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No reason Nigerians to go hungry-AfDB

The African Development Bank (AfDB) has challenged Nigeria to achieve a "zero hunger" status, adding that with her vast agricultural resources, its citizens have no business being hungry.

President of the bank, Akinwumi Adesina, said this at the official launch of the Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zones in Nigeria on Monday.

The AfDB boss, who commiserated with the Federal Government on the flooding that is devastating

the country, recalled how he had to deal with the worst floods in Nigeria when he was Minister of Agriculture.

He said that while floods may wash away some land and harvests, the government must not let the hopes of farmers to be washed away.

He described agriculture as being critical for the survival of any nation, adding that the most important role of any nation is to feed its people.

He said, "Food is a fundamental human right. Africa faces huge challenges in meeting its food needs, with 283 million people that

go hungry annually.

"Yet Africa has massive agricultural potential. With 65 per cent of the uncultivated arable land left to feed over 9 billion people in the world by 2050 being in Africa, what Africa does with agriculture will determine the future of food in the world.

"The story is no different in Nigeria, despite positive efforts that have been made to improve the agricultural sector. Food is now beyond the reach of many."

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Adesina



The World Health Organisation (WHO) has urged African countries to remain vigilant against the resurgence of polio in the continent.

WHO Regional Director for Africa, Dr. Matshidiso Moeti said this in a message to mark the 2022 World Polio Day which is celebrated annually on October 24.

The theme for World Polio

WHO tasks African countries on polio

Day 2022 and Beyond is "A healthier future for mothers and children."

Moeti noted that as many as 20 million children have been spared disability and are walking today, explaining that two of the three strains of wild poliovirus (Type 2 and Type 3) have been certified as

eradicated, and in 2020 the African Region was certified as free of indigenous wild polio.

Moeti disclosed that Since the landmark resolution for the Worldwide eradication of polio was adopted in 1988 at the 41st World Health Assembly, global efforts have

achieved a more than 99.9% decrease in polio cases.

According to her, the progress has safeguarded millions of children and their families from the crippling virus.

She however warned that detections of new outbreaks, including in areas where polio

was believed to have been eradicated, is a stark reminder that if Africa does not deliver on the promise to eradicate all forms of polio, everywhere, no child is safe anywhere.

"The Global Polio Eradication Initiative's (GPEI) 2022-2026 Strategy to end

polio lays out the pathway to finish this last mile.

"The significant global commitment to fund the strategy, at the 2022 World Health Summit polio pledging event earlier this month, was extremely encouraging

"In a show of global

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News

No reason Nigerians to go hungry-AfDB

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According to the Global Hunger Index (2022), released just a week ago, Nigeria ranks 103rd among 121 countries facing hunger crisis in the world.

"Hunger in Nigeria cannot be justified. Nigeria has the land, with 34 million hectares of arable land with rich and diverse agroecology.

"It has the water. It has the labor. It has great sunshine. Nigeria must achieve zero hunger. There is no reason for anyone to go hungry in Nigeria", he added.

To help turn this situation around for African countries, Adesina recalled that he prioritized agriculture when he was first elected President of the African Development Bank in 2015.

Since then, he told the gathering that the African Development Bank has committed \$25bn to investments in agriculture.

In the past six years, he said the African Development Bank's financing for agriculture has provided over 76 million farmers with improved agricultural

technologies for food security.

Through its Technologies for African Agricultural Transformation (TAAT), he added that the Bank has also provided 12 million farmers with improved climate smart agricultural technologies within three years.

He stated, "The African Development Bank is also supporting Nigeria, through TAAT, to produce more wheat, rice and maize.

"This support will allow Nigeria to cultivate by next year 900,000 hectares of rice, 250,000 hectares of wheat and 107,000 hectares of maize.

"If Ethiopia can do it, Nigeria can do it. If Sudan can do it, Nigeria can do it. However, to achieve these results, Nigeria must decisively tackle insecurity challenges that prevent farmers from going to their farms.

"The private sector cannot invest when there is insecurity. Food security needs national security. The African Development Bank is strongly supporting Nigeria.

We have always done so."

Adesina put the African Development Bank's portfolio in Nigeria at \$4.6bn, stating that this shows the high priority that the bank accord to Nigeria, across several sectors.

To boost food production in Nigeria, he noted that the bank is already investing \$522m, with additional co-financing of \$420m from partners.

For the project, he said the African Development Bank is providing \$210m for the development of the SAPZs in Nigeria.

Adesina said, "We are delighted with our partnership with the Islamic Development Bank which is co-financing with \$150 million, and with the International Fund for Agricultural Development which is co-financing with \$160 million.

"The SAPZ program in Nigeria is the largest in Africa. The commitment of the Minister of Agriculture is strong. The commitment by the Minister of Finance is strong.

"The commitment by the State Governors is very strong. The SAPZs in Nigeria are being developed closely with the State

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solidarity, the host country Germany, along with 15 other countries, as well as charities, international organisations, and numerous private sector initiatives, committed more than US\$ 2.6 billion to the strategy - more than half the total target.

"With this renewed financial commitment, we now have a critical opportunity to ramp up eradication efforts.

"For the African Region, this means improved surveillance and high-quality immunisation campaigns targeting zero-dose children for vaccination against all polio strains," she said.

Moeti further noted that at the end of the first quarter of 2022, WHO announced the successful closure of 32 outbreaks in 10 countries, stating that despite the closure, there are ongoing outbreaks that demand people to stay vigilant and finish the job.

"This is critical for Africa to stamp out new cases of wild polio, as well as to safeguard our wild polio-free certification status.

"According to the most updated statistics for the continent, more than 250 cases of paralysis from polio have been recorded this year.

WHO tasks African countries on polio

That is 250 too many," Dr. Moeti noted.

She said that to halt outbreaks of the circulating polio variant, 500 million vaccine doses have been administered globally, 95% of these in Africa.

Moeti stated that "Following two immunisation rounds, no further transmission has been seen.

The polio response has also prompted innovative digital technologies to identify, track and best deliver vaccines, especially to those in hard-to-reach areas.

"Our endeavors to deliver a polio-free world are also helping strengthen the greater public health system, boosting the overall response to other health threats and emergencies.

"The polio structure has been instrumental in supporting surveillance and the COVID-19 vaccine rollout globally, also increasing the efficiency of the Region's emergency responses to diseases including measles and cholera.

She advocated the advancement of the polio



Ghebreyesus

transition plans in tandem with eradication efforts, in order to best leverage the limited public health resources.

Moeti commended all the dedicated health workers who are delivering on the polio promise by going door to door to administer vaccines in often challenging circumstances to safeguard every eligible child and also ensure that polio is eradicated once and for all.

NASENI tips Nigeria for industrial revolution

Nigeria can join the next Industrial Revolution if it embraces cutting-edge technologies or frontier technologies, the National Agency for Science and Engineering Infrastructure (NASENI) said Monday.

He explained that President Muhammadu Buhari has empowered the agency to aid the country's emergence as a manufacturing economy.

Haruna spoke at the first phase of the flag-off of the South-south regional skill development at the Construction and Fabrication Academy of West Africa, Calabar.

He explained that about 100 youths will receive a five-day training on modern methods of electrical installation and maintenance.

Haruna said: "This training is, therefore, to familiarise the trainees not only on the current advances of the new and emerging technologies in electrical installations, repairs and maintenance but also prepare and equip them and build adequate competencies to meet the challenges and opportunities of the development anticipated of the shape and nature of the next industrial revolution.

"The president has continued to empower NASENI to lead the nation in the direction of a manufacturing economy, and undoubtedly this type of skill development is a key prerequisite towards the development of a competent workforce for Nigeria.

"I urge the participants to utilise judiciously and guard jealously the expensive tools to be given to them at the end of this training as their start-up."

The NASENI EVC said cutting-edge technologies or frontier technologies will

shape the Fourth Industrial Revolution and the nation cannot afford to be left behind.

He added: "These technologies include Artificial Intelligence (AI); Robotics; the Internet of Things (IoT); Big Data; Block Chain; Additive Manufacturing (3D Printing); Autonomous Vehicles; Unmanned Aerial Vehicles; Gene Editing; 5G Network; and even Smart Grid and agitations for wireless electricity. Every aspect of human endeavour, agriculture, health, industry, transport, hospitality etc all require electricity albeit well advanced electric energy.

"Electrical installation, repairs and maintenance will no longer be metre conduiting, piping or trunking of cable channels and streaming overhead conductors.

"It is beyond the provision of lighting points and socket outlets. It is about automation, remote sensing, remote control and wireless operation. The practitioners' knowledge needs regular updates to remain relevant and be able to get employment, remain employed and even create jobs for others."

Cross River State Governor, Ben Ayade, who was represented by his deputy Prof Ivora Esu, said the state was also committed to empowering the youth as part of its industrial development of the state.

He pleaded with the trainees not to "sell their starter packs.

"I know some of you will sell your starter packs when you are broke. Avoid that temptation," he said.

He said the state was

looking forward to the establishment of an equipment manufacturing institute by NASENI in Obudu and also has other projects in Obanliku and Akamkpa.

The Chairman of the House of Representatives, Legor Idagbor, praised NASENI.

Commissioner for Youths Development and Skills Acquisition, Signor Omang Idiege, said the academy would go a long way to cushion the effects of idleness and the #ENDSARS protest.

A former Minister of Culture, Edem Duke, said: "Ayade has broken all barriers in establishing industries in the state. Some have begun to function. Others will manifest into fruition many years to come. These trainees should see themselves as an entrepreneurship generation".

RMAFC to raise political office holders salaries

Public, political and judicial officers are set to enjoy salary increase. The Revenue Mobilisation Allocation and Fiscal Commission (RMAFC) said it has concluded arrangements to review their remuneration.

A statement from the RMAFC said the Chairman of the Commission, Mohammed Bello Shehu gave the assurance when he paid a courtesy visit to the Chairman, Nigerian Governors Forum, Gov. Aminu Tambuwal of Sokoto in his office in Abuja.

Mohammed Bello stated that paragraph 32(D) of part 1 to the third schedule of 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as amended, empowers the Commission to determine the remuneration appropriate to political, public and judicial office holders in the country.

He informed Tambuwal that the last time the remuneration review for these categories of Nigerians "was carried out was

2008 which makes it even overdue for review".

The RMAFC boss lamented what he described as the poor remuneration of public, political and judicial office holders which has exposed them to corrupt tendencies.

According to him: "The salaries of members of the House is even worse but because they claim they are independent they packaged all sorts of allowances.

"There is a need for that review. I have seen a magistrate that earns N150,000 a month. That is a magistrate, somebody who passes judgement. Ask around, it will shock you, they are all over Nigeria, they don't have housing, they don't have transportation, they have very difficult conditions of service".

"I think it's about time this is reviewed for national good because we have to be able to take care of judicial officers apart from the ministers and permanent secretaries."

He reiterated that the review is long overdue.

Defending his claim for the review, he said: "We have a middle level worker in NNPC, in CBN who earns more than a judge, that's the reality. In some places like the NCC, no one even knows. Anybody working in NCC will never disclose their salary to you".

"The salary of a serving minister is N500,000, housing allowance is 200 percent of the basic. I know of a Deputy Governor of the Central Bank, when he left, his gratuity was N500 million. That is a life time pension".

The RMAFC boss promised to produce a fair and credible remuneration for the affected officers.

Those whose remuneration will be affected and earn: The President N14,058,820 per annum (p.a.); the Vice President N12,126,290.p.a.; Ministers, SGF, HoS, Chairmen of Constitutional bodies N7,801,640:00 p.a.; Ministers

Again ASUU charges FG on IPPIS

The Academic Staff Union of the Universities (ASUU) has appealed to the Federal Government to reconsider its stance on using Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS) for paying its members' salaries.

Prof. Emmanuel Osodeke, President ASUU, conveyed the request of the varsity lecturers at a meeting with Speaker of the House of Representatives, Femi Gbajabamila and other stakeholders in Abuja on Monday.

He said the IPPIS would not accommodate peculiarity allowances in university lecturers pay.

Osodeke urged the government to consider the adoption of the University Transparency and Accountability Solution (UTAS) platform for the payment of lecturers salaries.

"There is no way IPPIS can

represent the universities, the greatest problem university has is funding. No university can invest again because of Treasury Single Account (TSA)", he said.

He said the union called off its strike based on trust, adding that the country's education was in dire need of human resources.

"If there is a problem in the payment you challenge the university to produce one. We were challenged in 2020 by the Minister of Labour and we produced it.

"In a normal country when there is a problem you go to the university to develop and not to go outside", he said.

On his part, the acting, Accountant General of the Federation, Sylva Okolieaboh commended the speaker for the meeting, promising to explore the possibilities of incorporating the university lecturers peculiarities allowances in IPPIS.

He urged ASUU to allow the issue to be laid to rest in the interest of the students, urging the union to present a comprehensive list of its peculiarity allowances for clarity in the nearest possible time.

"We will sit down with ASUU and look at what could be done and the material peculiarities that ASUU was complaining about.

The Speaker, expressed optimism that peace would return to Nigerian universities soon.



Business & Economy

Flood menace: When we ignore the root causes

The flooding menace in Nigeria has now become an annual ritual. In September/October each year, whole towns, villages and communities are completely submerged in water. Deaths occur, valuables are lost, and farmlands are devastated while hundreds of thousands of persons are displaced, writes AUSTIN AVURU.

THEN the usual drama ... government officials, politicians and sundry attention seekers queue up to display our deep sense of "compassion and philanthropy" by trooping to the various IDP Camps to donate toilet rolls, foodstuff, mattresses, etc, etc. By mid-November, the flood waters would have receded, the victims count their losses and everyone returns to business as usual. We do nothing and remember nothing until the next 12 months when we repeat the annual ritual.

But why does this disaster befall us every year? Some people have suggested climate change. I checked and the rainfall index in Nigeria, which stands at about 1295 has remained unchanged since 2001. So, our rainfall intensity and pattern have been largely predictable over the last 20 years. So, what is the nature of this problem that has defied solution?

All the communities that have been most badly affected by this menace have one thing in common. They are all situated along the banks of the Rivers Benue and Niger and tributaries of the Niger River.

So, why are we unable to do the simple things that other countries of even smaller size do, as a matter routine? Are we just wicked at heart, too corrupt to care or just incompetent?

The ease and ferocity with which these rivers overflow their banks and flood adjacent habitats call to question the real root causes of the perennial menace. While driving on the bridges across River Benue in Makurdi, or River Niger in Onitsha or Patani during the dry season, a quick look would show that the rivers are so silted up that you can practically walk across the river at some portions.

What this means is that these rivers and their tributaries, which are supposed to be critical drainage channels now have near-zero carrying capacity. Any incidents of heavy, sustained rainfall, or release of water from any of the upstream dams would have all the water simply overflowing the banks, resulting in massive flooding of adjacent communities. Again, because of the near-zero carrying capacity of these rivers, the flood waters would take days/weeks to gradually recede.

The Nile River, 6650km long and passing through nine African countries, has remained navigable all year round since



biblical times. It is 26 to 36 feet deep with busy traffic of Cargo and Cruise ships. Infact, cruises are a major tourist attraction on the Nile and in Egypt. A four-day cruise along the Nile can cost as much as \$500 per person. Large tonnages of Cargo ... agricultural produce, timber and manufactured goods are moved through the Nile River every year.

So, while others have turned their rivers into a major nexus of economic activity, from drainage to C to transportation, we have turned ours into a killing field for

our hapless citizens and a source of economic devastation to our country.

Dredging, the River Benue to Lokoja and the River Niger from Baro in Niger State to the Atlantic Ocean, to a minimum draught of 10 feet will transform both rivers to the same economic value as the Nile is to Egypt. From Baro to Onitsha by speed boat would be 90 minutes instead of nine hours.

Imagine ferrying tons of yam and other farm produce from Makurdi to Onitsha on a self propelled badge in three hours!

Most importantly, these rivers and their tributaries would constitute the critical drainage channels to ensure that adjoining towns and villages remain safe while reaping the benefits of the fertile banks of these rivers.

So, why are we unable to do the simple things that other countries of even smaller size do, as a matter routine? Are we just wicked at heart, too corrupt to care or just incompetent?

In 2008, the Yar Adua administration awarded an N34.8 billion contract to dredge the River Niger from Baro to the Atlantic. The following year, another contract for the rebuilding of the Baro inland port was awarded to complement other inland ports in Lokoja and Onitsha.

The dredging did not happen. In 2011, the Jonathan administration revisited the project, revising the contract sum upwards to N49 billion. The mantra then was that the River Niger would be navigable all year round from Baro to the Atlantic. But the Federal Ministry of Works and the Inland Waterways Authority would rather fight over the control of sand dredging rights in the Lagos Lagoon than serve this Nation diligently to address key existential problems.

The state governments have not fared any better. Travel to Yenagoa in Bayelsa State or Ashaka/Aboh in

Delta State and you realise that dredging and maintaining the River Niger tributaries that criss-cross the low-lying parts of these states to some minimum depth is more important than building roads.

These tributaries ought to be the main arteries of well-engineered drainage master plans for these towns and villages. Until this is done, the roads we build in these towns can only wait to be washed away every rainy season.

We must start today to plan the execution of this major inland waterway infrastructure project, both at Federal and State levels. It will take time and discipline to execute, starting from the Atlantic and working our way towards Baro and Makurdi. Maybe I am asking for too much, knowing that we have been working on the East-West Road for forty years and are not done yet! But this is much more than infrastructure for transportation. Lives, whole communities, and food security will all depend on it. Failure to act is an existential threat.

Source: Business day



Abubakar



Cooking gas: Marketers caution against panic buying

THE Nigerian Association of Liquefied Petroleum Gas Marketers (NALPGAM) has cautioned Nigerians against panic buying of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG), otherwise known as cooking gas as a result of the Force Majeure declared by Nigeria Liquefied Natural Gas Limited (NLNG).

NALPGAM's President Mr Oladapo Olatunbosun made the appeal in a statement against the backdrop of NLNG's declaration of force majeure on its gas facility due to flooding.

Olatunbosun said that cooking gas consumers need not panic about a possible scarcity of the product as a result of the force majeure.

He reiterated that based on information reaching the association, the NLNG has not shut down its production facility in Bonny as rumoured and confirmed that NLNG as at last Thursday had shipped a cargo of LPG for the domestic market as the dedicated vessel for shipment of LPG from the NLNG Plant in Bonny, "Alfred Temile", arrived in Lagos on Thursday to discharge product.

"The public should know that the supply of LPG from NLNG has not stopped; we should not give opportunity for further price hike due to speculated shortage of the product. We are already in hard times with the Russian/Ukraine war causing upset in the markets and the scarcity," he advised.

Olatunbosun said that NLNG has assured the association that it will keep producing LPG based on the feed-gas it receives from its gas suppliers, adding that production was expected to



Kyari

pick up after the flood recedes.

He, however, cautioned middlemen in the value chain not to take advantage of the hysteria in the market as a result of the flood which has also hampered the distribution of the production across the nation. He called for urgent intervention by critical stakeholders to grow the industry and for more investment to meet demand and crash the price.

It would be recalled that the General Manager, External Relations and Sustainable Development, NLNG, Mr Andy Odeh in a statement urged Nigerians on the need not rush to fill their gas cylinders as there is enough quantity of LPG to satisfy the market.

Odeh said that the flooding or force majeure declared has no impact on LPG availability. The NLNG account for 40 per cent

supply of gas in the domestic market and in recent times has been the sole supplier for the domestic market.

Odeh, further explained that the company's plant was in operation at a limited capacity, due to reduced gas supply from some of its upstream gas suppliers.

"None of NLNG's assets on Bonny Island or in any of its host communities are impacted by the flood. The Force Majeure is as a consequence of a similar notice by upstream gas suppliers due to the impact of flood in their production facilities." NLNG continues to monitor the situation with upstream gas suppliers and is evaluating the impact of the flood on its business," he said, assuring that the firm was working with all critical stakeholders to mitigate the impact on product deliveries," an earlier statement from the NLNG said.

Betting rises as poverty, joblessness hit Nigerians

AFTER losing his job as a factory engineer in 2019, John Uwa, a 47-year-old father, was frustrated after searching in vain for another source of livelihood to enable him to provide for his family.

A friend who won big on a betting platform introduced him to betting. Uwa, a Lagos-based father of three, told BusinessDay that the betting platform has been of support to him, helping him to raise little money to support his wife through his wins, even though he lost most times.

"On my phone, I have up to five betting apps. Previously, I staked N1,000-N5,000, but now I have increased my stake and reduced the accumulator risks due to the country's current situation of inflation," he said.

"Some days, I lose, but that hasn't stopped me from playing. I became addicted to it at some point. You'll notice me constantly pressing my phone in the morning, afternoon and evening, monitoring some sites and people who are constantly dropping games on social media platforms. At one point, I was always using my generator to charge my phone when it was running low on

power," he added.

Ordinarily, Uwa's faith, Christianity, was enough to make him avoid gambling, but since losing his job and convincing himself employers must have something against hiring older men, the promise of cashing out big on the next bet has proven to be too much temptation. According to Uwa, he recently got a job as a teacher which rather enables him to stake higher amounts. However, there is only so much his N70,000 salary can take him.

Uwa is one of many Nigerians now addicted to gambling as a means of escaping surging poverty levels in the country. Nigeria ranked 103rd out of 121 countries in the recently released 2022 Global Hunger Index report.

Before inflation started rising to the current level (20.7 percent in September), there were 82.9 million poor Nigerians. The number has since risen to 90.1 million in 2021 and is projected to hit 95.1 million in 2022, according to data from the World Bank.

Many more poor Nigerians could mean more desperate betting customers. A recent report showed that 66 percent of Nigerians have placed a bet

on a sporting event at least once in their lives. With this surge in demand, betting investments have also multiplied in the country. The list of betting companies keeps growing on a daily basis.

The betting platforms in the country include Msport, 1xbet, Naijabet, Nairabet, Betway, Bet9ja, Sportybet, Lionsbet, Merrybet, Surebet247, Betfarm, Betland, 1960bet, Betking, and 9japredict.

Victor Idishi, a clearing agent in Apapa, said betting remains a major business for him because of his passion for football and ability to forecast games.

"I bet when I am 85 percent certain that the team will win, especially when a league is in play. I play short games and stake amounts such as N100,000 or N200,000 because I am confident of winning," Idishi said.

Sports betting is particularly the most prominent of the betting segments due to the love for football by millions of Nigerians, and the majority of the games are now done online. Online gaming is expected to grow to a global industry worth \$93 billion by 2023.

DANGOTE Industries Limited is finalising plans to borrow the balance of the N300 billion bond under which it raised N188 billion last July, with the proceeds set to go into the construction of the 650,000-barrels-per-day refinery project in Nigeria's commercial hub, Lagos.

Afrinvest West Africa Ltd, the joint issuing house of the latest N112,415,455,000 bond, sent out a notice to investors on Monday of the imminent launch of the Dangote Industries series 2. The tenor for the offer is 10 years.

The required regulatory approvals are still being awaited but the offer will be open in a few days, according to Afrinvest.

Proceeds from the bond will be used to part-finance the Dangote Petroleum Refinery Project, which is scheduled to begin operations in the first half of 2023, after several delays due to supply chain issues triggered by the COVID-19 global pandemic.

Dangote Industries issued a Series 1 Bond offer on June 30 this year under its N300 billion debt issuance programme.

The deal comprised two tranches of seven and 10 years. Each tranche priced

Dangote eyes second tranche bond to finance refinery



Dangote

at the "higher range" of the initial price guidance, of 12.25 percent to 12.75 percent and 13.00 percent to 13.50 percent for each tranche respectively, according to Abiodun Keripe, managing director of Afrinvest Research and Consulting.

The bond was oversubscribed, with N10 billion demand for the

seven-year tranche and N176 billion for the 10-year offering.

Although the Dangote refinery is yet to commence operations, the \$2.5 billion petrochemical plant has been operational since March 22, 2022. With a capacity of 3 million tonnes per year, it is hoped that the plant will be able to fulfil local demand as well as earmark a proportion of production for export.

Deregulation'll increase transparency in downstream businesses - Official

MR. Gabriel Aduda, the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Petroleum Resources, on Monday, said deregulation of the downstream sector would increase transparency in downstream sector of the petroleum industry.

Aduda said full deregulation would also create healthy competition among investors.

Aduda was represented at the 16th Oil Trading and Logistics Expo in Lagos with the theme: "Regulating Downstream Energy Transition in Dynamic Times," by Mr Augustine Okwuduafor, the Deputy Director, Downstream Department, Federal Ministry of Petroleum

Resources. He noted that deregulation would give business guaranty to investors at the stage of conceptualisation.

According to him, deregulation will significantly reduce, if not eradicate completely, the diversion and smuggling of petroleum products across Nigerian boarders.

"All hands are on deck towards full deregulation of the downstream sector, as this will ensure commercialisation and liberalisation of the sector."

"It will also increase investment opportunities, create more jobs and promote seamless energy transition."

"All these measures and many more will cushion the projected impact of downstream sector deregulation on consumers and the economy at large," he said.

He further said data was key in the Oil and Gas Industry, and that a reliable and accurate data would give investors a certain level of assurance.

"Hence, government is keen and determined to harmonise all downstream data across

the relevant agencies and parastatals to eradicate data variations.

"Government, through the Ministry of Petroleum Resources, its agencies and Federal Ministry of Science and Technology, is considering enhanced technologies."

"They include Machine Learning (ML), Artificial Intelligence (AI) to monitor and gather downstream data for effective policy formulation and investment guidance," he said.

Aduda emphasised that oil also had a place in the energy transition space in the sense that oil could be made cleaner through the development and use of appropriate technologies.

He said moving the downstream sector forward to that enviable position required collaborative efforts from all stakeholders.

"I challenge you all to come along to move the downstream sector towards achieving the downstream we could all be proud of."

"As government, we are prepared to take feedback from fora such as this to guide policy formulation, especially as it affects our Oil and Gas Industry."



sylva



Business & Economy

Startup Act: Experts list gains, warn against pitfalls

THE experts, who spoke appreciated President Muhammadu Buhari for signing the Startup Bill into law last recently but observed that multi-stakeholder implementation and collaboration would be critical for inclusive impact and sustainability. According to them, it was also very important to avoid nepotism and every form of bureaucratic bottlenecks if the Act must be successful. Writes ADEYEMIA

THE new Act, which seeks to provide an enabling environment for technology-enabled businesses in Nigeria, has been described as a game-changer for the burgeoning startup ecosystem in the country.

Among other things, the Act would ensure that federal laws and regulations are clear, planned and designed to work for the tech ecosystem. With the Act, Nigeria's tech ecosystem is expected to see an improved enabling environment soon.

While reports had it that Nigerian technology startups raised over \$1.37 billion in funding in 2021, the Nigeria Startup Act began its progress in June 2021 and was passed by the country's National Assembly in July. It was a joint initiative by Nigeria's tech startup ecosystem and the Presidency aimed at harnessing the potential of the country's digital economy through co-created regulations.

The Minister of Communications and Digital Economy, Prof. Isa Pantami, had said the Act is a major achievement of the digital transformation era of President Buhari. He added that there are provisions in the Act that would change the narrative of the industry.

One such provision, according to Pantami, is the Council for Digital Innovation and Entrepreneurship, which the President would lead as the chairman.

The main function of the council is to ensure the monitoring and evaluation of the regulatory framework. It will also formulate and provide general policy guidelines for the realization of the Startup Act's objectives and give overall directions for the harmonization of laws and regulations that affect a startup.

The Act bridges the gap between regulators and the rest of the startup ecosystem. Globally, this relationship is fraught with tension, but the new Act now sets mechanisms and opens channels for stakeholders to constantly engage.

Speaking on the impact of the Act, Co-founder, Domineum Block chain Solution Ltd and Founder, Startup Arewa, Mohammed Ibrahim Jega, said the Act was designed in a way to ensure it creates more opportunities for startups, especially early-stage ones, stressing that it creates easy access for startups to harness the benefits and opportunities through the Startup portal.

Jega said the Startup Act, through tax and fiscal incentives for



Pantami

startups, investors and even accelerators, would provide room for more attraction of investments from both local and international investors, which would positively impact the economy.

According to him, through the regulatory support provisions to link and collaborate with agencies of government, this would reduce the operational burdens for startups trying to scale regulatory hurdles.

To maximize the benefits, the Startup Arewa Founder said robust implementation by relevant agencies of government with support from other actors from the ecosystem (civil society and even industry associations) would be critical.

He said states should adopt the Act to drive the level of impact desired for startups to grow and even scale, adding that accountability should be instilled on relevant actors responsible for implementation.

Jega posited that creation of awareness and education on the Startup Act and the roles to be played

by each stakeholder within the ecosystem should be prioritized.

On his part, the Founder, Jidaw Systems and Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) Policy Advisor, Jide Awe, said to maximize the benefits of the Act, there must be a multi-stakeholder implementation and collaboration for inclusive impact and sustainability.

Awe said government and stakeholders must now undertake activities to achieve the aim of the Act.

According to him, recognition of the startup ecosystem has to be practical, with implementation being simple, efficient and not bogged down by bureaucratic red tape.

"Government and stakeholders should faithfully implement the Act in line with its intentions. For example, the special startup fund established under the Act needs to be functional and practical to facilitate more accessible access to capital and expand the startup ecosystem," he added.

The STI Policy Advisor said in recognition of the fact that the Startup Act aims to create an environment that promotes and supports tech startups and entrepreneurship in the country, to boost local content development and innovation, the expectation was that this would lead to the creation of more jobs locally and attract foreign investments to Nigeria.

He added: "The Act aims to make it easier for ecosystem participants to interact and collaborate more deeply with those in business, education, research and development, finance and government. New products/services, improved productivity and efficiencies introduced by startups expand the digital economy, creating new social and economic opportunities. In addition, it is an avenue to boost youth innovation and bring more young people into the startup space; it can contribute towards enabling Nigeria's large population of young

people – one of the largest youth populations in the world – to realise their potential.

"Improving the ease of doing business with startups provides a welcoming environment for tech-based enterprises while attracting investors and new players to Nigeria's tech startup ecosystem," he stressed.

For the Chairman, Mobile Software Nigeria, Chris Uwaje, beyond the economy, "the entire nation is destined to benefit and gain from the immense opportunities presented by the enactment of the Startup Act (which indeed is long overdue) because it will unleash accelerated innovation for sustainable national development."

Uwaje, who commended President Buhari and Pantami, said the Act would generate massive new employment opportunities and jobs.

According to him, research data informs that the technology Startups Ecosystem creates more employment opportunities in any country that buys into the development model than large multinational corporations in the same sector.

"Therefore, with the growing large population of the youth in Nigeria and indeed Africa, startups will help reduce youth restiveness, societal conflicts and unemployment. Also, it would help to transform Nigeria's consumer-based economy into a production process economy and earn foreign exchange. Its benefits are many," Uwaje stressed.

The Mobile Software Chairman, however, warned that it was not yet uhuru, saying the journey ahead would be long and tough, because "you cannot build a skyscraper with the foundation of a bungalow."

Uwaje added: "For example, the proposed startup funding threshold of N10 billion is grossly inadequate. In my opinion, the standoff point to earn the benefits of the emergence of startup requires an initial investment outlay of about \$50 billion – since the software capability and competences nationwide has the ability to generate \$10 billion yearly if well organized. These are numbers with the audacity to attract global Venture Capitals and deliver innovation soon corns and unicorns within the shortest possible time."

According to him, that estimate was probably based on inadequate database and expert National Baseline Study of the state of Startups in Nigeria in comparison with their global counterparts in South Africa, India and China.

"Putting the perspective in context, China's Tech startup generated \$131 billion in 2021, while the United States of America generated \$396.6 billion in the same year. Available records estimates the number of Startups in Nigeria to be about/ranging from 4,500 to 6,700 as the largest in Africa, but the scaling and survival ability is very low due to limited and organized infrastructure such as IT/Knowledge Parks, Standard Innovation Hubs, Accelerators and Investment Promotion circuits.

"Also important is the linkage between Academia/Education and Industry. Indeed, we must buy into the concept of establishing Startup entrepreneurship in our education curriculum and encourage the female gender with STEM education.

"There is a lot to do in the global struggle with digital transformation, Climate Change and human population – a challenge that has now been magnified by the future of education, works, health care and entertainment," he added.

A telecoms expert, Kehinde Aluko, also pointed out that going forward, the Federal Government would need to get the buy-in of the states.

Aluko said states' belief in the project was critical if it must succeed.

"I read recently that some states like Anambra, Lagos, Kaduna, Ekiti, Yobe and Zamfara have shown interests. Others must be brought in to guarantee success. There is a need to drive the Startup Act into the states. People are interested in policies that fit into their business plans," Aluko said.

According to him, to avoid challenges of Right of Way that telecoms operators are facing in some states, there was need to get everybody involved in the implementation. He said every state was meant to compete on policy, stressing that policies and natural resources are what should differentiate states.

Aluko submitted that the most important thing to get the Startup Act working was to ensure that the implementation was devoid of delay, bureaucratic bottlenecks and any form of nepotism.

Special Adviser to the President of African Development Bank (AfDB) on Industrialization, Prof. Adebunji Oyeleran Oyeyinka, also acknowledged that if well implemented and transparently managed, Nigerian startups could reap massive investment benefits from the Act.

His words: "Startup initiatives broadly are intended to build a strong ecosystem that is conducive for the growth of startups. Its objective is to empower startups to achieve growth through innovation and acquisition of technology."

"As part of a country's industrial policy, tools as this help to promote economic growth, create high skills jobs in the area of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR).

"The provisions of the Startup Act while benefiting mostly young entrepreneurs would help the Nigerian economy enormously.

"The usual benefits include relaxed conditions for business registration, tax exemption, and access to finance, potential grants and access to patent all reading to lower transaction costs."

Oyeyinka, however, noted that "one cannot legislate progress and this includes provisions of such an Act," adding: "We have seen several initiatives that work excellently in other countries but in our context they fail. Why? When a model works it's because the precept (theory) is sound. Policy and practice are mediated through human agency and this is where we fail. When a person in charge of a policy insists on bending rules or deviating from the policy factors that make a model work, it's going to fail.

"When the custodian of rules insists on pursuing private not public purpose, the model fails. When we have the mindset that 'this is Nigeria now' with all its negativity the model and efforts behind it is in vain."

Source: The guardian

"Government and stakeholders should faithfully implement the Act in line with its intentions. For example, the special startup fund established under the Act needs to be functional and practical to facilitate more accessible access to capital and expand the startup ecosystem," he added. The STI Policy Advisor said in recognition of the fact that the Startup Act aims to create an environment that promotes and supports tech startups and entrepreneurship in the country, to boost local content development and innovation, the expectation was that this would lead to the creation of more jobs locally and attract foreign investments to Nigeria."

Politics

2023: Bafarawa chairs Sokoto PDP guber campaign council

From ANENE AIKE, Sokoto

FORMER Governor of Sokoto, Alhaji Dr. Attahiru Dalhatu Bafarawa has been commissioned to chair Sokoto State People's Democratic Party Governorship campaign council inaugurated by the incumbent Sokoto State governor, Rt. Hon. Aminu Waziri Tambuwal.

In the same vein, Alhaji Yusuf Suleiman will serve as Director General, Campaign Management Committee of the council which also has Alhaji Sa'idu Umar, the governorship candidate as deputy chairman accordingly.

Inaugurating the council at the International Conference Centre, Sokoto, Governor Aminu Waziri Tambuwal urged all party leaders and members to brace up and work in unity as a team from the grassroots to the state level towards delivering the party's candidates across all levels.

Tambuwal also charged them to work with those that were capable of mobilizing support for the party without compromising the journey.

"You should all ensure that those who are capable of reaching out and influencing support for the party and candidates are given the responsibility.

"Everyone must be included in the journey irrespective of his placement as a party member", he stressed.

He said PDP in the state has the confidence in God that gives power to whom he pleases and is ready to work for the victory of the party.

According to Tambuwal, I have not leveled any monetary influence against or tasked our governorship candidate on sharing positions if the party wins. What I said to him is to ensure he administers the state for the benefit of its people with every sense of honesty and sincerity".

"I know he has no money and has not paid to be given the ticket, neither did I bargain to be given something monthly if he wins election", Tambuwal spelt out in clear terms.

Meanwhile, others on the council



Bafarawa

include: Alh. Mukhtar Maigona (Zannan Sokoto) - DDG Field Operation, Alh. Murtala Abdulkadir Dan'Iya - DDG Finance, Dr. Saleh Ibrahim - DDG Media and Publicity, Hon. Umar Bawan Allah - DDG Volunteer Groups and Dr. Bello Guiwa - DDG Election Management.

Also listed are: Prof. Bello Rabi'u Alkali - DDG Research and Strategy, Hon. Aminu Bala Bodinga - DDG Region and Settlement

Matters, Hon. Abdullahi Balarabe Salame - DDG Security, Prof. Aisha Madawaki - DDG Documentation and Reporting, Hon.

Abdullahi Balarabe Salame - Zonal Coordinator, Sokoto East, Hon. Bashir Gidado - Deputy Zonal Coordinator, Sokoto East and Hon. Bello Shehu Suleiman - Zonal Secretary, Sokoto East.

The council also has Sen. Ahmad Maccido - Zonal Coordinator, Sokoto Central, Hon. Abdullahi Hassan Mai Malale - Deputy Zonal Coordinator, Sokoto Central, Hon. Ukashatu - Zonal Secretary, Sokoto Central, Hon.

Altine Shehu Kajiji - Coordinator Yabo/Shagari, Hon. Bello Aliyu Goronyo - Coordinator, Goronyo LG, Hon. Sagir Bafarawa - Coordinator, Gada LG, Hon. Muhammad Mainasara Ahmad - Coordinator, Sokoto South, Alh.

Murtala Abdulkadir Dan'Iya - Coordinator, Sokoto North LG while Hon. Aminu Bala Bodinga and Hon. Abdullahi Yusuf Hausawa will respectively serve as Coordinators for Tureta and Kware LGs.

UNDP, INEC partner on voter education in South-West

THE United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has partnered the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to ensure mass participation in the 2023 general elections.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the partnership involves sensitising Voter Education Providers comprising members of Civil Society Organisations and other stakeholders to work towards elimination of voter apathy during the 2023 elections.

At the opening of sensitisation programme on Monday in Ibadan, the UNDP Team Lead, Governance, Peace and Security, Mr. Matthew Alao, underscored the importance of voter education in any successful election.

"Voter education is crucial to a successful election. It assists election management body in its

task of delivering a free, fair, effective, transparent and credible election.

"Voter education is an enabler that assists the voting population to access basic voter information, make informed decisions and choices of political parties and candidates to vote in an election especially in a multi-party democracy like Nigeria.

"Civic and voter education helps to counter misinformation, disinformation and hate speech by laying the fact bare before the voting public," he said.

Alao emphasised the need to have improved and effective participation in the 2023 general elections.

He said: "Effective participation of the voting population put at about 95 million is central to the triumph of the 2023 elections.

"It behoves on every citizen,

'We won't tolerate intimidation, blackmail by EFCC'

From ABBAS GUNGURA, Bauchi

listening to the points raised by the state, granted an injunction restraining EFCC from tempering with its property or doing anything capable of disrupting the smooth running of the affected government offices and companies pending the hearing and determination of the motion on notice. It further directed the EFCC to remove the defacement it painted"

"The court had agreed that the actions of the EFCC are prima facie illegal and it is to appear before the court on the 9th November 2022 to explain why they took such unwarranted action meant to destroy the economy of the state at a time when the government is doing everything possible to grow the Internally Generated Revenue of the state and to continue with its developmental projects for the betterment of its people"

"Government assures citizens of the state that it is a law-abiding government and it will continue to fight for their rights. Bauchi State Government under the inspirational leadership of Governor Bala Mohammed will not accept any agency of government knowing that we are heading towards the 2023 elections to put her under unnecessary pressure and to blackmail the leadership.

"We note that all these brazen invasions are coming days before the opposition party launched its gubernatorial campaign in the state. Perhaps the EFCC, knowing that the opposition party has nothing to offer in the state, decided to provide it with a talking point.

"Government urges its citizens to remain steadfast in their support and to continue to believe that the best thing that has ever happened to Bauchi State is the dynamic government of Governor Bala Abdulkadir Mohammed and to reject the weaponized use of federal might to intimidate opponents as we head to elections in 2023", the statement unfolded.

"Government wishes to inform its citizens that the court after



Okoye

institution and civil society organisation to be aware of important voting information and procedures, share and enlighten one another on the information

and turn out massively on the election day to exercise their franchise by voting for parties and candidates of their choice.

"This will help to consolidate Nigeria's democracy, prevent violence, sustain peace and stability, and foster economic prosperity.

"We congratulate INEC for the successive progress it recorded in the recent elections especially in Ekiti and Osun states and urge the Commission to continue to improve on these achievements to make the 2023 general elections a record-breaking event in Nigeria."

In his remarks, Alhaji Abiodun Onikate-Amosu, the Administrative Secretary, INEC in Oyo State, charged the voter education providers to ensure that voters are well educated and to disseminate voting information properly.

Onikate-Amosu, who said the concept of voter education was to provide the electorate with basic information about participating actively before, during and after an election, urged the participants to carry out mobilisation of the voting populace adequately.

The administrative secretary said that the workshop was one among many that was planned towards enriching the knowledge and skills of the participants with regards to the electoral process.

He added that the workshop would acquaint participants with

new technology innovations put in place by INEC, "thus serving as a yardstick at educating the electorate.

"As voter education service providers, your focus to the teeming voting populace should be based on: how to educate the voters on voting; how electorate should thumb print ballot paper and how to let the electorate know that their votes will count."

He further assured the voting populace that the use of Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) has come to stay in the nation's electoral process.

According to him, BVAS doubles as device for accreditation as well as the uploading of the polling unit level result sheets to the INEC Result viewing (IREV) portal in real time on election day.

He charged the participants to maximize the opportunity of the workshop to enable them engage better as they disseminate information received to the teeming voting populace.

Corroborating the administration secretary, Mrs Alaba Adeniyi, Head of Voters Education and Publicity, INEC, Oyo State, said the workshop was aiming to enhance voter education providers in the Southwest zone.

Some of the participants, Mrs Wuraola Owolabi, Mrs Modupeola Sobukola and Mr Martins Alao said the sensitisation would go along way to ensure full participation by the populace in the general elections and be abreast of the new

PDP campaign materials: We don't have Atiku - Wike

GOVERNOR Nyesom Wike of Rivers State has explained why the photos of the presidential candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Atiku Abubakar, and its National Chairman, Iyorchia Ayu, were missing in the party's campaign materials in the state.

Wike said Atiku picked people from Rivers into the PDP Presidential Campaign Council without his "contribution".

"Some people have asked me why it is that they don't see the presidential candidate's picture (and) the

party's (national) chairman in the party's campaign materials. I said what are you talking about?

"The presidential candidate entered my (Rivers) state and picked members of the presidential council without a whole governor of the state having a contribution.

"So they don't want us to campaign for them, let's campaign for those who want us to campaign for them - the senatorial, governorship candidates want us to campaign for them, so we are here to campaign for them."

Governor Wike stated this at the inauguration of the State PDP Campaign Council in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, according to reports.

"They say they don't want Rivers people to campaign for them, will you force yourself?

"No", the cheering crowd retorted.

Speaking further, Wike said Atiku appointed "enemies of Rivers as members of his campaign council.

"I have never seen how people would disrespect a state like Rivers, and go and choose those who are enemies of the state without contributions from us."

The governor did not, however, mention those he described as "enemies of Rivers State".

A former national chairman of the PDP, Uche Secondus, who hails from Rivers State, has been appointed Technical Adviser by Atiku.

Besides Secondus, other PDP members from Rivers State appointed to the presidential campaign

council include two former deputy speakers of the House of Representatives, Chibudom Nwuche and Austin Opara.

Others are a senator, George Sekibo; a former senator, Lee Maeba; and a former transportation minister under Olusegun Obasanjo, Abiye Sekibo, as well as a retired army general, Kenneth Minima.

The PDP has been enmeshed in a leadership crisis after its presidential primary which was won by Atiku.

Wike is leading a group of four other governors and other party chieftains who are calling for the removal of Ayu as the PDP chairman, to achieve a "regional balance" since Messrs Ayu and Atiku are both from the north.

Wike's allies who were appointed to the PDP Presidential Campaign Council last month announced their withdrawal from the council.

Members of the group also boycotted the presidential campaign flag-off of the party. They are adamant that Ayu must be replaced with a southerner.



Wike

Politics

2023 Presidency: Kwankwanso, contender or ...?

The Presidential Candidate of the New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP), Senator Rabiu Musa Kwankwanso, was adjudged as the dark horse ahead of the 2023 presidential election. However, with just months to the poll, KEHINDE OSASONA asks if he is still a contender to the throne.

WHEN two-term Governor of Kano state, Senator Rabiu Musa Kwankwanso, and some political associates formed the National Movement, which later adopted the New Nigerian Peoples Party (NNPP) as its political wing, some Nigerians hailed the decision, tagging it a third force capable of giving the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) and the major opposition party, Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), a run for their money.

Justifying its formation at a media parley, the group said it was on a mission to save the country from the PDP and APC, arguing that the parties had run the country in turns since the beginning of the Fourth Republic.

The eventual defection of the arrowhead, Kwankwanso, who commands a large number of supporters, did not come to many as a surprise. Intra-party disagreements with stakeholders in the main opposition PDP coupled with other reasons had led to Kwankwanso's defection.

Now the presidential candidate of his newly formed party, the former governor has insisted that the NNPP was the party to beat in next year's general elections. Dismissing his claims, political observers said NNPP was a party of the future with no capacity to shake the ruling party, APC and its main opposition, the PDP.

Aligning with the observer's views, the Senator representing Kano South, Kabiru Gaya, said NNPP would not be a threat to the victory of the APC governorship candidates in Kano state.

Gaya, a former governor of the state, speaking recently, maintained that: "In Kano, we have two political parties; the APC and the PDP. The PDP split into two with the Kwankwassiyya forming NNPP. We still have only APC and PDP in Kano. So I am optimistic APC will win Kano in 2023."

The question then is whether Gaya's confidence steams from the APC's winning strategy or he is privy to information that could weaken their opponent.

Others have also queried whether the lawmaker was merely basking in the euphoria of the APC being the ruling party.

As he campaigns for the presidential election gets underway Kwankwanso's NNPP has at least candidates of three other political parties: Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu of the APC; Alhaji Atiku Abubakar of the PDP; Mr Peter Obi of the Labour Party (LP); to contend with.

Blueprint Weekend checks indicated that Kwankwanso would battle for the soul of Kano state and by extension the entire North come February 2023.

Although Kano still remains NNPP's stronghold, the party members cut across Gombe, Kaduna, Sokoto, Katsina, Jigawa, Nasarawa and Zamfara states. However, despite its seeming confidence, some analysts have argued that the NNPP does not



Kwankwanso

have what it takes to spring a surprise as earlier predicted.

In an exclusive chat with *Blueprint Weekend*, a political analyst and commentator, Daniel Sombo, noted that exit of former Governor of Kano state, Ibrahim Shekarau, may have punctured NNPP's aspirations. The former governor had dumped the party to return to the PDP.

Speaking on the development, Sombo said, "As much as I welcome the new party NNPP into the fold, I regret to say that the party is just a party of the future if nurtured well as it cannot rattle any of the heavyweight parties, including Labour Party.

"Here is a party that is yet to make any meaningful inroads southwards but only domiciled in Kano and a handful of supporters or followers in some northern states, I mean it does not cut it for me.

"As a matter of fact, even if Shekarau is still with them, they can only rattle APC and PDP in Kano based on their popularity, but I don't see Kwankwanso springing any surprise again.

"I say this because if Obi had chosen to be his deputy, it would have been a three horse race for APC, PDP and LP."

To make matters worse, while deserting the Kwankwanso party for PDP, Shekarau was quoted as telling reporters that his decision to leave NNPP was informed by Kwankwanso's breach of trust.

However, despite Shekarau's exit, a chieftain of the party, Alhaji Buba Galadima, has predicted that Kwankwanso would win all the states in the North-west and garner enough

votes in other regions of the country in the presidential election.

Galadima, who described Kwankwanso as a lion, boasted that the North-west with 24 million registered voters was for Kwankwanso.

"Nigerians should know what is facing them. Take North-east where I come from, Kwankwanso will win Bauchi, he will win Gombe, he will win Adamawa, he will win Taraba. The only states where he would have to wrestle with the APC are Borno and Yobe.

"If you take North-central, we will win Plateau, we will win Nasarawa, technically we will win Benue, of course Kogi is his second home. We will win Niger, and now Kwara from our visit, is falling into the stable.

"We will win Cross River, we will win Akwa Ibom, we will win Edo, and we will win Oyo. We are fighting for the soul of Delta. If that Delta falls, Kwankwanso on the first ballot will be the President of Nigeria," he boasted.

Galadima also said that even if

ethno-religious politics was played out in the presidential election, Kwankwanso would still emerge victorious.

"And in case, you do sectional, tribal and religious politics, what would happen is that Kwankwanso is going to come number one with the highest number of electoral votes, and whoever comes second, they will go into the election, Kwankwanso is the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria," he added.

In an exclusive interview, a former aspirant of the APC in Agbado/Oke-Odo Constituency in Lagos State, Jibola George, insisted that Kwankwanso had only come to showcase himself as a future presidential material, arguing that he cannot compete favourably with the two leading parties in next year's presidential election.

George, a former LGA youth leader, further stated that although Kwankwanso cannot be left out in the political game because of his popularity in some parts of the North-west,

especially in Kano state, that couldn't make him a formidable opponent as the APC and PDP has the wider coverage and more followership than NNPP.

"As it is, in this coming general elections I believe we have only two wave makers which happens to be Bola Tinubu, the president in waiting and Atiku Abubakar, based on their popularity, tenacity and party structures which we all know are additional advantage to the top flag bearers."

Also speaking exclusively to *Blueprint Weekend*, a former Chairman, Transitional Implementation Committee (TIC) during the administration of former Governor Abdulfatah Ahmed of Kwara state, said the NNPP candidate was going nowhere.

The politician and chieftain from Kwara South, who craved anonymity, said although Kwankwanso has sizeable followership in the country, especially in the North, he can't rattle either Atiku or Tinubu.

"I don't see him posing much threat for the PDP and APC candidates, the two major contenders in the presidential election, and if the election is to be conducted today, I see him coming a distant third with Atiku carrying the day in the North.

"In Kwara state today for instance, Professor Oba Abdurraheem, a former Vice Chancellor of the University of Ilorin and a renowned education reformer is the NNPP governorship candidate but his party is not among the top contenders in the state.

"Political party and structure plays a major role, the major contenders in Kwara State as we speak are Abdullahi Yaman of the PDP; the incumbent Governor Abdulasak Abdulkrahman of APC; Hakeem Lawal of the SDP; and Alhaji Gobir of the YPP, who all have their structures well rooted as against NNPP which is relatively unknown," he declared.

Culled from *Blueprint*

"Although Kano still remains NNPP's stronghold, the party members cut across Gombe, Kaduna, Sokoto, Katsina, Jigawa, Nasarawa and Zamfara states. However, despite its seeming confidence, some analysts have argued that the NNPP does not have what it takes to spring a surprise as earlier predicted. In an exclusive chat with *Blueprint Weekend*, a political analyst and commentator, Daniel Sombo, noted that exit of former Governor of Kano state, Ibrahim Shekarau, may have punctured NNPP's aspirations. The former governor had dumped the party to return to the PDP."

IMAGES

LALONG AT CJ'S THANKSGIVING SERVICE

The Plateau State Governor and Chairman, Northern Governors' Forum, Rt. Hon. (Dr.) Simon Bako Lalong (CON) on Sunday attended the thanksgiving service and grand children dedication of the Chief Judge, Justice David Mann at COCIN Giring, Abattoir, Jos South LGA



Governor Lalong (CON) putting heads together with the Chief Judge, Justice David Mann during the service



Commissioner for Higher Education, Prof. Benard Matur (2nd right) with some invited guests at the service



L-R: Governor Simon Bako Lalong (CON), Speaker, PLHA, Rt. Hon. Yakubu Sanda and wife, CJ, Justice David Mann and wife



Choir of the church rendering songs at the service



Celebrant, Justice David Mann, wife and children at the service



Rev. Chuwang Moses Gyang, Chairman, RCC Giring, Abattoir, Jos South LGA delivering remarks during the service



Rev. Chuwang Moses Gyang, Chairman, Regional Church Council, (RCC) Giring, Abattoir performing the children's dedication of Barr. and Mrs. Peres David Mann



Commissioner for Agriculture, Dr. Hosea Finangwai with his colleagues at the service

Photos: DANLADI DUK

Politics

2023 elections: Examining INEC and sanctity of votes

In 2023, as Nigerians elect their next set of leaders, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) will face the duty of preserving the gains of election reforms. So far, the reforms have brought some measure of credibility which hitherto was lacking in the electoral system, UCHE ANUNNE writes.

BEFORE the 2015 general elections, most Nigerians were pessimistic that the electoral umpire was capable of delivering on credible elections.

Elections in the country had been marred by allegations of over voting, ballot box snatching and stuffing.

However, all that changed in 2015 with the election that brought the incumbent administration to power.

After years of painstaking electoral reforms, the then administration of President Goodluck Jonathan delivered what many today consider as one of the most credible elections in the political history of Nigeria.

At the Goodluck Jonathan 2022 Peace Conference, Jonathan had described hate speech and propaganda as a threat to democracy, noting that the era of ballot box snatching was over, because of the introduction of electronic voting as contained in the new electoral act.

At the signing of the electoral bill 2022, President Muhammadu Buhari has noted that "the bill would also improve and engender clarity, effectiveness and transparency of the election process, as well as reduce to the barest minimum incidences of acrimony arising from dissatisfied candidates and political parties".

Observers of the political scene say the gubernatorial elections in Anambra, Ekiti and recently Osun where the popular candidates won on election days lay credence to the fact that finally the votes are beginning to count.

However, in spite of the success, concerns still remain as Nigerians return to the polls to elect a successor to President Muhammadu Buhari.

Ahead of the 2023 polls, INEC said there are 96.2 million registered voters, a significant increase of 12.2 million voters on 84 million electorate registered for the previous election.

Part of the breakdown of the figures showed that with a total of 22.67 million registered voters, North-West geopolitical zone, which comprises Sokoto, Zamfara, Kano, Kaduna, Katsina, Kebbi and Jigawa, tops the list of registered voters.

"In a democracy, it is the people that rule and all the people cannot rule at the same time, and that is why there's need for an election. So let us ensure that the people's vote counts.

"Our electoral commission must be independent. They must not be ruled or governed by anybody. They must be able to give a free, fair and credible election," said frontline politician and former Minister of Information and Culture, Prof. Jerry Gana.



Yakubu

Gana spoke in Abuja at the 11th edition of the Change We Need Nigeria Initiative Annual Lecture organised by the Charismatic Renewal Ministries (CRM).

According to Abraham Lincoln, democracy is the government of the people by the people for the people.

The surest route for this definition to be given a meaning is to ensure that the people are responsible for the mandate their leaders have.

Chief Mike Ozekhome, SAN, argues that the electoral reforms would be incomplete if this sacred authority is taken away from the electorate.

"It is the people that midwife democracy and midwife it for the people. The people therefore are the owners of the power not the elected or the selected few," he said.

A similar sentiment was also echoed recently by the chairman

of the Sokoto State chapter of All Progressives Congress (APC) Alhaji Isa Achida.

While addressing INEC officials, who were at the party secretariat to interact with its candidates, Achida was quoted by the media to have urged INEC to ensure that truly popular candidates emerge victorious in the 2023 elections.

The concern for over voting is not unfounded going by Nigeria's electoral history. Over voting is one of the grounds on which Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, the presidential candidate of Peoples Democratic Party in 2019 presidential polls challenged the result of the election.

As transparent as the June 16 gubernatorial election is claimed to be, issues of over voting has also been raised by Gov. Adegboyega Oyetola against the winner, Sen. Ademola Adeleke.

In approaching election petitions tribunal, Oyetola

alleges over voting in 749 polling units across 10 Local Government Areas in the state.

Stakeholders say it is important that INEC allays these fears and guarantee that all necessary instruments and resources will be deployed to ensure that Nigeria's next crop of political leaders are genuinely the choices of the electorate.

As part of the measures, INEC said it will deploy technology to enhance its operations and ensure higher efficiency and engender confidence in the electoral process.

According to Mahmood Yakubu, the chairman of INEC, the umpire will utilise the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) to protect the sanctity of the exercise.

"The BVAS has come to stay and will be the only means by which voters will be accredited in the 2023 General Election," Yakubu said in an address at a conference of the Guild of Corporate Online Publishers (GOCOP) in Lagos.

The INEC chief reiterated in Abuja at a seminar titled: '2023 and Beyond: Leadership, Politics, and Citizens Engagement,' organised by the St. James Anglican Church in Asokoro, area of the federal capital city.

"There will be no case of over voting again in any polling station. Voting will be based on BVAS and other electronic devices by INEC.

"At the polling stations, the number of votes must be based on the number of voters accredited at the time of polling and not based on the number of registered voters.

"The number of accreditation at the polling station must tally with the number of actual voting. If it exceeded by one vote, the entire process would be invalidated,"

the INEC chairman told his audience", he said.

Another area of concern for stakeholders is the transmission of votes, with many saying that the electronic transmission of votes will minimise challenges associated with manual transmission.

Again, INEC has affirmed its commitment to electronic transmission of votes.

"For clarity, 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

"We wish to reassure Nigerians that the electronic transmission of result has come to stay.

"It adds to the credibility and transparency of the process when citizens follow polling unit level results on the INEC Result Viewing Portal on real time on Election Day.

"There will be no change or deviation in subsequent elections", said the National Commissioner and Chairman of its Information and Voter Education Committee, Festus Okoye, in a recent statement.

He said doing otherwise would amount to violation of key section of Electoral Act, 2022.

"The entire gamut of result management is provided in Sections 60, 62 and 61 of the Electoral Act 2022," he said in the statement.

As the largest democracy in Africa and the continent's largest economy, the international community looks up to Nigeria to drive Africa into the future.

This can only be achieved when the people's choice is respected. INEC and other stakeholders have a major role to play in that regard.

NAN Features



Nigerians casting their votes

News

Prioritise peace -Lalong

By PALANG KASMI

PLATEAU State Governor Simon Bako Lalong has charged the new Aku Uka, His Royal Highness Manu Ishaku Adda Ali Matakhitsewen to govern his people with the fear of God and work hard for peace of his kingdom to be sustained.

Governor Lalong gave the message during the installation and presentation of Staff of Office to the Aku Uka by the Governor of Taraba State, Governor Darius Dickson Ishaku in Wukari.

Lalong described the installation as a unique moment that will linger in the minds of the people because the last time this type of event took place was in 1976 when the late Aku Uka was crowned.

Congratulating the new monarch for ascending the throne of his fore fathers at a time when there is a greater need to foster development, peace and progress of the land, Governor Lalong commended the king-makers for conducting a selection process devoid of rancour and bitterness.

He said "Being alive to witness this special event calls for thanksgiving to God and appreciation to the ancestors for giving us this rich and vibrant culture that we continue to uphold".

"I therefore bring you the goodwill and warm felicitations of the government and people of Plateau State with whom Taraba State and indeed the Kwararafa Kingdom shares very close affinities."

He expressed confidence that the selection of the Aku Uka will not only usher in a period of greater prosperity within the kingdom, Taraba State and Nigeria at large but will make him work towards addressing the challenges that the nation faces particularly in the area of security and crime.

He said for such challenges to be brought under control, it requires the support of the traditional institution, and expressed hope that the royal father will do everything possible to ensure that he mobilizes his subjects to rise against crime in whatever form.

Said Lalong: "Using your wealth of experience and the influence of your office, it will be very important for you to also work with the government and non-governmental organizations towards ensuring that job opportunities are created particularly in entrepreneurship and agriculture that are synonymous with the Kwararafa Kingdom".

"We look forward to you leading your subjects towards reviving the spirit of hard work, resilience and excellence that is known in Kwararafa Kingdom".

"Already, the Northern Governors Forum has submitted its proposal to the National Assembly to find a suitable role for the traditional institution in the constitution. We desire to see our royal fathers play a greater role in governance as it used to be in the pre-colonial and colonial times so as to be able to confront the challenges



Lalong

we face today".

"I know his Royal Highness will continue to play the role that his predecessor played within the Northern Traditional Council and the nation at large," he said.

Taraba State Governor, Darius Ishaku while handing over the Staff of Office to the new Aku Uka said the ancient Kwararafa Kingdom still remains a reference point for civilization, arts, culture and innovation which still resonates with its sons and daughters all over the world.

He disclosed that the new monarch emerged through a free and fair process that was decided by the king makers without any interference from the government.

Governor Ishaku charged the Royal Father to work assiduously in mobilizing his subjects towards promoting development in education, agriculture, health and infrastructure. He also assured him of the support of the government.

The Taraba Governor also used the occasion to warn traditional rulers against involvement in partisan politics and arbitrary sale of lands as well as allowing illegal mining in their domains.

Former Minister of Defence, Rtd.Gen. Theophilus Danjuma said the event is a special moment for the people of the Kwararafa Kingdom who are known for hard work, unity and pursuit of excellence.

He frowned against the level of insecurity in the country manifesting in kidnapping, banditry and terrorism which he said must be tackled immediately to save the nation.

Danjuma said the people must be involved in their protection and also work with the security agencies to confront criminals whose main aim is to destroy Nigeria.

Sultan of Sokoto Alhaji Sa'ad Abubakar in his remarks said that task before the new Aku Uka is enormous and calls for commitment that is built on vision, fairness and justice.

He advised his colleague never to allow politicians distract him from serving his people justly and honestly, as doing anything contrary to his calling and the wishes of his ancestors will not bring progress to the land.

The Aku Uka in his remarks thanked the people for supporting him to ascend the throne of his forefathers.

While pledging to be a father to all, the royal father promised to work in the footsteps of his forefathers who toiled to build a kingdom that embraces diversity, peace, unity and progress.

From ABBAS GUNGURA,
Bauchi

THE Bauchi State Chief Judge, Justice Rabi Talatu Umar, has been commended by the Emir of Katagum, Alhaji Umar Faruk II over her routine quarterly review cases visit to various custodians and Correctional Centres across the state over the weekend.

Alhaji Umar Farouk II made it clear that the routine cases review by the chief judge has not only sped up dispensation of justice, but also goes a long way in decongesting the custodian centres. He quoted the adage 'justice delayed is justice denied'.

The emir also noted that the routine visits to the centres by Justice Rabi Talatu Umar has kept the various court judges and magistrates on their toes, instilling discipline in their minds while keeping attention to their day to day judicial responsibilities.

"Your ability to undertake such a routine quarterly cases review visits to the custodial centres, and your taking of decisive actions in the judiciary have changed many things for the better", the emir told the chief judge.

Farouk II similarly commended Governor Bala Mohammed for his recent pardoning of 153 inmates awaiting trial persons from across various custodial

From ANENE AIKE,
Gusau

ZAMFARA State Police Command has rescued a one-year old baby and 10 women during a search and rescue operations at Gando Forest in Bukkuyum Local Government Area of the state.

A statement by the spokesperson of the command, SP Mohammed Shehu said bandits invaded Manye village in Anka local government area and abducted women and a one-year old child to Gando Forest in Bukkuyum LGA of the state and spent three days in captivity.

"On receiving the report, the Commissioner of Police deployed additional Police Tactical Operatives to reinforce DPO Anka and vigilante in their rescue operation. The task was successfully accomplished with the full support of stakeholders especially, the Sole Administrator of Anka LGA.

All the rescued victims

Police rescues one year old

were taken to the hospital for medical check, debriefed by police detectives and handed over to their families.

The commissioner of Police while commending the Sole Administrator,

Anka LGA for the full support and partnership during the rescue operation, congratulated the victims for regaining their freedom. He assured them that all the perpetrators will be apprehended and charged to court for prosecution.



Alkali

Emir lauds CJ over cases review

centres in the state under the prerogative of mercy granted him by the constitution, and in commemoration of the country's 62nd independence anniversary.

The Bauchi Chief Judge had earlier told the emir that she was on a routine quarterly cases review of awaiting trial persons in various custodial centres across the state with a view to speed-up dispensation of justice, and by doing so reduce congestion in the centres.

Justice Rabi Umar explained that during the cases review visit, her team also supervises duties of sharia court judges and magistrates with a view to make corrections where necessary, and equally release inmates who were unnecessarily kept awaiting trial without concrete reasons.

She said her visit to the palace was to pay homage to the emir, having been in Azare for official duties, and to seek the prayers, blessings of the royal

father, as well as advice from the emir in the conduct of her official duties.

Justice Rabi Talatu Umar had during the visits to the custodial centres warned the judges and magistrates to always be around during her visits to the custody centres so as to shed more light on the cases being reviewed, so as to ease the review and ensure justice dispensation.

Also, during the visit to the custodial centres, the Chief Judge released 21 awaiting trial persons across the centres in the state namely Ningi - 2 persons, Shira- 1 person, Jama'are - 2 persons, Azare - 2 persons, Nabordo - 3 persons, Remand Home Bauchi- 2, and Bauchi Correctional Centre - 9 persons.

The nine released in Bauchi are Salmanu Rabi'u, Musa Yusuf, Rabi'u Abdullahi, Usman Babayo, Usman Abdullahi, Ahmed Alhaji Yusuf, Babangida Isah, Ahmed Rashidu Sani, and Nasiru Ahmed.

Justice Rabi Umar counseled the released persons to seek for pardon from their parents, and equally look for lawful things to do to fend for a living. She said, 'Any father whose son is incarnated in custodial centre is in jeopardy, and any child who jeopardizes his parents would receive punishment from God'.



Mohammed

News

Tambuwal decorates aide with superintendent rank

From ANENE AIKE, Sokoto

THE Escort Commander of Government House, Sokoto, Ibrahim Sani Abdullahi, was recently decorated with his new rank of Superintendent of Police (SUPOL) by Governor Aminu Waziri Tambuwal.

In a perfunctory ceremony at the Governor's office, Abdullahi was adorned with his new rank by the Governor who was assisted by his aide de camp (ADC), SUPOL Yusuf Ibrahim. This was contained in a release issued by the Special Adviser on Media and Publicity to the Governor, Muhammad Bello.

It stated that Ibrahim is an indigene of Kura Local Government Area of Kano State, who had his primary and secondary education in Kaduna. He bagged a diploma in Business Administration from the University of Jos and Higher National Diploma (HND) from Abia Polytechnic. He later obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in Business



Tambuwal

Administration from the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN).

Thereafter, he proceeded to the Police Academy in Wudil. He was at various times an ADC to the former Deputy

Governor of Yobe State, Engineer Abubakar Aliyu; and, a Guards Commander to the former Inspector General of Police. (IGP), Suleiman Abba.

He is married with two kids.

Lalong tasks CJ on rule of law, justice

By PALANG KASMI

PLATEAU State Governor, Simon Bako Lalong has tasked the Chief Judge (CJ) of Plateau State Hon. Justice David Mann to continue to reform the Judiciary in order to further deepen the rule of law and justice delivery to all.

The governor also advised parents to take their parental responsibilities seriously to raise God-fearing responsible children in the society.

The Governor gave the charge while speaking at a thanksgiving service in honour of the CJ and dedication of his twin grand children held at the Church of Christ in Nations (COCIN), Giring, Abba, Jos.

Lalong said the appointment of the CJ which was a divine order, carries along heavy burden to ensure that humanity exists in harmony and under order and tranquility.

He commended him for serving the people without fear or favour and in line with his oath of office and dictates of his calling.

Lalong also prayed God to continue to give the CJ the grace to fulfill his responsibilities to the best of his abilities and for the good of the citizens.

He appreciated God's blessings of twins to the family of the CJ, tasking parents to play their role in the lives of the children.

Lalong used the opportunity to restate his administration's desire to provide livelihoods through social amenities to Plateau citizens.

In a sermon, Rev. Luka Damilep who took his reading from Colosians 1:15 urged the congregation to acknowledge the supremacy of God in their lives to constantly be in communion with him.

The Pastor described the Plateau CJ as God fearing,

calling on members to emulate his humble posture by submitting to the authority of God at all times and in any position they find themselves.

Lead Pastor of the Church, Rev. Chuwang Moses Gyang, speaking on behalf of COCIN President, appreciated the Chief Judge of Plateau State for not allowing his position to take him away from the presence of God.

He commended him for also contributing to the growth of the church and participating in the spiritual and physical rejuvenation of members.

During the dedication of grand children of the CJ, their father, Barr. Peres Mann said the event is a celebration of joy and grace of God upon his family for the perfect miraculous healing of the children, who at delivery, were discovered to have some medical challenges.

miraculous healing of the children, who at delivery, were

MUYOM charges youth to be architects of change

By DUMAH RANDONG

Youths have been charged to be architects of change in the society.

President Mushere Youth Movement, MUYOM Comrade, Kopmut Shadrack gave the charge after he was sworn-in President along with other officials of the body at the weekend in Mushere, Bokokos LGA.

Shadrack described youths as transformative agents that could bring positive change and development in the country.

He appreciated the youths for the mandate given him and expressed readiness to work with the entire youths both home and abroad for the development of the land.

He also promised to collaborate with the traditional rulers and other stakeholders for the progress of the land.

Speaking on the participation of youths in the coming general elections, Comrade Shadrack urged them to play the game of politics according to the rules.

Also speaking, Chairman Bokokos Local Government Area, Mr

discovered to have some medical challenges.

The father of the twins however said they resorted to trust in God, who miraculously intervened and healed them of the medical condition.

In his remarks, the CJ thanked God for the grace given him to rise to the rank of a Chief Judge in a journey that started way back in 1983 as a Magistrate.

He appreciated the Governor, Speaker and all other Nigerians that have contributed to his professional growth and have supported him to discharge his duties with fairness and justice.

Special prayers were offered for the Governor and his cabinet including the family of the CJ.

Donations were also made towards completion of the church auditorium with the Governor, CJ, Speaker of the Plateau House of Assembly, Head of Service and other invited guests supporting with donations.



Striking the right cords

These are certainly trying moments for our dear country. Moments when everything you do, say or consider must be well thought out because of the way and manner it would be interpreted. So many things are not right about our society. Our approach to issues of development, nation building and the likes are not founded on concrete reasoning but rather on emotions and self centred nay warped thinking. If you want your day spoilt scan through the social media. If you wish to wear a sad face and think nothing good about the society just venture to visit any site.

On the internet you would read about the mundane, sad and all the silly lies you can ever think of. You would see the use of the most vulgar and uncouth language. You will come across the murder of the English language. You would wonder whether it is that same language you relate in that is being employed to pass some messages on these sites. I had course at some point to

The recent car gifts to Niger Republic by our government and the justifications churned out in defense of the action smacks of insensitivity on the part of those saddled with the responsibility of finding solutions to our problems. How can we justify such an action when we have not put out the fire that is consuming our own house? Can we fight our neighbours fire on their behalf when our own house is being ravaged by a similar inferno

write long ago about the harm the social media was doing to our young ones unfortunately, that epistle was like a shrill voice in the wilderness. Nothing was seen to be wrong until now that the whole thing is threatening to consume us all and posing serious concerns to our country.

Visit any site, because of the anonymity social media provides, you scarcely see disciplined and refined conversations on them. People use very bad and poorly written prose because they think no one is bothered about them so long as they are not known. It is so horrible that young people are adopting this style of relating with the society without qualms. When you read some of the commentaries you feel like burying your head in shame.

Please do not get me wrong. There are well written and well thought out prose on the social media. There are plenty people who use the space for the improvement and development of the impressionable minds of these set who spend considerable amount of time surfing the net. Illuminating and refreshing articles are resources which are found on that space.

Without doubt, the space has been one of the most abused and often misused. The anonymity it provides kind of shield the faces behind the rubbish being churn out. And, until we begin to think of how to positively refine the psych of these set of individuals we might be heading towards the unknown. For me, some form of control is needed if effective use of the internet is to be made. There are often loud cries each time someone suggest that some control be introduced but we often postpone taking that hard but necessary decision. Whether we like it or not, we would certainly get to the bridge where we must reach a decision some day.

Keyamo's plea
Festus Keyamo, Nigeria's Minister of State for Labour recently came on national television to

plead with parents and students to beg ASSU, the union of our university lecturers to return to the classrooms after months of staying away from work without their demands being attended to. Much as I do not have the energy to join issues with him (he has a right to his opinion) yet I think it is one of the unfortunate slips anyone in a leadership position could make. As a Minister saddled with solving labour issues how much goodwill has he shown and generated in trying to resolve the issue? Are we to assume that he and his principal lack the capacity to solve the issues in contention? Least we forget, leadership is about solving the problems of our society. It is about bringing about creative ways of dealing with issues. But in the instant case, can we in all sincerity say that representatives of the government have done their best? I do not think so.

The recent car gifts to Niger Republic by our government and the justifications churned out in defense of the action smacks of insensitivity on the part of those saddled with the responsibility of finding solutions to our problems. How can we justify such an action when we have not put out the fire that is consuming our own house? Can we fight our neighbours fire on their behalf when our own house is being ravaged by a similar inferno?

Keyamo's statement was a tacit acceptable of the fact that the leadership has run out of ideas as to how to carry through the mandate Nigerians handed him and his co- travelers to solve their problems on their behalf. And it is a shame that such a highly placed officer could speak without thinking through an issue as sensitive as the ASSU strike. This too should help Nigerians to look again at the type of people it elects to represent them run their government.

News

Again, Taraba pensioners protest non-payment

From VICTOR GAI, Jalingo

A certain group of pensioners in Taraba have staged a protest over the non-payment of their pension and gratuities for up to ten years.

The protest which took place in Jalingo, the Taraba State capital on Monday began at the Government House roundabout to the State House of Assembly.

They carried placards with inscriptions such as "our pensioners are dying without collecting their pensions and gratuities". "Gratuity is a right, not a privilege. Pay us our rights, pay us our gratuities". "Accumulation of pensions and gratuity, which government will pay?"

The protesters who came under the auspices of Taraba State Concerned Retirees, disclosed in a statement that the non-payment of their pensions has caused hardship to them and their families. "You may wish to know that many local government staff retired for over 8-10 years now without being paid pensions.

This non-payment of gratuities and pensions of local government staff has caused very high hardship to us. Children were sent out of school, some died, some without money for treatment," the statement read.

The pensioners added that all efforts to "persuade" the governor to pay them fell on



Ishaku "deaf ears".

Meanwhile, the long wait by the visitors for the Speaker of the Taraba State House of Assembly to address them ended up in futility. But a few of the officials met with the Speaker on the matter.

Responding on the outcome of their discussion, Vice Chairman of the group, Alhaji Isa Sambo, disclosed that the Speaker promised to set up a committee to be made up of officials from the State and Local Government Pension Boards to look into the matter.

But that agreement did not go down well with members of the group who questioned why the Speaker refused to

address all of them but rather chose to speak with a few.

This protest happens to be the second time it would happen this year. A similar protest happened in July where the retired workers took to the Government House in Jalingo asking to be paid their pensions and gratuities.

Nigeria 3rd highest in UK with 10,296 doctors

By EZEKIEL DONTINNA

OVER ten thousand, two hundred and ninety-six (10,296) Nigerian doctors who obtained their degrees in Nigeria left the shore of

From ANENE AIKE Sokoto

SOKOTO State government under Governor Aminu Waziri Tambuwal has settled the gratuity entitlements of retired civil servants of the two administrations preceding his. As contained in a statement by his Special Adviser, the Governor has, over the last seven years, been consistent in the prompt payment of such recompense to retirees in the state.

This is as the Governor, who reiterated that his administration, intent on bequeathing to the state a purposeful and virile civil service that can deliver the dividends of democracy via "provision of incentives and capacity building initiatives," will establish a Public Service Institute in collaboration with the UmaruShinkafi Polytechnic, Sokoto.

Disclosing these interventions recently in Sokoto, Tambuwal who said that the payment of the gratuities, running into billions of naira will be on first come, first serve basis, handed cheques to beneficiaries.

According to him, his administration "has ... settled accumulated gratuities and pensions

Tambuwal pays 20 years gratuities, pension, other entitlements



Tambuwal

inherited from the previous administrations." "On assumption of office in 2015, I directed the payment of gratuity arrears of government/primary teachers from 2000-2008, followed by the settlement of another eight years backlog of gratuity from 2009-2017," he added.

Capping these payments with a third phase covering the period from March 2017- date to local government/primary teachers retirees, the Governor said all these was done "in spite of the economic difficulties our nation is passing through."

"Our administration," he

explained, "has remained committed to the welfare of the state's civil servants and senior citizens, who have spent the best part of their lives serving the people."

He further explained that in addition to the payment of the gratuities, "the payment of salaries and pension has not stopped since the assumption of our government in 2015."

He said this is because of the premium his administration places on citizens of the state who "deserve to live a decent life, especially our senior citizens, who have given the best of their lives to the service of our dear state."

Women, children's issues are dear to me

- Tallen



Tallen

By YVONNE ISHOLA

THE Minister of Women Affairs, Dame Pauline Tallen has emphasized that issues related to women and children are very dear to her. She made that statement recently when the executive members of Nigeria Association of Women Journalists NAWOJ, Plateau State Chapter paid her a courtesy visit in her residence in Jos, Plateau State.

Stating their purpose of visit earlier on, the Chairperson of NAWOJ, Comrade Nene Dung told the minister that NAWOJ had come to commiserate with her for the loss of her brother and to pray and encourage her for the health challenge she had battled with for some months.

Dung assured Tallen that "despite all of these, God is with you and will not allow anything bad happen to you. God is the one that said that even though we walk through

the valley of the shadow of death, he will be with us.

The NAWOJ Chairperson eulogized the Minister of Women Affairs for doing Plateau proud with all her achievements and for being the voice of women in Nigeria.

"NAWOJ is proud to be associated with you and the successes you have recorded so far in giving women a voice in Nigeria and for advocating and fighting for the rights of women and girls."

Nene Dung informed the minister that one thing NAWOJ holds very dear is the fight against violence perpetrated against women and the girl-child. That is why, she said, "we are very happy that our governor has assented to the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Bill, VAPP.

The NAWOJ Chairperson informed Tallen about a recent case in Nasarawa State that NAWOJ is pursuing. A female

student and her father, a lecturer in the same tertiary institution teamed up and assaulted his daughter's roommate who was alleged to have snatched his daughter's boyfriend.

And another case here in Jos where a girl ended up with a broken hand perpetrated by her father. Reports have it that the girl's sin is that she took hundred naira and bought garri to drink since her step mother refused to give her food.

Moved by the pathetic stories, the minister said she wanted NAWOJ President, Ladi Bala to update her on the Nasarawa case. "The lecturer must face the full wrath of the law to serve as a deterrent to others", Tallen promised.

Pauline Tallen was elated by the show of love from every quarters, all through her health challenge. And appreciated NAWOJ for their visit.

She informed NAWOJ that because of her passion for promoting the rights of the girl-child, she has made sure that Child Right Act was domesticated in 35 out of the 36 states of the federation.

Tallen re-emphasized that she hates violence against women and children. And would want NAWOJ to keep her in the picture of any case in that respect. The minister spoke particularly on the issue of rape, pointing out that a rape victim can never be the same again, hence the need to bring perpetrators to book.

the country to rank the third highest number of foreign doctors in the United Kingdom (UK) because of the poor working environment caused by poor leadership.

The National President of Nigerian Medical Association (NMA), Dr. Uche R. Ojinmah, disclosed this Monday, while briefing journalists on the occasion marking National Physicians Week at the conference hall of NMA in Jos, the Plateau State capital.

Represented by the Plateau State Chairman, Dr. Bapiga'an William Audu, the President stated, "let me inform you all that the Nigerian Doctor is poorly paid, over worked, lack necessary work tools and has become targets for

Nigeria's kidnappers. We as Nigerian doctors have been taken from the lofty heights of nobility to nothingness by the neglect and possible disdain for the health sector by successive governments.

"Let no one take our civility for weakness as I shall do all within limits of legality to protect the interest of the Nigerian doctors while the government continues in their "search" for obvious reasons behind medical brain drain. It is a heartbreaking situation for Nigerian doctors. The review of CONMESS has been due since 2014 based on the 2009 Collective Bargaining Agreement we signed with the Government.

Currently, Nigeria has the third highest number of foreign doctors working in the UK after India and Pakistan. Dispersion of the emigration

data for Nigeria trained doctors to UK is as follows: 233 in 2015, 279 in 2016, 475 in 2017, 852 in 2018, 1,347 in 2019, 833 in 2020 in spite of Covid pandemic and 932 in 2021 with 200 in one month according to Punch Newspaper October 9, 2022 title: Overall, 10,296 doctors who obtained their degrees in Nigeria currently practice in the UK", he highlighted.

Ojinmah, therefore, called on the government to quickly declare emergency action in Nigeria's health sector for the sake of her citizens because the country is losing our human resources for health in geometric progression, hence the need for all well-meaning citizens to intervene now and not blame doctors later.

Congratulating his members on the occasion of National Physicians Week, the President said, "let me start by informing you all that NMA had to shelve this year's Physicians' Week National opening ceremony and razzmatazz as a result of the massive flood affecting Bayelsa and some other states of Nigeria with attendant loss of human lives and property thereby dampening mood of the nation".

"I am hereby using this auspicious occasion to send a message of love and sympathy from NMA to all fellow citizens affected by the flood disaster ravaging the nation. We pray for a quick resolution and recovery. We call on our government to actively initiate measures to avert another flooding. This is one flood too many in our recent history as a nation. We say no more floods while we watch", he prayed.



Ehanire

Foreign Commentary

Xi Jinping's party is just getting started

Is Xi Jinping, China's most powerful leader in decades, another Mao in the making? Rupert Wingfield-Hayes writes.

COMPARING Xi Jinping to Mao Zedong is "inane", scoffs Rebecca Karl, a professor of Chinese History at New York University.

"If you're going to compare two people, it has to reveal something. It's like comparing Putin to Stalin or Liz Truss to Margaret Thatcher."

At first glance, the parallels are striking. Chairman Mao, as he was known, was the defining political figure of 20th Century China. He ran the Communist Party - and the country - from the republic's founding in 1949 until the day he died in 1976. No other Chinese leader has since come close. Until now.

On Sunday Xi Jinping became the first leader since Mao to be chosen as party chief for a third term. In his decade at the top, he has centralised power in his own hands, ruthlessly eliminated rivals, promoted a cult of personality, shut down criticism, and had his ideology - Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era - enshrined in the constitution. He is known, only half-jokingly, as the Chairman of Everything.

But it's still a mistake to draw a straight line from Mao to Xi, Prof Karl argues, because it dismisses all that came in between - and the Chinese who dreamed or fought for a different country.

The truth is Xi's path to power was far from inevitable. And it's defined as much by his ambition as it is by the party's failure to prevent what they did not want - a repeat of Mao's disastrous one-man rule.

In 1989 - as the Soviet Union was breaking up - China's hopes for change were crushed by tanks and automatic gunfire.

'We came too late'

The country was still recovering in that decade or so following Mao's death. Tens of millions had died on his watch - first from hunger because of his devastating mission to industrialise China overnight; and then in the violent, paranoid purges of rivals, dissidents, intellectuals and "class enemies".

Mao's mantle eventually fell to Deng Xiaoping, who had survived two purges, and insisted on collective leadership that would change every 10 years.

By 1989, that included General Secretary Zhao Ziyang, a reformist.

In the spring of that year hundreds of thousands of students and workers occupied central Beijing to protest against corruption and rising prices, and demand reform. Behind the high walls of the Communist Party's leadership compound, Zhongnanhai, the party's top rung split. Moderates led by Zhao tried to use the protesters to push further reform. Hardliners, led by Premier Li Peng, believed the students' goal was to overthrow the party, and wanted the protests quashed.

Zhao visited the protesters, urging them to call off their strike in what is now a historic speech: "We came too late. It's right for you to talk about us and criticise us any way you want... We're all old and it doesn't matter to us anymore. But you're still young, you should take care of yourself."

At the end of May the hardliners won. Early on the morning of June 4, the tanks rolled in. The massacre at Tiananmen Square ended debate about political reform. Instead, the Communist

In 1992, Deng - who had remained China's "paramount leader" - declared that the party should allow "some people to get rich first". It does not sound too dramatic, but it was another decisive break from Maoism. Revolutionary austerity had been shown the door.

On a chilly winter morning in January 1990, I stepped off a night ferry onto a dockside in the city of Guangzhou. It was my first glimpse of China. The air smelled sulphurous from burning coal. Outside the streets were a river of bicycles, ridden by workers in blue caps and Mao jackets. Occasionally the bicycles parted for a wheezing bus or official car.

Over the next six months I pedalled across the mountains of Yunnan, wandered the imperial palace in Beijing, and rode a train hauled by two soot-blackened steam engines far west into the deserts of Xinjiang. The landscapes were sublime but the poverty grinding. Everywhere I went people told me how "backward" China was compared to the West. But there were hints of change.

By the time I returned in 1998 the



Jinping

whole country had taken to heart Deng's invocation "to get rich is glorious". That year the Communist Party decreed China's state-owned housing stock be sold off, lock, stock and barrel. Swathes of Beijing's historic grey-brick courtyards were being demolished and replaced with glass and steel.

The word on everyone's lips was "xia hai" or "dive into the sea". It meant quitting your old job in a state company and plunging into private business. I remember the day one of our assistants came into the BBC office, handed in his ID and declared, "I'm off to Shenzhen", the boom city on China's southern coast.

Mao had closed China's economy off from the world. Now his successors were throwing it open. In 2001 China joined the World Trade Organisation. Along the southeast coast new cities mushroomed. Some specialised in buttons and zippers, others made cigarette lighters. In Zhejiang I found one that only made socks, tens of billions of them.

As I prepared to leave China in 2008, the Soviet-era airport had given way to a glittering megastructure designed by Norman Foster. And the first high-speed rail line opened between Beijing and Tianjin.

China was getting richer faster than any other country in history. But that unleashed other forces.

The fall of one prince, and the rise of another

"Heaven is high and the emperor is far away" is an old, oft-quoted saying in China. It means there is no-one watching what you are doing.

That certainly seemed to be the case under Xi's predecessor, Hu Jintao - corruption was on the rise and his authority was being openly ignored and even challenged.

In 2005 I was handed a DVD smuggled out of a village called Dingzhou in Hebei province. It showed a pitched battle between local farmers and dozens of armed thugs, hired by a state-owned power company, to force them off their land. The farmers had dug deep trenches in their fields. The thugs attacked at dawn opening fire with shotguns and beating

the farmers with steel bars. Six were killed.

The graft ran deep. In Beijing, I remember going to a nightclub whose owner was reputed to have a ready supply of illicit drugs and attractive young women for those with enough money. His business partner was the public security bureau - the police.

That was just the tip of an immense iceberg, says Richard McGregor, the former Beijing bureau chief for the Financial Times. "Everything and everybody got a cut, but it got out of control," he adds. "It was becoming more like Suharto's Indonesia, where it was corroding the foundations of the system."

It was at this time - during a trade war between China and the EU over textile quotas - that I got a rare invitation to interview the commerce minister. Such interviews with top Chinese officials were excruciatingly dull, but this was the opposite.

The minister's name was Bo Xilai. Tall, handsome and with a roguish charm, Bo seemed to enjoy the challenge, answering questions with wit and cogency. "This is a guy who could succeed as a politician anywhere," I thought to myself.

In 2007 Bo was sent to run Chongqing, a vast city that straddles the Yangtze River in the mountains of southwest China. It was infamous then for organised crime.

Bo launched a ruthless anti-corruption campaign, netting hundreds of criminals, businessmen, politicians and police. He built lavish infrastructure, including public housing. Strangely he also revived "red culture", requiring everyone to learn Mao-era songs praising the Communist Party. Many were terrorised by Bo's rule, but he was wildly popular with the working class.

Then, in 2012, Bo, who had been building his own power base for years, was brought down by an extraordinary tale of murder, corruption and international intrigue that rocked China. Today he is serving life in prison.

Xi was a princeling - the son of one of Mao's lieutenants, Xi Zhongxun, who had

been purged and later rehabilitated. Colleagues described the younger Xi as humble, self-disciplined and hardworking but otherwise unremarkable. Even on the eve of his elevation to general secretary of the Communist Party there was little hint of what was to come.

By the time Xi was appointed to lead the party in 2012, the corruption had reached its highest echelons. This terrified party elders who saw it as a grave threat, but also handed Xi an opportunity to pitch himself as a saviour.

Following Bo's stunning fall, hundreds of thousands of party cadres were put under investigation. More than 100,000 were indicted for corruption, including 120 high-ranking officials. Corruption plummeted and Xi's popularity soared.

Now he had the ammunition to destroy his most potent political rivals. He ordered the arrest of Zhou Yongkang in 2014, who until two years before had been a member of the politburo standing committee, and one of the most powerful men in China. Convicted in 2015, Zhou too is in prison for life.

This was unprecedented in the post-Mao era.

Xi's ruthless and dramatic consolidation of power has caused many to liken him to Mao. But Mao's destructiveness was rooted in his desire to build a socialist utopia. What does Xi want to build?

Nothing that Mao would recognise, Prof Karl says.

"China today has no socialist characteristics" she says "The subordination of labour to capital is complete. If you're a real socialist, you must have a notion of class democracy, of justice, of hierarchy and anti-hierarchy. None of that is even part of Xi Jinping thought."

The only thing that remains from Mao-era China is the party. And that, she says, is what Xi truly cares about.

Channelling the Great Helmsman

Nothing lends legitimacy to the Communist Party quite like Mao - the iconic revolutionary whose portrait still reigns over Tiananmen Square, where he declared the founding of the People's Republic of China.

So his ruinous legacy was covered up with reverence. And now, Xi loses no opportunity to channel Mao, even usurping his defunct titles - Great Helmsman, People's Leader, Chairman. But what he seeks is much bigger.

"The great emperors - that is who Xi actually looks up to, this guy is enormous in his ambition," Prof Tsang says.

In Xi's China there is almost no room for diversity. Xinjiang's 12 million Uyghur Muslims are being forcibly assimilated. Similar programs are under way in Tibet and Inner Mongolia.

"The policies that Xi has applied - the re-education camps - it's about making them more Chinese than Uyghur," Mr McGregor says. "It's cultural genocide."

This is starkly different from Mao's idea of a multi-ethnic state where, in theory, different groups had more autonomy. Xi's father too had a reputation for conciliation and respect for China's ethnic minorities.

But his son is driving a strident ethno-nationalism that seeks to unite the Chinese at home and drive away foreign powers who are, in Beijing's view, trying to encircle and weaken China.

In November 2015, I took off from the Philippine Island of Palawan in a tiny single engine Cessna. Our destination was the Philippine-controlled atoll of Pagasa, 400 miles away in the middle of the South China Sea. Our plan was to pass close to a new Chinese military base, built on an artificial island atop "mischief reef".

The outline of a runway and the extraordinary 9km long artificial island emerged as we

Then, loudly over the radio, came a warning in Chinese and English: "Foreign military aircraft in northwest of Mischief Reef, this is the Chinese Navy! You are approaching Chinese airspace. To avoid further action, turn away and leave immediately!"

We were a civilian aircraft flying in international airspace. But that didn't matter.

These South China Sea islands are only the most daring and visible of Xi's moves to take control of the near abroad.

Taiwan could be next. ?

But Xi's policies are only creating the hostile world he claims he is defending against, believes Susan Shirk, a China expert in former US president Bill Clinton's administration.

China's brashness has been driven by its extraordinary power as both the world's biggest factory and marketplace. It has so far seemed unstoppable, poised to unseat the US as the largest economy.

Then Covid threw a spanner in the works.

The challenge at home

Earlier this year, a Chinese friend spent 83 days alone, locked in a Shanghai hotel room.

"It drives you crazy," he says. "It's a mixture of depression and anger. After a while you feel like you cannot breathe. Your body starts to shut down. Every day is the same. It's like time has stopped."

He got caught in China's biggest and longest Covid lockdown. It was supposed to last four days, then another four, then another. Soon, the hotel staff stopped telling him.

"It's amazing how China continues these lockdowns for so long - they are incredibly wrenching," says Professor Dali Yang at Chicago University who has been studying the zero-Covid policy Xi has personally endorsed.

In the first year of Covid, Prof Yang says, the lockdowns made sense. They were brief and allowed life in China to carry on. There was even pride at how the country was handling the pandemic so much better than the West. "That's no longer the case," he says.

Economic growth has shrunk to 2%, the lowest in more than three decades. China's property market is in free fall. Youth unemployment is running at around 20%. A trade war with the US is not helping. And anger has been brewing.

"Each night after midnight people would start sharing video clips on social media," my Shanghai friend recalls. "They expressed their anger at the Communist Party, even at the very top leaders. They talked about how heartless and cruel this system has become."

The video clips were quickly removed. The internet is instantly scrubbed of any signs of dissent or criticism, but the ire over zero-Covid has been palpable - even rare signs of protest have emerged, if only for moments, before they are silenced. It's hard to deny that millions of Chinese hold Xi personally responsible for the cruelty of China's grim lockdowns.

Fear and loyalty has led to "over-compliance and over-implementation of what Xi himself originally wanted", Ms Shirk says.

And it appears to have paid off. Li Qiang, the Shanghai party chief who oversaw the city's controversial shut down, has been elevated to premier, Xi's second in command.

Behind the scripted scenes, China's Communist Party hosts a cut-throat world. Surrounded by loyalists and with no heir in sight, Xi is now indisputably in command of a much wealthier country, with a vastly more powerful military. And for the first time, the world is uncertain of what to expect from China. Xi has swept aside the old guard, both the critical and the cautious.

"In the past, we could always count on China's leaders to be pragmatic about economic policy, and prudent in their foreign policy. We don't see that now," Ms Shirk says.

That time has arrived.

In 2017, at the beginning of his second term, Xi declared: "China has stood up, grown rich, become strong and is moving towards the centre stage."

He deliberately echoed Mao's words in 1949 atop the Gate of Heavenly Peace in Tiananmen Square: "The Chinese People have stood up."

But Xi's China is not Mao's China - and Xi's ambition for himself and for his country far exceeds anything Mao ever dreamed of.

Mao, by all accounts, was a destroyer who ripped up the rule book not once but several times. But Xi is no anarchist - he is not even a rebel. And he certainly doesn't want the chaos of Mao's years, which tore apart his own family, to return.

What he does want is to be the most powerful leader China has ever had - and the Communist Party just handed him that victory.

BBC.

Foreign News

Sunak takes over as UK Prime Minister

Rishi Sunak became Britain's third prime minister of the year on Tuesday, tasked with taming an economic crisis that has left the country's finances in a precarious state and millions struggling to pay their food and energy bills.

Sunak, who is the U.K.'s first leader of color, met King Charles III at Buckingham Palace, where the monarch officially asked the new leader of the governing Conservative Party to form a government, as is tradition.

Sunak clinched the leadership position Monday, seen by his party as a safe pair of hands it hopes will stabilize an economy sliding toward recession, and stem its own plunging popularity, after the brief, disastrous term of Liz Truss.

Her package of unfunded tax cuts spooked financial markets with the prospect of ballooning debt, drove the pound to record lows and forced the Bank of England to intervene — weakening Britain's fragile economy and obliterating her authority within her party.

Sunak — at 42 the youngest British leader in more than 200 years — acknowledged the scale of his challenge as well as the skepticism of a British public alarmed at the state of the economy and weary of a Conservative Party soap opera that has chewed through two prime ministers in as many months.

"I fully appreciate how hard things are," Sunak said outside the prime minister's 10 Downing Street residence. "And I understand, too, that I have work to do to restore trust after all that has happened. All I can say is that I am not daunted."

When he was Treasury chief, Sunak became popular with the public by handing out billions in support to shuttered businesses and laid-off workers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

But now he will have to oversee tax hikes and public spending cuts as he tries to bring inflation and government debt under control.

Acknowledging "difficult decisions to come," Sunak tried to draw a line under the chaos that engulfed Truss and her predecessor, Boris Johnson. He said his government "will have integrity, professionalism and accountability at every level."

Opponents already depict Sunak as out of touch with the concerns of ordinary people because of his privileged private school background, previous career as a hedge fund manager and vast wealth.

Sunak "comes into office as not a particularly popular prime minister, but with a reputation for some semblance of economic competence," said Alan Wager, research associate at the think tank U.K. in a Changing Europe. "The problem will be he is seen as someone that's not broadly on the side of people. He's seen as someone that's broadly out of touch."

Much of Sunak's fortune comes through his wife Akshata Murty, whose father is the billionaire founder of Indian IT firm Infosys. The couple is worth 730 million pounds (\$826 million), according to the Sunday Times Rich List.

In April 2022, it emerged that Murty did not pay U.K. tax on her overseas income. The practice was legal — and Murty soon agreed to relinquish it — but it looked bad at a time when millions of Britons were struggling to make ends meet.

Sunak's top priorities will be appointing Cabinet ministers, and preparing for a budget statement that will set out how the government plans to come up with billions of pounds (dollars) to fill a fiscal hole



Sunak

created by soaring inflation and a sluggish economy — and exacerbated by Truss' destabilizing time in office.

That statement, set to feature tax increases and spending cuts, is currently due to be made in Parliament on Monday by Treasury chief Jeremy Hunt — if Sunak keeps him in the job.

Truss departed Tuesday after making a defiant public statement outside 10 Downing Street, seven weeks to the day after she was appointed prime minister. She announced her resignation on Thursday, acknowledging she could not deliver on her economic plans.

In her departing words Truss offered a defense of her low-tax vision and her brief term in office — despite the market mayhem triggered by her Sept. 23 budget package.

"I am more convinced than ever that we need to be bold and confront the problems we face," she said, before wishing Sunak success as "our country continues to battle through a storm."

Sunak's victory is a remarkable reversal of fortune

just weeks after he lost to Truss in a Conservative election to replace Johnson. Party members chose her tax-cutting boosterism over his warnings that inflation must be tamed.

Sunak was chosen as Conservative leader after becoming the only candidate to clear the hurdle of 100 nominations from fellow lawmakers to run in the party election. Sunak defeated rival Penny Mordaunt, who may get a job in his government, and the ousted Johnson, who dashed back from a Caribbean vacation to rally support for a comeback bid but failed to get enough backing to run.

As well as stabilizing the U.K. economy, Sunak must try to unite a governing party that has descended into acrimony as its poll ratings have plunged.

Conservative lawmaker Victoria Atkins, a Sunak ally, said the party would "settle down" under Sunak.

"We all understand that we've now really got to get behind Rishi — and, in fairness, that's exactly what the party has done," she told radio station LBC.

Five Palestinians, reportedly all gunmen, have been killed in a major Israeli raid against a militant group in the occupied West Bank.

A sixth Palestinian was shot dead by Israeli troops who were attacked with stones in a protest against the raid, Palestinian medical sources say.

The operation in the northern city of Nablus targeted the recently formed Lion's Den group.

The group killed an Israeli soldier in a shooting earlier this month.

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) had locked down Nablus for the past two weeks amid an intensive search for the killer of 21-year-old Staff Sergeant Ido Baruch. Sgt Baruch was shot dead in an ambush near an Israeli settlement about five miles (8km) away.

There has been an intensification of violence between Israel and Palestinians in the West Bank in recent weeks amid an ongoing Israeli operation to root out militants following a wave of deadly attacks against Israelis earlier this year.

The Lion's Den group was formed following near daily arrest raids by Israeli forces

Six killed as Israel targets militants

targeting militants, concentrated in the northern West Bank. It is believed to number a few dozen members and has carried out attacks and attempted attacks around the Nablus area and as far afield as Tel Aviv, according to the Israeli military.

Media caption, Watch: Guns and grief on the rise in the West Bank

The group had recently defied calls from the Palestinian Authority (PA), which governs Nablus, to give up its weapons in return for becoming part of the official Palestinian security forces.

The IDF said security forces raided an apartment in the casbah in Nablus, which it said was used as a bomb-making factory and headquarters of the group.

Palestinians called via loudspeakers for locals to come out and defend the city, as young men poured into the streets.

A fierce gun battle erupted between Israeli forces and Palestinians in which five were killed.

At least three who died have been identified as members of Lion's Den, including a senior

commander and founder of the group. Israeli media say all five belonged to it.

More than 20 Palestinians were wounded in the clashes, the Palestinian health ministry said. There are no reports of Israeli casualties.

Israeli troops blew the apartment up during the operation. Local reports say an anti-tank missile was fired at the building.

A Palestinian was also shot dead in the town of Nabi Saleh further south when youths threw stones at Israeli soldiers in protest at the Nablus raid, reports say.

The raid came amid a broader, ongoing operation launched by the IDF named Break the Wave after 17 Israelis and two Ukrainians were killed by Palestinians and Israeli Arab attackers earlier this year.

On the Palestinian side, more than 100, including militants, attackers and civilians, have been killed in the West Bank and East Jerusalem since January amid the upsurge in violence, making this year one of the deadliest for Palestinians since 2015.

German president visits Kyiv

GERMANY'S president arrived in Kyiv on Tuesday for his first visit to Ukraine since the start of Russia's invasion, as Western countries mulled a massive plan for Ukrainian rebuilding when the war eventually ends.

President Frank-Walter Steinmeier said after arriving that "it was important to me in this phase of air attacks with drones, cruise missiles and rockets to send a signal of solidarity to Ukrainians."

In April, he was planning to visit the country with his Polish and Baltic counterparts, but said his presence "apparently ... wasn't wanted in Kyiv." Steinmeier has been criticized in Ukraine for



Steinmeier

allegedly cozying up to Russia during his time as Germany's foreign minister.

Last week, a planned trip was put off because of security concerns.

Steinmeier's visit came as Ukrainians are bracing for less electric power this winter following a sustained Russian barrage on their infrastructure in recent weeks.

In Berlin, meanwhile, European Union leaders brought together experts to start work on a "new Marshall Plan" for the future rebuilding of Ukraine — a reference to the U.S.-sponsored plan that helped revive Western European economies after World War II.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said the meeting aims to discuss "how to ensure and how to sustain the financing of the recovery, reconstruction and modernization of Ukraine for years and decades to come."

Scholz, who co-hosted the meeting with European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, said he's looking for "nothing less than creating a new Marshall Plan for the 21st century — a generational task that must begin now."

Ramzan Kadyrov, the regional leader of Chechnya who has sent troops from the region to fight in Ukraine, urged Moscow to wipe off the map entire cities in retaliation for Ukrainian shelling of Russia's territory. Authorities in Russia's Kursk and Belgorod regions that border Ukraine have repeatedly reported Ukrainian shelling that damaged infrastructure and residential buildings.

"Our response has been too weak," Kadyrov said in a statement posted on his messaging app channel. "If a shell flies into our region, entire cities must be wiped off the face of the Earth so that they don't ever think that they can fire in our direction."

Ukraine's forces have shot down more than two-thirds of the approximately 330 Shahed drones that Russia has fired through Saturday, the head of Ukraine's intelligence service, Kyrylo Budanov, said Monday. Budanov said Russia's military had ordered about 1,700 drones of different types and is rolling out a second batch of about 300 Shaheds.

Britain's Ministry of Defense said Russia was likely to use a large number of drones to try to penetrate the "increasingly effective Ukrainian air defenses" — to substitute for Russian-made long-range precision weapons "which are becoming increasingly scarce."

"We need more weaponry, we need more ammunition to win this war," Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal told reporters in Berlin. He added: "We need tanks from our partners, from all of our partners; we need heavy armored vehicles, we need additional artillery units, howitzers."

The attacks came as the Russians pressed their offensive on the strategically placed towns of Bakhmut and Avdiivka and also shelled other areas in the Donetsk region, which is part of Ukraine's industrial heartland of Donbas.

Ukrainian guerrillas reportedly staged several explosions in a Russian-held southern city.

Italians don't need lessons from abroad

-Meloni

Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni, right, flanked by Infrastructures Minister Matteo Salvini, addresses the lower Chamber ahead of a confidence vote for her Cabinet, Sunday, Oct. 23, 2022. Giorgia Meloni, whose party with neo-fascist roots finished first in recent elections, is Italy's first far-right premier since the end of World War II. She is also the first woman to serve as Italian premier. (A P Photo/Alessandra Tarantin)

new premier, Giorgia Meloni, on Tuesday laid out her government's policy plans, firing back at critics at home and abroad alarmed that her far-right politics might undermine European unity or citizens' civil rights.

In a speech to Parliament's lower Chamber of Deputies ahead of a confidence vote required of all new governments, Meloni criticized the European Union for not always being ready for challenges, notably the dramatic energy crisis now threatening households and businesses.

But she pledged that her 4-day old government, with its right-wing and center-right coalition allies, will stay loyal to EU accords while working for changes to some of them, including on monetary stability.

Early in her speech, she bristled at critics, including those from foreign governments, who have said they would keep a "vigilant" eye on Italy's first far-right-led government since the end of World War II.

Such attitudes are tantamount to "a lack of respect for the Italian people, who don't need lessons," Meloni said.

The premier's 10-year-old Brothers of Italy party was the

top vote-getter in last month's election for Parliament, winning 26% of the ballots cast.

Together with her main allies, anti-migrant League leader Matteo Salvini, and conservative former Premier Silvio Berlusconi, Meloni's coalition can command enough support in both chambers of Parliament to win the confidence votes and get down to the business of governing.

In her election campaign, Meloni, 45, didn't make much fuss about the prospect of becoming the first woman to be Italy's premier. But one of her first remarks to the lower Chamber of Deputies manifested her awe for that achievement.

"I'm the first woman to lead this nation," Meloni said, acknowledging the weight of that on her when she thinks of that. She dedicated her next words to "all the women who have trouble affirming themselves" in workplaces and who make daily sacrifices to balance labor and family roles.

Meloni then expressed determination to "break the heavy glass ceiling that's on her heads." She went on to read out a litany of first names of women in Italy who have



Meloni

Vox Pop

What does a free press mean?

Lately, the media has come under intense pressure from various stakeholders. Some have accused media practitioners of pandering to the whims of owners, while others have said media practitioners, particularly journalists have failed in carrying out their constitutional responsibility of reporting events as they break for the benefit of the society. Paul Jatau went to town to speak to journalists about the challenges they face in the field and how they meander around them to report such events.

FREE press means the level of freedom available to journalists and media practitioners to practice their profession as expected without any form of censorship or intimidation, or threat from individuals, groups, organizations and government.



Adeyemi

In this regard, the Nigerian press is not free. Journalists in Nigeria do not enjoy the freedom to publish information at their disposal. There are various forms of restrictions to information. For example, the official secret Act. Journalists are intimidated, threatened, harassed, and victimized for doing their job. Government owned media only publish information that promote government officials and political office holders.

Private owned media are equally caged by influence of the owner. By and large, there is no freedom of press in Nigeria.

Kolade Adeyemi, Journalists in Jos.



THERE are several interchange of words in respect of free press which can be referred to as freedom of the press or freedom of the media as the case maybe.

However, what it implies is the fundamental principle of communication and expression across various

Kosoko

media of the print and electronic as well as the new media as established in the constitution to be exercised freely.

In spite of the fundamental principle of free press which connotes the constitutional responsibility to express any opinions even if these criticize the government and other organizations; the Press is expected to be responsible in the course of carrying out these responsibilities.

Reflecting on the freedom of the press in Nigeria is a gradual process with mixed feelings varying from one regime to another but the overall result has been unfair.

In the present dispensation, the press has been under various stringent conditions ranging from government policies and the biting economic conditions.

The print media has been battling with high cost of printing materials coupled with the dwindling reading culture while the broadcast media has been struggling with consistent government gagging through the regulatory bodies and financial burden of maintenance of broadcast equipment to remain afloat.

These are indices that the free press that is expected to be the voice of the voiceless and the reflection of the society is in dire need of the freedom.

Yemi Kosoko, Channels TV, Jos.



Momoh

FREE press means the freedom of media houses be it electronic, print and new media to freely access and disseminate information without hindrance. It as well entails freedom of speech for citizens and access to media space for everyone

one. On the question of how free is Nigeria's press. I think freedom of press has remained a mirage in Nigeria. The freedom is largely on paper than in reality. Freedom of press in Nigeria is like giving a goat to the gods as sacrifice and the owner of the goat is holding on to the rope tenaciously. Where is the freedom? If the Nigeria Broadcasting Commission can serve as accuser and judge by declaring electronic media houses guilty of offences and closing them down. Where's press freedom, if a state governor can order the closure of media houses simply because they covered the rally of the opposition party as reported in Zamfara recently. Where's is the freedom if owners of media houses be it government or private largely determine the content of news, programmes and even opinions in those media houses. Where is the

freedom when media workers are the least paid in Nigeria and a large chunk are not even on salary. Until the issues identified above and many more are fixed, free press in Nigeria will continue to be a mirage

Adeiza Jimoh Momoh, NUJ chairman Kogi State



Abu

considered a right to be exercised freely.

How free is the Nigeria Press?

Frankly, there is no press in the world that is totally free. Nigeria is not an exception in this case. The degree of press freedom from country to country however differs.

The situation of the Nigerian press through the military and successive civil administrations has not been entirely free. Many journalists have been attacked, imprisoned and killed in the line of duty, while many media organisations have been closed, proscribed and their operational licenses revoked for doing their jobs.

Dr. Sabastine Saidu Abu, Jos.

FOR me, free press means the fundamental rights of journalists and other media practitioners to report news and stories and perform their obligations and duties without hindrance, harassment, or intimidation by the government or machinery of the Government itself or organisations, communities and security agencies.

Free press also gives unfettered freedom to

journalists and media organisations to operate. It allows the media to function without government or political censorship especially government owned media stations and organisations. Again journalists should not be subject to attacks while carrying out their constitutional duties as was the case recently in Namu town of Quaanpan Local Government, Plateau State.

However, I will say the Nigerian press is not free. One could speculate that the Nigerian press could be 70 per cent free even though, just last week in Zamfara we saw the State government illegally shutting down broadcast stations in the state.

Also recently, National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) gave directive to television and radio stations not to report attacks by terrorists in detail which negates the principle of a free Press in Nigeria.

Pam Musa, Journalist Jos.



Bere

project divergent comments, opinions or re-echo a multiplicity of voices that hold authorities responsible for their action and inaction in a democratic society. This provides the platform for acceleration of development in all sectors of national economy, where critical stakeholders and key players are hold accountable for their constitutional responsibility in the interest of the survival of a coherent nation.

It is sad that even with the signing into law of the

Freedom of Information Act 2011 that provides the media individuals, groups or organizations free access to information from government agencies, parastatals, public and private sector. The press has operated for decades with huge incumbrances on the path of government and private owners. Denial of free access to reliable and credible information to the press has also been a huge burden, apart from outright clampdown on media organisations by the government. An example at hand is the recent alleged shutdown of some media organisations by the Zamfara State Government for the coverage of campaign rally of an opposition political party in the state. It is clear that no state government has the constitutional responsibility to seal or shutdown any media organisation except the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), but that has happened over the years apart from the undue influence of government on the media handlers. Also, the nation has witnessed occasions where the NBC has shutdown down some media organisations simply because their content or opinions were not in tandem with some government policies. These among several factors serves as hurdles to achieving a free press in Nigeria.

Gyang Bere, Chairman, Correspondents' Chapel NUJ, Plateau State.

FREEDOM of the press or freedom of the media is the practice in which print or electronic media report news without any form of control or influence by government. That newspapers, television, radio outfits, magazines, etc. exercise the right to publish truthful information freely makes the press free.

A free media functions as a watchdog that can investigate and report on government wrongdoings and this is critical to any democratic setting. Any government that is accountable to the people, must allow the freedom of press.

In Nigeria, one cannot say that the press has or, is enjoying total freedom and this can be traced to a number of factors such as secrecy, legal pressure, direct censorship and force, among other factors that has gagged the smooth operation of the media

Findings also reveal that Nigerian press freedom is a paradox and only exist on paper, that is, it is in the constitution but not in practice. Government has not done much to guarantee the freedom of the media in Nigeria.

Polycarp Auta, NAN, Jos



Auta



Pwaspo

FREE press means the mass media of a particular country are able to operate professionally through objective, balanced reportage and criticize the government without any restriction or hindrance. Free press is important in a democracy as it holds government accountable to the people. Section 22 of the

Nigeria Constitution states that the press, radio, television and other agencies which would include newspapers and online news platforms shall at all times be free to uphold the fundamental responsibility to hold the government accountable to the people.

The role of the press is universal but the socio-political environment they operate in differs, meaning the freedom they enjoy also differs. The press in Nigeria faces undue censorship, threats, arrests, harassment and non-patronage from the ruling class for perceived bias across religious, political or ethnic lines. The media in Nigeria is gagged at different levels and citizens have been denied access to credible information. The situation has exacerbated fake news and hate speech on the social media, thereby overheating the polity. The recent closure of media organizations operating in Zamfara by the State government is a clear example of the censorship being experienced by the media and if not checked, will undermine efforts towards a free, fair and credible election in 2023.

Ayuku Pwaspo, Vice Chairman, NUJ, Plateau Council

EVER'S WORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Parenting

Smart ways to handle teacher troubles

By **STEPHANIE DOLGOFF**

It's hard to know what to think (or do) when your child comes home clearly upset, or with a specific beef. "You hear things like, the teacher plays favorites, we all get punished if somebody's bad. Some of the complaints can be about social issues—for instance, there's a problem with another child and the teacher isn't stepping in.

Depending on your style and whether or not your child is particularly sensitive, it may be tempting to advise him (in age-appropriate language, of course) to grow a pair. More likely, however, a part of you will want to elbow your way into the classroom on steroids and fight for your kid.

Totally understandable although more likely to get you branded as the cuckoo mom to be humored than to resolve the problem. Instead, use step-by-step guide to sorting out your child's trouble with his teacher.

Play reporter

Sometimes kids will make generic claims, like "The teacher's mean to me." You want to find out what that means. What your child is saying. Try to get as much detail as possible.

Ask, "What exactly did she say? What was happening in the class when she said it?" (You might want to inquire casually, so your child doesn't clam up or exaggerate.) "Mean" might mean

Play advocate

Tell your child that you're going to write down what she's saying so you can go have a conversation with the teacher. (Give her a chance to elaborate on her story—it's hard for kids to remember every detail.)

"Let the child understand that you, her teacher, and the principal are partners working to help make school a great experience for her."

It's your child's feelings you're dealing with. Until you talk to the teacher, you don't have the whole picture". You might also be able to give your older kid some tools to handle the situation herself. Suggest options, such as approaching the teacher after class and pointing out, for instance, that she doesn't think she gets called on very often. Sometimes the teacher may not be aware of how your child feels.

Play the diplomat

If you decide you need to speak with the teacher, set up a time (not at dropoff or pickup), and go in as someone seeking help in solving a problem. Using inclusive language is important. Say something like "I'm coming to you with a problem I don't completely understand, but I'm hoping together we can best figure out Mark's concern." Here's where you explain what your child told you and when, using his words as often as possible.

"This de-escalates the situation." You're not saying "Mark says you do this." Instead, you're saying "I need help understanding what's bugging Mark." Whatever you do, assume innocence all around. Your child may well have done something to annoy the teacher, who may have reacted with, well, annoyance.

Despite your light touch, the teacher might feel criticized—some people are sensitive, particularly



beleaguered, tired and underpaid educators who do occasionally deal with parents who are a little overzealous on behalf of their perfect little angels. Do your best to reassure her that you're not blaming her.

"You don't want her to get defensive, because then you're in a hole and you're starting from behind". If she rears up, just stay calm and keep repeating that you're simply trying to understand what's going on.

Ideally, the teacher will shed light on why your child feels as he does, and you can have a mutually informative conversation that will help her teach your child most effectively.

Or the teacher may not have

done anything at all. Maybe the teacher is a grump, and your child is taking it personally. Getting a firsthand taste of how the teacher communicates may illuminate the situation. Then you can talk to your child about how some people are not as smiley or are maybe less patient than the other adults in his life, but that doesn't mean they don't like him, says Domene.

Play tattletale

No one wants to go to the principal's office, and that includes parents, but if you've raised your concerns with the teacher several times and you feel she isn't doing her best to resolve the problem, you have a choice to make: You can decide to turn the unpleasant situation into a "sometimes life sucks, kiddo" learning opportunity for your child, or you can go over the teacher's head. The first tactic, while perhaps not as just as the second, might ultimately be what's best for your kid. "The truth is, most kids will do fine even if they don't like their teacher." Ask yourself, is she learning what she needs to be?

But if you feel that what's going on in the classroom is turning your child off to school, by all means, speak to the principal or whoever is next on the school food chain. Tell the principal the steps you've already taken, and "keep bringing it back to the child's perceptions". "Your attitude is still, we all want her to have the best year possible."

Explain how you've tried waiting and discussing it with the teacher, but what's going on is interfering with your child's

education. Depending on the principal's style, she either will arrange for you to have another conversation with the teacher or will speak with him herself. In Goldberg's case, the principal admitted to her privately that the teacher was a poor choice and promised the parents in that class that the following year their kids would get an excellent teacher, which they did.

When things reach this point, of course, you may not exactly be the teacher's pet parent, which may cause problems for your child. But if it's something important, advocating for your child is more crucial than being labeled the annoying mom.

Play hardball

If you suspect the teacher is taking her frustrations out on your child, especially after you speak to the principal, that's the time to make it clear to the principal, firmly and calmly, that you're not going away. As a last resort, request a change of classroom. Schools are very reluctant to do that, but may if a child is truly suffering and the situation is unlikely to change.

After much persistence, Harrison was ultimately moved out of his second-grade class and was much happier (and got better grades) with his new teacher. Still, Black saw a similar pattern developing with her second son, and moved both boys to a new school.

"If you do nothing but defend your child and don't investigate the issues, you are not helping matters". "But if a problem is repeated year after year and you've done what you need to do with your child, you know it's the school."



EVERYBODY'S WORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Beauty-bytes

Nail care tips for healthy shiny nails

By **JESSICA LEIGH**

STRONG, healthy looking nails are something that every woman wants, but when it comes to nail care, most women can't think beyond a manicure. Of course, getting regular manicures is important, but is it the only way to care for your nails? We think not. In order to make them strong and shiny, you have to adopt a few nail care habits and give up on a few others. Whether you are someone who always has a coat of nail paint on or a person who can't stop picking and biting your cuticles, these tips will change your nail game for the better.

Think you have healthy nails? Well, here are a few signs to look out for that indicate whether your nails are healthy or unhealthy. Remember, brittle nails are not the only sign of unhealthy nails!

If you have one or more signs of unhealthy nails listed above, it is important that you begin caring for your nails as soon as possible. However, if you have an infection or the problem seems severe, please contact your doctor.

Tips for healthy fingernails

Here are a few nail care habits that you should begin doing right away! Plus, we have included a pro tip with each habit to ensure your nails become healthy and strong in no time!

Moisturise your nails

Just like our skin, our nails also require external moisture to stay healthy. In fact, your skin and scalp have some ability to produce oil naturally, your nails do not. Frequent washing takes away whatever little nourishment it gets. Therefore, the first nail care habit that you need to adopt is moisturising your nails regularly, and if possible, each time you wash your hands. If you regularly use sanitizer, apply a hand cream right after, and focus on your nails as the alcohol in



sanitisers can make both your nails and hands dry.

Massage your nails with a few drops of olive or coconut oil before going to sleep.

Maintain good hygiene practices

Regular and prolonged contact with water can lead to split fingernails if they are not dried properly and the trapped moisture can lead to infections. Therefore, don't let your nails grow too long as bacteria and dirt can easily accumulate inside it. Clean your nails at home regularly and sanitize the manicure tools before and after each use. While cutting your nails, trim them straight across

and then around the tips to form a curve, this prevents the dirt from getting pushed into the skin.

You can use natural disinfectants such as tea tree oil which helps kill bacteria and keeps infections at bay.

Do not scrape off nail polish

If your nail polish has started to chip off, take a minute out of your schedule to soak a cotton pad with remover and get rid of the colour. Scraping off the polish from your nail is the worst nail habit out there. It ruins the texture of the nail, removes its healthy, protective layer and makes your nails excessively dry. As a good nail care habit,

remove the polish as soon as it loses its shine, instead of waiting for it to chip or peel off.

Avoid keeping one nail paint on for too long as it will ultimately result in chipped nails.

Use a base coat and a top coat

Whether you apply nail polish frequently or occasionally, the chemicals and colours in these paints can harm your nails and discolour them. An easy way to prevent this, and ensure your nail paint stays on for longer is using a base coat and a top coat. This is a simple nail care habit that every woman should adopt. After cleansing your nails thoroughly, apply the base and wait for a few minutes. Then apply two coats of your favourite nail colour, wait until it dries off, then apply a top coat to seal everything.

Buy your nail products from a renowned brand, as you cannot be sure of the ingredients in substandard ones.

Wear protective gloves when necessary

Certain chores can cause harm to your nails such as washing utensils and gardening. The chemicals in the soap can cause your skin and nails to become dry, and all the muddy work you do while gardening can collect and remain in the nooks and corners of the nails for longer than you can imagine. Wearing rubber gloves will prevent the chemicals and mud from coming in direct contact with your hands and nails.

Wash your gloves thoroughly after every use and air dry them in sunlight.

Opt for quality cosmetics

Just like you wouldn't use any makeup or skincare product of substandard quality, do not use nail products that can potentially harm your nails. Whether it's your nail polish, remover, top coat, base coat or cuticle oil, invest in good quality products from renowned brands. Using low quality, subpar products will not only ruin your nail but can also affect your health by entering your body when you eat something.

Every bottle that claims to be natural, is not all-natural. It is best to do your research and avoid using products that contain harmful ingredients.

Avoid using acetone

Acetone may look like a quick and easy way to get rid of stubborn nail polish and colours, but the truth is that it is very harsh on your skin and nails. It makes them severely dry and prone to breakage. A nail care tip you should follow is to avoid using acetone on your nails. In fact, a lot of nail polish removers these days come with nourishing ingredients like almond oil and vitamin E to prevent them from drying out your tips.

If your nail polish remover does not have any nourishing ingredient, apply a few drops of oil after removing the colour to restore moisture and health.

Trim nails regularly

Don't grow your nails beyond a certain length, as this makes them more prone to damage and breakage. That does not mean you have to keep them really short, just long enough to look pretty. Like with your hair, trimming nails regularly is a good nail care practice. Take some time out every two weeks to maintain the shape of your nails by cutting and filing them.

Cut them neatly using a clipper, first in a straight line and then square or round at the tips, as you want them.

FAQs about nail care

Q. How often should I care for my nails?

A. Moisturising and cleaning should be done on a daily basis if you want your nails to become strong and healthy, trimming can be done once every two weeks.

Q. Can I apply petroleum jelly on my nails?

A. Yes, it is completely safe to use petroleum jelly on your nails to prevent dryness. Rub a small amount of petroleum jelly on your cuticles and the surrounding skin every night before going to bed. The vitamin E in it will prevent your nails from getting dry and also add a healthy shine.





Editorial

That US security advisory

AS the 2023 general elections draws closer, a lot of political activities have started especially with the flag off of the presidential and governorship campaigns. In the light of the above, therefore, there have been some concerns in the area of security. Security issues have been thrust to the front burner because of the volatile nature of the country. Owing to this, the social media space has been inundated with one story or the other on security matters, some true and some just rumours.

THE latest which started trending few days ago is the advisory from the US government to her citizens resident in Nigeria and in particular the nation's capital city Abuja of an impending security threat. The advisory is said to have appeared on the website of the US government and this was closely followed by another advisory from the UK government. Media reports also revealed that a similar advisory had emerged from the Australian government about a week before that of the US and UK.

WHILE this has sent shivers down the spines of many residents of Abuja as people are said to be avoiding a lot of the places mentioned in the advisory which include government buildings, places of worship, schools, shopping malls, crowded places such as markets, large gatherings, amongst others. The advisory went further to state that the US embassy will offer reduced services until further notice.

THIS development is worrisome and has generated reactions among stakeholders in the security circle. Of particular concern is the fact that reports indicate that the US government having been aware of the so called threat did not deem it fit to warn or bring it to the attention of the Nigerian government before going ahead to place it on their website.

IF they are in possession of an information that poses a security threat, the right thing to do was to have shared it with the appropriate security agencies in Nigeria instead of just dishing out to the public directly and in the process building fears in the people.

ALTHOUGH the Nigerian government has stated that there is no official communication from the US on the alert to its citizens, the IGP through the Force PPRO has said they are not taking the information for granted and have taken proactive measures to nip the situation in the bud in the event of a security breach. It went further to say that stakeholders are on the matter as all hands are on deck to forestall any unpleasant occurrence.

On the whole, the Nigerian government needs to do more to strengthen her security architecture particularly with the 2023 general elections fast approaching and people across board are already expressing concerns about the security situation in the country.

INDEED, the DSS through its spokesperson has said the advisory is nothing new, but however, called on Nigerians to take precautionary measures as they go about their legitimate businesses. Nigerians must be wary of persons who exploit the security situations to unleash mayhem on the citizens. They must therefore, take it upon themselves to help our security agencies nip any situation that threatens the peace.

POLITICAL violence is becoming a global phenomenon which many nations try to contend with within their political system. This can be in form of crises in the society particularly during elections where most politically related violence are always attributed to the teeming youths that are supposed to be the backbone of every society.

Due to idleness, lack of education, unemployment, poor orientation and greed of the political class our youth are becoming vulnerable in our society.

Another factor which reinforces violence in African political system is the desperate attitude of African politicians, the desperation to win election and occupy political offices by all means is a major cause of political violence.

In some cases, it is the contestants who in their quest for political powers organize some youths and provide arms that will be use to enforce fear during election and it is said that "when two elephants fight only the grass suffer". It is simply the youths who are at the middle of those desperate fellows aspiring that are being use against each other and even to the civilians who are peacefully exercising their rights to vote for a representative with pure intention and hoping to choose a credible candidate that will protect their interests.

During campaigns, the money and offer of some materials to the voters have become the order of the day across African

nations. It is also a factor responsible for continued spread of political violence. The level of poverty on the continent is such an intimidation where the innocent youths may be recruited for violence which is done just to survive. The politician

Nigerian youth must shun political violence

use of huge amount of money during electoral campaigns in form of gift to the poor especially those in the rural areas just to win peoples votes is not good for the people and democracy. Who would then be on ground during election to snatch ballot boxes and cause confusion, specifically, the youths are targeted as instruments of

perpetuating violence and their hearts are poisoned with money and other items which can make them participate and not be concerned of the danger involved in executing such acts.

For this phenomenon to be a favourable, peaceful atmosphere for citizens to participate in the country's democracy and be able to elect their



representatives peacefully without any molestation. The youths should therefore be cautioned on accepting any gift from politicians or be used as violent instruments to disrupt any peaceful election process in the country.

peacefully without any molestation. The youths should therefore be cautioned on accepting any gift from politicians or be used as violent instruments to disrupt any peaceful election process in the country.

Gloria Jared is an IT student from Kwararafa University, Wukari.

Kindly intensify security patrol in Rayfield

RESIDENTS of Rayfield in Jos South Local Government Area of Plateau State are concerned about the surge in kidnapping and other crimes particularly around Atiku Street, Rayfield

The issue of kidnapping, cultism and other violent crimes in Rayfield is now a source of worry to the residents who now sleep with their eyes wide openly.

Lately, there were reported incidence of kidnappings for instance, that of a woman who was kidnapped in front of the Plateau Radio Television Corporation (PTVC) Station, Rayfield.

Considering these kind of ugly situation which has become a daily occurrence, there is need for the Nigeria Police

Force to intensify patrol around the neighbourhood.

While on the other hand, the residents of the area should complement the security agencies through the setting up of vigilante or neighbourhood watch to forestall any security breach in this area also.

It is also commendable that the Plateau State government had passed the Bill on Anti-kidnapping and robber, cultism, violence and other related matters which was recently passed by the state House of Assembly.

However, Rayfield which is supposed to be the most secured environment, because it also accommodates the Government House, unfortunately the area is now experiencing serious security threats.

Recently, there was a reported case of kidnapping around NTA College which is just adjacent the old Government House. The area is also threatened by cases of robbery mostly at the ATM machines in front of the school gate.

Also, was the case of Adonai Boarding school few minutes drive from Atiku Hostel in Rayfield, where residents witnessed sporadic shootings by the hoodlums at night making households to run for dear life.

I wish to appeal to the government of Plateau State in collaboration with the security agencies to provide the necessary protection for the Rayfield community.

David Zando Hoku is an IT student of Kwararawa University Wukari, Taraba State.

STANDARD CARTOON

Congratulations and jubilation to APC, Plateau State for clearing 17 LGC chairmanship.

(What next LG Autonomy)



Opinion

Bandits attack on Kutebs: A cry for help

By AUDU JOY

IT has become necessary to draw the attention of the Federal Government under the leadership of President Muhammadu Buhari, the Commander-in-Chief of Nigeria Armed Forces, to the ongoing ethnic cleansing of Kuteb ethnic group of Takum and Ussa Local Government Areas as well as Yangtu Special Development Area (SDA) of Southern Taraba State by bandits.

It all began in the early hours of Sunday 17/4/2022 when unknown gunmen attacked Kwentwen, a village made up solely of Kuteb ethnicity, and killed twenty-five (25) persons, including women and children, in cold blood, also on 2/5/2022, Ukpan and Rikwenmboi in Yangtu SDA were razed by the bandits. Subsequently, such attacks continued in other Kuteb villages of Kpashi, Dinyina, Kando, Gbankwe, Gangum, Tati, Bassang, Rikwentumum, Shinkafa, Urerimam, Muji 1 and Muji 2 which claimed not less than 40 lives including that of the Commanding Officer of 93 Battalion, Nigerian Army Takum alongside six (6) military personnel and one (1) Nigeria Police officer in Tati. This attack was reported in some national dailies.

It may be recall that this sad incident occurred in the early hours of Tuesday 11/5/2022 following the attack on Tati community in Takum Local Government Area of Taraba State by garrison(s) of bandits that destroyed lives of Kuteb and property worth millions of naira. Troops of 93 Battalion of Nigeria Army in Takum which responded to distress calls from helpless perishing souls in the attacked communities were ambushed by the bandits leading to loss of the gallant soldiers and abduction of an officer. Despite this, the bandits remained resolute and increased the frequency of attacks and equally expanded to other Kuteb communities.

The authorities, the spate of attacks moved to Tati-Kumbu, Fawen, Flashin, Rikwentumum, Rikwen cwu, Tswaen 1, Tswaen 2, Kashiten, Mbiya, Kakum,

Kpashimbe, Rikwentam, Tutuwa, Ripaenchin, kutukok, Gaba area among others in Takum and Ussa LGAs. Further attacks involved Jenuwa Nyifiye in Yangtu SDA up till the end of June, killing 6 and carting away motorcycles and other valuables; Muji 1 and Mbiya a few kilometres from Takum main town where the blood thirsty Fulani bandits killed and burnt down many houses and property; Asik village where the faceless attackers killed not less than six persons and destroyed properties worth millions of naira; and Kwentuk where, on Wednesday 29/6/2022, four (4) people were killed in cold blood in their farms. Up to end of June 2022, these villages have been raided in successive attacks, killing and maiming helpless villagers while survivors flee. By this time, over 50 kuteb villages had been destroyed, death toll had risen to hundreds and thousands of kuteb people had been internally displaced to the mercy of harsh environmental conditions, hunger and infirmity. Unfortunately, women and children bear the brunt of this pogrom.

Sad and worrisome is the fact that the months of July, August and September have been more terrifying and gruesome. The marauders kept attacking more and more Kuteb villages with larger number of fighters who use high caliber weapons of modern warfare beyond mere civilian warfare. On the 4th day of July, 2022 between Jenuwa Gida Rikya and Jenuwa Nyifiye communities, a woman and her child were shot, killing the child instantly but the woman was left unconscious presuming she was dead. Same day, two kuteb commuters were shot dead and one other commuter was critically injured along Takum-Tati road. At Nzuya in Yangtu Special Development Area on Thursday 7/7/2022, six (6) people were killed including the district head and some of his cabinet members who were

brutally eliminated some hours after, another village Kuntab was attacked and a lady was killed by the marauders. Asik was invaded on the 8/7/2022, five (5) people were killed, many were wounded and the entire village was destroyed.

Hitherto, not relenting in the quest to maim and kill innocent and defenceless citizens, commuters prying Takum-Lissam road had been shot to death in several attacks of seeming guerilla warfare by the bandits. This often happens at the Takum side of the road. On Wednesday the 13/7/2022, Takum-Lissam road was blocked around the Kuchicheb hill within a kilometre ride from Takum main town and many were killed and wounded. On 15/7/2022, Asik was invaded again to complete the destruction and killings earlier started. Monday the 18/7/2022 simultaneous attacks were launched in two fronts at Jenuwa Nyifiye in Yangtu SDA and Ripaenchin in Ussa LGA, killing not less than 10 persons and property worth millions were destroyed. Again, on the 19/7/2022 travelers on Takum-Lissam road were attacked leading to the loss of three persons and their motorcycles carted away. The roads leading from Takum to Lissam, the headquarter of Ussa Local Government is now a death trap to kuteb travelers. What a horrendous development! It is pertinent to know that all the villages attacked are now inhabited by bandits who wield sophisticated weapons in broad day light and are having field day in launching attacks to surrounding villages from these newly-found attack bases. Nevertheless, on 25/7/2022 a kuteb settlement, Rikwentam-Lagos was invaded by bandits, houses were burnt and/or demolished and many were killed. 14/8/2022 was again a sad day as Ayiyi and Kwasati villages were invaded by the bandits who killed scores and destroyed houses. On 24/8/2022 bandits attacked Kpashimbe destroyed property and

killed one (1) soldier and scores of kuteb men, women and children.

By September, kuteb villages in Takum have all been destroyed and most villages in Yangtu SDA and Ussa LGA have been completely destroyed yet the attacks have continued unabated by the bandits. On 7th September 2022, the attackers attacked farmers in Jenuwa Gida killing a man in cold blood. This area is just a stone throw from the barracks of 93 Battalion of Nigeria Army. While still mourning the dead, a large number of bandits armed to the teeth invaded the same community of Jenuwa Gida in Yangtu SDA on 9/9/2022 where houses were burnt down and goods carted away leaving eighteen (18) people dead. In another front a legion of armed bandits attacked suburb of Kwasati in Ussa LGA on 10/9/2022 where villages of Kutukok, Wae-nja, Ayiyi, Alaha, Tutuwa, Rimamyang-Nyido, Mbushwu, Rikwewayaya amongst others were destroyed and scores killed in cold blood. Kwari and Kwambai villages in Yangtu SDA came under heavy shelling in the morning and evening of 12/9/2022 respectively, leaving many wounded, some killed and houses burnt. Almost simultaneously, villages of Sati-tsingnya, Nzurya, Kabrisi among others were also attacked and about twenty-five (25) people were killed. On 19/9/2022 Ussa Local Government woke up to the agony of marauding attacks on villages of Kutufa, Kurukur, Rufu, Yamusa which border Lissam, the Local Government Headquarters. This very attack was equally gruesome, killing 7 people and several property were destroyed. On 20/9/2022 a well-orchestrated and properly organized attack by the bandits was taken to Fuyirom and Kwasati villages of Kuteb ethnicity in Ussa Local Government Area. Many more villages are falling day by day while scores of lives are lost. The remaining villages are threatened and inhabitants live in palpable fear. Almost

on daily basis, a village falls into rubles and the inhabitants killed, maimed, abducted or displaced.

The situation in Kuteb villages of Takum, Ussa and Yangtu is pathetic and better imagined than experienced. Over three hundred (300) innocent souls have perished; men, women and children are internally displaced and languishing; farming is no longer possible; countless persons have been murdered in their farms; ripe farm produce cannot be harvested; hunger is looming and the attacks are escalating day by day. In all these, there is no succour from Government at all levels to these souls. The immediate and remote repercussions of this crisis on socioeconomic wellbeing of Nigeria is enormous. It is worth noting that large scale farming is the mainstay of kuteb people and affected areas produce over 60% of agricultural produce from Taraba and Benue States, the food baskets of Nigeria. Hence, famine is looming if the menace is not curbed instantly and survivors return to scavenge their decaying farms.

It therefore behooves on government at all levels to rise up to this occasion and protect lives and property of Kuteb in Takum, Ussa and Yangtu and to provide relief materials for thousands of IDPs from the affected villages.

Again, the issue of peace should be of paramount importance to government because without normalcy returning to these communities, both human and economic activities may be grounded. More so, the people of these communities who are predominately farmers are in dire of an urgent intervention so that they can go about their daily form of livelihood as peace loving people who also believe in co-existence with other communities.

AUDU JOY, is an IT students from Kwara University Wukari Taraba State

Implementing policies to mitigating security risk

By Nicholas Ibeni

SECURITY controls play a fundamental role in improving and shaping the actions security professionals take to protect an organization. In this article, I will be discussing three main types of security controls that should be implemented at the cause of drafting organization's security policy.

"According to the IDC survey, 72 percent of organizations in Nigeria have increased security budgets by 10 percent or more over the last few years. This is not only the result of accelerated cloud adoption levels, but also increased awareness of security in senior management and rising new threats."

They are three prime factors constituting implementing a security policy; technical, administrative, and physical. The primary goal for implementing a security control can be preventive, detective, corrective, compensatory, or act as a deterrent. Controls are also used to defend people as is the case security awareness training or policies. The lack of security controls places the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of information of every organization at risk. These risks extend to the safety of people and assets within organizations. Security control is the different ways in which we can integrate it in our security policy.

Security controls are countermeasures used to reduce the chances that a threat will exploit a vulnerability. For instance, implementing company-wide security awareness training to minimize the risk of a social engineering attack on your network, people, and information systems. While it's next to impossible to prevent all threats, mitigation seeks to decrease the risk by reducing the chances that a threat will exploit a vulnerability. Risk mitigation is achieved by implementing different types of security controls depending on the goal of the countermeasure, the level to which the risk needs to be minimized, the severity of damage the threat can execute.

The overall aims of implementing security controls is to help reduce risks in an organization. The effective implementation of a security control is based on its classification in relation to the security incident. The common classifications are; preventive controls attempt to prevent an incident from occurring, detective controls attempt to detect incidents after they have occurred, corrective controls attempt to reverse the impact of an incident, deterrent controls attempt to discourage individuals from causing an incident,

compensating controls are alternative controls used when a primary control is not feasible.

For instance, an organization that places a high priority on reducing risk usually has a risk profile, which demonstrates the potential cost of a negatively impacting risk and the human resources required to implement the control(s).

Further on, we look at layering approach which combines multiple security controls to develop what's called a defence-in-depth strategy. Defence-in-depth is a common security strategy used whereby multiple layers of controls are implemented. By combining controls into multiple layers of security you ensure that if one layer fails to offset a threat that other layers will help to prevent a breach in the system. Each layer of security works to counteract specific threats, which requires a security program to invest in multiple technologies and processes to prevent systems or people from being compromised.

Endpoint detection and response solutions are great at preventing viruses and malware from infecting computers and servers. However, endpoint detection is not equipped to log and monitor traffic on a network, or detect and prevent an attack in real-time like an Intrusion Prevention System (IPS). Before going into control types, it's important to first understand the cyber risks and threats they help to mitigate. Risks in cyber security are the likelihood that a threat will exploit a vulnerability resulting in a loss. Losses could be information, financial, damage to reputation, and even harm customer trust. Threats on the other hand are any event with the potential to compromise the confidentiality, integrity, and availability (CIA) of information.

Threats may also take the form of a natural disaster or be a synthetic risk such as a new malware variant. Secondly, we look at vulnerabilities which are weaknesses or flaw in the software, hardware, or organizational processes, which when compromised by a threat, can result in a security incident. such occurrence can potentially jeopardize the confidentiality, integrity, or availability of an information system or the information the system processes, stores, or transmits.

Having understood the basic risk concepts let's explore how security controls will be

implemented. At the most basic level, technical controls, also known as logic controls, use technology to reduce vulnerabilities in hardware and software. Automated software tools are installed and configured to protect these assets such as encryption, antivirus and anti-malware software, firewalls, Security Information and Event Management (SIEM), Intrusion Detection Systems (IDS) and Intrusion Prevention Systems (IPS).

Many organizations today implement some type of onboarding process to introduce you to the company and provide you with a history of the organization. During the onboarding process, you may be instructed to review and acknowledge the security policy of the organization. By acknowledging that you have read the policies of the organization as a new hire, you are then accountable to adhere to the corporate policy of the organization.

In order to implement the administrative controls, additional security controls are necessary for continuous monitoring and enforcement. The processes that monitor and enforce the administrative controls will be Management controls: The security controls that focus on the management of risk and the management of information system security and operational controls. Controls that are primarily implemented and executed by people (as opposed to systems). For instance, a security policy is a management control, but its security requirements are implemented by people (operational controls) and systems (technical controls).

An organization may have an acceptable use policy that specifies the conduct of users, including not visiting malicious websites. The security control to monitor and enforce could be in the form of a web content filter, which can enforce the policy and log simultaneously. Security controls also help to thwart phishing, besides the management control of the acceptable use policy itself, include operational controls, such as training users not to fall for phishing scams, and technical controls will monitor emails and web site usage for signs of phishing activity. Physical controls will observe security measures in a defined structure used to deter or prevent unauthorized access to sensitive material.

Physical Controls: will revolve around closed-circuit surveillance cameras, motion or thermal alarm systems, security guards, picture IDs,

locked and dead-bolted steel doors, biometrics (includes fingerprint, voice, face, iris, handwriting, and other automated methods used to recognize individuals).

Preventive Controls: will include; hardening, security awareness training, security guards, change management, account disablement policy.

Detective Controls: log Monitoring, SIEM, trend analysis, security audits, video surveillance, motion detection. Corrective Controls: Intrusion Prevention System (IPS), backups and system recovery.

Deterrent Controls: Reduce the likelihood of a deliberate attack and is usually in the form of a tangible object or person such as cable locks, hardware locks, video surveillance and guards.

The different between preventive and detective control is that preventive is designed to be implemented prior to a threat event while detective control is designed to detect errors and locate attacks against information systems that have already occurred. An alternative method that is put in place to satisfy the requirement for a security measure that cannot be readily implemented due to financial, infrastructure, or simply impractical to implement at the present time will be compensating control which is to meet the intent of the original control requirement and provide a similar level of assurance. Contingent upon the organization type, regulatory requirements mandate consistent and continuous assessments, whereas, non-public organizations are not held to regulatory requirements.

One of the prime objectives for security as a whole is to prevent unauthorized parties from accessing, changing, or exploiting a network or system. It aims to do what a bad actor would do, which is the main reason penetration testing are crucial to an organization's security in order to help personnel learn how to handle any type of break-in from a malicious entity.

While it is important for security professionals to have basic understanding of these controls, they must also recognize that the ultimate goal of implementing the controls is to strengthen their organization's defences in order to reduce risk. Information security must be treated as a program which requires continuous monitoring in order to defend and protect its most valuable assets. **Ibeni, a security researcher, writes from the Republic of Benin**

Change of Name

<p>ABUKAKAR</p> <p>I, formerly known as ABUBAKAR JAAFARU, now wish to be known and addressed as ABUKAKAR JAFAR IDRIS. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>BITRUS</p> <p>I, formerly known as GANYA KARVEN, now wish to be known and addressed as BITRUS GANYA KARVONG. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public please take note.</p>	<p>LAR</p> <p>I, formerly known as LAR PONTIM TIMKU, now wish to be known and addressed as LAR PONTIM. Correct date of birth is 15/12/2002 not 15/12/1997. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>PAULINA</p> <p>I, formerly known as WOKNANG PAULINA AMOS, PAULINA WOKNANG AMOS DARESON, WOKNANG PAULINA WOKNANG, PAULINA DARESON, PAULINA WOKNANG DARESON, now wish to be known and addressed as PAULINA SHALLUK. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>ISHAQ</p> <p>I, formerly known as NURUDEEN MOHAMMAD ISHAQ now wish to be known and addressed as ISHAQ MUHAMMAD NURUDEEN. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>SHAIBU</p> <p>I, formerly known as AKOJI MORDECAI AKOJI, now wish to be known and addressed as SHAIBU MORDECIA AKOJI. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>																				
<p>GODWIN</p> <p>I, formerly known as GODWILL SAMBO EDE, now wish to be known and addressed as GODWIN SAMBO EDE. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>NUHU</p> <p>I, formerly known as SILAS MUSA, now wish to be known and addressed as NUHU JOHN. Correct date of birth is 01/01/2004 not 01/01/1999. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public please take note.</p>	<p>YUNUSA</p> <p>I, formerly known as ZAINAB YUNUSA RAJI, now wish to be known and addressed as YUNUSA ZAINAB. Correct date of birth is 06/07/1996 NOT 06/02/1992. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>MALAI</p> <p>I, formerly known as UNDUKWIN JOHN, now wish to be known and addressed as MALAI DINATU JOHN. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>OSHIKOYA</p> <p>I, formerly known as SALAMI OLUWABUNMI ESTHER (MISS), now wish to be known and addressed as MRS. OSHIKOYA OLUWABUNMI ESTHER. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public</p>	<p>SIMON</p> <p>I, formerly known as SIMON JENET, now wish to be known and addressed as SIMON JANET. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>																				
<p>AROWOLO,</p> <p>I, formerly known as SUNDAY VICTOR ADELOLUWA, now wish to be known and addressed as AROWOLO, VICTOR SUNDAY. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>MANGSET</p> <p>I, formerly known as DAMEN NANBAM TIMOTHY, now wish to be known and addressed as MANGSET NANBAM TIMOTHY. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please</p>	<p>CHRISTIANA</p> <p>I, formerly known as CHRISTIANA OYINDAMOLA OLURANTI, now wish to be known and addressed as CHRISTIANA OYINDAMOLA SUNDAY. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>MANGWVAT</p> <p>I, formerly known as MANGWVAT ESTHER, now wish to be known and addressed as MANGWVAT ESTHER ELISHA. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>DINATU</p> <p>I, formerly known as PRECIOUS JAMES DUNG, now wish to be known and addressed as DINATU JAMES DUNG. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>	<p>DANLADI</p> <p>I, formerly known as DANLADI LONGBUL GRACE, now wish to be known and addressed as DANLADI LONGRET GRACE. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.</p>																				
<p>PAGYANG</p> <p>I, formerly known as NASH PAUL ISA, now wish to be known and addressed as PAGYANG YAKUBU DANJUMA. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>DENNIM</p> <p>I, formerly known as DENNIS TURMICIT CHOSEN, now wish to be known and addressed as DENNIM TURMICIT DENNIS. Correct date of birth is 01/03/1998 not 01/03/1991. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>MAHAMMED</p> <p>I, formerly known as MUHAMMED HUSSAINI, now wish to be known and addressed as MAHAMMED SALISU HUSSAINI. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>BLESSING</p> <p>I, formerly known as BLESSING GOMWALK, now wish to be known and addressed as BLESSING JOSEPH GOMWALK. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>DAWAK</p> <p>I, formerly known as YOPE DAWAK, now wish to be known and addressed as DAWAK YOPE. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>ABDULRAHMAN</p> <p>I, formerly known as ABDULRAHMAN IDRIS ABDULLAHI, now wish to be known and addressed as ABDULRAHMAN ABDULLAHI. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>																				
<p>ALIYU</p> <p>I, formerly known as JIBRIL JAMILA and HUSSAINI JAMILA HUSSAINI, now wish to be known and addressed as ALIYU JAMILA UMAR. Correct date of birth is 18/02/1985. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>MOHAMMED</p> <p>I, formerly known as ASHOM HADIZA MOHAMMED, now wish to be known and addressed as MOHAMMED HADIZA. All former documents remain valid. Jos East LGEA and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>KWARKAS</p> <p>I, formerly known as KWARKAS MUSA EMMANUEL, now wish to be known and addressed as KWARKAS BAMAYI MUSA. Correct date of birth is 05/03/2003 not 15/09/1997. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>TANIMU</p> <p>I, formerly known as TANIMU TELA AHAMADU, now wish to be known and addressed as TANIMU MAHAMMADU. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>TERSEER</p> <p>I, formerly known as TERSEER IHI STEPHEN now wish to be known and addressed as TERSEER TERYILA STEPHEN. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>SULAIMAN</p> <p>I, formerly known as SULEIMAN ABDULLAHI, now wish to be known and addressed as SULAIMAN ABDULLAHI. Correct date of birth is 05/05/1999. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>																				
<p>MUHAMMAD</p> <p>I, formerly known as MUHAMMED ALIYU, now wish to be known and addressed as MUHAMMAD ALIYU ALIYU. Correct date of birth is 03/03/1990 NOT 5/7/1989.. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>ANTHONY</p> <p>I, formerly known as NICHOLAS VOJUNG now wish to be known and addressed as ANTHONY NICHOLAS VOJUNG. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>SIMON</p> <p>I, formerly known as SIMON ENEJO SUNDAY now wish to be known and addressed as SIMON ENEJO EGBUNU. Correct date of birth is 28/09/1997. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>KANDE</p> <p>I, formerly known as KANDE PAUL GOPEP, now wish to be known and addressed as KANDE DORCAS GOPEP. All former documents remain valid. Correct date of birth is 7/10/1975. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>MOKEBE</p> <p>I, formerly known as EZENABOR CHIZOBA LUCYANN, now wish to be known and addressed as MOKEBE CHIZOBA LUCYANN. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>ABDULLAHI</p> <p>I, formerly known as ABDULLAHI FATIMA MOHAMMED, now wish to be known and addressed as ABDULLAHI FATIMA. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>																				
<p>DAMIAN</p> <p>I, formerly known as DAMIAN ALICE, now wish to be known and addressed as DAMIAN ALICE CHINONYEREM. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>BENNETH</p> <p>I, formerly known as BENETH CHRISTIAN KOSISO now wish to be known and addressed as BENNETH CHRISTIAN KOSISO. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>BADUNG</p> <p>I, formerly known as ELIZABETH TITUS TUMBA, now wish to be known and addressed as BADUNG ELIZABETH DALYOP. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>NANSEL</p> <p>I, formerly known as NANLA NANVYAP, now wish to be known and addressed as NANSEL NANLA NANVYAP. Correct date of birth is 02/12/1998. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>ALAGBE</p> <p>I, formerly known as ALAGBE IBUKUNOLUWA GOSHEN, now wish to be known and addressed as ALAGBE BLESSING ADEOLA. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>DUNG</p> <p>I, formerly known as THOMAS DORCAS BOT, now wish to be known and addressed as DUNG DORCAS CHUWANG. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>																				
<p>ABDULLAHI</p> <p>I, formerly known as ABDULLAHI MAIMUNA ABDULKARIM, now wish to be known and addressed as ABDULLAHI MAIMUNATU. Correct date of birth is 04/05/2003 not 04/05/1994. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>OMIAWELE</p> <p>I, OMIAWELE PETER wish to state that my correct date of birth is 12/11/1977 not 22/05/1973. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>FRANCIS</p> <p>I, formerly known as LONGS FRANCIS PANS, now wish to be known and addressed as FRANCIS RETSHWAR PANS. Correct date of birth is 05/01/1995 not 20/01/1992. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>SAMUEL</p> <p>I, formerly known as EHERE SAMUEL FRIDAY, now wish to be known and addressed as SAMUEL FRIDAY. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>RABIU</p> <p>I, formerly known as IRMIAH LIANGSHA, now wish to be known and addressed as RABIU BAIHAKI ISMAIL. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>DENAN</p> <p>I, formerly known as FWAIDIMATI KADITH DENAN, now wish to be known and addressed as DENAN KENNETH. Correct date of birth is 04/04/1980 not 04/04/1978. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>																				
<p>JIZAK</p> <p>I, formerly known as MARY JIZAK, now wish to be known and addressed as JIZAK MARY MATHEW. Correct date of birth is 21/02/2000 not 21/02/1995. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>SULEIMAN</p> <p>I, formerly known as SHAMSDINI ISA, now wish to be known and addressed as SULEIMAN YAHAYA LIMAN. Correct date of birth is 09/11/2000. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>ROSE</p> <p>I, formerly known as TIBIL ROSE DUNG, now wish to be known and addressed ROSE TIMOTHY SAMUEL GWONG. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>GARZALI</p> <p>I, formerly known as ABDULJALIL AMINU, now wish to be known and addressed GARZALI NUHU. Correct date of birth is 10/03/2003. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>AUCTION! AUCTION!! AUCTION!!!</p> <p>The Nigeria Police Force, Divisional HTQS "A" Division, Plateau State Command, Jos.</p> <p>This is notifying the general public that the following unclaimed items are due for Auctioning, by this, any body with proof of ownership should come forward within five days of this publication to claim his property. They items are as follows:-</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>S/N</th> <th>ITEM</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1.</td> <td>One scrap Tricycle with Reg. No. WAS 37 WV</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2.</td> <td>One (1) scrap bajaj motorcycle with chassis no. MDZA18AZXDWK39937X</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3.</td> <td>SOME SCRAP OF AIR CONDITIONER IRONS</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4.</td> <td>ONE (1) UNREGISTERED SCRAP TRICYCLE WITH PT NO. 4541</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5.</td> <td>ONE SCRAP HONDA PRELUDE CAR WITH REG. BB937 JIN</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6.</td> <td>One (1) scrap bajaj motorcycle with REG NO. MKD0460Z</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7.</td> <td>One (1) scrap Tricycle with REG NO. WAS308WL</td> </tr> <tr> <td>8.</td> <td>ONE (1) UNREGISTERED SCRAP BAJAJ MOTORCYCLE WITH CHASSIS NO MDZA18AY8LWM07256X</td> </tr> <tr> <td>9.</td> <td>one scrap Tricycle with Reg No. DNG115VG PT NO. 5505</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>And other scrapes items</p> <p>SIGNED: IDRIS MARAFA - 08036261848</p>		S/N	ITEM	1.	One scrap Tricycle with Reg. No. WAS 37 WV	2.	One (1) scrap bajaj motorcycle with chassis no. MDZA18AZXDWK39937X	3.	SOME SCRAP OF AIR CONDITIONER IRONS	4.	ONE (1) UNREGISTERED SCRAP TRICYCLE WITH PT NO. 4541	5.	ONE SCRAP HONDA PRELUDE CAR WITH REG. BB937 JIN	6.	One (1) scrap bajaj motorcycle with REG NO. MKD0460Z	7.	One (1) scrap Tricycle with REG NO. WAS308WL	8.	ONE (1) UNREGISTERED SCRAP BAJAJ MOTORCYCLE WITH CHASSIS NO MDZA18AY8LWM07256X	9.	one scrap Tricycle with Reg No. DNG115VG PT NO. 5505
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<p>DABOER</p> <p>I, formerly known as DABOER ANSELM, now wish to be known and addressed as DABOER ANSELM ANAFUME. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>YAHUZA</p> <p>I, formerly known as ABUBAKAR YAHAYA, now wish to be known and addressed as YAHUZA YAHAYA ABUBAKAR. All former documents remain valid. Correct date of birth is 01/07/2000 NOT 01/01/1996. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>ABDULAZIZ</p> <p>I, formerly known as ABDULAZIZ ABUBAKAR SAMBO and ABUBAKAR ABDULAZIZ, now wish to be known and addressed ABDULAZIZ ABUBAKAR. Correct date of birth is 02/03/1992. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>MANSUR</p> <p>I, formerly known as ABIDATU MUSA, now wish to be known and addressed MANSUR ABDATU MUSA. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>																						

Interview

God intends to revive Nigeria

Steven Halford, an American evangelist flew into Nigeria recently, undertaking teaching and training of Church leaders across different denominations. FWENJI GO'AR, our Online Editor engaged him during an exclusive interview. Excerpts:

WELCOME to Nigeria sir. Is this your first time?

No. My second time. The first time was 13 years ago. And I came over here with my friend, Fidelis to teach in a school. But I was here, for two weeks.

So, what brings you here this time around?

This time, I'm ministering, I'm preaching, and traveling, between Abuja and here (Jos)

We're having some gatherings, some crusades, teachings and training church leaders.

Yesterday, we had 500 church leaders I was training to be good citizens of Nigeria. In a nutshell, that's what I'm doing.

How do you see Nigeria now, compared to the last time you came?

It's different. There's an air of unease. I think, it depends on where really. Maybe because my reason for being here is a bit different. Last time, it was a teaching programme in small gatherings. This time, it is larger. And when I was here last time, there was some trouble, especially further up north. And you can kind of feel it a little bit, not hugely, but you can feel it.

It still feels good. It still feels home. So when I stepped off the plane, I felt like I was home. I love Nigeria.

What are the impressions of what you have started doing? You have a few more days to get it done, right? What have you noticed about your interactions with people here?

Well, I think Nigerians are wonderful people. Very warm, very hospitable. They are loving. That's why I think I love coming here. The people are just wonderful. I think the people are very industrious. They want to work; they want to provide for their families. They want to produce a better society, to continue to improve upon what they have. The people I have met so far are amazing. Every person I have met has been very wonderful.

You came all the way from the United States of America. Is there anything that you are bringing here which, may be, we don't already have?

I am actually from England, but I live in America. My dad is American, my mom English. So I have the best of both worlds. In England, we are quite educated. I think overly educated sometimes. We have a lot of head knowledge, but not a lot of practical knowledge. So, where you guys just get on and do the job, we may overthink it. And it takes too long to get it done.

I am a minister of the Gospel, and so I do believe in miracles. And in America, in England we over think everything. So, we give you knowledge, you give us faith. So, I would rather have faith over knowledge. The Bible says, the latter of the law brings death, the spirit brings life. So, I'd rather have the Spirit to do the work of God than just the knowledge.

Are you a fulltime minister?

Yes, and no. Yes, I do have a ministry that takes up most of my



Halford

time. But I also have a trade. I am a builder. I build houses. I build and renovate houses. I may come into a place like this, tear everything apart, fix it up and put it back together again.

I do work for a company in America. That's what I do. That pays the bills. I give most of my income to the ministry.

So, the business funds the ministry activities?

I don't own the business. I get a wage from the company. And then I tithe into the ministry. So, I don't support the ministry through that. I just pay the tithe. I split my tithe up which is 10 percent, half of it goes to the ministry and then the other half to the church.

I am not a wealthy man (laughs)

From your experience and interactions with people here, what is it that you are taking back with you?

I'm taking back the spirit of Africa. Yeah, people are writing to me saying whatever you get from there, bring it back.

Your hunger, your passion, your fire! and dedication, and the spirit of God in your nation. That's what I am taking back.

Can you tell us more about yourself? You've mentioned a few things; you're a businessman. Are there other things you would want to tell us about yourself?

First of all, I am not a businessman. I work for a company. So, I am an employee.

Yeah, I was born in England. As a teenager, I moved to America. I was in trouble as a child. I was a boxer and until four years ago, I still boxed. Yeah, as a Christian, as a minister, it goes along with good discipline.

There was trouble in England. I

was doing drugs and all kinds of stuff. When I had a chance to move to America, I moved there, and after a short time, I heard the gospel and became a Christian. About a year after that, a friend took me to the streets of Orlando, Florida, home of Mickey Mouse, home of Disney World. And they took me to the streets, and where started to evangelize. The first time I ever evangelized, the fire of God hit me. I started to preach, then people started getting saved. I started praying for the sick and they started getting healed.

I was involved with the occult growing up. When I became a Christian, I would go back into the occult shops, and I would walk in. The people would start yelling 'Get out, you are not allowed in here. We can't work our magic when you are in here.'

And I'll preach to them. Sometimes they kicked me out, and sometimes I'd stay and preach.

And then from there, I went to South America on mission trips. I went to the American prison system where I preached to inmates. God turned my life around. I went from a young boy who was troubled to a fruitful man.

I have 3 children. They are 19, 17, and 13. My daughter is about to be 14. That's a bit about myself. I live in Florida.

I have a ministry called "Ignite Global Missions". In my Global Ministry, we are Apostolic, Evangelistic organization. In Ignite Global Missions, we evangelize, and when people become Christians, we get them involved in local churches. If there wasn't a local church where they live, then we plant a new church here.

It's a healthy church, with sound doctrines. We want to create good citizens in countries. We are in five different countries.

Do you have some special words for Nigerians?

Yeah. Honour the Lord. Serve God. Know Him intimately. He loves Nigeria. He has a plan and a purpose for this country. I believe Nigeria is the heartbeat of Africa. As Nigeria goes, so goes the rest of Africa. I believe that we need to have Jesus and God as the centre of this country.

In England, we have a lot of Nigerians who have moved to England. They are some of the greatest preachers arounds, some of the greatest evangelists. Some of the greatest citizens that we have. Some of my closest friends in England are Nigerians. I was trained in financial services in England by Nigerians.

I do believe that God wants to bring a revival to this nation. Fresh revival. A new one.

I believe that God's hand is upon Jos, as the centre of the country. I know that this is the capital of tourism because the weather is beautiful. It's cooler here than it is in my state in America. In America, I cannot wear this. I would be sweating profusely.

So, yeah, I believe that God wants to raise Nigerians to impact Africa and the rest of the world. I also believe God wants to clean up the church in Africa, in Nigeria. I believe He wants to get rid of corruption and expose false pastors, who are in it for the money. It's a calling of God. God calls us to preach, and we either obey, or we disobey. But God would put an end to false pastors who are fleeing the children of God for money. They live like kings while the people live in poverty. I believe God wants to end that. These people are the ones that may not want people like me here. God wants to bring righteousness because the Bible says, 'Righteousness exalts a nation'. I believe He would do it from the lower levels, all the way to the higher levels of government, as we keep our eyes on Jesus.



Halford ministering at Global Upper Room Revival Ministry (GURRM) HQ, Jos

Feature

Conflicting FG, UNESCO reports on out-of-school children

Between the federal government and UNESCO, it's not clear whose report on the current number of out-of-school children one should believe as both claim theirs is authentic; ELEOJO IDACHABA writes.

IN the last few weeks, there have been conflicting official reports about the number of out-of-school children in Nigeria. While the Nigerian government claims that it has reduced the number from 10 million in 2019 to between 6.9 and 7 million in 2020, the United Nations Education and Scientific Organisation (UNESCO) in its latest report disclosed that at the present, over 20 million children are out of school in Nigeria for different reasons.

This, no doubt, has prompted reactions from various angles, but placing available statistics side by side, it appears the UNESCO report seems plausible in view of recent developments, especially the latest phobia regarding schools by parents in places like Niger, Katsina, Zamfara and parts of Kaduna states. In those places, the fear of kidnapping of female school children has, in borrowing the Biblical phrase, become the beginning of wisdom.

As a result of this, the development has compelled a lot of sit-at-home among those who should ordinarily be in schools. Also, the compulsory sit-at-home order in parts of the South-eastern axis of the country extending to states like Akwa Ibom has equally contributed to the growing number of children out of school in Nigeria.

UNESCO, while making its report public recently, indicated that Nigeria now has 20.2 million out-of-school children, a figure that is three times what the government claimed as the out-of-school children as of May 2020.

It is however not clear if the claim by the Nigerian government is correct, but available data shows that 244 million children and youths between the ages of six and 18 worldwide are out of school. From this figure, over 20 million of them are in Nigeria at the moment.

UNESCO in that report noted that, "Important data gaps have been filled in countries that have large out-of-school numbers but where no administrative data of good quality has been available for over a decade such as Nigeria which has an estimated 20.2 million children and youth out of school."

The development poses a lot of concern for the global body judging its negative implication on achieving the much talked-about Sustainable Development Goals on quality education for all by 2030.

As usual, while faulting UNESCO's report, the federal government speaking through the director of press in the Federal Ministry of Education, Mr. Ben Goong, told Nigerians to disregard the UNESCO report, saying it does not reflect the true



Buhari

state of affairs in the country.

According to him, the federal government has a reliable template through which it determines whether the number of those in school and out of school increase or decline as against the UNESCO template.

"We use a reliable template with the National Population Commission to calculate this in order to arrive at a reliable and acceptable figure. What we do is that we harvest the birth rate from NPC which has a figure of numbers of children born in Nigeria every year. We also do our routine school census which tells us how many are in school.

"When we minus the figure from the birth rate and the number of children that are in school using the outcome of our school census, then we arrive at a particular figure which can assume that are not in school. We have all this information and we conduct a school census, then return to the NPC and work on this template.

"So, where UNESCO got its figures and methods used to collate such data and arrived at over 20 million out-of-school children is what I don't know and can't explain. So, we absolutely reject the figure as it relates to the number of out-of-school children in Nigeria that was released by the global body."

Whether or not the government is right and UNESCO is wrong is a matter for inquest. For instance, when

He said, "It is unacceptable

schools that were closed in Kaduna state over insecurity were asked by the state government to resume for the current academic session in September, many parents declined.

According to the report, students of primary and secondary schools in the state declined to return to school over fear of bandits. This was in reaction to the state government's directive to September 4 that all schools across the state should resume.

Although the state government had assured students of their safety, many parents, learning from history, were afraid of allowing their children to go back to school; more so as there are no concrete arrangements for their safety despite the government's assurances.

Some weeks later, according to this writer's investigation, a number of the students remained at home for fear of insecurity, especially in many communities in the Southern part of the state.

UNICEF's concerns Also, commenting on this, the UNICEF representative in Nigeria, Peter Hawkins, while speaking recently in Jalingo, the Taraba state capital, in the wake of the low attitude to school resumption in September noted that the unabated security situation in the country was bedeviling the hopes of almost a million students who were willing to return to school.

He said, "It is unacceptable

school children because the facts were obvious.

She said, "Everyone knows that insecurity in various parts of the country has largely sent jitters in the minds of parents and students/pupils. I'm aware that even in some remote communities in Abaji Area Council which are within the Federal Capital Territory where bandits had threatened residents, a good number of school pupils are yet to return to classes because of the fear of being kidnapped.

"Except the government wants to be economical with the truth, otherwise the report by UNICEF and UNESCO is nothing but the truth. It was public knowledge when in July this year; bandits wrote letters to several schools in the territory, especially those around the outskirts of the territory. Most parents in those places are yet to see any serious security measures put in place to secure their children, that is why even up till now, some of the pupils would not resume."

According to a researcher on female education in Nigeria, Dr. Rosemary Okolie of the University of Ibadan, a lot of damage has been done to the psyche of students, especially the females, such that they need serious reorientation about education.

"Lately, what Boko Haram has done to young girls, especially in the northern part of the country, is beyond psychological repair. It would take a number of years to get many young ladies from that part of the country to still appreciate the importance of education, not when they are aware that some of their age mates who declared for education are currently house wives to some war lords in the forest and remote villages in Nigeria and nearby countries," she said.

As the argument goes on, it is believed that both the government and UNESCO are correct in their respective assessments of the out-of-school children.

PUBLIC NOTICE

THE KINGDOM NATION MINISTRIES

The general public is hereby notified that the above named ministry has applied to the Corporate Affairs Commission for registration under part C (now part "F") of the Companies and

TRUSTEES:

1. Sani Victor Friend
2. Okhuevbie James Oluwatobi
3. Tiri Kate
4. Sardi Olive Udochukwu
5. Okoh Grace Steven

Trustee/Chairman,
Trustee
Trustee
Trustee
Trustee/Secretary

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:

1. To see God's kingdom come and Jesus revealed to and through the greatest and least of men through communicating the genuine christian experience
2. To have all men established in faith and in life through teaching and preaching of the bible

Any objection to the registration should be forwarded to the Registrar General, Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC), 420 Tigris Crescent, off Aguiyi Ironsi Street, Maitama Abuja, within 28 days from the date of this publication

Signed: Secretary

Prime
T i m e
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By KENNETH DARENG

HISTORY has been made as Rishi Sunak, a minority of Indian decent is now the youngest British Prime Minister in over 200 years in the history of the United Kingdom. At last providence has decided to smile on Sunak who was defeated a couple of weeks ago in the race for 10 Downing Street by Liz Truss the out-going British Prime Minister.

Sunak is 42 years old, a member of the British Parliament, was elected a conservative MP for (Yorks) in May 2015 and had served as a Parliamentary private secretary and later build his political career to become Britain's Finance Minister under Boris Johnson.

What is surprising is that the new Prime Minister who is a Punjabi Hindu by faith will be presiding over a nation that is conservatively British by tradition and predominantly evangelical Christians by faith. And by implication he may have some difficulty attending to some state functions that

may have to do with Christian rites or church related activities.

Some Christians might just be wondering, is Christianity fading away in Great Britain? We have seen the likes of Sadiq Khan a Pakistani Muslim elected as Mayor of London. It has been reported that Islam is fast gaining grounds in Britain with the emergence of new mosques while the church pews are shrinking by the day in a nation considered as the seat of the British Monarchy, the home of the famous King James, Queen Elizabeth, King George and now King Charles II who are regarded as torch bearers of the Church of England that had spread the Christian faith to the nooks and crannies of Europe, the Americas, Africa and the rest of the world.

What the British citizens see as a symbol of religious freedom is also seen as a taboo in Sunak's India where the majority Hindus are very intolerant of other religious faiths like Islam and Christianity. The same Indians have for centuries till date continue to suppress and segregate upon minorities like the black Indians mostly from the south like Chennai, Kalkota and other parts who are not allowed to participate in a free religious activities, political offices are only a preserve of the majority hindus and even the Bollywood film industry does not give minorities equal space.

It appears the Indians are among the most racists

human race who want to enjoy freedom in other parts of the world which they seem to have found haven in Kenya, South Africa, Canada, Middle-east, U.S.A, Britain and so on. The Indians now enjoy freedom of patronage in other countries of the world

Minister where he stated; "I think its important actually to recognize that as a nation, we recognize different people's religious beliefs and how they practice it, but in the same way, that we should for freedom be allowed to practice our own."



Rishi Sunak the British nemesis?

not minding what is obtainable in their backyards in Delhi, Mumbai, Gujurat and other parts of India where persons of other colour are rather seen not as a fellow human beings but a curse based on the Hindu belief.

Can we imagine an African in the Indian Parliament or either him or her vying for Prime Minister of India? Perhaps the British are extending their hospitality beyond the limits which by implication is likely going to take away their sole matrimony.

The British by now are giving the Hindus an untimely place in the annals of history to desecrate with idols the land of the shining stars where the sun rises to the dawn with the intercessions of Christian matyrs who would by now be turning in their graves in bewilderment of what is happening in the land the bequeathed to the generations after them.

I read with astonishment the comments by Danny Webster Director of advocacy of the Evangelical Alliance of Britain whose reaction on Sunak's emergence as Prime

Again, Christian Conservative MP John Glen said he believes Sunak has integrity, drive and intelligence to restore the UK's reputation after the political and financial turmoil of recent weeks. But are these the only excuses to hand over the entire country to any person? Maybe this may open the door for Sonia Gandhi who despite her marriage to late Rajiv Gandhi the Indians have blocked any attempt to make her Prime Minister of India because of her Italian decent.

I am an advocate of equity, fairness and justice. Meaning, what is good for the goose is also good for the gander. Therefore, countries and their citizens that wants to enjoy the global pudding must be reminded that the taste must be all round and must begin first be on their door steps.

If there is justification in Rt, Hon. Rishi Sunak becoming British Prime Minister then, lets begin to see a world that is open to all without boundaries and not a world with different sets of immigration rules

and where the dreams of potential stars in all spheres of human endeavors are not shut down in some remote sea shores of Lampedusa trying to enter Italy or where walls are erected in the American Mexican border or where some global citizens end up in Asian jails or exposed to inhuman treatment in the Middle -east and other parts of the globe.

We also want to see more countries bringing forth the likes of the Obamas, the Kamalas, the Kwartengs, and the Sunaks of the world then we can be sure the world is indeed round.

“Again, Christian Conservative MP John Glen said he believes Sunak has integrity, drive and intelligence to restore the UK's reputation after the political and financial turmoil of recent weeks. But are these the only excuses to hand over the entire country, to any person? Maybe this may open the door for Sonia Gandhi who despite her marriage to late Rajiv Gandhi the Indians have blocked any attempt to make her Prime Minister of India because of her Italian decent.”



By Victor Gai

I have never been a fan of BBnaija despite the temptations around that could have lured me into getting addicted to the reality TV show. My neighbours are very good fans of the show but I don't give a hoot. Bring on football, especially EPL and serious political discussion

BBnaija: From beauty to ashes?

programs and you will pin me down.

However, I recently got attracted to BBnaija as a passive listener and observer to the news that a Taraba born ex-beauty queen, Beauty Etsayi Tukura, was expelled from the show for violating the house rules and for being violent to her housemates. For the first time, I found a BBnaija story interesting because it involves a former beauty queen from Taraba where I spent the greater part of my journalism career. By the way, proximity and prominence are two factors that influence one's choice of

news.

Since the news broke out early this week, it has been one bizzare controversy after another as we watch this charming and promising lady fall into disrepute. The local social media space here in Taraba is awash with unpalatable messages about their own daughter who has made the State proud some years back.

The 2019 Miss Nigeria even had the privilege of being hosted by His Excellency, Gov. Darius Ishaku when she won the crown. She even embarked on some humanitarian activities and was on the

path to stardom.

The 25 year old budding international entrepreneur hails from Kurmi Local Government Area of Taraba State, which is the most endowed local areas in the State in terms of natural resources. In fact, the land is blessed with some of the most charming women (it is not an exaggeration, find out yourself if in doubt)!

Meanwhile, I have read through all the drama concerning this very episode and my take is that, beauty must have shot herself on the foot. She allowed her enemies, chief amongst them the devil, to destroy her. Her enemies could have bewitched her (after all Kurmi, her local area, is famous for tales about witches and wizards), they could have kidnapped her to earn cash, in fact, they could have ended her life the way they did that promising female airforce pilot in Kaduna. They didn't do all these but chose to lure her into an unfamiliar terrain and where from all indications, she shouldn't be.

For heaven's sake, what is an ex-beauty queen doing

in a reality TV show. Does she lack work to do? I doubt it. Is it the money? Is it fame?

I guess that her modest success must have propelled her to fame and wealth.

Doesn't she have good advisers? she should be consolidating on those successes, planning on building a family and helping up coming women on how to discover themselves.

Unfortunately, Taraba State has some of the worst HIV prevalence rates in the country and young ladies are the worst affected. What hope is she giving to those young ladies looking up to her by involving in sexual escapades on international tv? The same Taraba is faced with teenage pregnancy, female out of school children and prostitution. These are issues needing attention and nobody of her type is speaking about it.

Anyway, I became interested when I read about the sex scandal between her and one of the housemates, Groovy. It is no secret now because the

beans has already been spilt. It is now true that she was provoked under the influence of alcohol by the actions of Groovy. She couldn't control herself, she resorted to violence. As a result she was expelled from the house. Then she ramped up her frustration, with a "small penis" label on her one time lover. Na wa! Groovy then responded by denying the claim saying she was only being "petty". What Groovy was implying was that she was only being sentimental about the whole thing.

But what could have driven a former beauty queen to be jealous under that particular scenario? Mind you she was gallivanting with persons not her status. The only explanation or answer I can give to this question is that she was after all, at the wrong place. She does not have any business being in that house.

Now that her reputation and integrity is under the test, it is only hoped this scandal would not destroy all that she has built, because it is indeed massive.

“But what could have driven a former beauty queen to be jealous under that particular scenario? Mind you she was gallivanting with persons not her status. The only explanation or answer I can give to this question is that she was after all, at the wrong place. She does not have any business being in that house.”

By **BULUS GAMBO**

Throughout last week, the entire women of Church of Christ in Nations, (COCIN) the world-over took time out to celebrate their annual week for the year 2022. The annual programme in the church's calendar was prepared to celebrate women folks who have continued to be a blessing to the body of Christ. This year's event was quite a memorable one which was celebrated in a grand-style and also left an indelible mark on the historical antecedents of the fellowship nation's.

Aside the normal activities in the programme of events, the women also took out time to pray for the church and the body of Christ as a whole. The week-long event also had the women embarking on encouragement visits amongst themselves in the midst of this perilous moments which the gates of hell has risen against the church.

For the President of the church, Dr. Amos M. Mohzo during a goodwill message, remarked; "all religion points to a belief in oneness and compassion that says we are all in Him together, in harmony, When one is helped all are healed. This belief is the core power of unity. One of the foundational concepts of conscious discipline that is more practical to our faith that we need to exhibit."

According to him, "Philippians 2 commands that "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather in expressing common humanity value others above yourself. Our theme for this year "Walk in Unity undoubtedly has been a challenge to all of us to rise to our responsibilities to act in Unity in every of our dealings in the body of Christ as believers."

In the words of Mohzo, "Therefore, 'practical unity' in action demands from us the totality of our commitments to the old religion taught by Jesus Christ and the apostles. Since the apostles create a unity of faith with our father, our savior and or fellow believers. No time of cause is better than now for us to be more proactive, a little more humane as more people are becoming vulnerable and discouraged in life. As you know our country is bedeviled by activities of terrorists who are killing, kidnapping and extorting huge monies as ransom from the poor masses. However, this will not deter us from executing our God given mandate of evangelism. I encourage the women fellowship to work towards evangelism in the southern part of Nigeria so that we can reach out to them with the undiluted word of God for their salvation."

In their goodwill message, the CWF Coordinator, Mrs. Godiya Kitgakka advised women that "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility while considering others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interest but also to the interest of others."

Philippians 2:3-4. As this year's theme; Practical unity means anything that concerns with real situation, actual use or experience. Generally, it is easier to say than to put to practice or action."

She prayed that the women will submit themselves to God by living in true unity by promoting true love, Godly character and attitude in order to attract God's blessings adding that, " Lets

since its establishment in 1971. The group which emanated with a prayer fellowship of the church where literacy classes and vocational skill acquisition programmes in the likes of sewing, cooking, and hygiene were taught has achieved a lot for the women of the church.

At the moment, the number of women in the fellowship has

COCIN Nasarawa Gwong women function in unanimity



fight evil and sin of all kinds and any unloved behavior that will bring division among us in Jesus name."

Interestingly, the women fellowship of COCIN LCC Nasarawa Gwong also came out in their large number to celebrate this epoch making event in style. This they did by not following to the later as outlined in the event but also held a cultural day where all the different ethnic groups in the church displayed their rich cultural heritage. Rich cultural delicacies of these ethnic nationalities were equality displayed for the church members to patronize. All the special guests including other dignitaries who patronized these dishes appreciated the energy and time the women put into the preparations of the variety of food. Some of the dignitaries who tasted the food could not hide how grateful they were, acknowledging that the women should be encouraged to do more for the church.

Some of these groups included the Mupun, Aizere, Za'ar, Birom, Anaguta, Mwachavul, Ngas and a combined performance by the different ethnic groups from Nasarawa State fellowship of the church. The one day event which took place inside the church was aimed at fostering unity of purpose for the collective benefit of the entire congregation.

Women Fellowship of the church has come a long way

increased beyond 300. This include women both from the Hausa and English sections.

Speaking during the occasion of the cultural day celebrations, Leader of the Women Fellowship in the church, Elder Jennifer Yarima noted with great delight that the women were able to stage the cultural day activity despite initial hiccups. She also acknowledged the women for standing by each other to see to the success of the programme.

She disclosed that the motive behind the cultural day celebrations was to help showcase the unity in diversity and further unite the church to become more focused adding that during the week of the celebrations, women of the church gave their all towards ensuring that the event was successful.

Yarima noted that in the coming years if Christ tarries, women in the church will continue to employ effective

strategies through prayers to foster the congregational unity and global evangelization so as to reconcile lost sheep with the Shepard.

Earlier in his sermon, the leading pastor of the church, Rev. Cletus Gwam who took his reading from 1 Corinthians 12: 12-27 praised God for the successful staging of the event.

Rev Gwam also thanked the entire women of the church for their sacrifice and dedication throughout the duration of the programme. He prayed God to reward each and every one of them.

In a three day teaching, Rifkatu Izang, immediate past COCIN Women Fellowship Leader, RCC Jos explains that the church has been divided for too long along tribal, political and economic lines.

Taking for text from Ephesians 2:14-16 the Guest speaker explained that "humility is the basic venture of life under the cross, just as pride is the real and greatest sin. It is the conscious renunciation of all human qualities that we may bear."

She noted that for true reconciliation to take place, there must be repentance, forgiveness, healing memory and inclusive salvation by faith which is the only way to unify the church.

Izang noted that the local church unity is achieved when love and truth are present in the assembly because both are essential to its blessing and spiritual progress.



IMAGES

DARIUS PRESENTS STAFF OF OFFICE TO NEW AKU UKA

The Governor of Taraba State, Ishaku Dickson Darius recently presented the Staff of Office to the new Aku Uka of Wukari, HRH Manu Ishaku Ada Ali in Wukari, Taraba State



Governor Darius Dickson Ishaku of Taraba State (right) is seen presenting the Staff of Office to the new Aku Uka of Wukari, HRH Manu Ishaku Ada Ali



Plateau State Governor, Rt. Hon. Simon Bako Lalong (CON) congratulating the monarch of the Kwararafa Kingdom, HRH Manu Ishaku Ada Ali



Gen. Theophilus Danjuma (left) with Governor Simon Bako Lalong of Plateau State at the ceremony



A cross section of royal fathers at the coronation ceremony

IMAGES

STEVEN HALFORD VISITS JOS

A renowned minister of the gospel, Steven Halford from the United States of America (USA) recently visited Jos, the State Capital for training church leaders, ministry and preaching at different places



Prophet Joseph Sunday Danyang of Global Upper-room Revival Ministries, Jos (left) welcoming Steven Halford to his office



Steven Halford (right) conducting a prayer session at one of the gatherings



A cross section of worshipers during the meeting



Renowned man of God, Steven Halford (middle) Fwenji Go'ar of The Nigeria Standard newspapers Jos (left) and Pastor Fidelis Omeje in a photograph

Photos: DANLADI DUK

Odd World

Woman faces backlash during wedding

A woman faced a huge backlash from her family after telling her sister that only three of her 10 kids could go to their wedding. The woman took to Reddit to explain that she got married in August and did not want their wedding to be too big so only kept it a small event.

She explained in the post: "We kept it small and simple and didn't want too many guests due to budget, so we only invited close family members and friends."

However, an issue arose over the invites as the bride's sister has 10 children.

"My parents and the rest of my family aren't religious, but my sister and her husband are very hardcore Christians and believe that having lots of children is God's will," explained the woman. "Obviously, inviting all of my nieces and nephews would be quite a cost. My wedding isn't child-free, but my husband and I decided it would be fairest if we only invited her three eldest kids."

The sister was less than impressed and called the bride a 'Bridezilla'

But the sister was less than impressed to hear this restriction and suggested the bride was being totally unreasonable and even called her a 'Bridezilla'.

"I talked to her about it and explained

our reasoning, but she was really offended and said that I'm picking favourites," explained the woman who remained anonymous.

"I told her I'm sorry but 10 kids is a big cost on our wedding budget and that we tried to be as fair as possible."

When it came to the big day, the sister brought her three eldest kids along but had to face questions from the rest of the guests asking where the other kids were.

The newlywed said: "After the wedding, my sister has been very off around me lately. She told me she 'understands how I feel about her babies' and said that I'm a bad sister and a terrible aunt, and has accused me of not respecting her religion and lifestyle."

In response, many have been quick to support the newlywed bride with one person writing: "If your sister was so upset she could've offered to contribute towards the costs. A consequence of having a load of kids is that people aren't going to want to cater to all of them at events because it is a big cost."

While another wrote: "I'm thinking the older children might be happy to attend the wedding where they can enjoy themselves without having to watch over their brothers and sisters."

THE MIRROR



When the media is muzzled

LAST week, the Russian government went for the arrest of a television journalist Marina Ovsyannikova for allegedly carrying out a grievous offence against her country. Even though she left the country after authorities put her on wanted list, the defiant journalist under the protection of a European state has continued to stick to her guns on her stance over the ongoing war in Ukraine. Before Ovsyannikova fled, she was placed under house arrest even as Russia is still insisting on her prosecution over allegations of distribution of information deemed false by the government.

Trouble started for Ovsyannikova after she staged an on-air protest over the ongoing war on Ukraine by her country. The journalist who was the former Editor at Channel One last March busted into the studio during a TV broadcast with a placard reading "Stop the war" and "They are lying to you".

Should the journalist be convicted, she will at least spent the next 10 years of her life in prison. For many who have not been following unfolding developments, some months back, Russia's President Vladimir Putin had unjustifiably invaded neighboring Ukraine against international laws and justified such a move.

Even as the global community was trying to come to terms with Russia's recent move against this journalist, a state in northern Nigeria also launched an attack against some media organizations including the Nigeria Television Authority, (NTA) and Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria, (FRCN) over what was described by stakeholders as the highest degree of unprofessional conduct ever imagined. Giving reasons for the closure, the Zamfara State government had alleged that these media organizations violated its provisions of the law and should be disciplined as such.

It's no longer news that media organizations in the world have in recent times been subjected to one form of intimidation or another. Just recently, an Aljazeera journalist Shireen Abu Akleh on assignment in Jenin in the occupied West Bank was killed by Israeli forces while performing her lawful obligations. Another Al Jazeera journalist, Ali al -Samoudi was also wounded by a bullet in the back at the sene.

According to the Committee to Protecting Journalists, about 34 journalists have been killed so far in 2022. Many others have also been attacked and wounded or found themselves in unpleasant situations while carrying out their legitimate work.

In Africa, unwarranted attacks on media organizations and journalists have been more pronounced in recent years. Even in practicably democratic nations of the continent, the media and journalists are not tolerated by the powers that be.

In most cases, media organizations and journalists are not accommodated by these leaders owing to the fact that many of them do not want their acts of personal aggrandizement and misrule be highlighted for people to see. For record purposes, of the many media organizations and journalists unjustifiably sanctioned and or incarcerated, leaders of such nation states have not for once been condemned for carrying out any of such brutal acts.

Some days back, while lamenting over the precarious conditions media organizations and journalists in developing nations of the world are going through, a friend of mine confident in me that such deliberate sanctions are deliberately employed by our leaders to muzzle the media from performing its constitutional roles. Most of these leaders who have no clue of transparent leadership and self centered are

convinced that they are above the laws of the land.

While many of them patronize the media during campaigns, most of them think that the operational activities of the media ends after they win their elections. It is therefore in their ideology that the press which is regarded as the fourth estate of the realm lacks obligatory mandate to supervise and monitor activities of the political class.

Thus, the hostile trending disposition of our political leaders and their consistent hostility towards the media and journalists has kept many issues away from public glare. For the fact that there are continuous problems of misinformation and lack of public understanding of government policies and programmes; this situation goes a long way in suggesting the fact that the media has unabatedly been muzzled and not allowed to perform its constitutional responsibility.

Evidently, the systematic backwards experienced in Nigeria today could be attributed to the way and manner media organizations and journalists are negatively treated in this country. When human rights are violated, the media is looked upon as a voice for the voiceless. Each and every time there is a disaster, the media is seen as the only tool anticipated to disseminate sufficient undiluted information to garner support for vulnerable victims. The media has also continued to play its role in the sustenance of democracy and ensuring that dividends of democracy are equally shared amongst the multifaceted and heterogenous communities in the country.

In terms of good governance which we are all desperately yearning for, it is only an independent media that can monitor and supervise the behavioral attitude of our political class to ensuring better comprehensive attitudinal change in our society. Since this same media and journalists fought for the liberation from the shackles of colonialism of many countries of the world securing democratic principles, any enemy of press freedom is not a friend to our global comity of nations.

This is the more reason why journalists should and or must be respected owing to the obvious fact that they have continued to sacrifice their all for the betterment of our society. Consequently, it's high time the media and its practitioners are provided an enabling environment for them to contribute to the betterment of our global community.

In this case, we must all rise in condemnation of acts of brutality and disrespect accorded media practitioners wherever they find themselves. If we intend to create a more civilized communities and establish nations based on good governance, the media must be respectively acknowledged and given the opportunity to play its constitutional role.

Practicably seeing the unending negative unfolding developments as regards unpleasant treatments meted vulnerable journalists across the world, stakeholders must begin to sanction countries that deliberately embark on unwarranted attacks against media organizations and journalists. Its high time stakeholders in the media industry also begin to hold political leaders to account on how they have unconstitutionally muzzled the media the world over.

Since we all agree that the media and journalists have sacrificed a lot towards transforming our respective societies for the better, we must also do the best we can towards protecting journalists and encourage them do their work efficiently. The bottom-line however is, nobody should be allowed to muzzle journalists as their expected obligations are aimed at transforming nations of the world for the better.

View Point

Negotiating multifaceted identities for national development

By DOGARA ISHAYA MANOMI

APART from saying your name, if you were asked, "who are you?" What would be your answer? Would it be about your tribe (e.g. "I am Zaar, Igbo, Fulani"), religion (e.g. "I am a Christian, Muslim, Traditionalist"), region ("I am a Northerner, Southerner, Middle-Belter"), profession ("I am a teacher, nurse, politician"), social status ("I am a king, a governor, a leader"), or nationality ("I am a Nigerian")? As simple as this question may sound, therein lies the root cause of most cases of terrorism, ethno-religious conflicts, favoritism, and nepotism in Nigeria.

This is a question of social identity. Social identity or group identity simply refers to how you define who you are in relation to your membership of a particular group and the value (e.g. self-esteem, sense of belonging) and emotion (e.g. happiness, hope, comfort) you derive from belonging to that group (Tafjel, 1978). For example, if you are asked, "who are you?" and you say, "I am a Christian," or "I am a Muslim," or "I am Zaar by tribe," you are stating your social identity as opposed to individual identity which would be mainly your name, your gender, or anything peculiar to you alone. Being a communal culture mainly, social identity normally overrides personal identity. This is why a sense of honor and shame (social) rather than guilt and innocence (personal) are the major determinants of people's actions, attitudes, and assessment of right or wrong. It accounts for why people feel less guilty if they can get away with corruption without being caught. Depending on the situation and place, we answer the social identity question "who are you (we)?" differently, since we belong to different social groups. But if you were to re-arrange these multiple social identities, which one would be first and which one would be last?

IS THERE A "NIGERIAN NATIONAL IDENTITY?"

Is there such a thing as "Nigerian National Identity?" An average Nigerian, in my estimation, has at least five significant multifaceted yet intertwined (but unequal) identities that play out more in communal or societal life, and which have significant impact on national solidarity, peace, and development. Those five multifaceted identities include: clan identity (e.g. Nghasiti and Morass among the Zaar people of Tafawa Balewa, Bauchi state), tribal identity (e.g. Ngas, Alago, Ibibio), religious identity (e.g. Christian, Muslim), regional identity (e.g. Northerner, Southerner, Middle-Belter), and national identity (e.g. Nigerian). However, two of these identities



Buhari

seem to be more prominent and salient to many, if not majority, of Nigerians, namely, religious and tribal identities. A simple indicator to this fact is that, most cases of terrorism and violent conflicts in Nigeria are religious and/or ethnic motivated. For example, the case of Boko Haram and the violent conflicts between Fulani herdsmen and farming tribes like the Tiv, Berom, etc. trope

Hence, it is accountable to argue that terrorism and ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria are primarily a function of "negative solidarity" that results from a sense of ethnic and religious social identity at the expense of national identity. In such a case, people regard their religious, sectorial, or ethnic identity as the most salient identity which deserves their absolute loyalty at all costs. As a result, any perceived disrespect or threat to that social group from outsiders is treated with extreme force, leading to terrorism and ethno-religious conflicts.

NEGOTIATING A TAPESTRY OF IDENTITIES: SALIENCE AND TROPE OF NATIONAL IDENTITY

For a multi-religious, multi-cultural, and secular nation (as Nigeria self-identifies constitutionally) to foster peaceful co-existence, national solidarity, and national development, it is time we renegotiate and promote a national identity above any other identity, at least in public domains. The good news is, promoting national identity in public domains above any other sense of social identity does not

diminish the value of other social identities that we hold dearly. Instead, it places them in their rightful contexts, where they will find utmost expression without negatively affecting "the other" nor disrupting peace and stability. Promoting national identity as the salient social identity would imply conscious efforts in making national symbols more conspicuous and religious and cultural symbol less conspicuous in public spheres. While both Christians and Muslims in Nigeria are actively trying to outdo each other in public visibility, evident in the way churches and Mosques are situated in strategic locations in cities and towns, worship in public spaces are promoted, and church worship and Sallah programs are done using loud speakers that compete to out-loud others, it is time to pause and ask ourselves: have our competing religious externalities contributed more to mutual understanding or rivalry, mutual trust or distrust, peaceful co-existence or conflicts? The answer seems obvious, right? The more religious and ethnic-conscious Nigeria becomes, the more we experience religious extremism and ethnic bigotry that promote violence in forms of terrorism and ethno-religious conflicts. This calls for a renegotiation of our sense of identity.

WAY FORWARD: DEVELOPING A MORAL VISION FOR "THE NIGERIAN IDENTITY"

From my stay, study, and interactions with people in different developed countries

(Germany, UK, USA, Belgium, among others), I have observed that a sense of national identity has been entrenched in their thought-pattern such that majority of the citizens regard their national identity as their salient identity, and every other sense of social identity contributes or functions in the service of national identity. National identity is unmistakably the only umbrella identity that can promote peace, cross-body solidarity, and national development.

NATIONAL CARDINAL VIRTUES? A CASE FOR A VIRTUE-ORIENTED NIGERIAN IDENTITY

Developing a national identity, however, requires articulating national "cardinal virtues." To develop national cardinal virtues, we can glean wisdom from ancient Greek philosophers (e.g. Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics) who articulated four cardinal virtues that would summarize all other virtues: wisdom, courage, self-control, justice. These virtues were considered necessary for human flourishing. Those cardinal virtues provided the moral compass that would guide every unit of society to contribute to peaceful co-existence. The Greek cardinal virtues, however, need to be contextualized to address the peculiarities and quandaries of the Nigerian state.

In view of the current multifaceted and competing identities and the state of terrorism and ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria, what virtues do you think should be our

"national cardinal virtues" that can find expression in each religion and ethnicity? In my opinion, the following should be our "Nigerian cardinal virtues": tolerance, peace, justice, self-control. The National Orientation Agency and relevant governmental and non-governmental organizations can champion the course of a virtue-oriented national identity and engage in public awareness campaign. Parents and teachers are to complement the effort by integrating and inculcating these virtues in children at home and in school. Religious leaders are to preach and teach it to their congregations. Musicians, media personalities, artists, film makers and actors, etc. to integrate these virtues and a vision of national identity in their acts, and so on. In this way, we can imagine and emerge an overarching Nigerian national identity that trumps any "negative solidarity" (E. Durkheim) and fosters peace, patriotism, national solidarity, and development. In this way, Nigerians will learn to be more in solidarity with virtue and their nation than with any other sense of identity. For example, if any office holder acts unjustly in giving most political appointments to people from his tribe, religion, or region at the expense of the "federal character," his own people will not stand in solidarity with him, but with the virtue of justice, and would also lend their voices in protesting and calling him to distribute political appointments justly, in the interest of national peace and development. This may sound like some utopian imagination, but it is possible. Rwanda is a good example of a nation that (a) rose from the ashes of a deadly ethnic-identity-motivated genocide and promoted national identity above all other identities, which has resulted in sustainable national peace, stability, solidarity, and development. Nigeria can do the same.

In conclusion, it is time to stop taking pride (and actually be ashamed) in being described as one of "the most religious countries in the world," if our religious identity marker does not promote peace and development. Instead, it is time to renegotiate the multifaceted identities and their resultant "negative solidarity," leading to a "Nigerian national identity," which is to be encapsulated in a "national cardinal virtues" of tolerance, peace, justice, and self-control, which will promote human flourishing. In this way, we can truly imagine and emerge a Nigeria of our dream, such that, when you are asked "who are you?" you would be proud to say, first, "I am a Nigerian," or better still, "I am Nigeria" (without relegating your religious and ethnic identities), because a nation is its people, and the people are the nation!

Rev. Dogara Ishaya Manomi, PhD is a Lecturer, Theological College of Northern Nigeria (TCNN).



Lalong's attends installation, congratulates JUTH CMD

AS part of activities last week, the Plateau State Governor Simon Lalong attended the installation ceremony and presentation of Staff of Office to the Aku Uka, paramount ruler of Taraba State, His Royal Highness Manu Ishaku Adda Ali Matakhitsewen.

Lalong was among the dignitaries who graced the occasion in Taraba State. He celebrated with the people of the state over the official ascension to the throne of their monarch, months after his selection by kingmakers of the kingdom.

Taraba Governor, Dairius Ishaku, Gen. Theophilus Danjuma, The Sultan of Sokoko, traditional rulers from across states were among numerous personalities that were also at the event.

There was also cheering news for Plateau State on the appointment of a new head for Jos University Teaching Hospital. Governor Lalong immediately met with the new Chief Medical Director (CMD) of JUTH, Dr. Pokop Bupwatda, at the Plateau Government Lodge, Asokoro Abuja shortly after receiving his appointment letter from the Minister of Health. The governor tasked him to



give his best professionally in running the hospital.

Bupwatda's appointment was approved by President Muhammadu Buhari after heading the health facility in acting capacity for many months.

As Director General of the APC Presidential Campaign Council, Governor Lalong alongside the party's flag bearer, Asiwaju Ahmed Tinubu and other stakeholders were in Kano to meet with Kano State entertainment industry 'Kannywood', and support groups of the presidential team.

Aside receiving a grand welcome with different performances and displays by Kannywood artistes, the presidential campaign team were received by the state Governor, Abdullahi Ganduje. They equally held meetings with different groups, and met with leaders of religious groups and other stakeholders to woo their support for the APC ahead of next year's elections.

Earlier, before embarking on the Kano trip, Governor Lalong had on Sunday attended a thanksgiving service in honour of the Chief Judge of Plateau State, Justice David Mann's twin grandchildren who were dedicated in church.



News

'Proper upbringing of children, solution to insecurity'

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

EVANGELIST Abraham Onye has said that the only solution to rising crimes and insecurity in Nigeria is for parents to embrace the spirit of proper upbringing of their children. Evangelist Abraham Onye who is the General overseer of the Peace of God Outreach Ministry expressed dismay over the inability of both the government and the society to guarantee the safety of lives and property of Nigerians. Onye while speaking at the 2022 Men's Day celebration of the Christian Evangelical Fellowship of Nigeria, (CEFN) Zonal Headquarters church in Lokoja, stressed the need for attitudinal change amongst Nigerians which he said can only be achieved through proper upbringing of children. He also identified deviation

from God's path as another reason for Nigeria's present predicament. He added that with good leadership in the offing, Nigeria will be economically great. This year's Men's Day which has 'Effective Parenting, Pathway to Celebrating God's Goodness' as its theme gingered the guest speaker to pray unto God to equip parents with wisdom and resources to ensure proper upbringing of their children. On some abandoned federal projects in Kogi State, Evangelist Abraham Onye attributed the non completion of Ajaokuta Steel Company in the state to lack of political will of the past and present governments. Evangelist Abraham pointed out that Kogi State is naturally blessed with resources that could sustain the state without waiting for federal allocations but illegal tapping of such resources has forestalled the

growth of Kogi economy. Earlier in his address, the Chairman of the Fellowship, Mr. Noah Ocheni (JP) enjoined parents to be watchful of their children's peer groups and other associations that could lead them to social vices. While advising children to



Benlo

Ponzhi Tarok inaugurates BoT, committees

From Israel Lar, Langtang

THE Ponzhi Zinni who is also the acting Ponzhi Tarok, HRH Nimnan Langnim has inaugurated members of the board of trustees (BoT), Constitution Amendment Committee and 2023 I'm O'tarok (Tarok day).

The inauguration was held last Friday at Ponzhi Tarok's Palace, Langtang in Langtang LGA of Plateau State.

While admonishing members of BoT, Constitution Amendment Committee and the 2023 I'm O'tarok members, the paramount ruler charged them that the task before them is enormous, hence, the need for them to work hard.

Addressing the members of the BoT and the two committees, the National President of the Ngwang Ishi O'tarok, Ambassador Nanpon Danjuma Sheni congratulated all members of the 3 committees. He noted that their selection is based on

merit and oneness of the Tarok nation.

Moreso, he charged the members to consult massively for wider participation of all and sundry towards the achievement and success of their various assignments. And also wished them well as they hit the ground running.

Responding on behalf of all members inaugurated, Arc Cephas Lar who is the Chairman, Board of Trustees promised not to disappoint the Tarok nation.

In the same vein, he assures of their commitment and that they would adhere strictly to the terms and reference of their duties by doing the right thing to the growth and unity of Tarok nation.

Members of the Board of Trustees include Arc Cephas Lar as chairman BoT; Constitution Amendment Committee has Barrister Nanfa Dalen as its chairman while 2023 I'm O'tarok has Dr Nanzing Nden as its chairman while Israel Nanjul Lar is the vice chairman.

Feature

Preserving monuments like the Zaria Mosque

The need to preserve and conserve the replica of monument the Zaria Masallaci (Mosque) in Museum of Nigeria traditional architecture (Motna), Jos. SULE PHILIP SHALLANGWA writes.

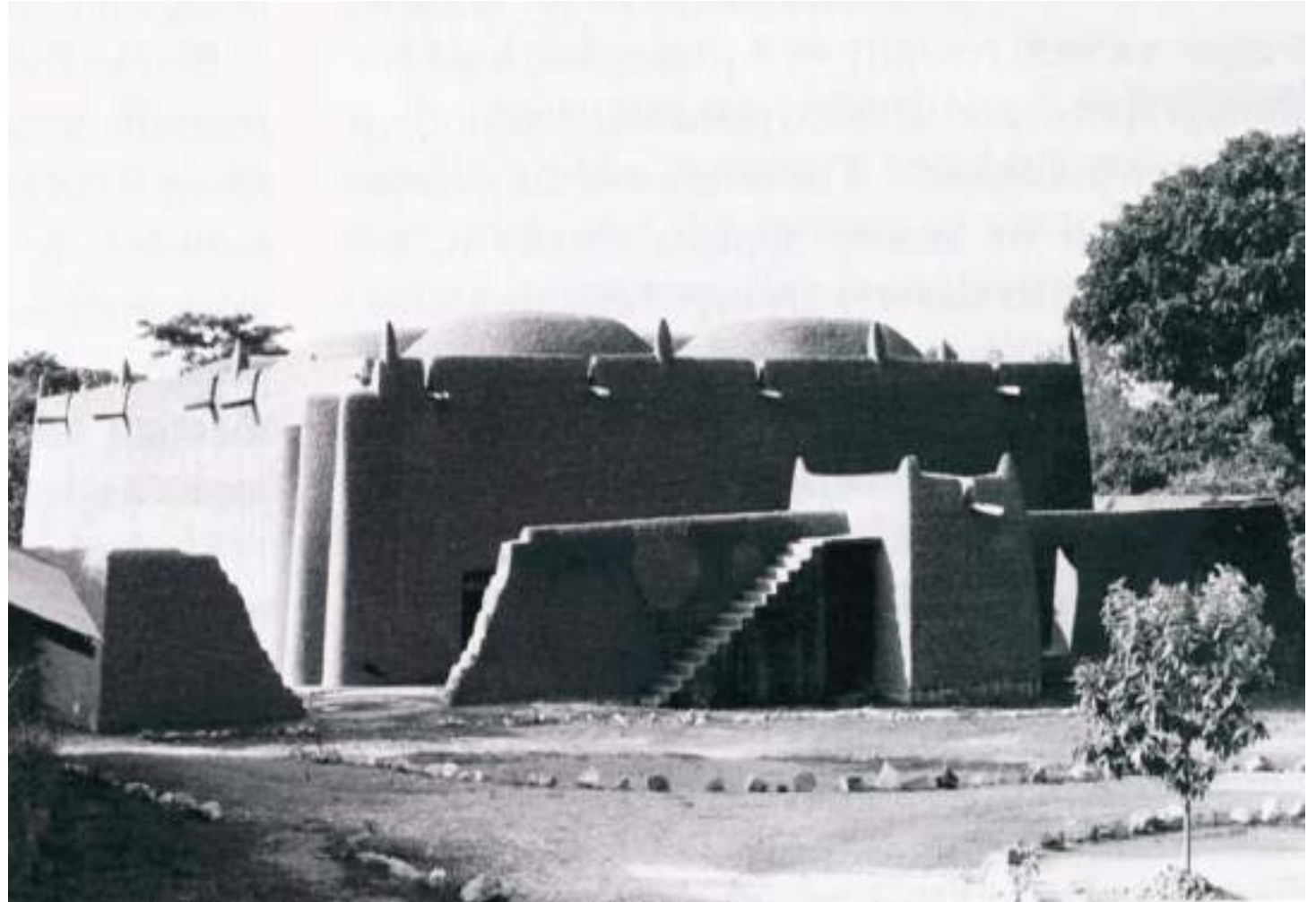
THE Masallaci juma'a in Zaria, the main hall of which is called Uwar Masallaci, was erected during the reign of Abdulkarim (1834-46) of the Fulani Katsinawa dynasty the Fulani installed king who ended the centuries-old Habe autonomy of Zazzau. The decision to build the mosque was made significantly enough, on the advice of Mohammed Bello Sultan of Sokoto (1817-37), and with his moral and material support. It was on his orders that it was assigned to the famous Sokoto master builder mallam, Mikhaila. Who enjoyed the honourable title of Babban Gwani (supreme expert) and also kakan maina (Grandfather of the Builders) Mikhaila arrived in Zaria with his children and grandchildren and was generously received by the Sarki, who gave him a hundred slaves as labourers. He also provided him with a ward near the city market place and this site remained the family residence until recently, retaining the name Babban Gwani ward. Babban Gwani slaves were settled in a ward, unsuwar, baya south of the mosque. They stayed there after the building was completed and remain in charge of its maintenance under the supervision of Mikhaila's son and grandsons.

To design a Masallaci so elaborate and as will be seen, to read just standardized forms into a new spatial composition required some time. The creative process involved the concurrence of a mature esthetic imagination and technological master piece and the conclusion reached during this period of incubation needed to be precisely defined before even the foundations of the building were delineated on the ground.

It is the consensus that Mallam Mikhaila designed and erected the whole Masallaci complex: The hall, and the three gates on the north, west and south sides (Kofar Masallaci Arewa Yamma and Kudu respectively).

When the building was completed, Zaria was visited by the Sultan of Sokoto Muhammadu Bello, who inspected the Masallaci and considered to be "excellent", with nothing to be altered or improved. If this story is correct it would subject the approximate date of completion of the Masallaci, haraba and zauruka as before 1837 which was the year of Sarkin Bello's death.

It is not clear whether the court house, majalisa na sharia (a court of law and justice) standing at the north-east corner of the mosque was erected by Mallam Mikhaila himself or by his sons. It



is traditionally accepted in Zaria that the older master did nothing more in the city than the mosque itself. So it is probable that the court house was built by his sons. Furthermore, it was told that the court house was erected during the reign of Abdulkarim i.e before 1846.

It is known that Mallam Kikhaila established a dynasty of builders, the member of which for many years bore his honorable title, Babban Gwani. This ended when Mallam Balarabe was too young at the time of the death of his father Ismaila the last Babban Gwani of Zaria, to inherit the title Balarabe and his descendants were known as Sarkin Magina.

The Zaria Masallaci may certainly be considered as the most noble achievement of Nigerian ecclesiastic architecture. Its spatial composition was most impressive and imaginative and the structural skill of its designer has never been equal in any other mosque in the country. The architect applied practically every device even used in the most developed constructions of northern Nigeria, enriched them with a number of his own creativity combined them in a serene environment. Even taking for granted his complete master of the building craft which had been developed for generations and was displayed in the best monuments of Habe/Hausa/Fulani architecture, there is still the probability that Babban Gwani, through his

appellation of distinction. Possessed some professional secrets of his own. His mastery designs was harmonious and impressive to everyone. But what is not obvious is that he used some technical devices of his own in the processing of the building materials. Today only a few remaining examples of similar process exist. The use of dorowa dafara Kabaruwa and various grasses seem to be the last vestiges of the old science. Perhaps that was how he succeeded in erecting the surprisingly bold fabric, a cohesion of strict Fulani planning and artistic license in spinning a complex web of stanchions, arches, ribs and domes.

MOTNA: Is an acronym which stands for Museum of Traditional Nigerian Architecture. It was established in 1965-1970. Originally, 64 acres (25 hectares) of land was marked out for the construction of 48 ethnic structures (buildings). The sites are organized with groups of buildings representing the various ethno-geographic groupings of Nigeria. It is great significance that the scenario of each site should be as close as possible to its character and religion. Also the relationship of groups were practicable and analogous to their actual geographical position. Consequently, the whole area present a miniature map of Nigeria. The first foundation was laid in 1972 and so far most of the buildings erected are on the

northern wing of MOTNA corresponding to the northern lands of Nigeria.

The preliminary master plan of the site as well as the precise scales drawings are made from measured field notes 1958-1966 at the Research field centre from tropical architecture a Goanack Tenical University Poland under direct supervision of Prof. Z R. Dmochowski. The leading and most sought after labour forces are the Traditional master builders. It was accepted the as a Dominican role that the actual construction of any edifice should be done by craftsmen brought to Jos from the actual place where the copied building was originally erected. Thus assumed, it will be a unique museum of its kind in Africa and due to its special characters, unique to the world. Presently, the original building in Zaria is no more in existence for long what people used to relay on was the replica that was in Jos. The building that originally looked beautiful and in good condition and that had attracted visitors from across the world had totally collapsed due to Plateau weather and climatic condition that brought the condition of the monument to the state of ruins over the years is now getting attention from the new management of National Commission for Museums and Monuments under the able leadership of the new Director General Professor Abba Isa Tijjani: whom through his effort have been collaborating with

public private partners to bring the entire monument replicas in Jos that had lost its glory to the original dreams of its existence.

The major challenge now is that most of the original builders and the labourers had passed on, coupled with scarcity of local building materials, shortage of manpower, adverse effects of weather condition, e.g high rainfall leading to collapse of monuments and effects of rodents, reptiles and termites. Others include maintenance cost of monuments, heritage and sites that is capital intensive, inadequate skilled labourers, environmental degradation and insufficient funds for constant maintenance, to mention but a few.

By and large, a monument of such importance that have historical, spiritual, educational, memorial and architectural value should not be allowed to collapse like that, hence, the need to preserve and provide priority attention to this excellent centre for research and learning, offering tourism potential and development opportunities, employment opportunities and serving as source of revenue to the government which can also attract a lot of students from various institutions on excursions, etc.

Shallangwa is a Chief Superintendent of Monuments National Museum, Kaduna.

Sports

Olowookere reveals why to Nigeria's historic win

FLAMINGOS head coach Bankole Olowookere is convinced that hard work and not luck was the secret behind Nigeria's first-ever appearance at the semifinals of the FIFA u17 Women's World Cup.

Newsnow said that, the Nigerian cadet team, on Friday afternoon, defeated their United States counterpart 4-3 on penalties (full-time scores: 1-1) in the quarterfinals of India 2022.

Before the delayed kickoff, the United States, Group A winners, were the favourites to claim a win against the West Africans.

And the Americans did not disappoint, as they dominated for long stretches of the match, out-shot the Flamings 27-8, and racked up 15 corner kicks to Nigeria's four.

Player of the match and Nigerian descent Onyeka Gamero was a constant thorn in the flesh of the Flamings, forcing a goal-line clearance just before stoppage time.

But the Flamings were resolute in defence and showed cool nerves to score four of their penalties and book their place in the World



The Nigeria u17 women's national team won a World Cup quarterfinal match for the first time on Friday

Cup's final four.

But for Nigeria's coach Bankole Olowookere, the Flamings were not inferior to the Americans.

And the veteran tactician believes his team's hard work and preparation gave them victory over their quarterfinal foes.

"As a country, Nigeria is bigger than just the quarterfinals, and the victory against the USA was a reward for hard work," Olowookere said.

"We are not destined to be in the quarter-finals, we are a big nation in football so we just needed to work things out and God allowed things to work for us; that's why we are here today."

Nigeria reached the

quarterfinals stage of the FIFA u17 Women's World Cup three times in 2010, 2012, and 2014 but failed to go beyond.

In the Flamings' first-ever semi-final appearance in the tournament, the Nigerians will face the winner of the quarterfinal clash between Colombia and Tanzania.

Osimhen hands Napoli record-equalling 11th straight victory

VICTOR Osimhen was the match winner for Napoli as they equaled their best-ever winning streak of 11 matches across all competitions.

Goal said that, Osimhen started upfront for Napoli against Jose Mourinho's Roma at the Stadio Olimpico and after cutting a lonely figure for

most parts of the game, the Nigerian did the damage 10 minutes from time.

Osimhen showed great strength to get on the wrong side of Roma defender Chris Smalling before firing a powerful right-footed shot past Rui Patricio for his fourth league goal of the season.

It was the first start for Osimhen after recovering from a knee injury two weeks ago, having started from the bench in Napoli's wins against Ajax Amsterdam and Bologna.

The Nigerian fed on scraps for a big chunk of the game and nearly provided an assist in the 60th minute when he controlled the ball well in the box before passing to Juan Jesus who fired wide.

Osimhen's first real opportunity arrived nine minutes later when Piotr Zielinski started a counter-attack after winning the ball on the edge of the Roma box. He then passed to Hirving Lozano who was already on the move, and the Mexican found the Nigerian but the lanky striker fired just wide

Flamings target first-ever Women World Cup final

Mexicans 2-1 for a place in the quarters.

In the quarterfinals, the Colombians thrashed Tanzania 3-0 to set up a date with Nigeria.

Nigeria has bossed Colombia around at this level, maintaining a hundred per cent win record against the South Americans, with two wins out of two.

The two teams met for the first time at Azerbaijan 2012, where the Flamings ran out

3-0 winners.

In their second meeting at Costa Rica 2014, Nigeria edged a closely fought encounter, beating the Colombians 2-1 to qualify for the quarters.

The Flamings made three quarterfinals appearances before India 2022, while Colombia never made it past the group stage.

This is the first time both countries will play in the semifinals of the World Cup.



Will the Flamings qualify to the U 17 FIFA Women World Cup final today?

Unuanel calls for use of VAR for CAF



Plateau United were beating by Esperance with a controversial penalty

SAMSON Unuanel demands the Confederation of African Football to introduce Video Assistant Referees in all CAF Inter-club competition games.

A questionable penalty was awarded against Plateau United in their second round, second leg CAF Champions League match against Esperance. With scores tied 0-0 after 83 minutes, Egyptian referee Ibrahim Nour El-Din awarded a penalty to the hosts following Ifeanyi Emmanuel's foul on Mohamed Ali Ben Hammouda. Replays showed that the infringement occurred outside the goal area. Ben Romdhane took the ensuing kick which he dispatched past goalkeeper Suraj Aiyeseo. With the score tied 2-2 on aggregate after full time, the Tunisians progressed to the group stage on away goals.

The former Sunshine Stars and Enyimba handler claimed the error could have been avoided if VAR was in use. Unuanel told **GOAL.**

"It is sad to see Plateau United crash out in that manner. Errors like that one

against Esperance are a bad advert for African football. The damage has been done but CAF should make it a point of responsibility to ensure VAR is used in all matches of the CAF Champions League and CAF Confederation Cup.

"Referees are human beings and are bound to make mistakes, but that with this technology, it will be reduced to the barest minimum. If VAR is being used week in and out in other continents, Africa

should also do everything possible not to lag."

The veteran tactician also feels the Peace Boys did not help their chances of progressing with their slim win in the first leg. He added: "In a competition of this magnitude, you need to score more goals at home. That was where Plateau United got it wrong against the Tunisians. Esperance needed a goal to qualify and they worked it out. Well, they still have the Confederation Cup to compete for and I hope that they make use of the experience garnered there."

Following their elimination, Fidelis Ilechukwu's men got demoted to the CAF Confederation Cup where they would be aiming to reach the group stage via a play-off.

Enugu Rangers are the first Nigerian team to reach the final of the CAF Champions League in 1975. However, they lost the final to Guinea's Hafifa FC.



Haaland

'Man City happy with Haaland's arrival

KEVIN De Bruyne says Manchester City have had no problem adapting to the arrival of Erling Haaland because they are used to playing with a striker.

Goal said that, there were some fears that City would have to adjust their playing style to get the best out of summer signing Haaland as Pep Guardiola often played without an out-and-out striker in attack. But De Bruyne says they have experience playing with similar forwards to Haaland, citing Gabriel Jesus as an example.

"I don't think it is really different, I think it is just different players. We have played with a false nine, but we have also played with Gabriel Jesus up front or with Raheem [Sterling]," he explained. "So, it is maybe not the same as Erling. But if you see Gabriel Jesus at Arsenal, he is a real

number nine. It depends on the games and now we play with a real out-and-out striker. He makes different movements, so I think you have to adapt a little bit to the way he wants to play also, but I think it is going quite well."

Haaland has had no issues settling in at City. The Norwegian scored two more goals as his side beat Brighton 3-1 on Saturday to take his Premier League tally to 17 from just 11 matches. He has also scored five goals in three games in the Champions League.

Haaland became the first City player to score in seven straight home matches since Sergio Aguerro did so back in February 2018.

Sports



At the 2022 US Open, Carlos Alcaraz became the youngest men's Grand Slam champion since compatriot Rafael Nadal in 2005

Swiss Indoors: Alcaraz beats Draper in three sets

World number one Carlos Alcaraz came back from a set down to defeat Britain's Jack Draper in the opening round at the Swiss Indoors in Basel.

BBC SPORT said that, the 19-year-old Spaniard won 3-6 6-2 7-5 in his first meeting with British number three Draper, 20, ranked 45th.

Alcaraz took his third match point on serve to edge an entertaining match.

He will play Dutchman Botich van de Zandschulp or France's Adrian Mannarino next.

Draper capped an impressive first set by breaking the US Open champion's serve for a second time, doing so to love, to move a set from victory.

However, Alcaraz responded with a double break early in the second set as the Spaniard opened a 4-0 lead on his way to levelling the contest.

Draper broke back to reach 4-4 in the decider, but Alcaraz was able to get over the line following his decisive break in the 11th game - despite also facing two break points in a tense finale.

Alcaraz is contesting his second event since winning the US Open title and

becoming the top-ranked men's player, having suffered a first-round loss to David Goffin in Astana earlier in October.

He will make his first appearance at the season-ending ATP finals in Turin, which begins on 13 November.

Meanwhile, Draper is set to contest the Next Gen ATP finals, which features the world's top players aged 21 and under, in Milan from 8

November.

Andy Murray is in action against Russian qualifier Roman Safiullin in Basel on Tuesday, while Norwegian second seed Casper Ruud meets Switzerland's Stan Wawrinka.

The Swiss Indoors, won a record 10 times by home player Roger Federer who announced his retirement in September, offers €2.1m (£1.8m) in prize money.

JESSICA Pegula won her first WTA 1,000 title with a straight-sets victory over Maria Sakkari at the Guadalajara Open.

BBC SPORT revealed that, American Pegula needed just 70 minutes to wrap up a 6-2 6-3 win over her Greek opponent, and as a result rises to number three in the world rankings.

The 28-year-old now has 41 WTA main draw match victories this season, with only world number one Iga Swiatek (62) and Ons Jabeur (46) winning more.

"I'm just super excited, relieved, happy, all the emotions," she said.

"Just a lot of emotions, but super excited just to get a big title next to my name. That was something I really wanted this year, and I kept saying it was one of my goals, so to be able to accomplish it at the end of the year is really cool."

The final marked Sakkari's second match of the day, having earlier completed her rain-delayed semi-final against Marie Bouzkova, which she won 7-5 6-4.

Pegula converted five of eight break points against the 27-year-old world number six, who struggled

Guadalajara Open: Pegula wins first WTA 1,000 title

with unforced errors.

Pegula had beaten four Grand Slam champions - Victoria Azarenka, Sloane Stephens, Bianca Andreescu and Elena Rybakina - on her way to the final.

"All the people I beat, my draw to get here in my opinion was honestly the toughest out of everybody," said Pegula,

who reached three Grand Slam singles quarter-finals this year.

"I was a little annoyed when I saw the draw come out.

"But the way I've been able to manage it throughout the whole week, today handle my nerves and emotions, I'm super proud of myself."



Pegula

Ryder Cup golf course approved following appeal

PLANS for a multimillion-pound golf course at a country park in Greater Manchester have been approved following an appeal.

BBC SPORT said that, the plan for Hulton Park - including over 1,000 homes and a primary school - had been rejected by councillors due to the impact on greenbelt land.

Developers hope the top class 18-hole course near Westhoughton will be chosen to host the 2031

Ryder Cup.

A formal bid for Bolton to host the competition will be made next year.

Bolton Council approved plans for the scheme in 2018, which included 1,036 houses built on greenbelt land, despite hundreds of objections.

In 2020, the secretary of state said it could go ahead if the proposed golf course won a bid to host the Ryder Cup in 2031 or 2035.

Developers Peel L&P revised its previous plans to include more parkland

after public feedback.

However, it was rejected in February, a month after the area's planners recommended the scheme for approval.

Peel L&P appealed and planning inspector Dominic Young finally granted full permission the scheme.

It will also feature a clubhouse, golf academy, driving range, practice course, adventure golf course and academy building with sports and learning facilities, a golf shop and cafe.

The inspector also

granted outline planning permission for up to 1,036 homes, a village centre, village hall, community allotments, primary school, short stay holiday accommodation, cabins and lodges and a range of other retail, leisure, recreation, community and food drink-related uses.

Additional highways infrastructure and the regrading of land to accommodate the golf course will also be factored in.

Richard Knight, director of planning and strategy at

Peel L&P, said: "We put forward a robust and compelling case at the public inquiry and are pleased that the inspector has recognised the long-term benefits a revitalised Hulton Park will bring to the economy of Bolton and the North West."

Campaigners against the plans, which included Westhoughton-born actress Maxine Peake, had described the scheme as a "housing project in golf clothing" and claimed the developer would build more houses after the Ryder Cup.

McIlroy returns to top of world rankings with CJ Cup win

RORY McIlroy returned to the top of the world rankings for the first time in more than two years by retaining his CJ Cup title in South Carolina.

BBC SPORT said that, the Northern Irishman claimed a one-shot win at Congaree Golf Club, shooting a four-under-

par 67 to finish the tournament on 17 under.

American Kurt Kitayama also hit 67 on Sunday, and briefly drew level with McIlroy thanks to a birdie at the 12th.

However McIlroy made three straight birdies of his own to pull clear.

"It means a lot," said an emotional McIlroy after claiming his 23rd PGA Tour win.

"I've worked so hard over the past 12 months to get myself back to this place. I feel like I'm enjoying this game as much as I ever have.

"I absolutely love the game of golf and when I go out there and play with that joy, it has definitely showed over these past 12 months. It feels awesome."**Swiss Indoors: Alcaraz beats Draper in three sets**

Holding a one shot lead coming into the final day, McIlroy knew a win would take

him above Scottie Scheffler and to the top of the world rankings for a ninth time.

A second place finish would also have seen him leapfrog Scheffler, because the American finished in a tie for 45th on one under.

For McIlroy, birdies at the 14th, 15th and 16th holes gave him a three-shot cushion over his closest rival Kitayama.

The lead allowed the four-time major winner to come home in relative comfort despite bogeying the last two holes.

"It's a big achievement, I'm really proud of myself right now," he continued.

"The journey of trying to get the best out of myself, that's the satisfying thing. Now it's all about going forward and trying to just keep this going.

"I never feel like I've figured this game out, I don't think I ever will figure it out, but every day I wake up trying to get closer."



McIlroy



Developer Peel L&P hopes the site near Westhoughton will secure the 2031 Ryder Cup



Quest



writer

Longji Aaron Bako

FRAGMENT

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Ecosystem services: Emphasis on pollination, seed dispersal

Function of ecosystem

THIS is used by secondary producers to create even larger variety of biomass goods for human consumption, ranging from food and raw materials to energy resources and genetic materials. Processes such as photosynthesis and nutrient uptake by autotrophs and conversion of energy, carbon dioxide, water and nutrients into variety of carbohydrate structures, pollination services all fall in this category.

Materials are continually been obtained from organisms and their parts directly for human benefit. For instance, fish, honey and other animal products are commonly sold in economic markets. UNFAO, 1993, reported that annual world fish catch amounted to about 100 million metric tons and valued between \$ 50 billion and \$ 100 billion and is the leading source of animal protein. The variety of vegetation serve as food to man also timber, wood, fuel wood, fibre, fruits, nuts, mushrooms, thatching, spices and pharmaceutical and industrial products and so on.

Grasslands are important sources of usable human goods and services including animals used as important labor force such as camels, mules, bullocks among others and those whose parts and products are consumed such as milk, meat, wool and leather. The grasslands are also useful for animal grazing especially in the tropics.

From the above classification and examples, it is clear that some of the ecosystem services can be regarded as direct benefits (example; meat, fuel wood, timber and the likes) while others indirect. The indirect benefits are as important as the direct benefits, for example, pollination and seed dispersal which will be discussed further.

Seed Dispersal

A fully grown plant remains rooted in one place as long as it lives. For plants to move to new sites beyond the parental shadow, seeds need to be dispersed. The seeds of some plants such as the dandelion are modified for wind dispersal some others by water such as the seafaring coconut seeds. Many other seeds yet are dispersed by animals as many in this category have co-evolved with animals for their seed dispersal. Mutualistic congruency between plants and vertebrate frugivores dispersing their seeds initially suggested plants-disperser coevolution and prompted some co-evolutionary



models.

Seed dispersal is an important ecological process that provides a number of ecosystem services and economic benefits such as removal of seeds from parent plant, where seed and seedling mortality is high, escape from seed predators, enhanced germination, increased gene flow and regeneration in and restoration of natural and disturbed habitats. It is a key process for the spatial and genetic structure of plant populations for the regeneration of disturbed habitats and for vegetation dynamics in general.

An understanding of dispersal is needed to assess recruitment limitation in plant communities and to predict population responses to global change.

Dispersal as co-evolution

Plants have co-evolved with some animals for the dispersal of their seeds to suitable environments and conditions. Interactions between fruiting plants and their seed dispersers are now largely recognized as diffuse mutualisms with seeds dispersed by an array of fruit consumers, whose behaviour and composition may vary both geographically and temporally, the tight co-evolutionary relationships between plants and seed dispersers are considered rare and limited to cases where seed size constrains a potential disperser assemblage, or to areas where the disperser community is impoverished. Vertebrate dispersers deliver

ingested seeds to different microhabitats, this act of dispersal from the maternal environment is important in the diversification of germination timing, Plants dispersed by vertebrates have evolved seed appendages or coverings that are ingested and digested by animals that later eject the seeds in conditions suitable for germination. Dispersal can be carried out on the exterior of the animal or can be carried out after seeds have passed through the digestive system of the animals.

Endozoochory vs Exozoochory

Endozoochory: Seeds enter digestive system of animals, generally when they ingest plant structures closely associated with seeds, these are subsequently spat out, regurgitated or defecated in conditions suitable for germination, as seeds pass through vertebrate guts, they experience a variable scarification which serves as seed treatment. This process might diversify their timing of germination that is, asynchrony which may be advantageous in unpredictable environments. Passage of seeds through mammal guts changes the timing of germination, generally accelerating it and increasing its diversification that is, asynchrony. Prompt germination often enriches plant fitness by allowing early seedlings to outcompete later seedlings. The Elephants for example ingest and subsequently disperse seed of

many plants such as *Parinari excelsa*.

B. Exozoochory: This explains how animals carry seeds on their exterior and further disperse them to areas they may find suitable to germinate. This can be seen in the dandelion and other plants that have burs and / or spicules that stick to animal bodies and are further dispersed.

Pollination occurs when pollens are transferred from one flower to another resulting in fertilization and seed production. It is an essential ecosystem service that contributes to both the maintenance of biodiversity and food production. Pollinators are vital components of both wilderness and farmland ecosystems, they are therefore regarded as keystone species due to the disproportionately large role they play in the community structure.

It is estimated that 75% of crop species identified as globally significant, require a degree of animal pollination. Fruits and vegetables, which add variety to the human nourishment and provide essential nutrients, tend to depend greatly on pollinators.

Wild pollinators are important for agricultural production and it has been shown that diverse pollinator assemblages increase pollination services as a result of complementary resource use arising from variations in morphology and behaviour among pollinator taxa. In many developing regions, wild pollinators are the sole provider

of pollination services available, particularly for small-scale farmers, because of the high costs associated with maintaining managed colonies and perhaps limitations in technology to maintain a managed colony.

PLACING VALUE ON THE ECOSYSTEM?

The issue of conferring value on the ecosystem and its services has been undergoing a lot of arguments. Some argue that it is impossible or unwise, that we cannot place a value on intangible resources as human life or other aesthetics. Meffe and Carrol, (1994) argue that when construction standards are set for roads, bridges and others. We are automatically valuing human life because spending more on the project will eventually save lives. The world today is in an economic age. Financial language is one that we understand in our discourse. It is an age of financial literacy and nations measure how well they are faring by measures such as GDP, profits and income. Books that nowadays emerge as best sellers are those on financial literacy. Little wonder there are headlines from the environmental protection such as, —global ecosystems are worth \$33 trillionll, —Bats' estimated monetary value is placed at \$3 billion annuallyll and so forth.

Opinions can be contrasting on whether or not nature and biodiversity should be conferred economic valuations but as it is established throughout this write-up, nature provides us with direct goods and services which are valuable economically and affect our economy directly, nothing seems wrong in discussing and measuring or analysing those values to gain them better appreciation.

The services enjoyed from the natural ecosystems are very difficult or impossible to replicate. While it is also difficult to place direct monetary value on these services, what is possible is calculating some of the financial values. For instance, 80 percent of world's population depends on natural medicinal products, the value of pollination services rendered by animals such as bees, bats and birds for free can worth trillions of dollars, for example, in U.S only, it is estimated at 6 billion dollars annually.

To be continued next week