting our differences that we can refrain from imposing our beliefs and customs on people we meet and interact with. In the article we culled, it is said that the American does not like to have his private space invaded. In essence, a stranger or acquaintance who stands very close to an American may be considered impolite. On the reverse, when it comes to the Arab man and his space, according to Cultural Atlas: "Saudi standards of personal space differ depending on the context. If the person is a friend of the same gender, the distance is often smaller than what Westerners are used to in public. For example, two friends may nestle together when sitting. However, it may be bigger in instances when there is a difference of authority or when the other person is from the opposite gender. It is best to keep at least a meter distance between you and a Saudi person to respect the modesty of the other person if you do not know them well". This demonstrates a difference. It will be very unwise for the Arab and the American to assume the reverse when dealing with each other by applying the self-reference criterion on space and distance. This is crucial in Business negotiations and interpersonal relationships.

In Nigeria, how often do we ignore the cultural preferences of others by imposing ours? We tend to think that the small things do not matter. Well, they do, and they are triggers that should be avoided. It is self-referencing criterion that has led to cultural arrogance and bias in our polity, and sadly this is a mark of cultural illiteracy and insensitivity. Interestingly, a person who is unschooled in the fine art of cultural sensitivity is globally considered unrefined and uncivilized. Are we? Next week we will look at stereotyping and ethnocentrism as elements of cultural illiteracy.

How to isolate Self Reference

WE have been sharing a very powerful series entitled, Fear Not Trust God. I believe it is God's intention and purpose to subdue the spirit of fear in your life and to bring you to a place of trusting Him. So that you will understand that in the face of the worst happenings in this world, you can prosper, thrive, and know that God's provision to protect and preserve you is greater than any activity of the devil to destroy you.

I believe this is the heart of God's Spirit in inspiring us to share these precious thoughts. The aim is to teach us how to resist the spirit of fear and not to tolerate it and to open the door for God to move in our lives as we learn to trust Him.

Our text has been from Isaiah 12:2, which says, **Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation.** This verse begins by saying Behold, God is my salvation; in other words, there may be all kinds of opportunities for me to be afraid based on what I am seeing and experiencing but because God is my salvation, I will trust in Him and I refuse to be afraid.

This has been our text for this series and we have all through emphasised the fact that there are two clear paths that every is presented with in this life. These paths are either the path of fear, which will open the door for the devil to steal, kill and destroy or secondly, the path of trusting God, which is the gateway and the open door for the power of God to flow into our lives and establish the blessing of God in our lives.

I tell you there is nothing we will ever go through all the days of our lives that the power of God cannot handle. God is able to take care of us. Whatever you may be experiencing, the antidote and the cure for fear is trusting God. Fear and the devil will not have their way in your life in the name of Jesus but as you learn to trust God, He will have His way all the time and when He does, you end up with a favourable outcome and a testimony and you being blessed.

Now, we have already established the fact that fear is a spirit and an abnormality. It is of the devil. 2 Timothy 1:7 **For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.** Fear is not one of God's gifts to His children. He tells us what to do with the spirit of fear because fear is of the devil.

James 4:7 and 1 Peter 5:8&9 tell us that we are to resist fear steadfastly in the faith. We are to submit ourselves to the authority of God's word, see fear the way the word of God says it is - not a gift to be treasured and valued and embraced but as something to be resisted because it is of the devil.

The Bible in James 4:7 says, **submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and**

he will flee from you. To resist fear is to resist the devil. In other words, it is possible to live your life free from fear.

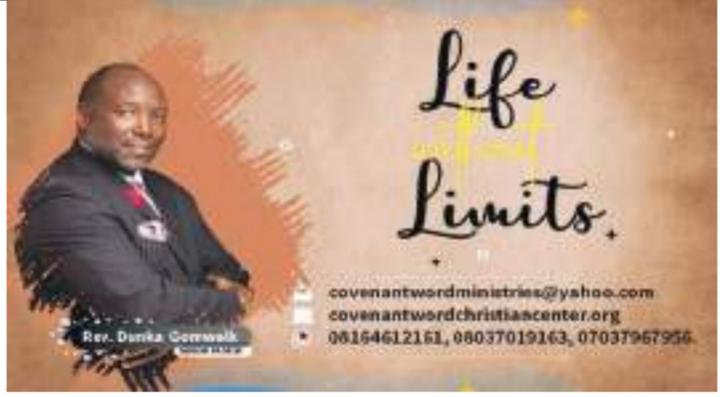
Now, we are not denying that there will be occasion for fear to come, but fear does not have to grip and take hold of your life.

We have also found out that another reason the Bible tells us to resist the spirit of fear is because it is the open door that authorises the devil to perform the wicked acts in the life of the

stripped him of this authority when He died and went to hell on our behalf and was raised again to life.

Furthermore, these verses say it is through the fear of death that men are held in bondage.

So as wicked and as hurtful as death is, it has been destroyed, but its ability to manifest itself now is through fear. Fear resurrects the power of death so to speak even though that power has been destroyed in



Fear not, trust God (22)



“Our perceptions define our lives. For example, I can tell someone you are handsome or you are pretty over and over again, but if they do not see themselves that way, they will never have a consciousness of the fact that they are handsome or pretty. In other words, your perceptions actually rule your life. Your perception of yourself and your situation is what actually determines how you live your life.”

believer. Satan has no authority to operate in the life of a believer outside of fear. In Christ Jesus, the devil is already defeated. The Bible says in Colossians 2:15 that **having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.**

Hebrews 2:14 and 15 says, **Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.** These verses tell us that Satan is the custodian of the power of death - all that threatens the human race. However, Jesus has

Christ Jesus but when men yield to the spirit of fear, it resurrects the operation of death and opens the door for Satan to kill, steal, destroy and enforce his will over the human race.

The key here is to understand that when you learn to shutdown the operation of fear, you learn to shutdown anything that death has to offer whether it is poverty, sickness and disease, premature death or anything which will seek to hurt your sense of security, peace and joy.

When you shutdown the spirit of fear, you make its operation impotent and then when you substitute it with trusting God, you allow God to unleash His blessings upon your life and bring you to the state and quality of life that He has always intended for you. The blessing of God preserves protects and

abundantly provides for His people.

We also found out that if you do not understand how the spirit of fear manifests itself, you will not be able to confront it or shutdown its operations. We also found out that the spirit of fear manifests itself through thoughts, ideas and suggestions. Your thoughts are the doorways into your life. Proverbs 23:7a says **as he thinketh in his heart, so is he.** It is through your thoughts that either God or the devil enter your life.

Just as you may have a gate that secure to entrance to your house or compound, so also is your mind the doorway into your life. You secure your mind, you secure your life. Satan seeks to breach your defences in life by penetrating your thought life. He seeks to take over your

thoughts, ideas and suggestions. If you think on something long enough, it will take over your imagination. Your imagination is like a magnet that pulls things into your life. You must understand that the moment your thought life or mind is compromised, you have a breach in your life.

Defeating the spirit of fear starts with understanding how it manifests itself, which is through your thoughts, ideas, imagination and suggestion. Satan's greatest power is the power of suggestion. To shutdown the devil, you must shutdown these thoughts, ideas, suggestions that come from him. The only way you can do this is by substituting Satan's thoughts with the truth of God's word.

Our perceptions define our lives. For example, I can tell someone you are handsome or you are pretty over and over again, but if they do not see themselves that way, they will never have a consciousness of the fact that they are handsome or pretty. In other words, your perceptions actually rule your life. Your perception of yourself and your situation is what actually determines how you live your life.

If you do not take charge of your thinking and allow the word of God to rule your mind, you will never be able to defeat the spirit of fear. He who rules your mind will eventually control your life. So, shutdown the spirit of fear by identifying how it operates and then learn to trust God.

“I tell you there is nothing we will ever go through all the days of our lives that the power of God cannot handle. God is able to take care of us. Whatever you may be experiencing, the antidote and the cure for fear is trusting God. Fear and the devil will not have their way in your life in the name of Jesus but as you learn to trust God, He will have His way all the time and when He does, you end up with a favourable outcome and a testimony and you being blessed.”

INTERNATIONAL

Somalia: Struggle to defeat al-Shabab

In an audacious appointment, Somalia's new government has included a former al-Shabab militant, who once fought against the authorities, in the cabinet, but the weekend's deadly hotel siege is a reminder of the tough task ahead for those in power. Mary Harper writes

WHEN Somalia's new President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud took office in May he declared a top priority was bringing an end to the country's 15-year Islamist insurgency.

Three months later al-Shabab staged one of its most spectacular ever attacks, storming a hotel a short drive away from the presidential palace in the capital, Mogadishu.

They held it for 30 hours. Officials said more than 20 people died in the siege of the Hayat and 117 were injured.

Less than a month earlier, the group mounted an unprecedented invasion of neighbouring Ethiopia.

It was as if they were cocking a snook at the new president.

International diplomats have described the complex, coordinated attack as a "game-changer" that took at least 18 months to plan and involved an estimated 1,200 fighters.

The then-commander of US Africa Command, General Stephen Townsend, said the militants penetrated 150km (93 miles) inside Ethiopia.

One reason why the group was able to stage this brazen assault was the increase in conflict in Ethiopia after years of general stability and growth.

Shortly after civil war erupted in the northern Tigray region in November 2020, a member of al-Shabab called me up.

"We are simply crossing our arms and enjoying the spectacle of Ethiopia destroying itself," he gloated. "The time to strike our primary enemy is finally approaching."

Ethiopia is one of the countries in the region which has sent troops to Somalia to support the government.

President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud pledged to end the al-Shabab insurgency

This is the second time President Mohamud has been in power. When I interviewed him shortly after the start of his first term in 2012, he said he would defeat the militants within two years.

Ten years later, they are still going strong.

The chairman of the Mogadishu-based Hiraal security think-tank, Mohamed Mubarak, says they are "more powerful and sophisticated than they were in 2012".

Al-Shabab has developed a parallel government and controls large swathes of territory.

It taxes people inside and outside areas it controls. Even Mogadishu residents prefer to use its justice system, which they consider more efficient and less corrupt than official courts.

The group continues to attack at will, firing mortars at parliament and into the heavily fortified international airport which houses embassies, the UN and foreign troops.

No wonder al-Shabab has been



The fight over control of the Hayat Hotel left much of it destroyed

described as al-Qaeda's most successful affiliate.

President Mohamud acknowledges that al-Shabab cannot be defeated by brute force alone.

On 2nd August, the government took the bold gamble of bringing in one of its former arch-enemies as part of a new strategy to end the conflict.

I was in Mogadishu at the time, in a car with friends stuck at a roadblock.

For once, nobody was in the least bit bothered about being ordered out of the car, bodies searched, vehicle and bags gone through with a fine-tooth comb.

As we waited in the only small patch of shade we could find, we went into a kind of trance, eyes glued to our mobile phones as we watched the prime minister's spokesman announce the new cabinet.

The name we were waiting for was that of a founding member of al-Shabab, trained in Afghanistan.

Mukhtar Robow was under house arrest before he was appointed religious affairs minister

Al-Shabab's former deputy leader and spokesman, Mukhtar Robow, was named religious affairs minister.

While some were horrified by the

move, many Somalis have greeted with enthusiasm the entry into government of a man who used to be on the US list of most-wanted terrorists with a \$5m (£4.2m) bounty on his head.

They include the MP and former BBC correspondent Moalimuu Mohamed who bears the scars of being caught up in five al-Shabab attacks. A targeted suicide bombing earlier this year left him fighting for his life.

"I welcome Mr Robow's appointment," says Mr Mohamed.

"As a former jihadist leader he will contribute a lot to the fight against al-Shabab. He can work with the religious community to challenge extremist ideology and convince the militants that their beliefs do not follow the true path of Islam."

Mr Robow fell out with al-Shabab in 2013. He publicly denounced the group, even donating blood for victims of a huge truck bombing in Mogadishu in October 2017 which killed nearly 600 people.

He was detained in December 2018 and kept under house arrest until he was named as a government minister. He said he received the phone call while in detention.

The security expert, Mr Mubarak, describes Mr Robow's appointment as a "brilliant idea from a counter-terrorism perspective".

"He is a powerful tool, especially in terms of ideology, as he will provide strong doctrinal pushback against al-Shabab. As a founding member of the group he knows them inside out. He knows how they think and how they act."

Others have reacted with horror to Mr Robow's appointment and see it as yet another sign of the impunity that has marked Somalia's more

than three decades of conflict.

Social media has been ablaze with criticism. Many of the remarks on Twitter were hostile: "If Somalia was a working society, Robow would have been executed publicly."

"The appointment of this ruthless and vicious killer means only one thing: Al-Shabab has officially infiltrated Somalia's government."

Al-Shabab believes its former deputy leader's acceptance of a government job is a heinous crime, meriting the ultimate punishment.

In a 10-minute recorded statement the group's spokesman, Ali Dheere, said "Robow is an apostate. Shedding his blood is permissible."

President Mohamud believes his appointment combined with a renewed military offensive will weaken al-Shabab sufficiently to force it into talks.

"It all depends on political will," says Mr Mubarak.

"The downfall of al-Shabab will only come if the African Union and other foreign forces, federal and regional troops, and local militias all come together. Only then will they negotiate and make compromises."

Militant-turned-minister Mr. Robow now talks of peace and forgiveness. He says he will work with Islamic scholars to persuade people to leave al-Shabab by convincing them that what they do is un-Islamic.

But it is unclear whether the government's gamble will pay off, or simply strengthen al-Shabab's resolve to fight harder than ever before.

Sosource: BBC News



Mohamud

INTERNATIONAL

Zaporizhzhia: World narrowly avoided radiation accident

EUROPE faced the prospect of a radiation disaster on Thursday when a Russian-occupied nuclear plant was disconnected from Ukraine's power grid, President Volodymyr Zelensky has said.

It was only due to back-up electricity kicking in that the Zaporizhzhia plant was able to operate safely, he added.

Fires had earlier damaged overhead power lines, cutting the plant off.

There is growing concern over fighting near the complex, which is the largest nuclear plant in Europe.

"If the diesel generators hadn't turned on, if the automation and our staff of the plant had not reacted after the blackout, then we would already be forced to overcome the consequences of the radiation accident," President Zelensky warned on Thursday night.

The damage was caused by fires which Ukraine's state nuclear agency said had interfered with power lines connecting the plant on Thursday, temporarily cutting Zaporizhzhia off from the national grid for the first time in its history.



Zelensky

"As a result, the station's two working power units were disconnected from the network," Kyiv officials said.

The state nuclear company said work was under way on Friday to try to reconnect the reactors to the grid. Zaporizhzhia's other four reactors have been out of action for most of the war.

Satellite images taken on Wednesday showed an extensive fire burning in the immediate vicinity of the nuclear complex.

President Zelensky blamed the damage on Russian

- Zelensky

shelling, and in his nightly address accused Moscow of putting Ukraine and Europe "one step away" from disaster.

But local Russian-appointed governor Yevgeny Balitsky blamed the Ukrainian military for the strikes, accusing them of causing power outages to the region as a result.

Russia's military took over the plant in early March, but it is still being operated by Ukrainian staff under difficult conditions.

ALI Hassan Harb was stabbed and killed by an Israeli settler while on his land near Salfit in the West Bank, his family and rights groups said.

Illegal Jewish settlements are built across the occupied West Bank, where settlers have conducted repeated attacks on Palestinians

Ramallah, occupied West Bank - Israel's State Prosecutor has closed the case of an Israeli settler who stabbed a Palestinian man to death in June in the Israeli-occupied West Bank.

The prosecution informed the family on Thursday that the investigation into the unnamed settler was closed "on the basis that the attack was a case of self-defence", the youth's uncle.

Ali Hassan Harb, 27, was stabbed in the chest and killed on June 21 by an Israeli settler while on the Harb family's land in the town of Iskaka on the outskirts of Salfit city, near the illegal Jewish settlement of Ariel, according to rights groups and Harb's family.

He had gone down to the land along with other family members after a group of settlers arrived to set up an outpost.

Naeem Harb, the main

Israel drops prosecution of Jewish settler



witness to the attack and the youth's uncle, said the family intends to keep pushing for accountability despite the closure of the investigation.

The State Prosecutor released a statement on Thursday saying, "after reviewing evidence in the case, including statements from those involved in the incident ... the decision was made to close the case since the claim of self-defence could not be ruled out," according to Israeli media.

He was approximately a metre away from his nephew when he was stabbed.

"The settlers came to our land and the killing happened in front of the army's eyes and under their protection," said Naeem. "The settlers were not exposed to any danger. We went to the land and told them to leave, and they left, and then came back with the army and killed the martyr, Ali."

"After the settler stabbed him, the soldiers prevented us from advancing to him or giving him any help. He was on the ground for 20 minutes, bleeding out," added Naeem.

Documentation by rights group Yesh Din, which monitors settler attacks in the occupied West Bank, showed a similar sequence of events.

"Settlers arrived at the scene and attempted to set up a tent. Friction ensued and settlers left the place. Immediately

afterward, soldiers arrived at the scene, and later the settlers returned," Yesh Din said in a statement.

Settler violence and attacks are a daily reality for Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem, where at least 600,000 Israeli settlers live in approximately 250 illegal settlements, according to rights groups.

The vast majority of investigations into attacks are closed without any punishment for the settlers.

According to Yesh Din, since 2005, 92 percent of cases were closed at the end of an investigation without an indictment filed.

Only three percent of files have led to convictions in the same period.

Murad Samara, a social and political activist in Salfit, a governorate in the northern West Bank highly affected by settler attacks, said the closure of the investigation is part of longstanding Israeli policy.

"There is no justice in Israel's justice system," Samara added. "Our people and our political leaders must search for alternatives in order to seize our rights and to hold settlers, and soldiers, and officers of the occupation accountable in international courts."

"This is an occupation government. They give impunity to the settlers and to the army to kill Palestinians as they wish," he said. "We do not bet on their government, or their justice."

I can't help my starving family

THE World Health Organization (WHO) boss, Dr Tedros Ghebreyesus, has revealed he is unable to send money to his "starving" relatives in Ethiopia's war-torn Tigray region.

"I have many relatives there. I want to send them money. I cannot send them money," he said in a press conference.

"I don't know even who is dead or who is alive," he continued.

Since the war began in 2020, the region has been cut off from the outside world, with no phone or internet.

Ethiopia's government has been accused of imposing an aid blockade on the region which impeded crucial deliveries - something it blamed on the fighting.

Tens of thousands of civilians have died and

millions are in urgent need of food aid. The World Food Programme says that almost half of Tigray's 5.5m population are in "severe" need of food.

It is not the first time Dr Tedros, a former Ethiopian health minister, has spoken about the war. On Wednesday he said the situation was worse than that in Ukraine and suggested that racism was behind the difference in the global response.

"I can tell you that the humanitarian crisis in Tigray is more than Ukraine, without any exaggeration. And I said it many months ago, maybe the reason is the colour of the skin of the people in Tigray."

In 2020 he denied an Ethiopian general's accusations that he had helped procure weapons for the Tigray rebels. "There have been reports

suggesting I am taking sides in this situation. This is not true," he tweeted at the time.

Fighting resumed this week after months of calm following the humanitarian truce agreed in March between Tigrayan forces and the Ethiopian government.

On Friday Tigrayan forces said the government had conducted air strikes in the region's capital, Mekelle.

Television affiliated with the Tigrayan forces showed images of a destroyed building and said civilians were killed in the strikes, but there has been no government comment and the reports cannot be independently verified.

A spokesperson for the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), Getachew Reda, told the BBC's Newsday programme that heavy fighting was still going on and that the people of Tigray were suffering.

The TPLF blames the Ethiopian army for the outbreak of fighting, while Ethiopia blames the TPLF.

"We have people who are starving because of the siege imposed on us by the authorities in Addis Ababa and their partners in crime. We have people who desperately need humanitarian aid, Mr Getachew said.

"It would be foolhardy for us to start a war when in actual fact our people are in need of humanitarian aid."

The government has not responded to BBC requests for comment.

Residents of Kobo, a city approximately 15 miles (25 km) away from some of the reported fighting areas told the BBC what they saw amid the fresh outbreak of violence.

"We are hearing sounds of heavy weaponry. It can still be heard. The war has

- Ghebreyesus

already been escalated. An additional defence force is also entering the area," one woman said.

"The community is confused and some are fleeing to the nearby city. But most of them are alongside the federal defence force and the Amhara special force to face what is coming," a man said.

The Tigray war broke out in Ethiopia's northernmost region in November 2020 - later spreading south to the Amhara and Afar regions.

Thousands were killed, over two million people fled their homes and some 700,000 people were left living in "famine-like conditions", US officials said.

Germany to return hundreds of Nigerian Benin Bronzes

IN July Germany handed over two Benin Bronzes

Germany has signed an agreement to transfer ownership of 512 Benin Bronzes, hailed as the largest return of cultural artefacts looted from the continent in the 19th Century.

The agreement was signed between the Foundation of Prussian Cultural Heritage (SPK) and Nigeria's National Commission for Museums and Monuments (NCMM).

The first objects will be returned to Nigeria this year from the Ethnological Museum in Berlin, according to a statement by the foundation.

"Around a third of the objects transferred will remain in Berlin on loan for an initial period of ten years and will be exhibited in the Humboldt Forum," it added.

The Benin Bronzes consist of thousands of metal sculptures and ivory carvings seized from the West African kingdom of Benin - in what is today Edo State in southern Nigeria - by a British military force in 1897.

Most ended up in European museums after being sold by businessmen and dealers.

In April 2021, the German government said it wanted to give back hundreds of Benin Bronzes.

A toxic gin concoction that killed 14 people in north-western Uganda has left others blind, a doctor has said.

All the victims are believed to have consumed a locally manufactured spirit called City 5 Pineapple Flavoured

Gin over the weekend in Madi-Okollo district.

"These people have now lost their sight, some of them partially, while others are completely blind. Partially means they can still have a degree of vision but not what they used to have," said Dr Onesmus Misso from the Arua Referral Hospital.

Police have arrested four people over the incident while the owner of a gin manufacturing plant is on the run.



Ghebreyesus



Two Benin bronze earlier handed over to Nigeria



With **BULUS GAMBO**

If I wasn't an actor, I would be doing music — Actress Favour David

Nollywood has been gifted with a bunch of exceptional actors especially female actors and one of the amazing actors who has been doing so well in the industry is Favour David a plus size aspiring actor who has been in some of the biggest movies in the eastern part of Nigeria. In an exclusive interview with Glamsquad magazine, the talented actress who is currently in her final year studying accounting at Godfrey Okoye University opens up about her career, aspirations and future as an actor.



she did not want any of her kids going into movie like my dad though it was my elder sister that was head over hills about being an actor so I just forgot about the movie entirely and faced musically fully even though I refused to hit the studio until I felt I am ready.

How has your growing up influenced your career as an actor?

Well, I will say it has influenced it positively, you know while growing up I learnt a lot from my parents especially my mom, I think that molded me into the person I am today because I grew up to be determined and focused in life. I am as well very strong even though I think I talk less and friendly, I mean it's really helping my

career now because I am experiencing less stress in this industry. I have a vision and I

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What was growing up like for you, did you think that one day you would end up doing movies?

Growing up for me was really fun, I had a lot of experiences and No I didn't think I would one day end up doing movies, though my dad was into movies and music; he was really talented in both so my siblings and I took after him. I really preferred music to movies back then because I didn't see movies as something I could do because I was shy and still a quiet type even though I was stubborn and besides my mum didn't like the movie industry because of the rumors of everything that happens there so



Couples who became close friends after ending marriage

Not all marriages last forever, but that doesn't mean the separation has to be final. Some former celebrity couples decided to stay friends, even after they went through a divorce. Whether they have children that they're co-parenting, or just decided to have an amicable separation, these celebrity couples can prove to be an inspiration for all of us.

Demi Moore and Bruce Willis



Although Demi Moore and Bruce Willis were married for over a decade, and eventually got a divorce in 2000, they are still very good friends. Demi even attended Bruce and his second wife's vow renewal ceremony in 2009.

Channing Tatum and Jenna Dewan



Although they went through a difficult divorce, the former couple are still friendly with each other. Jenna Dewan said that she is happy about starting a new chapter in her life.

Orlando Bloom and Miranda Kerr



Miranda Kerr also has a good relationship with both her ex and his current partner, Katy Perry. The supermodel revealed that they often hang out together and that Orlando Bloom likes Miranda's new boyfriend too.

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EVER'S WORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Relationship

When your husband doesn't help with anything

MANY women get incredibly frustrated when their husbands don't do their fair share around the house.

Not only do women take on far more unpaid emotional labor than most men, but they generally have to take on the bulk of domestic chores as well.

It's Difficult To Break Ingrained Habits

For thousands of years, domestic chores were considered "women's work." Men worked outside of the house, so hearth and home were the wife's domain. She was generally responsible for cooking, cleaning, and the bulk of child rearing.

This dynamic exists around the world, and still holds sway in many places. Remember that women working outside the home has only become commonplace in the past 50 years.

Furthermore, depending on cultural upbringing, many families still have a partnership in which the woman is the default housekeeper.

If your husband was raised in a family where his mother took care of the domestic duties, that could go a long way to explain why he sits back and lets you take care of the housework.

After all, if he wasn't raised with household chores and responsibilities on his plate, he probably just thinks that these things take care of themselves.

He Likely Doesn't Realize What He's Doing (Or Not Doing)

Think about that last point for a moment.

If someone has been raised with a particular familial structure, and only ever witnessed that dynamic firsthand, it would be very difficult for them to conceive of anything but their own life experience.

You may be feeling incredibly frustrated about this situation, but try to stay grounded and rational about it.

It's easy to get upset or passive-aggressive, but those approaches rarely help anything.

Instead, be proactive and rational. Nagging and whining will only shut your husband down, whereas a rational problem + solution approach is far more likely to result in real change.



So let's move on to some of the ways you can change the household dynamic to something more equal.

Make A List

A lot of men do really well with visual cues rather than abstract concepts, so make a list.

Then sit down with your husband/partner and show them just how much each of you has been doing, and explain why there needs to be more of a balance.

Prepare yourself to meet instant resistance and defensiveness. From his perspective, he might be doing a lot, since he likely does far more housework than his father ever did. To him, he's being proactive and a huge help around the house.

Try to be patient with him during this process, and explain your stance without being aggressive or over-emotional about it.

After all, the two of you are life partners, right? So approach this as a partnership of equals, with respect and efficiency.

Help Change His Perspective

Men who have grown up in the aforementioned type of household might be very proud of themselves for "helping out" with the housework.

They see it as the woman's job, and



that they're being proactive, wonderful partners by doing what they feel is helping her with her workload.

The same goes for housework. If a person lives in a house, then it's their responsibility to help care for it. Do they wear clothes? Then they need to wash them. Do they eat? Then

they can do their fair share of the cooking and dishwashing.

It's up to the two of you how you want to distribute household responsibilities, as long as you both end up taking care of things. Those are established chores that need to be taken care of, and if they aren't, then there's a specific adult responsible for them who's slacking off.

This is easier than just a free-for-all in which things get done "whenever"... mainly because they'll inevitably get done by the person who's been taking care of them forever.

Really drive home the fact that since both of you are living in this place, you both need to take care of it. Together.

Decide On A Fair Split Of Duties

When it comes to delineating different domestic chores and rules, it's important to take all work aspects into consideration.

If you'd like to keep things from getting stale, create a chore wheel, and spin it every weekend. This will create different chore schedules on a weekly basis, so one person isn't stuck on vacuum or dishwashing duty forever.

Then, if any of the chores haven't been taken care of, it's very clear who hasn't been pulling their weight.

It's also important to remember that some chores take much more

time and effort than others: not just because of frequency, but because of physical/mental labor.

Get Extreme: Go On Strike

In a worst-case scenario, if you've already tried approaches like a chore wheel and/or assigned tasks and your husband is still slacking off, a stronger response might be necessary.

He might not realize just how much effort goes into making a household run smoothly. As such, he doesn't understand what will happen if you stop picking up the slack that he keeps dropping.

So go on strike.

Only pick up after yourself, cook for yourself, do your own laundry. **Yes, there is a risk that these kinds of extreme measures may take a toll on your relationship. Hopefully you never have to resort to these, and your husband will step up and do his share without you going in full-on strike mode.**

If, however, you do have to resort to this, then it may be worth the risk. His response to this situation may very well determine the course of the rest of your marriage:

Either he'll realize just how much you have to do on a constant basis and step up, or he'll pitch a fit at having to do his fair share, and want out. If it's the former, then yay! You have an awesome, equal partner who loves and respects you enough to be an active member of the household.

If not, then at least you know now, and might spare yourself a lifetime of slavery, tending to someone else's needs and whims day and night.

Important caveat: if your husband is abusive in any physical or emotional way, going on strike is not a good idea. It may lead to aggression or retaliation which might put your safety or well-being at risk.

5. If You Have Children, Teach Them Differently

The best way to avoid the kind of resistance to housework and such that we discussed here is to nip those expectations in the bud. Namely, don't raise your kids the same way that you (or your husband) were raised.

Get them started on chores very early. Show them that everyone takes part in all aspects of home and family maintenance, so they learn that as part of the family, they're part of everything involved.

If kids grow up with the idea of personal household contribution as the norm, they'll be much more prepared for independent adulthood once they're out of the house.

All Of This Applies To Any Gender Partnerships

One final, and very important note: although this article centers around the idea of a husband who doesn't do his fair share around the house, this situation certainly isn't limited to male partners.

You'll get a whole lot of push-back and resistance – not to mention sullen behavior and mouthing off – if you try to get the kids to take on any household responsibilities. That will be worse if your husband/partner expects you to take on all the chores and is horrified by the idea of making his kids work around the house. If he never had to, why should they?

This is very difficult territory to negotiate. Yes, it'll take patience and reasoning, but also a firm hand.

Source: Consciousrethink.com.



EVERYONE'S WORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Relationship

"I don't feel attractive to my partner"

EVERYONE wants to feel like their partner finds them attractive, no matter how long they have been together.

There's more to a relationship than just how physically attracted you are to each other, but you still want to feel that your partner desires you for your physical attributes as much as they do for any other reason.

You might be in a new relationship and worrying about whether your partner feels the same way as you, or maybe you're scared that your partner will leave you for someone else because you've stopped putting as much effort into your appearance.

Whatever has triggered your fear about no longer being attractive to your partner, what can you do to change how you feel?

A lot depends on when your lack of self-confidence started. Have you always felt this way or has something changed to make you question how much your partner wants you?

When trying to feel better about yourself, it's important that you do it for your own sake primarily, not to make your partner love you more. You deserve to feel great in your own skin, and it's good to get your self-esteem back so you can be the happy, confident person you should be.

Consider how you rate "attractiveness."

To understand why you don't feel you're attractive to your partner anymore, you need to understand what you consider attractive in the first place.

What or who is it you're comparing yourself to that makes you feel as though you are less in some way? After all, everybody is unique, so you're never going to find someone quite like you.

Do you judge attractiveness by age or ability? Whatever it is, the bar that you're setting for yourself and failing to reach is something that lives in your own head and is under your control.

Did someone say something rude to you about how you look? Has this made you question how other people see you, including your partner?

Think about when you started feeling so negative about yourself and what it was that triggered you into feeling that way. Whatever it was, it doesn't deserve the time and power you're giving it to allow it to have such a negative effect on your state of mind.

Don't let one thing change everything you think and feel about yourself. Once you know where this dip in self-confidence started, you'll realize how insignificant it is compared to everything else that makes you who you are and what you bring to your relationship.

Consider whether it is your partner who is making you feel this way.

Is the reason you're feeling unattractive due to something your partner has said or done?

Perhaps they made a personal comment or just haven't been complimenting you as much as they used to.

Firstly, you need to figure out if they are simply oblivious to the way they've made you feel. If you think they genuinely didn't mean to upset



you by something they did or said, then it's worth having a conversation with them about how you're feeling so that they know not to do it again. Tell them if you're not feeling secure or loved in your relationship and give them the opportunity to make a difference.

If they are deliberately attacking your self-esteem as a way of manipulating and controlling you, then this isn't someone you should want to be with.

Spice up your sex life.

How's your sex life been recently? Have things cooled down between you and your partner and that's what made you wonder if their feelings have changed toward you?

It could be that your body has changed and you're feeling self-conscious about the way you look. Even if nothing is different, but you and your partner just haven't been having as much sex recently, you could be taking this as a lack of interest on their part and blaming yourself.

Rather than there being a problem, it's more likely that you're just going through a dry patch which could have been brought on for any number of reasons and has nothing to do with how attractive you are.

If you're still worried about your sex life, start prioritizing how you feel about yourself. You'll soon find that you feel more in the mood to spice things up again. Set aside some time to spend with your partner again—go on a romantic

date, have a short trip away together, and make time for each other to connect emotionally and physically.

5. Stop putting your partner on a pedestal.

Do you think your partner is more attractive than you?

Are you worried that people look at you both and wonder why someone like them is with someone like you and that your partner will one day think the same and leave?

If this is the case for you, then you need to stop putting your partner on such a pedestal. However attractive you find them, they are only human. They are lucky to have

someone who cares about them as much as you do and should feel grateful for it, no matter what either of you look like.

Remember that they have chosen to be with you. Even if you do think they're more attractive than you, they wouldn't be with you if they didn't find you attractive too. You think they could get anyone they wanted, but they're with the person they want and it's you, so stop worrying about it and enjoy it. **Reframe the way you see yourself.**

Over time, physical changes you've noticed in yourself could be

making you feel less attractive than you once did. You've started to wonder if your partner is still in love with you like they once were.

You might have had to recover from an illness or had children, or just changed your habits, which has meant that the body you have now isn't the one you had when your relationship started.

Rather than think negatively of yourself because you aren't who you used to be, or the size or fitness level you once were, reframe how you see yourself and try to be kinder.

Think of your achievements, not what you think you lack. Stop comparing yourself to you "before" and reframe the way you see yourself and what it means to be "attractive" now.

Accept getting older.

Everyone changes over time. We can't remain the person we were when we were years younger, and you shouldn't want to.

Aging might mean looking older, but it also means that you and your partner have shared years of memories and grown together into people who are even more comfortable and secure with each other than you were when you first met.

They are aging just as much as you are, and it's a natural progression for everyone. Your relationship can't have much of a foundation to it if you think that the way you look is more important to your partner than everything you've shared—if this is the case, then you deserve so much more.

Stop comparing yourself to others.

We are all individuals, which makes it impossible for you to fairly compare yourself to someone else.

You might rate someone as more attractive than you, but you might also have a different body shape, hair color, or lifestyle, which means you could never look or act the way they do even if you wanted to.

It's an exercise that is guaranteed to make you feel bad about yourself, because there will always be something someone else has that you don't. Life isn't a competition of who has more or looks better. If you were to stop worrying so much about other people, you might appreciate everything you have to offer instead.

To be continue.





Reality Bites

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Commemorating victims of violence

THE human rights of persons, related to Freedom of Religion or Belief, Freedom of opinion and Expression, the right to peaceful assembly and the right to freedom of association are still a challenge in many countries including Nigeria.

Such rights are enshrined in articles 18, 19 and 20 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Nigerian constitution also gives citizens rights to freedom of religion, expression and association.

But sadly, upholding such rights that plays an important role in the fight against all forms of intolerance and of discrimination based on religion or belief is still a challenge in the country.

Rights activists call for the open, constructive and respectful debate of ideas, as well as interreligious, interfaith, and intercultural dialogue, at the local, national, regional and international levels, which they say are virtues that can play a positive role in combating religious hatred, incitement and violence.

In 2019, the US placed Nigeria on the 'Special Watch List (SWL)' of countries that have engaged or tolerated "Severe violations of religious freedom". religious persecution.

Countries like Burma, China, Eritrea, Iran, North Korea, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan were tagged to be of particular concern by the US Department for violating the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998, while Russia and Uzbekistan were placed on a special watch list, including Cuba, Nicaragua, Nigeria and Sudan for governments that have tolerated "severe violations of religious freedom".

Continuing acts of intolerance and violence based on religion or belief against individuals, including against persons belonging to religious communities and religious minorities around the world, and the number and intensity of such incidents, which are often of a criminal nature and may have international characteristics, are increasing, say many bodies.

That is why the General Assembly adopted the resolution A/RES/73/296, titled "International Day Commemorating the Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief" to be marked on August 2022, to strongly condemn continuing violence and acts of terrorism targeting individuals, including persons belonging to religious minorities, on the basis of or in the name of religion or belief.

The Member States, including Nigeria reaffirmed their unequivocal condemnation of all acts, methods and practices of terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism, in all its forms and manifestations, wherever and by whomsoever committed, regardless of their motivation, and reiterated that terrorism and violent extremism as and when conducive to terrorism, in all its forms and manifestations, cannot and should



not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group.

The Day comes right after the International Day of Remembrance and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism, 21 August.

The day is to sensitise the public, governments against acts of violence against persons on the basis of their religion or belief, as well as any such acts directed against their homes, businesses, properties, schools, cultural centres or places of worship, as well as all attacks on and in religious places, sites and shrines that are in violation of international law.

A United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) delegation came to Nigeria in June 4-11 2022 to Assess Religious Freedom to meet with Nigerian and U.S. government officials, religious communities, civil society representatives, and human rights defenders to assess religious freedom conditions and discuss threats facing Nigerians of a range of faiths and worldviews.

Head of the USCIRF team, Commissioner Frederick Davie said Nigeria is home to diverse religious and belief communities, and added "We were fortunate to learn from an array of perspectives about the state of religious freedom in the country. Our meetings highlighted the complexity of the drivers of violence in Nigeria and the intersection of religious freedom and other security and human rights concerns".

After its engagements with the stakeholders, the USCIRF said it looked forward to incorporating the findings from this visit into its foreign policy recommendations to the President, the Secretary of State, and Congress relating to religious freedom in Nigeria.

Apart from past occurrences, pregnant Muslim Hausa woman Harira Jubril and her four children. On June 4, a violent mob in the capital city of Abuja beat, stoned, and burned Muslim local defense force member Ahmad Usman to death for alleged blasphemy. On June 5, armed assailants attacked worshippers celebrating Pentecost Sunday in a Catholic church in Owo, Ondo state, killing at least 40 people. There are also sad stories of how the Kidnapped Dapchi School girl, Leah Sharibu, has still not been released

from the hands of her captors Boko Haram insurgents since 2019, because she refused to denounce her Christian faith; and in 2020, the brutal honour killing/execution of a Christian student of University of Maiduguri Ropvil Daciya, by religious extremists for his faith, with the execution circulated on social media.

The USCIRF has condemned these attacks and all violence that threatens religious freedom in Nigeria stating that "All these incidents were truly horrific and demonstrated the challenges facing Christians and Muslims in Nigeria,".

In marking the 2022 UN international Day commemorating the victims of violence based on religion or belief, the United States Department of State has honoured slain Sokoto student, Deborah Samuel, the 200 Level student of Home Economics at Shehu Shagari College of Education, Sokoto, who was murdered by Islamic extremists and set ablaze after she advised her classmates against posting religious materials on their WhatsApp page.

Deborah's picture was uploaded on the website of the US Office of Religious Freedom.

Honouring Deborah, the office wrote, "In May, a mob brutally stoned, flogged, and burned to death college student Deborah Samuel in Nigeria, in an attack fueled by hatred and blasphemy allegations, even as authorities attempted to stop it. We honor her life as we continue the work to end such vicious violence.

As we remember victims who lost their lives as a result of religious intolerance, there is need for every citizen in the country to appreciate and understand that there is beauty in diversity of opinion, expression, religion, and cultural differences.



EVERYBODY'S WORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Living

Why some adults refuse to grow up

SOME people seem to just not want to grow up. They take one look at the prospect of becoming a mature adult and decide... nah, it's not for them.

It's more than likely that almost all of us know someone who refuses to grow up: it's not something that's limited to a particular age range, gender, or ethnic background, but can affect people from all different walks of life.

It's just... a total abdication of maturity, with people preferring to keep behaving, and even dressing, the way they did in their youth.

What causes this behavior? Why are so many people insisting on behaving like kids and abjectly refusing to mature?

Let's take a look at a few contributing factors.

They're Afraid Of Autonomy And Aloneness

Making decisions for oneself can be incredibly daunting, and a lot of people balk at that kind of responsibility for themselves by refusing to sever the parent-child bonds they're comfortable with.

Many people want security, comfort, and the reassurance that they're making the right choices and doing things well: validation that generally comes from a parent or mentor.

If people don't take steps toward personal autonomy, they might never have confidence in their ability to live life on their own terms.

Growing Up = No More Fun

Some people look at children and envy their carefree attitudes and behavior.

Kids often live utterly in the moment, and aren't weighed down by all the concerns that come with adulthood.

Many assume that once they grow up, they can't immerse themselves in joyous abandonment like that, but are instead bogged down by the never-ending onslaught of adult responsibility.

Or, even worse, they might only be allowed to have the kind of so-called "fun" that adults are supposed to have, like playing golf on weekends, or having board game parties with neighbors, where everyone complains about their sciatica.

This is utter crap, of course.

A person can have unbridled joy at any age, and can delve into whatever pursuits make their souls shine. They just have to balance that with life responsibilities, and that balance is what many of them balk at.

Few Positive Examples Of Happy Adulthood

In popular media, can you think of a few examples in which adulthood is seen in a positive light?

In TV shows and movies, most adults are seen as either haggard shells of their former selves, or laughingstocks, whilst young people are vibrant and having the time of their lives.

People may have experienced trauma watching their parents and/or grandparents deteriorate from disease, or seen supposedly stable



marriages fall apart, and are paranoid of experiencing the same thing.

If they can avoid the trappings of those who grew up before them, then they can avoid the hurt and disappointment that they've witnessed firsthand.

Vanity

How many people do you know who are obsessed with maintaining their youthful appearance?

People are constantly inundated with the message that youth and beauty are their only real attributes, and that aging is something to be fought against, lest they succumb to wrinkles, sagging, and all the other things that go along with the natural

aging process.

Shallow people who wholly identify their sense of self-worth with their physical appearance can go absolutely ballistic when they start to realize that their temporary physical shells are starting to show a bit of wear and tear, and many will go to extreme measures in order to cling to that youthfulness.

Unresolved Childhood Trauma

In a case such as this, it's less of a refusal to grow up, and more of an inability to do so.

For some people who experienced serious childhood trauma, they're far more comfortable living in a fantasy world of possibilities as a form of escapism, than they are in living in reality... especially when it comes to

dealing with trying circumstances or hard decisions.

When faced with a difficult situation, they'll disassociate and retreat into a safe, comfortable fantasy realm, rather than actually dealing with things... and attempts to force them into action will just cause them to retreat further.

They're Trapped In The Glory Days Of Their Youth

This is common for people who had a brief bout of fame or success in their teens or early twenties, and have decided to cling to that temporary shimmer forever.

The person could be a 60-year-old man who still dresses and behaves as he did when he was 22 and had a breakthrough hit with his rock band.

Or a woman in her 40s who won't stop talking about how amazing life was when she was a teenage model and had a torrid affair with a well-known celebrity.

Personality Disorders

Certain personality disorders, such as cluster B types like borderline personality disorder or antisocial personality disorder, can keep a person from properly maturing into adulthood.

Their behavior is so over-dramatic, over-emotional, unpredictable, and self-sabotaging, that they'll either find themselves in circumstances that cause them distress (thus forcing them to retreat), or they will instigate those very situations so they have an excuse to retreat into stagnant sameness.

In their quest to avoid any kind of pain, discomfort, or abandonment, they choose to remain in places and situations that they can control; in which they feel safe.

For many, this means mom and dad's house, or the apartment they've lived in since they were 18, eating the same foods (because they provide comfort), wearing the same style clothing (because that keeps things constant), etc.

There's one very common reason why so many people refuse to grow up, and more often than not, it's this undercurrent that fuels all the aforementioned reasons as well:

Death Absolutely Terrifies Them

To grow up means that they're adults.

Once they're adults, they have to acknowledge that they're aging.

Aging means growing old.

Growing old means that they're going to die.

Although death is part of the natural life cycle for every living thing, death-denying Western culture cherishes youth and beauty, and vilifies old age.

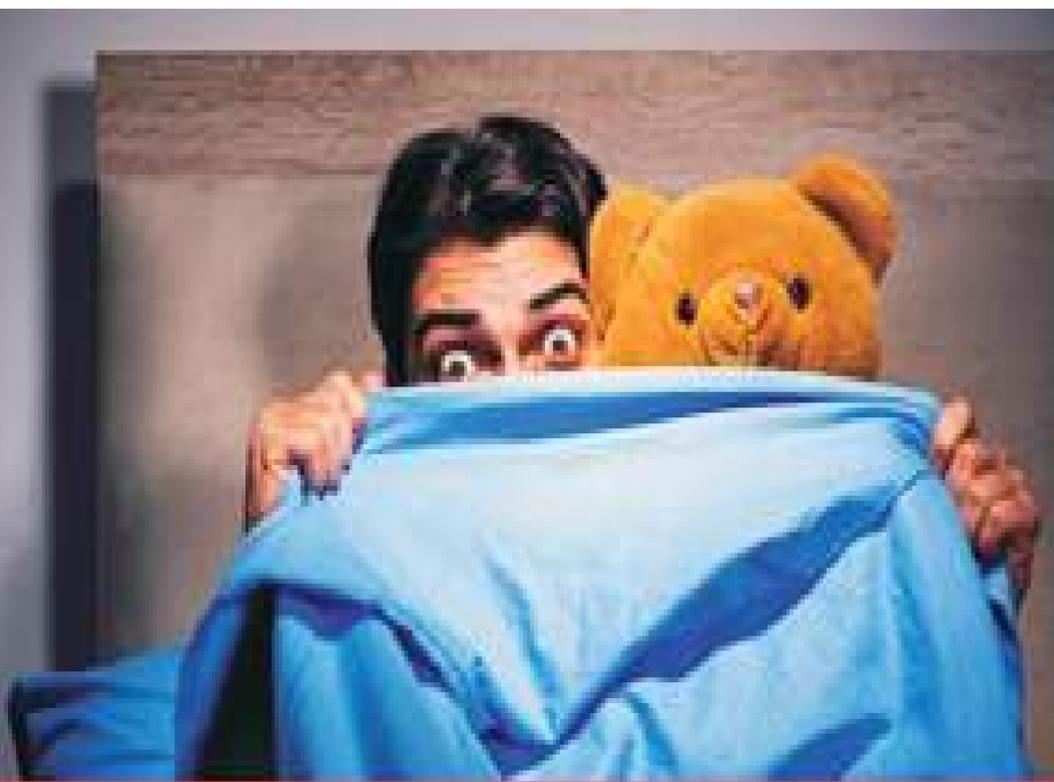
Death is something to be battled against, denied, ignored, not dealt with at all.

People go out of their way to avoid even thinking about death, let alone talking about it, and the sudden awareness that they, too, are going to die one day can be devastating, even paralyzing to a person. Rather than accept this with a measure of grace, they play pretend that they're young and carefree, forever running away from the reality of their eventual end, instead of embracing and celebrating the time that they have.

Still not sure why you are so averse to growing up? Talking to someone can really help you to handle whatever life throws at you. It's a great way to get your thoughts and your worries out of your head so you can work through them.

A therapist is often the best person you can talk to. Why? Because they are trained to help people in situations like yours. They can help you to identify the reasons why you don't want to grow up and work with you to find solutions to those things.

Too many people try to muddle through and do their best to overcome issues that they never really get to grips with. If it's at all possible in your circumstances, therapy is 100% the best way forward.



BUSINESS WORLD

FG, governors endorse harmonised digital economy, e-government policy

PRESIDENT Muhammadu Buhari and five governors have endorsed a framework on the harmonisation of digital economy, e-governance initiatives at federal and state levels.

President Buhari, represented by the Minister of Communications and Digital Economy, Isa Pantami along side Imo, Lagos, Nasarawa, Kaduna and Edo States Governors made this known at the inaugural meeting of the presidential Council on Digital Economy and e-government master plan in Abuja.

While charging the council members on a concerted approach towards implementing the initiative, Pantami, stated that there have been pockets of digital initiatives going on in the state levels which are not in alignment with Federal government's digital economy initiatives.

He recalled launching the National Digital Economy and Policy Strategy (NDEPS) in November 2019 with eight pillars which required the involvement of actors at all levels.

He said that digital economy cannot be implemented in silos, with FG bearing the responsibility, adding that states, sub-nationals have a significant role to play in ensuring achievement of NDEPS.

He said, "Many states have good initiatives on digital economy, however there is lack of harmonisation to their activities. Framework is



Buhari

going to be developed so that our sub-nationals will play their own role and FG will continue to provide intervention where necessary.

"There are issues that requires engaging the sub nationals to look at decision making, implementation, getting their input with regards to regulation and many more and that cannot be easily achieved. It is because of this, this council have been inaugurated, today is our first official meeting after the inauguration by Mr President."

He further made case for establishment of the Ministry of Digital Economy in states to cascade and implement activities at the national level.

The Presidential council was

launched to strengthen the capacity of government, to develop, adopt and deploy digital technologies to make government more efficient and transparent.

The council is also to ensure the improvement of Nigeria's global standing in the ease of doing business index.

In his remarks, the Governor of Imo State, Hope Uzodinma said he would immediately inaugurate Ministry of Digital Economy towards e-governance implementation in his state.

Governor of Edo State, Godwin Obaseki stated that the harmonisation of digital economy initiative will help stamp out waste and duplication in governance.

He added that if Nigeria can get it right on harmonized digital economy strategies, the impact will be tremendous.

MR. Festus Osifo, president of, Trade Union Congress (TUC), says Nigerians are not averse to the removal of subsidy on Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) but waiting for the government to win their trust over the issue.

Osifo spoke during a panel session at the Association of Energy Correspondents of Nigeria (NAEC) Strategic International Conference on Thursday in Lagos.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the topic of the session was "Energy Transition, PIA, Petroleum Pricing and the Way Forward for the Downstream Sector."

He noted that the majority of Nigerians were not really interested in the energy transition but were only concerned about affordable and reliable energy.

Osifo, who is also the president of the Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria (PENGASSAN), noted that the downstream sector had not achieved its potential due to the thorny issue of PMS subsidy.

He said apart from communicating with the people to create an attitudinal change, the government must lead by example by cutting out wastage and making sacrifices that would help Nigeria overcome its economic challenges.

"The Presidency should come out and say that they are reducing their budget. The National Assembly also needs to do so. That is leading by example."

"Nigerians are not really averse to the subsidy removal but the government must be ready to demonstrate not just

FG needs to win trust of Nigerians - TUC President

by talking but by doing and by acting.

"The government must demonstrate that if subsidy must go, this must reflect in our education, it must reflect in our healthcare and also our level of infrastructure."

"So, the trust deficit that Nigerians have must be addressed before we can make any progress," Osifo said.

However, Mr Olumide Adeosun, Chairman, Major Oil Marketers Association of Nigeria (MOMAN), called for a phased removal of PMS subsidy to mitigate its impact on ordinary Nigerians.

Adeosun, who was represented by Mr Clement Isong, Executive Secretary, MOMAN, said the N5 trillion subsidy payment by the government was

unsustainable and putting a huge strain on the nation's forex reserves.

He said the best option was to fully deregulate the sector and allow market forces to determine the price while also investing the subsidy gains in other critical areas such as mass transportation, healthcare and education.

Similarly, Dr Gabriel Ogbechie, Group Managing Director, Rainoil Ltd., said the global average price currently for PMS was N516 per litre, which was way higher than the N175 per litre it was being sold in Nigeria.

Ogbechie said the government should not only deregulate but also initiate a petrol tax to fund maintenance and construction of critical infrastructure across the country.



Osifo

Food sellers lament high cost of foodstuff

FOOD sellers in Kaduna State have lamented the high cost of foodstuff and other commodities in the state, which they said is making business more difficult.

Survey suggest that the high inflation currently being experienced in the country has caused a rise in goods and services.

A cross-section of food sellers at Bakin Dogo market lamented over their inability to purchase large quantities of foodstuff for their business.

A food seller, Wasilat Yusuf, who has been in the business for over 20 years and has been managing after food stuff increases said keeping her business afloat has been a major challenge.

"It has not been easy for me since the death of my husband five years ago. He used to help me with my business, especially financially and also assisted me when foodstuff prices started to increase," she said.

On the impact of the

increase in the prices of foodstuff, she said, "Initially, I used to sell a plate of food with meat for N200 naira. Now I have been forced to increase it to N500 if the customer buys one piece of meat, and N700 with two pieces of meat."

Another food seller at the market, Mercy John, explained that due to the increase in prices of foodstuff, she was forced to increase the price of her food.

Wasilat however lamented that her customers have begun to complain, saying, "In order not to increase the price of my food too much, I had to reduce the quantity of the food to satisfy my customers."

While noting that she used to make up to N50,000 daily, but now hardly makes up to N30,000, she called on the government to take deliberate steps to reduce the cost of foodstuff.

On her part, Hafsat Muhammad, a widow, said some food vendors are responsible for the increase in the price of food.

She claimed that some food vendors increase prices on their own to maximise profit and not because there is a change in their supply.

Hafsat also appealed to the government to find a solution

to lower the prices of foodstuffs and other commodities.

FG partners with Israel, Japan on manufacturing

THE Federal Government has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Israeli and Japanese companies to commence assembling and manufacturing of environmentally friendly, green, electric and smart automobiles by 2023.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the National Agency for Science and Engineering Infrastructure (NASENI) entered into partnership with the Israeli, Japanese and Nigerian companies on Thursday, in Abuja.

Israeli Ambassador to Nigeria, Michael Freeman, said that the partnership which was a combination of Israeli, Japanese and Nigerian technologies would help address the many challenges affecting the transport and environmental sectors in Nigeria.

"We are talking about bringing electronic Motorcycles into Nigeria which will be a programme that is green, environmentally friendly."

"It offers people a cheap way and safe way of transport and even has a technology to ensure that the motorcycles are only used for legal and appropriate purposes."

"When we look at what the problems are in the world and in also in Africa and in Nigeria, we are talking about issues of fuel scarcity, we are talking about green technology, we are talking about the need to provide cleaner, cheaper, easier transport."

"I believe that a programme that

is going to start in Nigeria will be successful and will go across Africa," Freeman said.

Prof. Mohammed Haruna, Executive Vice Chairman, NASENI, lauded the collaboration which he said had come to stay and would be domesticated in the country.

Haruna said that this project Nigeria would see to the manufacturing of Nigerian made electrical vehicles in the nearest future.

"We are grateful and we are happy with this collaboration and we assure Nigerians that the automobile industry after this collaboration will not be the same again," Haruna said.

Dr Ayal Raz, Representative of Peramare Enterprise, said that against some perception, Nigeria was safe to invest.

"With this innovative idea, we believe is going to change so many things in the face of Nigeria."

"It will bring green energy which means cheaper cost of transport and we all know what that means for our people."

Mr Takeshi Isaku, Chief Innovation Officer, Musahi, said that his company beyond production is keen on supporting the African continent, Nigeria build a sustainable nation with clean and safe technologies.

"We really want to contribute to African nation with our technology. What we want to

bring is not only to produce but what we want to achieve is to support the African nation to be sustainable.

"Through our products with safety and environmentally friendly features in our technology," Isaku said.

Hon. Wadada Aliyu, Chairman, PAN Nigeria Limited, described the initiative as historic and a starting point for technological evolution in Nigeria.

"This synergy between Israeli, Japan, NASENI and PAN as a facility where the assembling will be done, I think the sky will be a starting point of technological evolution in Nigeria," Aliyu said.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the project was facilitated by Nigerian company, LINKSMAN International LTD.

Mr Madisca Haruna, Managing Director, LINKSMAN International LTD said the project seeks to attain the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030, Goal 7 which seeks to enhance international cooperation, facilitate access to clean energy research and technology.

The partnership was signed between NASENI, Nigerian companies Peramare Enterprise, LINKSMAN International LTD, PAN Nigeria, Israeli company SIXAI, with Japanese Company, Musashi as the technical partner. (NAN) (www.nannews.ng)



Abubakar

BUSINESS WORLD

NASENI: Pathway to Nigeria's industrialisation?

The National Agency for Science and Engineering Infrastructure (NASENI) was established in 1992 by the federal government with specific mandates in the areas of capital goods, research, production and reverse engineering. In this piece examines how far it has gone in achieving the set objectives. ABDULLAHI M. GULLOMA writes.

NASENI, by its mandate and scope of operation, is the country's only agency established to conduct development works in the areas of manufacturing.

It's capable of coordinating the proliferation of technologies developed either within or outside of its centres, including patents obtained. Technologies developed in the areas of spares, components and systems engineering are to be transferred to entrepreneurs for the production of goods and services.

Thus, the country can have the benefit of a rapid technological development by strengthening NASENI since the mission of NASENI is to establish and nurture appropriate and dynamic science and engineering infrastructure base for achieving locally based and sustained industrialisation through the development of relevant processes, capital goods and equipment necessary for job creation, national economic well-being and progress.

Initiatives

In a bid to fulfill its mandate, NASENI established various development institutes in order to standardise made in Nigerian products and make them globally competitive. In this light, therefore, people from the six geo-political zones of the country will receive training in modern farming techniques.

The programme is part of President Muhammadu Buhari's directive to NASENI to introduce modern techniques in farming with 100 youths from each of the six geo-political zones of the country as participants.

At the occasion of the launch of the empowerment training programme in Kebbi state, the chief executive of NASENI, Prof. Haruna Sani, said the programme was introduced to aid agriculture and the economic diversification plan of the country. "The exercise was a mission accomplished and a sign of the seriousness of the administration to empower the youths and also to lift Nigeria's agriculture away from mere subsistence," he said.

Haruna stressed the importance of agriculture to nations' development, saying that the developed countries initially prioritised agriculture using modern techniques, science and innovations to become industrialised.

The chairman of the Occasion, the Attorney General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Mr. Abubakar Malami, said the President is determined to tackle the high rate of youth unemployment, poverty and especially food insecurity and also industrially transform the country.

The target of 100 youths per geo-political zone of the country, he said, is intended to take the youths off the streets, address youth restiveness and increase food security through the introduction of modern farming practices to attract young people.

"Seventy percent of Nigerian youths and workforce live in the rural areas and, therefore, targeting them with new farm implements and techniques by NASENI is like putting a round peg in a round hole," the minister said.

Of course, the aim of this programme is none other than the need to make farming in the country an all-year activity, not seasonal anymore, and increase yields.

Nigeria, China partnership



Sani

Again, it is in line with the industrialisation and economic diversification agenda of the federal government that NASENI, in partnership with the China Great Wall Industry Corporation (CGWIC) will, in September this year, carry out the ground-breaking and foundation laying ceremony for the establishment of a first class transformer production plant in Nigeria. If established, the plant will be the first of its kind in Nigeria and second in Africa.

The management of the Chinese team has met with the Executive Vice Chairman of NASENI to finalise arrangements for the September 2022 ceremony, directed by President Muhammadu Buhari, who doubles as the Chairman of the Governing Board of NASENI.

The leader of the Chinese delegation and chairman, Liaoning Huaye Group Development Limited, Anshan, Ma Liming, said during the working visit to NASENI that Nigeria and China had a long lasting relationship which led to the signing of the agreement on building of the first transformer manufacturing plant in the country.

He said the partnership also resulted in the training of 60 NASENI engineers on the transformer production line and high voltage testing laboratory plant.

There is no doubt that this development comes at the apt moment for no nation can develop without being independent as far as the issues of its power generation and supply are concerned. Thankfully, the upcoming programme will lead to the establishment, also, of a solar cell manufacturing plant in Nigeria aimed at popularising renewable energy in

the country.

Hopefully, NASENI and China would continue to work together to ensure the attainment of the realisation of the power needs of the country without which Nigeria cannot industrialise.

Thankfully, too, more than 50% of the 15% counterpart fund to be paid by the federal government on the establishment of a transformer plant in Nigeria has been paid and the ground-breaking and foundation laying ceremony of the project will be done by the President.

No doubt, for any nation to offer permanent solutions to the issue of power supply, it must have its own high voltage testing laboratory, which is what this project is also expected to achieve for Nigeria and when the plant effectively takes-off, it will be run by trained Nigerian engineers and scientists.

Indeed, NASENI is driving the project in line with its mandate to provide capital goods and equipment, including machinery, to offer a solid foundation for the industrial development of the country.

NASENI boss' assurances

Little or no wonder, Prof. Haruna said: "We are in this for the purpose of ensuring that Nigeria becomes one of the countries in the world with steady power supply which is an essential ingredient for industrialisation."

The executive vice-chairman of NASENI said due to the importance which the agency placed on solar energy, 98 NASENI engineers will be trained on solar cell modular production in China with local engineers expected to go to the Asian country in September to commence training.

research and innovation of manufacturing companies and innovative institutions, with Nigeria becoming one of the new beneficiaries of the programme.

Speaking at the programme launch, the NASENI boss said the Call for Public Proposal for the Delta-2 programme is one of the projects to be implemented under the bilateral agreement between the two countries.

According to him, the priority areas of the MoU which include biotechnology and pharmaceutical research, agriculture and food technology, mining industrial development, among others, were unable to take-off earlier due to bureaucracy until the Presidential Implementation Committee (PICTT) on Technology Transfer/Information Exchange between Nigeria and Czech Republic was inaugurated by President Muhammadu Buhari in November 2020.

He said: "The PICTT would be sourcing technologies from the Czech Republic's manufacturing companies; tertiary; research; and development institutions. The sum of CZK 250 million (250 million Czech Koruna, approximately US\$10.5 million) has been allocated as research fund by the government of the Czech Republic, through the TA CR and will be supplemented by NASENI on behalf of the Federal Government of Nigeria to the sum of 2,000,000,000 or US\$5.7 million."

Already, 284 public proposals for Delta-2 programme have been submitted for screening. It is, therefore, hoped that the committee members would ensure that the important projects leading to Made-in-Nigeria technologies and products are selected from the companies to transform the country and to kick-start the country's industrial revolution.

According to the PIC's terms of reference, the committee is expected to work collaboratively with relevant stakeholders and partners to ignite a process of fostering growth and expansion of infrastructure, manufacturing and innovation in Nigeria.

Of course, the roles the government is expected to play in the bid to industrialise Nigeria cannot be underestimated. After all, Dr. Osita Ogbu, the erstwhile economic adviser to ex-president Olusegun Obasanjo, once said, "There exists incontrovertible evidence that development is not driven by savings but by inventiveness, innovation and ideas generated through science and technology and the principal anchor and leader of this process must be the government."

This adage fitted well with the recent active roles being played by the government and, in particular, President Buhari, who gives crucial directives to NASENI regarding his administration's promise of providing millions of jobs to Nigerians, especially the youth, and developing the country.

New dawn

Thus, with the current goings on in NASENI, it can be said that, indeed a new dawn has emerged to redesign Nigeria's economic transformation pathway and strategies for the nation's economic development while science, engineering, technology and innovation sector provides the new direction.

Source: Blueprint.

Undoubtedly, the benefits of having a local solar cell manufacturing plant in the country are enormous. Of course, getting electricity from multiple sources is essential for a populous country like Nigeria and if the country can have the solar cell production plant on its shores, have steady light and even transmit to other African countries, all the merrier.

MoU

Boosted by the performance of NASENI and the imperative for infrastructure development, as part of the economic diversification initiatives of the Buhari-led administration, the federal government and the Czech Republic launched a Call for Public Proposals on Delta-2 Programme worth \$16.2 million co-funding research and development projects.

The intended programme to be birthed by the MoU, known as the Delta-2 Project, is to be assessed by the committee with inputs from Nigerian companies. Hopefully, this initiative will lead to building and expansion of infrastructure, manufacturing programmes and innovations in Nigeria and, ultimately, what will come to be known as the "Made-in-Nigeria" technologies and products.

According to the chairman of the Presidential Implementation Committee of Transfer of Technology between Nigeria and Czech Republic (PICTT), Dr. Mohammed Dahiru, more than 200 Nigerian companies have applied to take part in the Delta-2 project.

The Delta-2 programme is the cooperation model of the Technology Agency of Czech Republic, TA CR, running from 2020-2025, through which the TA CR sponsors applied

ENTREPRENEUR WATCH

WITH CELESTINE D. ATTSAR

Growing threat of second hand goods

The COVID-19 pandemic and economic turbulence have had a significant impact on businesses, manufacturers and households, including individual lifestyle and well-being in recent times. The direct consequence of this has been rising inflation with quite serious implications. Globally, no country is immune to inflation. Around the world, inflationary pressure has been experienced in the USA, the UK, and many other developed and developing nations. But in Nigeria, the peculiarity is that inflation has been getting higher steadily for the last

NIGERIA is one of the countries where inflation has grown the fastest and it has been a concern for many businesses and the government due to its severe impact. Lately, we have witnessed continued and unexplainable increases in the price of practically every known item and service across the country. The troubling trend is that most of these basic and essential necessities are increasingly out of the reach of many people, indicating that the country's cost of living has risen at an alarming rate.

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

Although academic literature has pointed out that once inflation exceeds a certain level, on average above 15 per cent, it starts to have a negative impact on the economy, principally on economic stability, growth, employment and investment attractiveness. Even so, the author thinks that the real inflation in an economy is shown by the rise in prices of food, groceries, and other goods and services that people use every day.

Without a doubt, the food inflation trend over the last two years has been overwhelming. The proportion of the majority's income that is spent on food has remained ridiculously high. The persistent rise in inflation results in a decline in the buying power of Nigerians, who are therefore getting poorer. Because they will be forced to prioritise significant spending and the affordability of essentials will continue to decrease. The consequences of high inflation are a spike in unemployment numbers, a rise in poverty rates, declining savings, a high number of jobless youths, crimes, and unrest.

A report by Aljazeera titled, 'Inflation rises in Nigeria amid fuel scarcity and insecurity,' indicated that four out of 10 Nigerians are living below the poverty line. So, with this trend, the author has noticed a spike and sharp rise in the demand for substituted products and services by the majority of the citizenry in the country. The substitution effect usually happens when consumers replace very expensive items with cheaper ones due to price changes or when their financial conditions regress, and vice-versa.

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

For the majority of businesses, the persistent inflation in the country has made the high cost of running and maintaining independently generated power unbearable, particularly the cost of diesel. This has resulted in a high cost of running businesses. However, this cost is passed on to the consumers without notice. When this cost is passed and consumers find it intolerable, then a change in demand by switching to substitute products and services prevails. The propensity for this trend is high and it has been the order of the day.

Substitute products or goods are alternative goods that could be used for the same purpose. Therefore, in the presence of inflation, substituting



means that consumers seek out alternatives that are frequently low in price most of the time, low in quality, inferior and largely unregulated. The demand for substitutes continues to rise because the masses need to survive at all cost. So who has the blame?

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

From a business perspective, substitute products create rivalry,

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

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

As a response, it is a time for businesses to re-strategise, engage

in high marketing and promotional campaigns, as well as innovate in line with customer expectations and patronage-improving products, and lower prices. Again, businesses can review their pricing model at this time to accommodate consumers and customers with waning purchasing power.

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

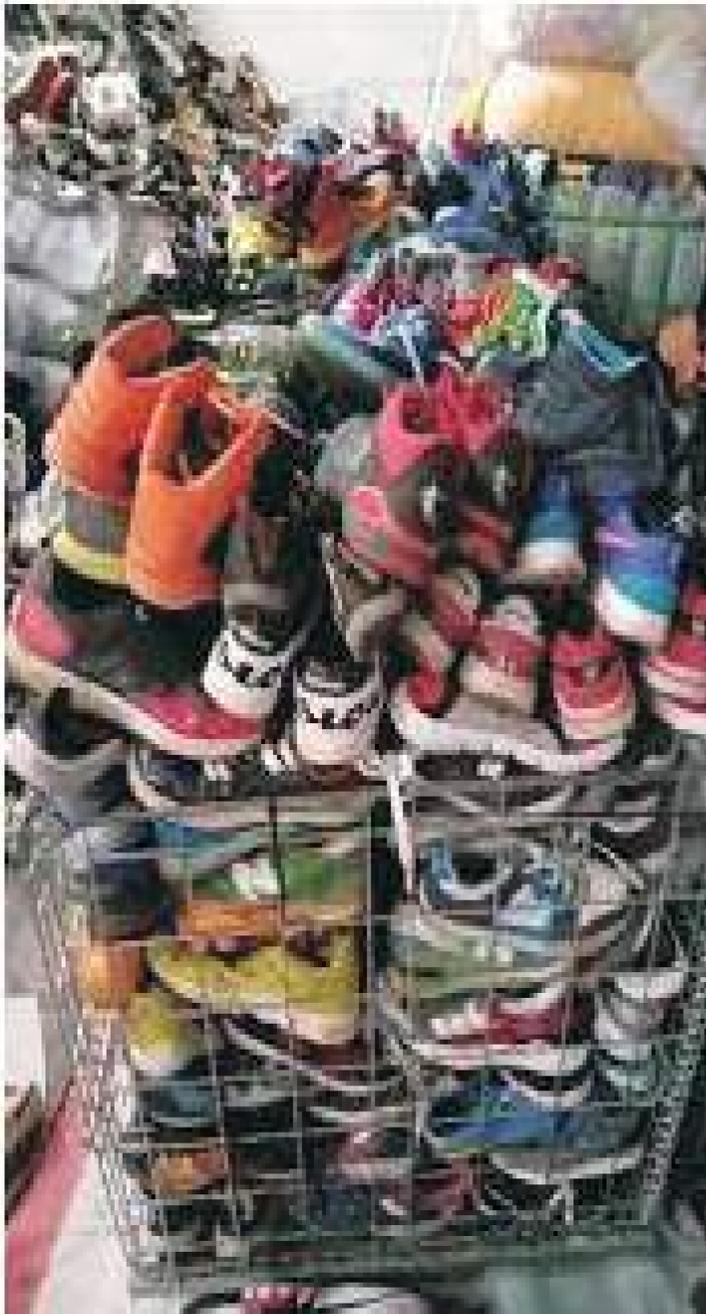
Businesses can fail entirely as a result of substitute effects and substitution products outperforming the original. In a market where there are fewer substitute products, there is a higher probability of businesses earning greater profits, but the reverse is the case, with inflation and the current realities. So, entrepreneurs, business owners, and SME operators need to clearly understand that their businesses

may just suffer from a substitution effect, which can weaken the sales of their products and may be attributed to consumers switching to cheaper alternatives just because they no longer have affordability or the price hike is unbearable.

In the view of the author, consumers largely make their choices based on their available spending power and make constant adjustments based on price changes, most of the time on impulse. In a time of hyper-inflation and low consumer spending, cheaper substitutes and second hand (used) items are the available alternatives. An observation of the surroundings reveals every accessible space or place for micro businesses to operate. It is an avenue to trade in second-hand items, which most people now prefer as alternatives, owing to dwindling income and affordability at this time due to inflation. This can make it harder for well-known brands or established businesses to get patronage and remain in business, if differentiation or other business strategies are ignored to stay cost competitive.

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

Source: The will





Continued from page 16

If I wasn't an actor, I would be doing music — Actress Favour David



are Omotola & Genevieve and they are still my major influences and I see them as my role models. I love the way they work and the way they carry themselves, I admire the women they have become and I want to be more than that one day by God's grace and I know I will get there.

Have you ever been a victim of molestation in the industry?

No, not at all.

You have gained wide acceptance by many after your first movie; how has this helped your acting career?

Yeah that's true, after my first movie I have really gained a wide acceptance by many, at least now I have a number of people who are helping me and have taken it upon themselves to promote my brand and has really opened me up to more job opportunities, I'm really very grateful. God bless you all. I know ever since I've really been working much more than I expected.

What's your brand as an actress?

Well, my brand is not limited to any genre of movie, I can cast for any genre of movie be it glamour, epic or drama and so on and trust me I do better in all.

If you were not into movies, what other career would you have been?

Music of course, music is one of the things I love doing the most; I will still go back to it

will get there by God's grace.

Are you a graduate, tell me about your educational background:

I am still an undergraduate, I attended my primary school at per Excellence Nursery and Primary school and did my secondary school at P.A.C college both at Owerri, Imo State and now I am in my final year studying Accounting at Godfrey Okoye University Enugu state.

Favour David & Uche Ogbodo on the set of King's Guard

Who are your major influences in the industry?

My major influences



someday though. One thing at a time you know.

What should we expect from you in a couple of months?

A lot, like an expansion of my brand to any extent and so many other things I intend venturing into that will affect lives positively one way or the other. Just wait for it because I intend taking everyone unaware.

Couples who became close friends after ending marriage

Continued from page 16

Jennifer Lopez and Marc Anthony



Jennifer Lopez said in an interview that she didn't feel her best during her marriage to Marc Anthony, but after their separation, they became great friends and parents to their twins.

Reese Witherspoon and Ryan Phillip



Although their relationship had its ups and downs, the former couple did everything in their power to offer their children a great childhood. That includes staying on good terms with each other too. Most recently, Reese and Ryan got together for their son's birthday.

Angelina Jolie and Billy Bob Thornton



Angelina and Billy remain good friends even after their split that happened almost a decade ago. Billy Bob Thornton revealed that even if they might not see each other often, they still talk regularly.

NEWS

Lalong offsets N114.5m to rescue PRTVC from NBC

IN line with its philosophy of rescue, Governor Simon Bako Lalong approved the payment of fifteen year backlog of licenses of the Plateau Radio and Television (PRTVC) owed the Nigerian Broadcasting Commission (NBC), totaling one hundred fourteen million, five hundred thousand Naira (1, 14,500,000.00) only. This happened months before the regulatory body took the drastic action of shutting down over 50 defaulting broadcasting station.

Governor Lalong's magnanimity is an uncommon demonstration of the commitment he has exhibited to see that democracy thrives by providing the citizens platforms to be informed, educated and entertained.

Management of PRTVC expresses appreciation to Governor Lalong for this progressive act of commitment and resilience and assures him that PRTVC will rise up to the occasion by discharging its mandate with utmost decorum, responsibility and professionalism.

The Ministry of Information and Communication as well as



Lalong management and staff of PRTVC consider the Governor's intervention as a boost to action which will translate to greater commitment to duty by rejigging the Corporation's programme content and service delivery. By this development, the era

of lackadaisical attitude, truancy and unprofessionalism by staff of PRTV should be eschewed as any breach will not be tolerated. It will be recalled that prior to the Governor's gesture, PRTVC was under threat of closure by NBC for unpaid license fees of up to 15 years.

Development of welding industry, vital

MINISTER of Science, Technology and Innovation, Dr Adeleke Mamora has said that development of the welding industry was vital to the growth of the steel sector.

Dr Mamora said this when the President of the Nigerian Institute of Welding Mr. Solomon Edebiri paid him a courtesy visit in his office in Abuja.

This was contained in a statement signed by the Deputy Director, Press and Public Relations in the ministry, Atuora Obed.

The Minister stated that the welding industry if properly developed, managed and sustained will not only create jobs for teeming unemployed youths but will also encourage mass production and growth of the steel industry in Country.

He reiterated government's efforts to ensure that welding is maintained in the school curriculum particularly in technical schools, adding that

From Dorcas Pankyes, Abuja

it will lead to overall development and sustainability of the welding industry.

Dr Mamora however, warned that meaningful achievement will not be made without synergy and effective application of principle of 5Cs which is cooperation, Communication, Coordination, Cordiality and Collaboration in order to lift the country to greater heights.

Earlier, the Minister of state, Chief Ikechukwu Henry Ikoh, said that to achieve rapid industrialisation, Nigerians must be trained on the skill of welding so as to avoid employing professionals from abroad.

He further said that indigenous welders must be encouraged to be thorough in their work so as to be internationally competitive.

The President of the institute

Dr. Solomon Edebiri said that his institute and the ministry have collaborated on many fronts, including the drafting of the National Institute of Welding.

He informed the minister of the establishment of a National Capacity and Capability Development Plan for Welding and related skills.

Archbishop inaugurates home of peace

BY EZEKIEL DONTINNA

THE Catholic Archbishop of Jos, His Grace, Most Rev Dr Mathew IshayaAudu, has inaugurated the House of Prayer, Poor and Peace of the Community of Sant' Egidio Nigeria to accommodate both the weak, poor, aged and the vulnerable to the glory of God.

This took place at the Sant'Egidio, BusaBuji in Jos-North Local Government Area of Plateau State, Saturday where members trooped enmasse as early as 8:00am to witness the occasion.

While delivering a sermon on the occasion, the Archbishop of Jos prayed that the house become the home of peace, and urged them to be patient with one another because they were instruments of peace saying, "when you are in peace with each other, you will be able to translate same to the larger society".

He observed that, majority of people these days were so pessimistic and so much belittle the God-given talents in them, challenging them not to think about the quantity of the talents they may have to offer, but the results of what they could offer for the propagation of the Good News of peace in connection with God.

Audu, therefore, called on them to stay away from tribal sentiments because it destroys the purpose of God for mankind, hence the need for



Audu

them to work toward bringing back the family foundation of God which started with Adam since all religions profess to the fact that humanity started with Adam and Eve.

However, the Cleric expressed concern that, the selfishness and greed of man has denied many people today the privilege to enjoy God's plan for mankind He has provided everything sufficient for us to live peacefully.

Appreciating God for his faithfulness, the Country Representative, Community of Sant'Egidio Nigeria, Prince Henry Ezike, thanked the Archdiocese of Jos for this prominent feat, and the gift of having His Grace' acceptance to come and bless the House of the Community today

JTF reacts to allegation of murder by soldiers

From DORCAS PANKYES, Abuja

Command is carrying out investigation to unravel the identity of the suspected soldiers. Additionally, the Sector has instituted a Board of Inquiry to unravel the circumstance surrounding the unfortunate incident. At the end of the investigation, the soldiers will be made to face the full wrath of both military and civil laws.

This incident is highly regrettable given the Sector's disposition and zero tolerance on violation of Code of Conduct and Rules of engagement for troops, the statement read in part.

Consequently, the Sector wishes to commiserate with the family of the victim and the good people of Yobe State and promised that justice would be served accordingly.

Minister to drive military partnership between Nigeria/India

From DORCAS PANKYES, Abuja

MINISTER of Defence Maj Gen Bashir Salihi Magashi (rtd) has demanded quick action towards implementing bilateral military agreements between the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the Republic of India.

This was contained in a statement signed by the Special Assistant to the Minister of Defence on Media and Publicity, Mohammad Abdulkadri.

General Magashi stated this



Bashir

during a courtesy call on him by the Indian Minister of State for External Affairs and

Parliamentary Affairs Shriv Nuraleedharam at the Ministry of Defence Headquarters, Ship House Abuja.

He said, moving forward time is of essence towards achieving the desired end - state in improved collaboration to support the Armed Forces of Nigeria in the areas of equipments in aid of the current fight against banditry, terrorism and piracy in the nation's territorial waters.

While appreciating the visit of the Indian powerful delegation, the Defence Minister placed on record the valued military capacity building programmes, trainings and intelligence sharing between the two countries and assured them that he will attend the forth coming Defence Expo in India slated for October this year.

The Indian Minister of State For External Affairs Shriv Muraleedharam who led the 8- man delegation on the courtesy call thanked the Defence Minister for oiling the wheel of progress of the age-long military bilateral partnership between the two countries which he said dates back to 1958, two year before Nigeria got her independent.

The leader of Indian delegation congratulated the Defence Minister for his three years in office and assured him of quick impact support to drive the mutual agreements between the two countries.



Mamora

NEWS

We have space for National Orthopedic Centre

BY EZEKIEL DONTINNA

CHIEF Medical Director of Plateau Specialists Hospital Jos, Dr. Filimon Golwa, has expressed optimism that Plateau State has enough space for the hosting of National Orthopedic Centre approved by the Federal Government.

He gave the assurance recently in an interview with **SUNDAY STANDARD** in his office in Jos, the state capital following the approval of siting of the agency by the Federal Ministry of Health in the state.

The CMD said "it is so difficult to say because that is a policy thing. Government from the Ministry of Health is working assiduously to really get a better location that will fit the National Orthopedic Centre in Plateau State.

"I cannot say for now, because government is working frantically to make sure that they get befitting place where it will fit for this agency. We have enough place at the extreme end of our hospital and all we need to do is to reclaim the land and turn it around for any services that will good for us.



Golwa

"But, we have enough space on the Plateau here. We have the old JUTH, we have the Lalong Legacy Projects that are all over the state. So, government can decide to use any one of these projects and turn it around to be the National Orthopedic Centre. We do not have a problem

with that", he assured.

Golwa, added that Plateau State has been blessed with so many life changing agencies, hence the need for the government to rise up to its responsibilities and take a swift action that would help create job opportunities for the youth in the state.

From VICTOR GAI, Jalingo

TARABA State House of Assembly has screened eight nominees for the post of commissioners and caretaker chairmen for the 16 Local Government Councils of the state.

The House had received an executive communication from Governor Darius Ishaku seeking the endorsement of the House for the eight commissioners and caretaker chairmen, vice chairmen and councillors.

When the Speaker of the House, Joseph Albasu Kunini, read the communication during plenary; the House gave a speedy approval.

The commissioner-nominees screened and approved by the House include: Lois Emmanuel, Iliya Agabi, Emmanuel Masa-Ibi, Shuaibu Yakubu Maliki, Hassan Bappa, Saleh Saad, Dr. David Ishaya Kassa and John Mboli.

The 16 caretaker committee chairmen include: Ismaila Zakari for Ardo Kola LGC,

TRHA screens eight commissioner-nominees

Aminu Hassan for Jalingo LGC, Bale Bako for Ibi LGC and Abershi Musa for Ussa LGC.

Others are: Paul Garba Dogo- Gashaka LGC, Boyi Manja Abershi- Takum LGC, Amamzalla John Joseph- Kurmi LGC, Ali Nicodemus Iki-Donga LGC, Micah Danbaba-Bali LGC and Andrew Luka Zanya for Zing LGC. Former lawmaker, Dr. Abubakar Jugulde, Pastor Daniel Zading, Dan Asali Biru, Adi Daniel, Nemuel Tuno, Barr. Shehu Voks were for Sardauna, Lau, Gassol, WukariW, Yorro and Karim Lamido LGCs respectively.



Ishaku

Bogoro GL boss warns on bad elements harbouring

CHAIRMAN of Bogoro Local Government Council in Bauchi State, Hon. Iliya Habila has warned

traditional rulers and the people of the area against acts that would breach peace and security.

Habila gave the warning while addressing traditional rulers, religious leaders, herders, security agents and other stakeholders during a meeting in the area. The Chairman warned the traditional rulers and leaders of Fulani groups against indiscriminate acceptance of strangers whose mission and purpose were not known in the area.

According to him, Bogoro which is currently peaceful is surrounded by neighboring areas which had serious security challenges, hence the need to be cautious in entertaining strangers. He said of late, following pressure from the neighboring Local Governments and Plateau, bad elements have been making attempts to come to the area which was detrimental to peace and security. Habila told the traditional rulers that on no account would they accept any stranger except after due scrutiny by the authorities in consultation with ardos.

On the relationship between farmers and herders especially during the rainy season, the chairman advised either parties from taking the laws into its hand in cases of breach of any law. Habila advised farmers against blocking cattle routes while urging the herders against destruction of farmlands in order of to have harmonious relationship.

Habila also enjoined parents to monitor the activities of their wards as part of efforts to ensure peace and security. The Chairman commended the three district heads of BOGORO, Boi and Lusa as well as security agents in the area for their prompt report and mediation in crises. In their separate remarks, the village heads, hamlet heads, security agents, representatives of youth tribal groups, religious groups thanked the Local Government authorities for providing an avenue for the interaction.

CHAN to partner PLSG for mutual benefits

By DUMAH RANDONG

THE Christian Health Association of Nigeria, (CHAN) has said it was poised to forge a formidable partnership with the Plateau State government to explore areas of mutual benefits.

Executive Director of CHAN, Michael Idah who stated this when he paid a visit on Governor Simon Lalong at Government, House, Rayfield, Jos, Wednesday, noted that they were mindful of the fact that the state vision and mission were at tandem with that of their organization which was to provide accessible and affordable healthcare services to citizens of the state.

He said the organization was also mindful of the fact that government could not achieve these alone hence; the need to partner with the state government as its facilities and services were a great strength to help it achieve laudable health for all.

The Executive Director

however commended governor Lalong for his passion and commitment to the Universal Health Coverage which was one of the most prominent global health services and strategy.

He appealed to the state government to make policies that recognize, encourage, support CHAN and other faith based organizations for effective health delivery especially the hard-to-reach areas among others. Governor Simon Lalong represented by his Deputy, Prof. Sony Tyoden commended CHAN for complimenting government in providing health care delivery to citizens over the years noting that what they have been doing was in line with the history of faith based organizations who did not only come with the gospel but health care as well.

Lalong pointed out that the issue of health care was not the business of government alone and called on other well meaning individuals and

organizations to compliment governments efforts stressing that his administration was committed to qualitative health care to the people of the state.

While assuring the

organization, Lalong said government will study areas of partnership with the view to contributing towards successful implementation of the programme.

Niger leads in drug addiction surge

From MATHEW JWANTU, Minna

WIFE of Niger State Governor Hajija Amina Abubakar Sani Bello has said Niger State has the highest number of youths involved in drug abuse in North Central Nigeria.

Hajija Amina Bello stated this while declaring a two day stakeholders, workshop on the implementation of the At-Risk Children programme open at Haske Hotel, Minna Niger State.

This finding, according to her was as a result of 2017 research which put Niger State at the peak of drugs related vices resulting to some clashes among youths in the state.

"I am aware that the At-Risk Children Programme is an intervention that offers a multi-dimensional, broad-spectrum approach to its nearly 13.2 million out-of-school children as estimated by the UNICEF". She said

"The Northern part of the country including Niger State has been more devastated accounting for the 69% of the devastated children scattered across the region".

She was optimistic that the workshop was conceptualized among other things as cardinal milestone in the journey to implement ARC-P in the state.

Dr. Amina reiterated that the workshop will also help the state define a clear path on what aspects of the programme should be pursue to remedy the vulnerabilities of children lacking basic social protection across the state.



Tyoden

NEWS

BSPHCDA launches Rota vaccine

From **ABBAS GUNGURA, Bauchi**

BAUCHI State Primary Health Care Development Agency (BSPHCDA) has launched ROTA vaccines that will be mainstreamed into its routine immunization (RI) campaigns across the State.

Addressing mothers, health care service providers and other key stakeholders on Thursday 25th August 2022, at Kofar Dumu Primary Healthcare Centre in Bauchi, shortly before launching the ROTA vaccine, the state executive chairman of the Agency Dr. Rilwanu Mohammed said the oral vaccine is meant to check Diarrhoeal Disease that is caused by ROTA Virus among under five children.

According to Dr. Rilwanu Mohammed, "ROTA vaccine is meant to protect your under five children against Diarrhoeal diseases, Dehydration and Hospitalization.

"Ensure that your children get the required doses of the ROTA vaccines at 6, 10 and 14 weeks of age. All vaccines are effective, safe and free", Dr. Mohammed urged mothers and care givers".

He disclosed that Bauchi State Government has received 200,000 doses from the Federal Government and that more will be received in due course.

He thanked the Federal



Mohammed

Government and International Partners for making available the ROTA vaccines, assuring that it will be judiciously utilize across all the 20 local government areas of the state.

"Going forward, the ROTA vaccines will be included into all RI campaigns as one of the antigens to be administered to all eligible children in the State", said Dr. Mohammed.

In a goodwill message, the representative of WHO Mr. Tarik Beru congratulated the state for launching ROTA vaccine and also mainstreaming it into their RI campaign.

He called on care givers to avail themselves the opportunity by bringing their children to be immunize, stressing that, "this is another effort at

mitigating child mortality and morbidity in the community".

Also speaking, the Zonal Coordinator of NPHCDA, Mallam Bashir Maidabino, said the launching of the ROTA vaccine could not have come at a better time than now looking at the damage diarrhoea is causing among children.

He also appeal to the mothers to complement the efforts of health agencies by imbibing the culture of hand washing, sanitation and personal hygiene at the household level. The two retired Directors; Abah and Suleiman, in turn thanked the Commissioner, the management and staff of the Ministry for their cooperation while in service and the honour done them at retirement.

GOVERNOR Muhammad Inuwa Yahaya of Gombe State says his administration has been executing programmes and projects that goes in tandem with the aspirations of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) in the last three years.

He told the Senior Special Assistant to the President on SDGs, Princess Adejoke Orelope-Adefulire, when she visited him in Abuja that, "we identified our priority areas across all sectors and so far, what we have been able to do within the last three years are in tandem with the aspirations of the SDGs".

According to him, "We have a clear vision and we have focused our attention to the provision of quality education, effective healthcare, social infrastructure and human capital development that cascade all through the state".

He said, his administration acknowledges the significance of the SDGs in driving global and national development agenda, describing its 17 goal as the bedrock of human development.

However, going through Gombe State's 3rd year scorecard and progress report document presented to her by the Governor, Princess Orelope-Adefulire,

We've executed programmes in tandem with SDG's... Gov. Inuwa

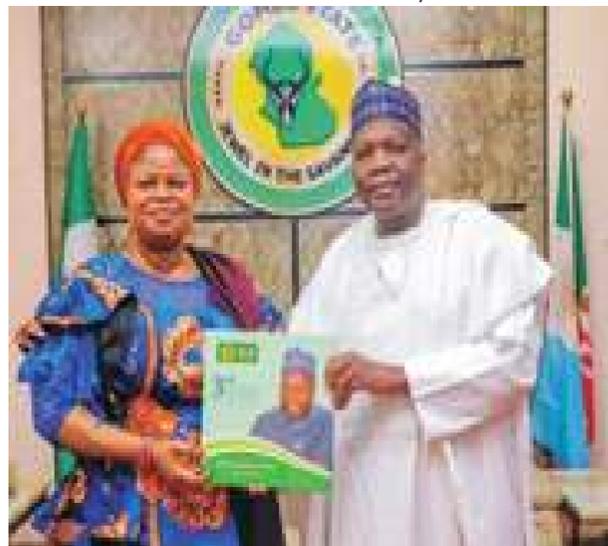
From **WILLIE ATTAH, Gombe**

was visibly astonished with the feats attained by the Inuwa-led administration within three years of its stewardship.

According to the Director General, Press Affairs, Gombe Government House, Ismaila Uba Misilli, Gombe State Government and the office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on SDGs, has been having a strong

collaboration in the areas of high quality education, good primary health care, human capital development and girl child development among others.

He said during the meeting, Governor Inuwa and the Senior Special Assistant to the President discussed ways of strengthening the already existing partnership between Gombe State Government and the Presidency.



Bauchi gov't Presents brand new fire fighting vehicles to State fire service

From **ABBAS GUNGURA, Bauchi**

GOVERNOR Bala Mohammed, of Bauchi state has purchased brand fire fighting vehicles for the State new fire service with a view to render effective respond to fire disasters related issues.

The Secretary to the state government, Barrister Ibrahim Kashim, while presenting the keys of the donated vehicles to the Fire Service Management, urge them to handle the vehicles with proper care for effective service delivery.

He said the donation of the fire fighting vehicles was part of the determination of the administration of Governor Bala Mohammed to provide the fire service with well-equipped equipment's to discharge its responsibilities efficiently.

"We are grateful to His Excellency, Governor Bala Mohammed for purchasing these vehicles to Fire Service to improve operations, we are all aware that fire service in our state is facing challenges of lack of modern equipment's and the vehicles we are donating

today is part of efforts to address the challenges" he said.

Barrister Kashim used the occasion to reassure the people of the state that the state government is doing everything possible to provide modern fire fighting vehicles in each of the local government area of the state to alleviate their sufferings during fire disasters.

In his response, the Director of Fire Service in the state, Engineer Bala Garba expressed gratitude to Bauchi state Government particularly, Governor Bala Mohammed for the donation of the vehicles, assuring to utilize them timely, efficiently and effectively by responding to fire disasters immediately.

PPC MCS to collaborate with PSCFA

By **HOSEA NYAMLONG**

PRESIDENT of Plateau Publishing Corporation, Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society Limited (PPC MCS LTD), Mrs. Jennifer Yarima has assures collaboration with the Apex body of Cooperatives Financing Agency.

Yarima disclosed this during a courtesy visit by the Board members of Plateau State Cooperatives Financing Agency (PSCFA), on Wednesday in PPC Board room, adding that the visit was apt, considering the

economic challenges faced by the Primary Cooperative Societies today.

She pointed out that the delay in remittances from the state government has affected the smooth running of the primary societies, while members are in need of money to solve their pressing needs cannot access funds.

"The remittance is in piece meals, which is not enough to meet up with the needs of members, let alone to attend to other projects in the society that would benefit members."

She appealed to the Apex

body to intensify more efforts, by ensuring that the needful is done by government, because societies cannot operate successfully without funds.

Earlier speaking, the President of PSCFA, Pharm. Lenka Musa, stated that their aimed of the visit was to familiarize and interact with PPC MCS EXCO to know their challenges and where they can assist in solving the problems.

He stressed that most of the primary societies, especially the workers cooperative societies in both Federal and State government are being faced with the challenged of non-remittances of their deductions.

He encouraged societies to have share capital, for this funds would be used to invest into various lucrative businesses that would generate more income to the society at the end of the day.

Musa observed that most of the cooperative societies are in the habit of using member's savings to invest into businesses, which is wrong and is not proper.

"Savings are meant for loans to members, because at the point of exit of members from service, the savings would serve as a bedrock that would sustained members, pending when retirement benefits would be ready".

He maintained that the apex body have outlined a lots of programmers for

the primary societies and one of the programme they have embarked is the familiarization tour to all the primary societies in Plateau State.

He called on societies to think within and outside of the box, in which he believes, it would help in generating more economic ideas in sustaining the viability of the primary societies in this present day economy.

UniBen graduates NILDS students

From **JIDAUNA YANUNG Abuja**

THE National Institute for Legislative Democratic studies (NILDS) affiliated with University of Benin, Edo State has graduated students in various Departments of the institute.

Among the graduated students is Mr. Zakka Isa Fom from Plateau State, a senior Legislative Aide to RI Hon. Onofiok Luke Akpan a federal lawyer from Akwa Ibom State, Who backed a master in parliamentary administration.

The ceremony which took place within the National Assembly complex was attended by Representatives of both the Senate President, Senator Ahmed Lawal and Speaker, Hon. Femi Bajabiamila and other dignitaries including the Vice Chancellor University of NILDS among others.

In their separate messages on the occasion both the Senate President and the speaker who said the importance of Education can

never be over emphasized; urged the grandaunts not to relent in pursuing further studies, because education according to them is from cradle to grave.

On their part, the vice chancellor and the Director General of NILDS urged the graduating students to be good ambassadors of the schools anywhere they find themselves just as they also advise them not to forget their alma mata because any river that ignores its source will dry up in no time.

The occasion was witnessed by so many dignitaries across all walks of life, especially members of the college old student's association.

One of the graduating students, Mr. Zakka Isa Fom expressed his happiness over the successful completion of his studies.

He thanked the management of the college for the support given them during their studies.

Fom stated that the studies will enhance his productivity in the parliament being one of the oldest legislative Aids in the National Assembly (NASS).



Yarima

NEWS

I will complete all my projects -Usman

EXECUTIVE Chairman of Jos North Local Government Shehu Bala Usman has reiterated the desire of his administration to complete all ongoing projects initiated by his administration.

This according to the council chairman is in fulfillment of the social contract between his administration and the inhabitants of the area to boost socio economic activities of the people.

The chairman stated this at the commissioning of the rehabilitated pedestrian bridge in Gangare linking Rikkos in Jos.

It would be recalled that last month houses in Gangare and some parts of Rikkos were submerged by floods which affected some pedestrian bridges within the community.



Usman

Worried by this development, stakeholders of the two communities met and intimated the chairman who promptly visited these areas to assess the situation for himself and immediately directed the Supervisory Councilor for Social Services John Ari Voda to put measures to ameliorate the plight of inhabitants.

While commissioning the pedestrian bridge, amidst jubilation by elated residents, the chairman said, the rehabilitation of the pedestrian bridge was part of the continuous efforts by his administration to transform the area and make life bearable for the people.

He lauded Governor Simon Lalong for executing several developmental projects in Jos

North coupled with the ongoing construction of British American overhead bridge, rehabilitation and construction of road network in the locality.

This among several others, the Chairman stated have proven the love Governor Simon Lalong have for the people of Jos North Local Government.

The Chairman used the opportunity to restate his relationship with the legislative arm of Jos Council remains cordial noting that together they will offer democratic dividends to the people.

Councilor representing Gangare Ward, Umar Abubakar commended the Jos North Chairman for responding quickly to the plight of his constituents stressing that Shehu Usman's commitment

to governance and the social economic prosperity of the area was unparalleled and assured him of the total support of the people of Gangare to his administration.

APC Chairman of Jos North Local Government, Sani Gangare and the Gangare Community Leader, Malam Guda appreciated the chairman for coming to the aid of the people noting that the road linking Gangare to Rikkos was a source of worry adding that with the intervention of the the Local Authority a sight of relief to the two communities.

Highpoint of the occasion was the presentation of an award of excellence by the Gangare community to the Council Chairman for his outstanding contribution to humanity as well as Gangare community.

KOGI State Chapter of Radio, Television, Theatre and Art Workers' Union (RATTAWU), has praised Governor Yahaya Bello for the payment of operational licence fees to the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) and purchase of new transmitter for Radio Kogi.

The union has also commended the state governor, for creating enabling environment for the state Radio station to thrive.

The state Chairman of RATTAWU, Comrade Haruna Isah gave the commendation during a courtesy visit to the General Manager of Kogi State Broadcasting Corporation, the management of Radio Kogi, Mr Ojo Oyila in his office on Friday.

Comrade Isah appreciated the efforts of the state governor in attempt to arrest the challenge bedevilling the state broadcasting station, particularly the purchase of new transmitter for Radio Kogi and settlement of National Broadcasting Commission's service fees recently. While Comrade Isah condemned the action of National Broadcasting Commission, NBC for shutting down the station and others over non payment of service fees, he stated that the commission should note that the media is an oxygen of democracy.

RATTAWU eulogises Bello over payment of NBC fees

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

"The action of the NBC was uncalled for, considering the security challenges and the forthcoming general election in the country. NBC should understand that the media is an oxygen of democracy", he said. Comrade Isah thanked the general manager of Radio Kogi for his efforts in ensuring that the station bounce back to function shortly, stressing that the union will stand by him in this direction.

The RATTAWU state chairman

added further that the new leadership was ready to assist in any form to ensure his efforts yield the desired result and the situation become normal in the radio station

In his remarks, the general manager thanked the new executive members, soliciting their cooperation for smooth operation of the state radio station. Mr Oyila who assured that the station will commence operation shortly thanked Governor Yahaya Bello for standing by the state radio at this period.



Bello

Lalong urges security agencies to synergize

By DUMAH RANDONG

THE relative peace being enjoyed in Plateau state has been attributed to the synergy among the various security agencies in the state.

Governor Simon Lalong who stated this while receiving the state directors

of the Department of Security Service, DSS, North-Central geopolitical zone who paid him visit at Government, House Rayfield, Thursday, noted

that the collaboration among the security agencies has enabled them to share intelligence which has helped in no small in restoring peace in the state.

Lalong represented by his Deputy, Professor Sonni Tyoden appreciated the contribution of DSS in intelligence gathering which has helped to achieved relative peace.

The governor said the issue of peace was the concern of everyone hence the need for citizens to contribute their quota and stressed that the state was the first to establish the Plateau Peace Building Agency in the country as a demonstration of his administration's commitment to peace.

He tasked the service to come up with recommendations that will help the government address the security challenges bedeviling the state and the country at large especially with the increasing tempo of political activities ahead of the 2023 general election.

Earlier, Chairman of the Forum of State Directors, DSS, North-Central zone and Kogistate Director of DSS, Tosin Ajayi had said they were in Jos for their zonal quarterly meeting to share intelligence lia strategize on the security challenges such terrorism, banditry, kidnapping and all forms of criminality.

Ajayi stated that the meeting was the seventh in the series since it began as directed by the Director of the DSS and commended governor Lalong for the peace efforts as well as the synergy among the security agencies in the state.

Farouq to actualise humanitarian ministry's mandate

From Abbas Gungura, Bauchi

MINISTER of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development, Sadiya Umar Farouq has called for improved actualization of the Humanitarian ministry's mandate.

The Minister made the call while declaring open a two-day Management Retreat for staff and agencies of the Ministry of Humanitarian

Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development.

In her keynote address made at the NAF Conference Centre, Abuja,

Farouq noted that natural disasters and man-made crises across the country have adversely impacted

the lives and the well-being of many Nigerians hence the need for the ministry to look inward towards strengthening the organizational structure of the ministry for improved service delivery.

"This exercise is the assembly of the management staff of the humanitarian sector designed to brainstorm on ways of improving the actualization of the mandate of the ministry. It is also a period of stock taking and winding down to understand the level of implementation and impact of the various programmes of the Ministry including the National Social Investment Programmes (NSIPs).

"I commend the leadership of our various agencies, departments and units which have worked tirelessly to ensure that the poor and vulnerable members of the society are given sustainable sense of belonging in the Country.

In his welcome address, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry Dr Nasir Sani-Gwarzo, mni. NPOM noted that the in-house event is

designed to assess the achievements, shortfalls and challenges of the ministry since its inception.

"This auspicious gathering of the management staff of the entire humanitarian sector was designed as a veritable platform for brainstorming and stock taking on the journey so far.

"We have therefore gathered here to critically examine our modus operandi, identify existing gaps and proffer enduring solutions to them.

We shall also examine the ministry's organizational structure as approved by the Office of the Head of Civil Service of the Federation with a view to strengthening it for efficient and effective service delivery".

The Director of Planning, Research and Statistics of the ministry Mr Ralph Oraeluno said while setting the context for the retreat the objective was to enable participants to assess the strides taken so far by the ministry.

"We are here as critical stakeholders in the humanitarian sector for two days to x-ray and assess our

journey so far. How we have fared, possible gaps and proffer solutions to them so as to continue achieving.

"We are expected to find solutions to the problems that may be presented here by departments, agencies and units that tend to militate against their productivity.

"It is also a period of winding down so as to gather more strength for the great task ahead of the Ministry in managing humanitarian issues in Nigeria".

There were goodwill messages from representatives of the National Emergency Management Agency, the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons, the Commission for Persons With Disabilities and the Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on Sustainable Development Goals (OSSAP-SDGs).

The retreat with the theme 'Strengthening Social Inclusion For Improved Living Standard of Nigerians' ends on Friday.



Farouk

SUNDAY MAGAZINE



Electoral

2023 election: Media and accurate political reportage

Continued from page 10

divergent roles of the media in Nigeria political process within the framework of our national political goal. This issue and question of education, information, mobilization and monitoring has become a very crucial factor in the realization of the national objectives in the context of the electoral process. This is as a result of the ugly incidences of the various forms of electoral malpractice which have repeatedly threatened the possibility of credible elections and national integration in Nigeria. Though the issue at stake is the responsibility of all stakeholders in the body politics, there is however, a rationale in assigning this responsibility as a primary concern of the mass media on the ground of professional competence as the fourth estate of the realm."

While quoting the Nigeria Press Council, the scholar explained that "The Nigeria Media have fallen victim of manipulation by government and politicians. We are being witnesses to the fallen standard of journalistic profession and its negative contributions to nation building through a hackneyed uncouth and indiscrete reporting of events and issues... ethnic polarization of the media houses and consequent undue influence on the power and political tussles. As a result, in moment of crisis, the media become ready tools for those actively involved in the crisis of power."

This equally means that the

media has quite a significant role to play in our quest for democratic consolidation on the polity. This is also achievable if and or when the media is able to ensure that the society is well informed of unfolding developments.

But again, in another submission on Reporting Africa: The role of the Media in (Un) Shaping Democratic Agenda, Christopher Afoke and Sharon Adetutu Omotoso believes that "Externally, unbalance reporting imperils the image of the continent which has severe implications not only for foreign investments, tourism and African marginalization in the politics of international economic system but also for national prestige and the psychological health, personal outlook, growth, and the welfare of individual citizens. One wonders whether Africans will continue to risk their lives trying to migrate illegally under dehumanizing conditions to the United States in hope for a better life if the American media ignored the "God's own country" and "land of milk and honey" rhetoric and focused only on its rates of murder, drug abuse, gangsterism, racism, homelessness and the poverty of over 40 million (20 percent) of Americans who live below the poverty line. Would the world continue to glorify the United States as the global bastion of democracy, freedom and development if the CNN was to shun national interest and put it's "Let us expose America"

programme on international satellite so that the world can see what really goes on inside United States?"

Both scholars therefore agree that "The dominant images of Africa in both African and foreign media show that the media in Africa, usually the source of such negative views, does not understand what its responsibilities entails in terms of broadcasting for peace, broadcasting for friendship and understanding, and ultimately, broadcasting for development in the continent. Development, as a process by which people create and recreate themselves and their life circumstances to realize higher levels of civilization in accordance with their own choices and values becomes relevant here because only such genuine development which reflects the values, realities, needs and cultures of people is worth sustaining in the sense of striving for a growth that enhances current and future potentials of a state to satisfy the yearnings and aspirations of its people."

While the Nigeria media is very much guilty of misreporting positive developmental antecedents, it is becoming quite glaring in the past few years that these organizations have not gotten it right when it comes to accurate political reportage for sustainable development. In most cases, stakeholders, political leaders including top ranking government officials after grating media interviews subsequently denied making

such statements in the first place. Indeed, government executives, managers of several conglomerates and security heads have consistently called on the Nigeria media to do the needful so as to ensure reportorial accuracy in their expected obligations to the nation. This according to some of them would consolidate on the nation's quest for developmental growth and preventing its citizens from being dragged into any euphoria of political uncertainty and or chaos.

Highlighting the relevance of accurate political reportage, Ndoma Brown and Israel Udoisor of the Department of Mass Communications, Cross River University of Technology, Calabar and Department of Mass Communications, University of Maiduguri respectively opined that "News is the life blood of politics and for politics to grow and flow in the right direction, it must be infused with the right blood. In this case, the right type of news for politics to experience growth and development should be basically considered in the interest of the society. Journalists and politicians know that they cannot succeed without each other in their respective careers. Therefore, despite the conflicting relationship that may exist between them, they manage to maintain a relationship that would help them to use each other in achieving their professional goals.

According to them, "To efficiently understand the inherent contradiction in the

political news reportage by the Nigerian print media, clearly states that the Nigeria media industry has only been so pre-occupied in the acquisition of sophisticated modern communication technology hardware with a complete disregard to the operational communication, which received only a token attention. It should be noted that the development of the human variables in the operational aspects of the media rather than the impressive arrays of communication technologies would lead to the proper operation of the media for balanced news reportage. It is observed that in Nigeria, not much consideration is given to the crucial role of the media choosers, message designers and producers, their training and skills as well as their knowledge of the socio-cultural and political context of the audiences."

As we approach the 2023 general elections however, stakeholders and media owners must reshape their thoughts to knowing the implications of inaccurate media reportage and its consequences on the polity. Journalists must also come to terms with the need for accurate news reporting which is a yardstick for peaceful elections in any developing nation of the world. In this regard, journalists should not be left behind in their expected obligations of ensuring a free, fair and peaceful elections in 2023 to foster national development and integration in the country.

METRO-FOCUS

Millers and noise pollution

By YVONNE ISHOLA

ONE of the commonest businesses that abound on every street corner and market in Nigeria is milling. This is because the millers provide a vital service to the home managers that aids their cooking.

Our country is a developing nation with more than half its population struggling to survive. Basic necessities like food, shelter, health care are reserves of the rich. Those in this category are a negligible number. The majority of the population live from hand to mouth.

It is no wonder, having home appliances like blender to enable a housewife grind food ingredients is perceived as luxury. This mind set necessitated the setting up of milling business in every corner one turns.

Millers of grain are usually found in markets or crowded areas. However, millers of liquid things abound around residences where their services are in high demand.

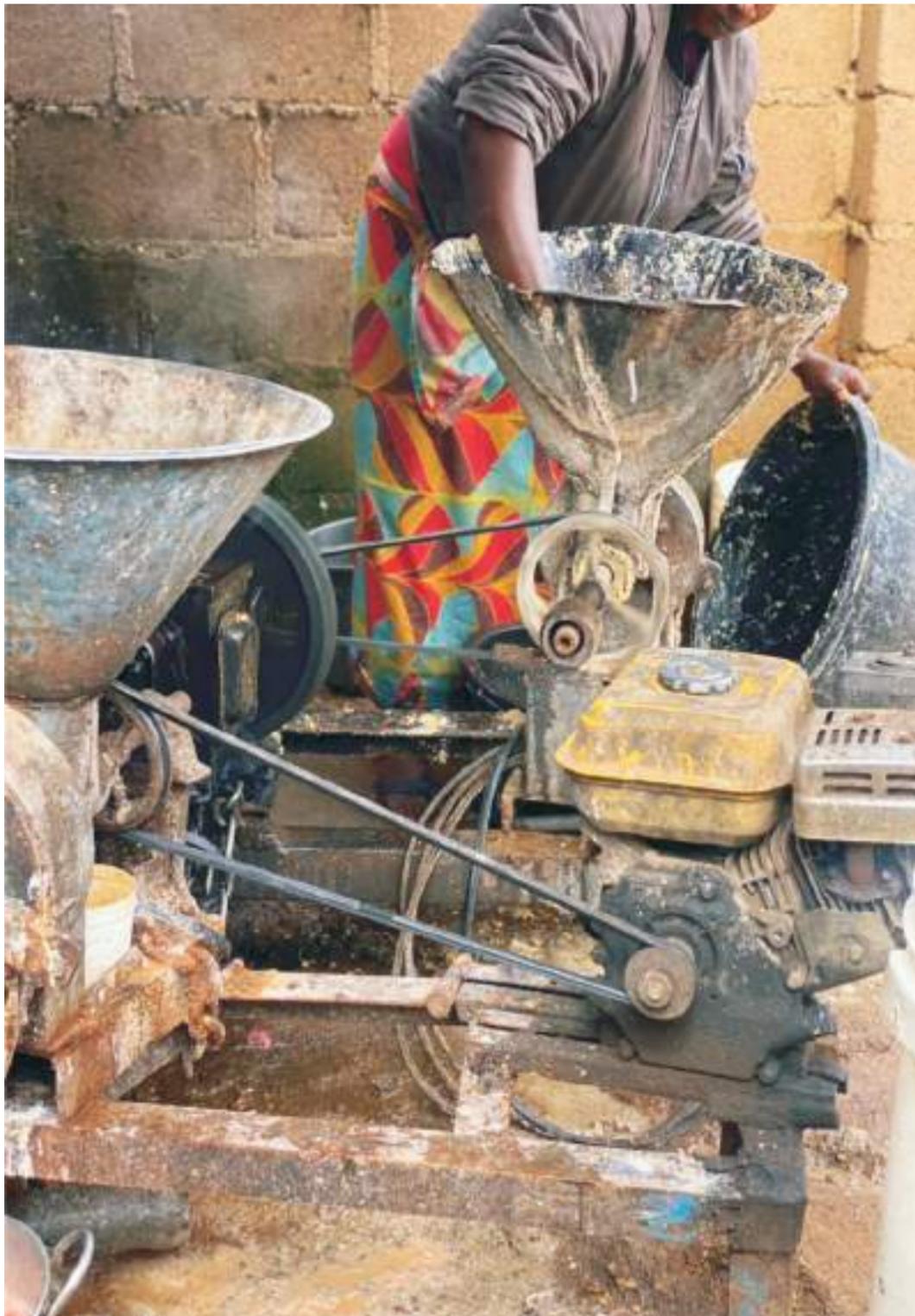
One of the features that characterises millers is their noise pollution. It pierces deep into one's bone marrow until one's eardrums seem like exploding.

Noise pollution apart, take a cursory look around the surroundings of the millers, and you would agree with me that there is also environmental pollution. It is the type that gives one the creeps.

Sometime last year, one went to make some purchases in Bukuru. When I was through, I decided to grind my tomatoes in the market (Kugiyu). By the way, it is commendable that there is a place designated for millers of liquid at the centre of the market. As one approaches it, different sounds of engine would lead you to the millers.

It is a large open place which looks as if it was built in a hurry. It is roofed but it is an open building without walls.

Every engine seemed to be hard at work, and the floor was a testimony of how busy the day had been. The floor was very wet and full of mud. On every corner were peelings of onions, head of peppers and or seeds. Some were carelessly strewn around.



Uncaring, the women went about their normal business, grinding away. When it was my turn, I watched as the woman washed the grinding machine because she had just ground beans.

The lady used unclean water that was collected in a bucket in the course of blending. I looked in amazement as she almost poured my tomatoes into the milling machine without rinsing it thoroughly. She used about 2 cups to rinse the milling machine and immediately poured my own into the milling machine. I was miffed.

The lady then pulled a pestle from a black coloured zinc which had seen better days and went to work, pushing the tomatoes in with

the pestle.

As I waited, I took a good look at the milling machine and like government property that suffers lack of maintenance, it was all rusted. There was a filthy bowl underneath the engine that was collecting the escaped tomatoes. It looked more like a bowl we used to use on our playground as kids.

After grinding the tomatoes into my container, she picked a container that looked more like a public toilet bucket, rinsed it and made to exchange my container with it so that she would grind it a second time.

"Leave it rough like that! ' I stopped her. But before I knew it, she quickly emptied the contents of the filthy

container underneath the miller.

There is no gainsaying that



if Nigeria is ever going to move out of the wilderness of diseases, one of the areas that government should direct its search light on is the millers. It is where we grind ingredients for every day cooking and our paste for *akamu*, corn for corn flour.

What government should note is that it is the same rusted milling machines that those who make *kunu aya*, *dabino* and *dates patronise*. This set of people don't cook their *kunu*. After blending it, all they do is to sieve out the chaff and serve or package for sale.

Diseases abound in Nigeria. This may not be unconnected to our careless way of living. A Miller sees no reason to keep his or her milling machine free of rust or the surrounding neat. The only thing that stops them from using their milling machine is if it packs off.

Our nature is very self centred. If what I'm doing won't affect me, then I'm OK. Many a times, we eat food and end up with stomach-ache. Rusted milling machines and filthy environment where the business is operated could be a contributing factor.

Take a good look at the items used at the millers, the surroundings, the millers themselves, their appearance, aprons or clothes that give them the appearance of masons.

Regulatory bodies need to be up and doing. Whatever needs to be done, should be done to bring sanity to the system.

SUNDAY PEOPLE

JOELENGS AT MACBAN MEETING IN MANGU

Mr Joseph Lengmang, Director General, Plateau Peace Building Agency recently attended a town hall meeting organised by the State Chapter of the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN) in Dalan, Mangu LGA



Director General, PPBA, Mr. Joseph Lengmang (middle) being received at the meeting by Alhaji Nura Muhammad, State Chairman, MACBAN (right)



Director General, PPBA (left) on arrival with the Chairman, MACBAN



Plateau Peace Building Agency Boss, Mr. Joseph Lengmang delivering his remarks



A cross section of officials and members of the group listening to speeches



A cross section of security personnel at the meeting



Mr. Joseph Lengmang, Director General, Plateau Peace Building Agency (middle) noting some points



Alhaji Nura Muhammad, Plateau State Chairman of Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN) delivering his speech



A cross section of invited dignitaries and Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN) at the Dalan meeting

Photos: MEDIA UNIT, PPBA, JOS



Road Runner

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SAFER TOGETHER

The key to safe driving skill

ACKNOWLEDGING the need to change attitude is difficult because the evidence is statistical and most people trust their own experiences rather than statistics on pages. If you are a fast or aggressive driver, you may not make the connection between your attitude and the way you drive even if you had had a crash before. Research has shown that drivers have a strong tendency to blame road conditions or other drivers rather than themselves for the crashes they cause. This explains why there is a strong tendency for drivers to repeatedly make the same mistakes and become involved in the same kinds of crashes.

A fully professional approach to driving requires taking an objective look at the facts, being prepared and where there is evidence, discarding inappropriate attitudes and developing a critical awareness of your own attitudes and capabilities.

These are the key steps to achieving this critical self-awareness:

Acknowledge that attitudes affect driving performance

Be aware of your own attitudes and recognize that they affect your risk of having a crash

Recognize that you are vulnerable
 Make safety your primary concern in all your driving decisions

Consider your own experience of near misses or crashes and what you have learnt from them

Carry through changes in attitude to your driving performance by applying them in every driving situation

Concentration and alertness

These are also key mental aspects of driving skill. What are the factors that can hinder concentration and alertness?

Our ability to handle information about the environment is limited. We handle this by giving more attention and concentration to some parts of the environment than others (selective process theory). This is important in driving because we react most quickly to things happening in the part of the environment in which we are concentrating.

One way of seeing this is to imagine your

field of view as a picture -you can see the whole picture but you can only concentrate on one part of it at a time. If you concentrate your vision on a small area you are less aware of the whole picture. If you scan different areas of the environment in turn, you become more aware of the picture as a whole.

Scanning the environment

Drivers who can rapidly scan the whole environment looking for different kinds of hazards have a lower risk of crash than those who concentrate on one area. There are several ways you can develop your ability to do this:

Move your eyes around
 Look for hazard in any shape or size and from any direction

Develop your sensitivity to the variety of possible hazards in different driving situations-this depends on learning, experience and a commitment to developing this awareness.

Looking but not seeing.

Whatever we see depends to a large extent on what we expect to see. You may have experienced at one time or the other, a situation where you pull out and narrowly miss a bicycle coming from the direction in which you just looked. Errors of this nature are commonplace because drivers are generally looking out for cars and lorries rather than other road users smaller in size such as bicycles, motorcycles, pedestrians, animals, hence they fail to see them. When we concentrate, we do not just look at a particular part of a scene, we look rather for a particular type of objects that we expect to see and react quickly to them. Conversely, we often fail to see objects that we do not expect to see. In looking out for cars and lorries, drivers can become blind to smaller and less expected road users. This explains why road traffic authorities and professionals insist that smaller and more vulnerable road users go extra mile to make themselves visible to drivers by adorning themselves with bright and reflective attires. A group of pedestrians strolling at night should ensure they carry white lights in front and red light behind. These are measures to promote visibility and prevent road traffic crashes.



NEWS

Bauchi Gov't privatise Moribund industries

From
ABBAS GUNGURA,
 Bauchi

IN its efforts to boost economic activities and create more job opportunities to the teaming youth in the state, Bauchi State government has decided to privatise its six moribund industries in the state.

The six are Bauchi Meat Factory, Bauchi Furniture Company, Bauchi State Fertilizer and Blending Company, Zaranda Hotels, Wikki Hotels and Tours and Gallambi Cattle Ranch.

This development was made public recently by the Chairman, Bureau for Privatisation and Economic Reforms, Senator Baba Tela, who is the Deputy Governor of Bauchi State.

Senator Baba Tela, who spoke with journalists at Government House, Bauchi, shortly after the close of financial bidding for the six ailing companies and industries, said it was in the best interest of all stakeholders for the process to be carried out.

"Government is not just interested in selling the assets off but interested in seeing them work because it has realized it's incapacitated to run them profitably," he said.

"If you look at all those places, they were doing well. Now they are sorry sites, so if you bring in somebody who can make them look good, that is fantastic,"

The Deputy Governor explained that the state government would bring in people who have the financial and managerial capacity to resuscitate the six ailing



Bala

companies.

He said the purpose was to generate money for government, create employment and boost economic activities of the state.

"This is the first round. More industries and entities have been slated for and we will continue to do it as long as there are those entrepreneurs that need to be privatized," he said.

Speaking earlier after the financial bid opening, Secretary to the State Government, Barrister Ibrahim Kashim, described the process as smooth and transparent.

Kashim disclosed that AY Shafa beat two others and emerged preferred bidder to clinch Bauchi Fertilizer and Blending Company after offering 80 percent shares at the price of N400 million.

While New Frontier was preferred bidder to acquire 75 percent of Bauchi Meat Factory at N301 million,

Galambi Cattle Ranch was acquired N150 million by H & Y Global Ventures for the same amount.

While Zaranda was leased out for 25 years to preferred bidder Butfield who offered N1.2 billion while Butfield also beat other bidders to get Wikki Hotels offer at N200 million for a lease for period of 25 years.

Speaking on the development, the Chairman of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) in the state, Comrade Danjuma Seleh, assured workers that the state government has carried them along in the process.

Danjuma expressed the hope that the privatisation of public assets in the state would not lead to sack of workers in the affected entities.

He appealed to the state government to consider workers who have worked for over a decade to be considered for pension.

Ocheni bags Worthy Servant Leadership Award

From
AMEDU JOSEPH,
 Lokoja

FORMER Minister of State, Labour and Productivity, Professor Stephen Ocheni has been conferred with Worthy Servant Leadership Award by the Nigerianpost Newspaper Professor Ocheni while reacting to the honour bestowed on him at the Nigerianpost lecture series to mark the thirty first anniversary of the creation of Kogi State, expressed gratitude to the Nigerian post publisher, Mr. Mike Abu and management for the recognition.

He expressed confidence that those given awards at the ceremony actually deserved it.

The minister noted that such awards which are not borne out of monetary considerations, is a wakeup call for such recipients to do more for the development of society.

Speaking about the theme of the event "This house must not fall", the former Minister of State for Labour and Employment noted that the only antidote is effective leadership.

According to him, if practical and effective Leadership must be embraced, the principle of management by objective must be embraced

Professor Stephen Ocheni who was the chairman of the occasion expressed hope that at the end of the event many who attended the event will be able to redefine leadership from different perspectives.

Earlier the publisher of the Nigerian Post Newspaper, Mr. Mike Abu thanked guests for honouring their invitation. He commended Governor Yahaya Bello for his achievements in all sectors despite daunting challenges.



Ocheni

NEWS

Gombe addresses ecological problems with N802m

By WILLIE
ATTAH, GOMBE

GOMBE State government has approved the sum of N802, 326,576m in addressing ecological problems affecting some of its roads across the state.

The state Commissioner for Works, Engineer Abubakar Bappah stated this while briefing newsmen shortly after the State's Executive Council Meeting.

He said the council meeting which was chaired by the State Governor, Muhammad Inuwa Yahaya, approved the amount for emergency repairs of some washed out roads in different parts of the state to ease movement of people especially in the rural areas.

According to him, the funding of the roads rehabilitation will come from the State's Ecological Funds and it is to be shared on 55% from the state government and 45% from the local governments concerned.

Completion of the roads which will take between one and two months are shared between the following contractors; CGC Nigeria Limited, SKECC Company, ECC International, Annuri Links and Grandscope Nigeria Limited.

The roads, seven in number to receive attention are in Yamaltu/Deba, Shongom, Akko and Billiri Local Government Areas of the State.

They are: Hinna-Shinga-Gwani-Wade road; Daban

Fulani-Gwani-Kinafa; Panguru road with culverts; Boh-Lalaipido road with culverts; Kumo township road with culverts; Mararaba Tumu-Pindiga-Kashere road with culverts and Kashere-Billiri road with culverts.

Pantami lauds growth ICTs contributions to GDP growth

From
JIDAUNA YANUNG Abuja

MINISTER of communications and Digital Economy, Isa Pantami, has applauded consistent growth in ICT contributions to the nation's Gross Domestic Product, GDP, which hit 17.92 percent in the last quarter of 2020, first quarter of 2021, and has continued on an impressive trajectory. The Minister, who gave the figures at the opening of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU's) - (Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office) FCDO Roundtable, and Technical Workshop on Building Capabilities for Sustainable and Inclusive Digital Transformation in Nigeria, said this "percentage is

unprecedented, and this is only the contribution of ICT to our GDP without calculating digital services." Pantami said digital access and connectivity had become a necessity, as the play an increasingly vital role in our everyday lives and have become key drivers of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. The minister assured his audience, including representatives of ITU, FCDO, and other international agencies, embassies, and the Executive Vice Chairman of the NCC, Prof. Umar Garba Danbatta, that the "Federal Government understands the enormous private sector support, as well as support from International Organizations".

THE Minister of Health, Dr Osagie Ehanire, says there are enough medical doctors in the country, and the Federal Government is working toward achieving "a one-for-one replacement" for any medical doctor who resigns and leaves the country.

Ehanire made the revelation on Tuesday in Abuja during a media conference.

He also said there was no embargo on the employment of doctors and other health personnel in the country.

"There is no embargo on employing doctors; where there is a need, we do. But, because there is a Civil Service regulation, there are processes before doctors are employed.

"We have heard complaints of doctors who are now leaving the system but there are actually enough doctors in the system because we are producing up to 2,000 or 3,000 doctors every year in the country, and the number leaving is less than 1,000.

"It is just that the employment process needs to be smoothened," he said.

The minister explained that the ministry was working with the Office of the Head of the Civil Service to use the 'One-for-One' employment strategy so that if one doctor or nurse resigns to go abroad, another one is employed.

"So, if we have one

Medical doctors, FCT synergize towards job creation

From DORCAS
PANKYES, Abuja

replacement then you are not likely to have shortage.

"But that has been worked out because the Head of Service had the experience that in the past when one person goes, they use the opportunity to take three and those others may not even be people who are required.

"We want to use this policy so that we can reduce shortages and have our personnel back in our hospitals," he said.

Dr Deborah Bitrus-Oghoghorie of the Department of Hospital Services said the issue of the two weeks' ultimatum given by the National Association of Resident Doctors for the Federal Government to meet the demands of the association or risk an industrial action was being looked into.

According to her, they are mainly financial issues, which the ministry could not solve on its own.

"The issue we have with the resident doctors are mainly financial issues and because of that, we at the ministry of health cannot handle it alone.

"So, what we are doing now is to facilitate resolving the issue with the Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning and the National

Salaries, Incomes and Wages Commission (NSIWC).

"We want to assure you that the ministry of health, especially the department of hospital services, is working very hard to ensure that industrial action is averted," she added.

DP CLASSIC NEWS reports that on Aug. 20, the resident doctors had given the Federal Government another two weeks' notice within which to implement the payment of the new hazard allowance and arrears stipulated as at Dec. 22, 2021.

The two weeks, which took effect on Monday, will elapse on September 4.

The said hazard allowance is contained in the circular issued by the NSIWC dated Dec. 22, 2021, with reference number SWC/S/04/S.218/11/406.

Some of the other demands of the association include the urgent implementation and commencement of payment of the 2022 Medical Residency Training Funds in full to its members using the old template.

Also, that the shortfalls using the newly reviewed template be computed and incorporated/factored into the 2023 budget and paid in arrears.



KANAM LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCIL

INVITATION TO TENDER FOR SUPPLY OF VEHICLES

Kanam Local Government Council desire to engage the service of suitable and qualified contractor for the item below
Purchase of Five Sharon Buses

PRE-QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS: -

1. Evidence of registration with CAC
2. Evidence of Tax clearance certificate for at least 2 years
3. Evidence of Financial capability from reputable Bank
4. Evidence of technical know-how and good performance
5. Evidence of successful execution of same project or similar.
6. Any other information that will enhance the chances of the contractor/company.

COLLECTION OF TENDER

Since the Pre-qualification and tender stages are to run simultaneously, this advertisement serves as a notification for both pre-qualification and tender.

Interested contractors should apply and collect unpriced BOQs and other details in respect to the project, from Kanam LGC Works Department, on payment of Forty thousand naira (N40,000.00) non-refundable fee.

SUBMISSION OF PRE-QUALIFICATION AND TENDER DOCUMENT

Submission of pre-qualification and completed tender documents shall be returned on or before 14days from the date of this advertisement, sealed spiral binding of three (3) copies, addressed to the office of the Executive Chairman, Kanam LGC Council Dengi, Plateau State.

Note: Only short-listed contractors will be contracted.

Signed:
Chief Information Officer,
For Executive Chairman.



ICRC

The International Committee of the Red Cross - ICRC- (www.icrc.org) is an independent humanitarian organisation, neutral and impartial. Jos Sub Delegation is looking for a suitable candidate to fill the vacancy below

Nutritionist Field Officer

Under the supervision of the EcoSec Delegate in Jos and in line with the country's strategy, the Nutritionist Field Officer plans, implements and monitors the ICRC's nutrition programmes in the Areas of Responsibility of Jos Sub-Delegation (covering 7 states). S/He is the focal person for all the nutrition activities performed in Jos Sub-Delegation. S/He also has an active and recurrent communication with the EcoSec team in the Sub-Delegation and with the nutrition team in Abuja and participates in the regular internal reporting.

Main Duties and Responsibilities

- Participates in the planning and follow up of project activities in the areas of intervention according to the timing and type of monitoring established.
- Participates in EcoSec or other departments assessments or perform independent assessments to determine the needs and proposes interventions.
- Collects and shares information to improve the ICRC's understanding of the environment and humanitarian trends and responses. Organizes and supervises the execution of training sessions, nutritional awareness activities and / or cooking demonstrations, according to the pre-established schedule, in collaboration with the nutritionists, the National Society, the Ministry of Health, community leaders and any other pertinent interlocutors.
- Plans and organizes field trips to follow up on activities in the field according to the frequency required by the program Creates and ensure the implementation of the data collection tools needed for the monitoring of the projects, in collaboration with the EcoSec Analysis & Evidence unit.
- Serves as a focal point for the stakeholders involved in the programs including volunteers from the National Society, PHCC personnel. Nutritionists from the Ministry of Health, community stakeholders and others, and assures their participation in the projects In close collaboration with other departments, prepares and follows up on all administrative and logistical documents required as per ICRC's procedures for the projects' implementation (Supply Requests, donation certificates, weekly movement plan, among others). Assures an adequate follow up of the budget dedicated to the projects that are being implemented.
- Reports timely and adequately to his/her line manager.
- Participates to the process of reporting for assessment, training, weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly activities and ensures adequate follow-up of recommendations.
- Reports on time the information needed for the internal reporting process (EPMT - MFR, QER).
- Assures the integration of the nutrition sensitive approach among other departments and sectors by as specified by the Nutrition and EcoSec strategies.

Education and Experience Required

- Minimum of Bachelor's degree in Human Nutritional science or its equivalent or degree in other related health sciences with relevant work experience
- At least 3 years of experience working in nutrition in international humanitarian organizations, entities, or NGOs.
- A minimum knowledge about infant and young child feeding, nutrition during the life cycle and food security and livelihoods programs is highly desired.
- Familiar with Nigerian public health sector systems is highly desirable.
- Fluent in Kanuri, Fulani and Hausa is highly desired.

Desired Profile and Skills

- Good organizational and planning skills.
- Good reporting and analytical skills and well-developed computer skills
- Conversant with Nigerian National CMAM, IYCF and GMP technical protocols.
- Good field work skills and ready to spend between 50-75% of the time in the field.
- Sensitive to cultural, gender, religious and other social issues with colleagues and stakeholders.

How to Apply

- Send Curriculum vitae, Application letter and NYSC Certificate to ABJ_Recruitment_Services@icrc.org
- Clearly indicate "ABJ202200307 Nutritionist FO JOS" as the subject of your application (Applications intended for this role without this subject will not be treated)
- In the body of the mail, please indicate the following in the format as seen:
- Qualification(s)
- Current location
- Languages you speak
- Years of relevant experience

The deadline for the submission of applications will be 08.09.2022, 16:30hrs. Late application will not be considered

Only short-listed candidates will be contacted.

Equal opportunities shall be provided to all employees and applicants for employment based on their demonstrated ability and competence without discrimination based on race, colour, religion, sex, nationality, status, disability etc.

(Female candidates are encouraged to apply)

However, ICRC will not request for any monetary payments from applicants at any stage of the recruitment process.

SUNDAY SPORTS



Williams

How US Open victory of 1999 tells my story

By **HOLLY HONDERICH**

IN 1979, her father Richard watched a women's tennis match on TV and saw the Romanian player Virginia Ruzici win \$40,000 - about \$4,000 more than his annual salary.

"I went and told my wife we had to have two more girls and make them tennis players," he recalled, 20 years later. "I was 37 and knew nothing about tennis but I thought we could teach them and they could win the US Open."

On 26 September 1981, Williams arrived - 15 months after her sister Venus. By the time the pair turned pro in the mid-1990s they were already making waves.

"There was a rage inside these two little kids," says Rick Macchi, the Florida-based coach who helped guide them through their developmental years.

"They were just ready. I called it when they were nine, 10 years old. I said: 'They're gonna be world number one and they're going to transcend the sport.'"

In August 1999, the smart money was on Venus making the big breakthrough. A tall and imposing player, the 19-year-old had already racked up seven titles. She was third in the WTA rankings.

But Serena would get there first. Her victory at the US Open that year saw a future sporting legend announced to the world.

Now, 23 years later, she is almost done.

"I hate it," she wrote last month of her impending retirement. "I don't want it to be over."

In some ways, it already is. With her 41st birthday looming, Williams can no longer match her own imposing legacy on court.

She has one more stop. From Monday she will return to Flushing Meadows to play in her final US Open, the site of that first Grand Slam title.

Looking back on those two weeks

of New York late summer in 1999, the signs were already there of what was to come for Williams. She was irrepresible, unpredictable, matchless. A 17-year-old girl from Compton, poised for greatness.

Williams had made her US Open debut in 1998, when she was knocked out in round three.

This year, things looked different. She breezed through the two opening rounds against fellow American Kimberly Po and Croatia's Jelena Kostanic.

Her father Richard had already stirred a minor drama, predicting that his daughters would meet in the final. "They're too fast for the other girls," he said. "They're a little too strong for them."

World number one Martina Hingis replied saying the Williams family had a "big mouth".

Serena laughed it off.

"Obviously she's number one, so she can say whatever she would like to say," she said. Then she smiled widely. "I personally don't think my mouth is big, if you're just looking at it."

In the third round, Williams showed no signs of letting up. She deployed her bruising serve and sprawling court coverage to defeat 16-year-old Belgian Kim Clijsters in three sets.

When Williams won, skipping across the court and throwing her arms to the sky, the crowd erupted, apparently thrilled by the new teen prodigy.

But later, once Serena and Venus had become dominant, the Williams family began to notice a chill from spectators in New York, says sports writer SL Price.

"Venus and Serena's mother Oracene said they felt for years, for almost 10 years, that the US Open crowds were not behind them," Price says.

"They felt othered in their own home tournament, just because of the straight identification: a white audience with black players. They

were African American women in a white-dominated world."

The country-club crowds of professional tennis were accustomed to a different sort of player - soft-spoken, demure and white. The Williams sisters stood out.

"I'm tall; I'm black," Venus had said at her 1997 US Open debut. "Everything's different about me. Just face the facts."

Two years after her 1999 victory over Clijsters, Williams met her again in the final at Indian Wells, a tournament in southern California seen by some as the unofficial fifth Grand Slam.

Williams was booed relentlessly throughout the championship match. Rumours - unfounded - had spread that Richard had engineered Venus' last-minute withdrawal from the semi-final against her sister two days earlier.

In his autobiography, Richard said that racial slurs "flew through the stadium" at him and his daughters. When Williams faulted on serve the crowd clapped. When she won, they

jeered. She would boycott Indian Wells for the next 13 years.

"How many people do you know go out there and jeer a 19-year-old?" she said after the match, looking uncharacteristically resigned. "I'm just a kid."

Back at the US Open of 1999, weeks away from her 18th birthday, the depth of Williams' talent was becoming obvious.

In the fourth round she met Conchita Martinez. Then 27, the Spaniard had won Wimbledon in 1994.

The years of pro experience seemed at first to favour Martinez, who used deep, punchy shots and heavy topspin to clinch the first set 6-4. But in the second set Williams transformed, unleashing a series of flat and punishing groundstrokes.

"She had a switch - she could flip it," says Shane Rye, Williams' former trainer. "That's what separates the elite from everyone else, and she is the upper, upper echelon of elite elite."

Closing out what would be her biggest win in a major so far, Williams

stared down Martinez before serving an ace - her 12th that day - and claiming the match.

There was Williams' resilience on display: a stubborn refusal to lose that soon became her trademark; an ability to grit her teeth and battle her way back.

"Richard Williams always said 'Serena is better because she's meaner,'" says sports journalist Jon Wertheim. "In retrospect, it was the perfect distillation. She had a fire, that 'Serena mean' that got her through a lot of matches."

Years later, in September 2017, Williams would endure a harrowing delivery of her daughter, Olympia. An emergency C-section, a life-threatening pulmonary embolism (a blood clot in the lung), and two more surgeries left her bedridden for her first six weeks of motherhood.

It would end up being her longest break from tennis since she was a toddler.

"I'll never forget that phone call, when she was finally cleared by her doctor to play," says Rye, who worked with her through her recovery.

"I remember how emotional that was for her."

It was quite the comeback. Still breastfeeding and suffering from postpartum depression, Williams once again grit her teeth and bore down on court, making it to the finals of two majors in 2018 - Wimbledon and the US Open.

Her burning drive also ignited some spectacular, regrettable on-court flameouts, many at the US Open.

Often these incidents reflected less on Williams than on the sexism still polluting tennis. Her temper almost always paled in comparison to the legendary meltdowns of male players, John McEnroe, Jimmy Connors and Andy Roddick among them.

When Williams was docked a game at the 2018 US Open final after calling chair umpire Carlos Ramos a "thief", Roddick called it the "worst refereeing I've ever seen".

"I've regrettably said worse and I've never gotten a game penalty," he said.

Still, Williams' protracted dispute with Ramos - a bitter back and forth that lasted almost all of the second set - seemed to rob Naomi Osaka, then 20, of a magic moment: her first major win, and against her childhood idol. During the trophy ceremony, both Williams and Osaka wept.

"I was behind the umpire's chair at the time and you're just like 'here we go again, don't do this, get it together,'" Price says. "But there's something about that unpredictability; it's Serena being Serena."



Richard Williams, posing with daughters Venus (left) and Serena (right) in Compton in 1991

SUNDAY SPORTS

Chukwueze, Benrahma lead African goal scorers in Europa

SAMUEL Chukwueze was on target as Villarreal defeated Hajduk Split 2-0 in Thursday's Uefa Conference League second leg play-off round.

Goal said that, Africans painted Europe with goals, however, they suffered contrasting fortunes in the tournament.

The Yellow Submarine had secured a 4-2 victory over the Croatian First League outfit at the Estadi Ciutat de Valencia.

In Split, they completed a double over Valdas Dambrauskas' Masters from the Sea to reach the group stage with a 6-2 aggregate result.

Unai Emery repeated at a press conference his wish to bring Edinson Cavani to Villarreal. The former Parisian striker would rather approach Valencia, but according to Emery, nothing could be ruled out.

Alfonso Pedraza put the Spaniards ahead in the 37th minute before the Nigeria international doubled the advantage four minutes before the hour mark.

At the Energi Viborg Arena, Said Benrahma found the net as West Ham United brushed aside hosts Vigorg 3-0.

Twenty-two minutes into the fixture, Gianluca Scamacca put the Premier League side ahead, before the Algeria international doubled the advantage in the 51st minute.

Four minutes after the hour mark, Tomas Soucek wrapped up victory to secure passage after a 6-1 aggregate score line.

Elsewhere, FC Cologne beat Fehervar 3-0 away from home with Tunisia international Ellyes Skhiri on song.

Having lost 2-1 at home to the Hungarian side on August 18, the Bundesliga side knew that anything short of victory would deny them a chance of making the next round.

Fueled by that, they travelled to the MOL Arena Sosto with the ambition of making amends for their home defeat.

It took them 10 minutes to take the lead thanks to Timo Hubers' effort before the



Chukwueze

Tunisian star made it two goals a minute into the second half.

There was still time for Kingsley Schindler to add the third for the Billy Goats in the closing stages of the encounter.

In the end, Cologne advanced 4-2 on aggregate.

Nigeria prospect Moses Usor inspired Slavia Prague to a 2-0 triumph over Polish side Rakow Czesochowa.

In the reverse fixture played

in Czesochowa, the Czech Republic side bowed 2-1 – thus needing at least a two-goal win to qualify.

Slavia Prague appeared to be heading for elimination as the score stood 0-0 after the hour mark. Two minutes later, however, Usor opened the scoring at the Fortuna Arena.

With scores tied 2-2 on aggregate, the game extended into extra time. Ivan Schranz was the hero with a late strike

UCL: Osimhen to face Bassey

VICTOR Osimhen's Napoli have been drawn in group A alongside Dutch champions Ajax Amsterdam, Glasgow Rangers and Liverpool on their return to Europe's elite football club cup competition.

Newsnow said that, Calvin Bassey, who currently plays for Ajax will have a chance to face his Super Eagles teammate in a potential head-to-head clash over two legs. He will also be facing his old club, Rangers in a potential return to Ibrox for 22-year-old defender.

The strongest team in the group looks to be Liverpool, who made it to the final last season.

In group B, Zaidu Sanusi's FC Porto will face Club Brugge, Bayer Leverkusen and Atletico Madrid to fight for a place in the next round of the competition.

Fortune Bassey will have an opportunity to face some of the biggest teams in Europe and travel to some of the best stadia when Viktoria Plzen face

Bayern Munich, Barcelona and Inter Milan in group C.

The forward is currently at the Czech champions on loan and will look forward to the grand occasions.

Sporting Lisbon, Olympique Marseille, Tottenham and Frankfurt have been drawn in group D while Chelsea, Italian champions Dinamo Zagreb and Austrian champions Salzburg have been drawn in group E. Samson Tijani will not have an opportunity to

Niang urges Marseille to sign Ronaldo

MAMADOU Niang has challenged former team Olympique Marseille to go for Manchester United superstar Cristiano Ronaldo.

Goal said that, the 37-year-old has been linked with a move to the Ligue 1 outfit in the current transfer window.

Rumours have it that the Portugal international is considering leaving the Red Devils and surprisingly, the Ligue 1 outfit has been linked with the 37-year-old. The ex-

NICOLAS Pepe was unveiled by Ligue 1 side Nice on Thursday after Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta decided the Ivory Coast international does not fit into his plans for the 2022/23 campaign.

Goal said that, the attacker was released to the French outfit on a season-long loan deal and some supporters are not happy with the move.

The winger has struggled for consistency since joining the Gunners who paid Lille £72m (\$85m) for his signature just three years ago.

This season, the 27-year-old has not played for Arsenal, who have started their Premier League campaign on a high. They are the only team with maximum points from three matches meaning they are on top of the table.

Whether Arteta might consider including Pepe in his plans in the future is anyone's guess but fans have reacted differently in a post by **GOAL** after the attacker was presented to the fans by the Eagles.

"[Pepe] doesn't look happy because he knows Arsenal are going to win the league and he won't be there to experience it," a fan by the name Tha Pelo opined.

However, Joseph Ekwe was there to remind him that the season is still young with his

'Arteta destroying Pepe as he did to Ozil, Aubameyang, Iwobi'



Pepe

reply: "Keep dreaming after only three games."

There are those who believe the loan exit is an advantage for the Ivorian and they went on to challenge him to give the best and return to the team.

"I already miss you Pepe but working hard and doing well, come back and prove Arsenal fans right," Abdulwaheed Ayedun challenged the winger.

"Wishing you the best of luck Pepe; take full advantage of this loan like [Folarin] Balogun and [Nuno] Tavares are

presently doing in France and you are already familiar with French football," Akinbami Bolaji encouraged the former Lille man.

Diya Peter Oyeyemi felt Arteta did the right thing to let the player leave since, just like Alex Iwobi, he did not take advantage of the platform provided for him to grow.

"Arsenal gave him all the opportunity in the world to impress but it was a one-off thing with him just like Alex Iwobi; good luck anyway cos you still remain our player partially," he wrote.

The statement did not go down well with Makinwa Olakunle who believes the problem lies with the manager.

"Arteta is the problem, he cannot manage established footballers, because he does not have a stellar career like them. He destroys their confidence. The list is endless; [Mesut] Ozil, [Pierre-Emerick] Aubameyang, Iwobi. Pepe should leave and not come back again. He is not a flop, It's just Arteta's thing."

Pepe scored 16 goals in 80 Premier League matches for Arsenal and provided nine assists in the process.

play in those games as he's out for the rest of the season with a fractured tibia and fibula.

Meanwhile, Salisu Yusuf, the coach of the Nigerian B team and assistant coach of the Super Eagles has reduced the number of players to 26 with four of the boys left in Abuja.

Newsnow revealed that, the regular suspects including Sani Faisal, Babatunde Bello, Chiamaka Madu and others who were invited by Jose

Peseiro have been handed a place on the team to Ghana.

The Super Eagles B will face Ghana this weekend with the second leg to come up in Abuja during the week.

NPFL champions Riviera United have the highest collection of players on the team to Ghana for the 7th African Nations Championship qualifiers.

The game will come up today August at 5p.m West African Time (WAT).



Osimhen



Ronaldo

Real Madrid star has been used sparingly by the Manchester heavyweights and just started one of the team's last three games.

Article continues below Auba, Ziyech & other African transfers that could still happen

Which other African transfers can still happen before the transfer window closes?

In the recent game against Liverpool at Old Trafford, which the hosts won 2-1, the veteran attacker was introduced in the 86th minute in place of Marcus Rashford; and with six days to the conclusion of the transfer window, the former Senegal international has urged Marseille to go for the player.

"We all have the right to dream! We are still talking about Cristiano Ronaldo, huh," Niang told **RMC Sport**.

"We all remember [Zlatan Ibrahimovic's] impact when he arrived at PSG and reinvigorated the fans. Cristiano Ronaldo's arrival in Marseille would be good for the city and for the fans."

Despite his advancing age, Niang insists Ronaldo can have a positive influence on

the team both on and off the pitch considering the team is taking part in the Champions League.

"He is an old player, but today he can perform, he can bring more on the pitch and in the locker room," Niang continued.

"When you have the opportunity to sign Cristiano Ronaldo, I think Longoria and McCourt should jump at the chance and at least give it a try. Last season, he had a complicated season with Manchester United. "But we could see him at

Juventus, he was efficient and successful. I think the team would be stronger with Cristiano Ronaldo and that he will bring his experience. There is a need for it, with the Champions League."

Last season, Ronaldo scored 18 goals in 30 Premier League matches for the Red Devils and provided three assists in the process.

Eric Bailly has recently sealed a move to Marseille, from Manchester United, on a season-long loan

SUNDAY SPORTS

US Open: Williams plays Kovinic, Raducanu faces Cornet



Twelve months on from her stunning US Open win, Emma Raducanu is ranked 11th in the world

BRITAIN'S Emma Raducanu has been handed a tough start against France's Alize Cornet when she returns to New York to defend her US Open title. **BBC SPORT** said that, Raducanu, seeded 11th, stunned the world last year by winning the major as a little known 18-year-old qualifier. Cornet, ranked 37th in the world, is an experienced and talented player with some notable results at the majors. Serena Williams will play Danka Kovinic as she begins what is set to be the final tournament of her career.

The American great, who turns 41 next month, could face second seed Anett Kontaveit in the second round if she beats the Montenegrin. However, 21-time major champion Novak Djokovic is not in the men's singles draw after pulling out of the tournament earlier on Thursday. Djokovic, 35, is unvaccinated against Covid-19 and the United States will not allow visitors who have not had the jab into the country. The US Open main draw

starts on Monday at Flushing Meadows in New York. British men's number one **Cameron Norrie** is seeded seventh and plays Frenchman Benoit Paire, while 2012 champion **Andy Murray** starts against Argentine 24th seed Francisco Cerundolo. Norrie, who reached the Wimbledon semi-finals last month, cannot face a higher-ranked opponent until the quarter-finals as a result of his elevated seeding. The 26-year-old left-hander is projected to play Spain's 22-time major winner **Rafael**

Nadal, who is coming back from an abdominal injury and starts against Australian wildcard Rinky Hijikata, in the last eight.

Kyle Edmund, the former British number one who is still at the start of a comeback after almost two years out with a knee injury, has been drawn against Norwegian fifth seed Casper Ruud.

One of the most eye-catching first-round matches in the men's draw pits Australia's **Nick Kyrgios** against his doubles partner and good friend Thanasi Kokkinakis.

Defending men's champion **Daniil Medvedev** starts his bid to retain the trophy against American world number 110 Stefan Kozlov.

Two-time US Open champion **Naomi Osaka**, now ranked 44th in the world, plays American 19th seed Danielle Collins in one of the stand-out first-round matches.

Osaka has lacked form and fitness over the past couple of years, also having taken time away from the sport to focus on her mental health, but was always likely to be a tricky unseeded floater in the draw.

Poland's world number one **Iga Swiatek** begins her quest for a third major title against Italy's Jasmine Paolini, with 2017 champion Sloane Stephens possibly awaiting her in the second round.

PGA Tour changes Golf, says Westwood

LEE Westwood has branded changes to the PGA Tour as "just a copy" of the controversial Saudi Arabian-backed breakaway LIV Golf series.

BBC SPORT said that, the PGA Tour is increasing prize money at 12 events to \$20m (£17m) to match those of LIV Golf.

Top players will play in all 12, and at least 20 events, across the season.

"I laugh at what the PGA Tour players have come up with,"



Westwood

Stanford to coach British Triathlon after retiring

THE 33-year-old, who was crowned world champion in 2013, won gold at the recent European Championships in what was her final race for Great Britain.

BBC SPORT said that, the will now become assistant triathlon coach at the Leeds Triathlon Centre where she spent most of her career.

"Stepping away from competitive triathlon has been a difficult decision," said Stanford.

"I've had such an amazing experience on the World Class programme, despite the many ups and downs that I've faced during my career; that's largely thanks to the people, both athletes and staff.

"But knowing I'll still be working with the team, albeit in a different capacity, is really exciting and I can't wait to continue my journey with British Triathlon.

"Ever since being mentored by Dame Kelly Holmes in my

teenage years, I've been intent on one day paying that forward, by giving back to the sport that has given me so much.

"I'm incredibly grateful that British Triathlon has given me the opportunity to make this passion a reality."

Stanford's victory in Munich

came just a fortnight after winning a silver medal for Wales in the mixed triathlon relay at the Commonwealth Games.

British Triathlon's performance director, Mike Cavendish, said: "When I found out that Non was interested in moving into coaching I was really excited -

From **DORCAS PANKYES, ABUJA**

THE Nigeria Basketball Federation has condoned the family and friends of former Nigerian international, Amaka Adibeli who passed on last week.

In a statement by the NBBF President, Engr. Musa Kida, the federation described the demise of the member of the D'Tigress 2003 Afrobasket Championship as tragic which has left the basketball team in deep shock and state of mourning.

"The former First Bank captain will forever remain in our heart because we have lost an irreplaceable gem. Her career trajectory and achievements indicated that she was a true professional".

Kida described her as one of the best point guards that ever came out of Nigeria as she strode the domestic and international stage like a colossus.

"Generations to come will read about her and will be inspired. She was a good example of what every girl child should be".

NBBF condoles with Amaka's family

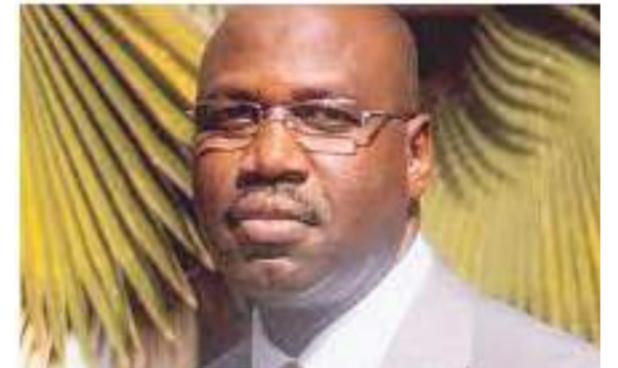
The late Amaka won series of gold and silver medals for the Lagos State women basketball team at the 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004, and 2006 National Sports Festival

At the club level, she was part of the invincible First Bank Women's team that dominated and won the Zenith Women National Basketball league from 2002 to 2009.

The former Nigerian international was part of the D'Tigress team that clinched the 2003 and 2005 Afrobasket

championship titles and the 2003 All African Games gold medal. Apart from her string of successes, she was part of the First bank team to win the 2003 and 2009 Afrobasket Club Championships. She was appointed as First Bank's assistant coach between 2007 and 2010.

"We pray that her gentle soul finds a perfect peace in the bosom of her maker as those of us left behind deal with the vacuums left in our hearts".



Kida

Us open: Djokovic unable to travel

NOVAK Djokovic says he will be unable to travel to New York for the US Open, which begins on Monday.

BBC SPORT said that, Djokovic did not defend his Australian Open title in January because his Covid-19 vaccination status led to him being deported from the country.

Since October 2021, the

United States has banned non-vaccinated visitors.

Serb Djokovic had hoped to compete, but wrote on Twitter on Thursday: "Sadly, I will not be able to travel to NY this time for US Open."

The 35-year-old won his 21st major title with victory at Wimbledon in July, leaving him one behind Rafael Nadal's all-time men's record, but will

miss out on another chance to add to his tally.

"I'll keep in good shape and positive spirit and wait for an opportunity to compete again," Djokovic added.

"See you soon tennis world!" Djokovic was on the US Open entry list as recently as Monday and, in a social media post on 30 July, wrote "I am preparing as if I will be allowed to compete".

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) - the nation's health protection agency - has reviewed some of its rules for unvaccinated citizens in recent weeks, but Djokovic's apparent withdrawal suggests travel restrictions will continue to apply.

His absence at Flushing Meadows may benefit Spain's Nadal, who seeks a 23rd Grand Slam title, with world number one Daniil Medvedev of Russia, looking to defend the title he won for the first time in 2021.

from the PGA Tour to take part in the first LIV event in June.

The former world number one added: "It's just a copy of what LIV is doing. There are a lot of hypocrites out there. They all say LIV is 'not competitive'. They all point at the no-cut aspect of LIV and the short fields.

"Now, funnily enough, they are proposing 20 events that look a lot like LIV. And hopefully, they will be held to account as we were in the early days."

The 20 events comprise of the dozen PGA Tour events that the top players have committed to, the four major championships, the PGA Tour's flagship Players Championship, and three others that they players can choose.

The \$20m prize fund matches the prize fund on offer at LIV events for the individual competition, with LIV offering an extra \$5m for the team element at their tournaments.

Westwood is still a member of the European DP World Tour - where he was won 25 events - and says he intends to play in his 29th consecutive BMW PGA Championship at Wentworth, which starts on Thursday, 7 September.

However, he is "not convinced by the strategic alliance" with the PGA Tour.

"I've seen how the PGA Tour has behaved over the years," said Westwood.

"There's not been much 'give'. All the PGA Tour has done since Tiger came on tour is up the prize purses. In turn, that has taken all the best players from Europe away from the European Tour.

"They've had to play in the States, taking all their world ranking points with them. That's worth



Novak Djokovic won a seventh Wimbledon title in July



Stanford

SUNDAY FEATURE

Commonwealth Games: Event remains special for Africa

THE 22nd edition of the Commonwealth Games ended with Nigeria the top-performing African country in Birmingham following a record haul of 35 medals.

Africa's most populous nation topped the continent's medal table for the first time since 1994, with South Africa second and Kenya third.

However, the multi-sport event has its critics - not least for the £778m (\$952.6m) cost of staging it this year and its battle to remain relevant in a packed calendar.

Kenyan middle-distance runner Coneslus Kipruto believes the event still produces competitive contests.

"The Commonwealth Games is a big event. It's almost like an Olympic event because many countries come to compete," the 27-year-old told BBC Sport Africa.

"We ran a good steeplechase event for example, very competitive.

"We always come to compete as we were colonised by the British. We come to battle for these medals - it's always good to have a Commonwealth gold medal in your cabinet."

The 2016 Olympic and two-time world steeplechase champion may have finished fourth in Birmingham, but deeply adores his gold from the Gold Coast Games four years ago.

"It doesn't come with any money because it is not included in the contracts we have, but it's good to represent your country and gauge yourself," he added.

"I won it in 2018 and I am happy I have a gold from the Commonwealth Games."

Botswana's lawn bowls players got the chance to compete in Birmingham

The Games, which were first held in Canada in 1930, feature athletes from 72 nations and territories - mostly former British colonies.

However, the last four countries to join the Commonwealth of Nations - Rwanda, Mozambique, Gabon, and Togo - have no historical ties to the British Empire.

Some argue that the Games lack the Olympic spirit and appeal, but participants from Africa enjoy the national pride, glory and exposure on offer.

Birmingham 2022 became the first major multi-sport event to hand out more medals to women than men and one of those champions, Folashade Oluwafemiayo, says the quadrennial event has a place in the hearts of Nigerians.

"I was hoping to be at my first Commonwealth Games because it's special to Nigeria," the world record-setting powerlifter told BBC Sport Africa.

"To win gold here makes it more special. I've also discovered there are lots of sports at the Games which



Nigeria's Ese Brume set a new Commonwealth Games record as she won long jump gold

African countries don't have, so I'm imploring the African countries to develop more sports."

Lawn bowls player Lephai Marea Modutlwa, meanwhile, was delighted to participate in an event that is yet to get Olympic approval.

"The Commonwealth Games are very relevant to lawn bowls because it is the pinnacle of our sport," the Botswanan said.

"Competing here is a great honour. We have lots of good bowlers who have never had opportunity to compete at the Games but finally did in Birmingham."

The lure of a large audience and national pride was enough to convince world 100m hurdles champion and record holder Tobi Amusan to compete in Birmingham.

As the athletics reached its climax and the likes of Jamaican sprint stars Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce and Shericka Jackson were racing at a more lucrative Diamond League event in Poland, Amusan was claiming two golds for Nigeria.

Meanwhile, compatriot Ese Brume set a new Games record with a leap of exactly seven metres to regain her long jump title, adding a second Commonwealth gold to the one she claimed in Glasgow in 2014.

"The Commonwealth Games is very massive and whenever it's time to represent my country, and I get the chance to attend I never hesitate to do that," the three-time African champion said.

"This gold means a lot and I hope it will inspire other young athletes to aim high, work hard and grow up to become champions one day. Encouraging the next generation

Along with sports not included in the Olympics, the Commonwealth Games also offers a chance to those not able to qualify for World Championships and younger athletes at the beginning of their careers.

Tanzanian powerlifter Yohana Assa Mwila finally participated in the first major competition of his career at the age of 38.

"This is a big event that is attracting countries that was never colonised by Britain;

countries like Rwanda, Mozambique, Togo are also here, next we will see Ethiopia," he said.

"It teaches us more about friendship. We meet different people from different countries. It gives us some good lessons.

"The dream of every athlete is to see their national anthem being played at such events. I am inspired by just participating and attending."

Mozambican boxer Tiago Osorio Muxanga and South African

triathlete Jamie Riddle, 22, were also debutants and the latter said representing his country had been "a lifelong goal".

"I didn't really get the true message of the Commonwealth Games until I watched the opening ceremony," Riddle added.

"I think the whole point is to bring us all together and, through sports, unite people."

Muxanga, a 21-year-old who won a silver medal in the men's light-middleweight division, said: "This means a lot for me, because I represent something like 10 million people in Mozambique who are suffering, who are fighting for a good life.

"This Games can inspire more youth people to follow boxing or other sport. I think this will inspire more young people in Mozambique to follow their dreams."

For Maxwell Jele of Eswatini's Olympic and Commonwealth Games Association, Birmingham offered the tiny Southern African nation a great opportunity to showcase its athletes.

"We brought a relatively small team compared to other countries, however we ensured a good mix of sporting codes and gender," Jele told **BBC Sport Africa**.

"We set out objectives based on our long-term strategy and focused on athletes that are building towards a bright future."

The Games is yet to be staged in Africa, but the world's second-most populous continent remains committed to the Commonwealth Games.

Source: BBC Sport Africa.



Tobi Amusan added the Commonwealth 100m hurdles crown to her World Championships success in Eugene last month - and then she helped Nigeria to 4x100m relay gold in Birmingham



FIFA ranking: Super Eagles still world's 31st

THE Super Eagles of Nigeria has maintained 31st position in the world in the August FIFA ranking.

According to the ranking table published on FIFA's verified page on Thursday, the Jose Peseiro-tutored players maintained the 1,504.7 garnered points in July.

On the continental level, they are still placed fourth behind Senegal (18), Morocco (23) and Tunisia (30).

On the global scene, with five major tournaments in different parts of the world, international women's football has hogged the headlines in recent months.

Fifty-eight international fixtures were played in the men's game, mostly in Africa and Asia, hence changes in the August edition of the FIFA World Ranking are few and far between.

Two countries, Mauritania (107th, plus 3) and Botswana (146th, plus 3) have been posting good results, as reflected by a climb of three places each in the standings.

That progress makes them jointly the two most-improved sides in terms of places.

In the top 50, almost nothing has changed from the previous edition, Brazil (1st), Belgium (2nd) and Argentina (3rd) still occupy the podium places, while their immediate followers remain in the same order they were in June.

Only Iran (22nd, plus 1) and FIFA World Cup hosts Qatar (48th, plus 1) move up one place apiece.

Outside the Top 100 in addition to the aforementioned African duo, Mozambique (116th, plus 2) and Angola (120th, plus 2) also made up ground among CAF sides, as did Bermuda (168th, plus 2) in Concacaf.



With a raft of international games to come in September in particular, there is expected to be more movement in the next edition.

Meanwhile, President Muhammadu Buhari says football remains the number one sport in Nigeria and a national asset.

According to the president, his administration will resist any attempt to undermine its development.

Buhari stated this when he received the 10-year Football Development Masterplan submitted by the Minister of Youth and Sports Development, Sunday Dare, on Tuesday in Abuja.

While describing football as "our passion and a major tool for unity," the president affirmed that:

"It is the responsibility of the government to safeguard the sport, which has brought Nigeria many laurels, and treat it as a national asset. "Indeed, just as I expect

and demand a higher standard of patriotism, responsibility and commitment from those charged with the administration of our football."

Buhari also urged all stakeholders to work together constructively and patriotically.

"We have seen attempts to disrespect and undermine the institutions supervising our sports.

"We have seen attempts to subjugate national interest for narrow interest or disrespect the laws of Nigeria. Nigeria will not take lightly any attempt to inflict injury on its football fortunes," he added.

The president used the occasion to spell out his expectations from the two-volume report.

He directed the Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports Development and the Nigeria

Football Federation (NFF) to commence its implementation in phases.

He said this should be carried out within the fine lines of relevant sections of the Nigerian laws on sports development and the statutes of the world soccer governing body, FIFA.

"This government is interested in developing a football culture that will accommodate global best practices.

"This will also help the nation to lay a solid foundation for domestic football and to put in place professionally and efficiently run leagues.

"It will also help in entrenching a consistent and stable football calendar and create a value chain which will boost the sports ecosystem," Buhari said.

He said that achieving this will guarantee desired progress in continental and

international competitions.

"The president said: 'I know that a lot of work went into putting this 10-Year Masterplan together.

"I received regular briefings on the work being done and I am happy that our goal has been achieved."

The Nigerian leader expressed delight that the Masterplan enjoyed the inputs of a wide range of stakeholders in football.

"I am equally happy that the Nigeria Football 10-Year Masterplan (2022-2032) identified 15 Key Areas of challenge.

"It has also provided practical recommendations to address these fundamental problems that have bedeviled football development in the country.

"The implementation of the short term and medium term plans should commence.

"I believe this will signal a positive turning point for our football and a major step

forward in our bid to create a conducive environment for its sustainability, viability and profitability.

"The Nigeria Football Federation, the body charged with the development of our football is directed to own and commence the implementation of this master plan under the supervision of the Ministry of Youth and Sports Development."

The president, who reviewed the state of the round leather game in the country, expressed concern that in the past years, football development had gradually stunted due to the neglect of the core orientation of football administration.

He described the governance structure around Nigeria's domestic league as weak, adding that "standards are conveniently compromised."

He, however, expressed delight that these issues and many more have been addressed in the Document.

The president, therefore, urged the NFF to salvage the domestic league at all levels, saying:

"Nigeria's football development must return to the path of focus on grassroots and youth development and an overall good governance structure around every level of its development. Nigeria now expects results," he urged.

On the forthcoming NFF executive election, Buhari reiterated his earlier communication to the body on the need for a more equitable and democratic representation in the Congress of the NFF.

According to him, this will ensure that critical stakeholders are not shut out and the most capable and competent men and women are elected to run the affairs of the Federation.

"This government has demonstrated political will. It will match it up with making the right laws and investments and work with critical stakeholders.

"I thank FIFA for its support and commitment to the development of Nigerian football which has been longstanding.

"I trust it will partner with Nigeria in its effort to improve the fundamentals of its football development," he said.

In his remarks, the Sports Minister announced that the Buhari administration had disbursed over N15 billion to NFF through budgetary appropriations and Presidential interventions in the last seven years.

He commended the president for the attention given to football development in the country and laying a solid foundation for the growth of the game.

NFF apologises to Falconets...get cash gift from Minister

THE Nigeria U-20 Women's team, the Falconets, are finally back in the country after their tortuous journey from Costa Rica.

The Coach Christopher Dajuma-led team, who were knocked out in the quarter-final of the 10th FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup after losing 2-0 to the Netherlands, arrived at the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport, Abuja, late Wednesday.

The Falconets made headlines for all the wrong reasons on Wednesday when photos of them sleeping on the floor of Istanbul's airport surfaced after a glitch in their travel schedule forced them to be grounded for 24 hours.



But after almost 72 hours since embarking on the trip back to Nigeria, the ladies finally arrived Wednesday night and were welcomed by

the NFF Secretary-General Mohammed Sanusi and the Sports Minister's representative Toyin Ibitoye. Mr Sanusi, who had earlier

absolved the NFF of any blame in the predicaments that befell the Falconets in their return journey home, apologised nonetheless.

"We want you to know that Nigerians appreciate all of you but we are saddened that you have to sleep over at the airport because for a reason that is beyond our control," he said.

NFF washed off its hands from the travel logjam as it was FIFA that booked the tickets for the Falconets.

"The NFF did not book the team's tickets from Costa Rica; FIFA did. FIFA also did not envisage the hitches that saw the team delayed for more than three hours in Bogota, and another one hour in Panama. By the time the team got to Istanbul, the flight to Abuja had left. The NFF scribe explained in a statement issued on Wednesday.