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PLAFEST: Celebration of cultural unity

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For a week running, the maiden Plateau Festival of Arts and Culture was staged in Jos, bringing together cultural groups in the state and outside to a cultural extravaganza. Plateau State has been blessed with abundant culture, if anything; the utilization of such can sustain the peace the state has yearned for ages. KATDAPBA Y GOBUM revisited the Festival, taking a look at the implication and what it portends to the state if continued.



Senate fails to grill CBN Deputy Governors

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This blame game must stop

The Federal Government recently accused state governors for being partly responsible for the rising rate of poverty in the country. It blamed the state chief executives for prioritizing the construction of bogus infrastructure such as bridges and airports in cities rather than improving the lives of the people in rural communities.

This unfortunate blame game started when members of the Senior Executive Course 44 of the National Institute of Strategic Studies, Kuru submitted the report of their findings in a comparative study on strengthening local governance in Nigeria, which discovered that local governments are not allowed to operate as they should. The report stated in very unequivocal terms that until local governments are given free hands to operate, they will continue to remain underdeveloped.

Buttressing the allegation, Minister of State for Budget and National Planning, Clement Agba attributed the poverty rate to governors' misplacement of priority at the State House shortly after a recent Federal Executive Council meeting. Agba noted that 72 per cent of the nation's poor reside in rural communities but that governors had abandoned that critical demography, preferring to spend state resources on the capital cities instead.

As if to confirm the obvious, state governors are basically functioning in their state capitals and are not working in the rural areas. And, the democracy that we preach about is delivering the greatest good to the greatest number of people. However, from our demography, it shows that the greater number of our people live in rural areas, yet governors focus less on these areas. Considering the fact that 70 per cent of the people live in rural areas, producing 90 per cent of what we eat, something urgent needs to be done. What is most annoying is the fact that 60 per cent of what they produce is lost due to post harvest loss and it does not get to the market.

The Minister also lamented that despite the federal government's intervention to alleviate poverty, the results do not reflect the amount of investment made in the area. He said, "In the course of working on the national development plan, we looked at previous plans and asked why they didn't do as much as expected. We also looked at the issues of the National Social Investment Programme.

However, it is our submission that as much as the Federal government blames the governors for not fighting poverty in the country, they too share in the blame. For when the head is sick, the whole body is affected. We also recognize that the governors have consistently complained about the over-centralization of power in the exclusive functions. For the federal government to be spending humongous sums of money with little to show for it, speaks volumes about its activities.

The truth of the matter is that the local governments need autonomy to function properly because if the local communities are not effectively governed, we will continue to complain that bandits have taken over our communities. It is the absence of government in the local communities and the ungoverned spaces that allow bandits the free rein to operate.

Therefore, both the Federal government and state governors should own up, take responsibility and function effectively and stop apportioning blames. Rather, there should be serious supervision and checks henceforth as duties are delegated. Our Houses of Assembly members should also rise to the occasion by diligently performing their responsibilities.

Senate fails to grill CBN Deputy Governors

The Nigerian Senate on Friday failed to interrogate the two newly re-appointed deputy governors of the Central Bank of Nigeria, Aisha Ahmad and Edward Adamu, to give an explanation on the apex bank's cash withdrawal limit policy.

There have been nationwide mixed reactions over the CBN's cash withdrawal policy which limits cash withdrawal for individuals to N100,000 per week and corporate bodies N500,000 per week.

On Wednesday at plenary, the Upper Chamber mandated the committee on Banking, Insurance and other Financial Institutions to get clarifications from the two CBN officials when they appeared for their re-appointment screening.

But when the two deputy governors appeared before the lawmakers on Friday, they told the Senate committee that it was high time the country embraced the policy.

PUNCH reports that the lawmakers merely asked the apex bank officials to explain the policy without further probing on the details of the policy.

Responding to the Senators, the CBN's deputy governor on Financial System Stability, Ahmad, told the Senate committee that the cash withdrawal limit policy was not new as it was introduced in 2012 during former President Goodluck Jonathan's administration, starting with Lagos State.

According to Ahmad, in the past, transactions were limited to bank branches but had now expanded to include multiple electronic platforms as well as a geometrical increase in the number of agents from 88,000 to 1.4 million.

At the end of Ahmad's presentation



Lawan

of simple explanation on the policy, the committee, chaired by Senator Uba Sani (APC Kaduna Central), reportedly asked her to "take a bow and go" as moved by the Whip of the Senate who doubles as the deputy chairman of the committee, Senator Orji Kalu (APC, Abia North) and seconded by Senator Danjuma Goje (APC, Gombe Central).

But in a dramatic twist, the "take a bow and go" verdict by the committee chairman didn't appear to sit well with some senators.

Hence, the senator representing Bayelsa West Senatorial District, Senator Seriake Dickson, told newsmen after the screening that the timing of the CBN policy was wrong.

The unsatisfied lawmaker lamented that he had expected his colleagues to grill the nominees at such a time that the country was going through hardship, adding that it was important to examine the readiness of institutions, the economy and small business owners not in the banking system.

Senator Dickson said, "They should have been grilled in national interest; we are not here playing and if our country is going through a terrible situation and circumstances and if at this point in time, we have nominees of Mr President who have been managing the economy in such a way that people are not comfortable and we are talking about a screening exercise and people just say, 'take a bow and go', then that's not fair enough."

According to him, since the current administration would soon end, it was best to leave the policy for the next administration.

"The CBN can introduce the policy; we can debate it, but not to rush the country into this cashless policy when you have a national outcry. I think we need to reexamine this and the Senate committee, of which I'm a part, should have more deliberately questioned the CBN nominees on the policy," Dickson said.

Oil marketers agree to end fuel scarcity

The Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority (NMDPRA) and other relevant organisations in the oil sector agreed Thursday to end the lingering fuel scarcity across the country in 48 hours.

Speaking to journalists in Abuja after a closed-door meeting with the State Security Service (SSS), the operators said depots would work seamlessly for 24 hours daily to end petroleum queues across the country.

Nigeria's lingering fuel scarcity became worse in recent weeks as several filling stations failed to sell petroleum products. Operators of filling stations where petroleum products were available sold at prices higher than the government's pump price.

The government initially claimed the problem was caused by flooding, but the shortage has continued long after floodwaters receded.

Daily, Nigerians queue for long hours at filling stations to buy petrol for their cars and generators. Others patronise vendors who sell petrol in gallons in the so-called black market.

The government has failed to act to end the shortage, repeatedly claiming that it has sufficient stock and that buyers should not panic.

However, speaking to journalists on Thursday, Clement Isong, the Executive Secretary, Major Oil Marketers Association of Nigeria, (MOMAN), said operators would ensure that they implement the decisions reached at the meeting.

"We did have a meeting in regards to the challenge to fuel distribution and they were confirmed as we also know that

there is enough supply in the country," he said.

Mr Isong said there have been some distribution challenges and these were discussed and certain decisions have been taken to enhance distribution.

We do agree and believe that as these decisions are implemented the queues will subside and there will be a happy Christmas for everybody.

"We have committed to working with the NNPC to continuously improve operational efficiency to achieve operational excellence," he said.

Also speaking, Umar Ajiya, NNPC's chief financial officer, noted that "Indeed we had a meeting earlier and we have confirmed that in this country we have over 1.9 billion litres of petroleum motor spirit (PMS).

We have also made procurement for suppliers of similar volume from now until the end of March after the election," Mr Ajiya said.

He explained that a commitment was made at the meeting to continue selling the product at a price agreed with the regulator to all marketers especially the Independent Petroleum Marketers of Nigeria (IPMAN) members. He also pledged to provide avenues for depots to uptake to curtail the profiteering that they have experienced in some depots.

"We have also committed and directed our operation team to engage in 24 hours loading in the next couple of days, as well as to ensure that some outlet sells 24 hours without compromising safety and security in order to bring quick relief to Nigeria," he said.

On his part, Femi Adewole, the Executive Secretary, of the Depot and Petroleum Products Marketers

Association of Nigeria, (DAPPMAN) blamed the challenge of sourcing foreign exchange as one of the reasons for the shortage.

"The challenges to marketers, especially depot owners, were explained and the meeting agreed and noted the forex component challenge and its input into our cost, which we should in all ideal cases recover reasonably. That was agreed upon.

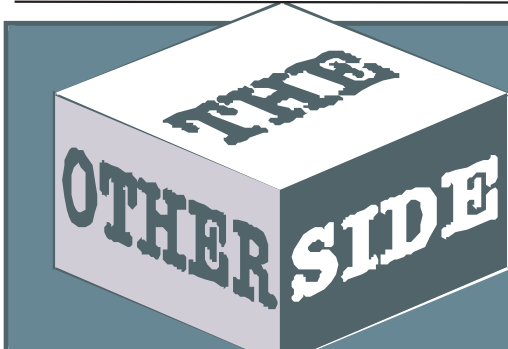
We also agreed that based on the assurances of products given to marketers, provided by NNPC, we will ensure that, going forward, all depots work 24 hours, based on the security risks appraised.

"We will work 24 hours to ensure that the queues in town are reduced. Our retail outlets, spread nationwide, will also ensure that they sell 24 hours based on our security situation appraised. I want to assure Nigerians that going forward, they will be able to get fuel in filling stations without too much hitch or harassment," he said.


In his remarks, Akporeha William, the president National Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers (NUPENG), said it will mobilise all its members across the country to be all ready to move products across the country and again to shun sharp malpractices like redirecting petroleum products to where they are not supposed to go.

"I think this is necessary because where products are meant to go they will continue to be moved to the place.

"And again, we request our tanker drivers to please be on alert and ensure too that they will drive 24 hours to mobilise petroleum products across the country," he said.



With
**Katdapba
Y. Gobum
On Sunday**



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"It may not have been out of place that several of those who came to see him must have been assisted in their cases on pro bono basis. He was a man for all. And always, people were about him. I just wonder if he had time for his family, because he was always involved in causes for the sake of people. He did because he gave the same measure of discipline at home as much as for those outside".

SOMETIMES in 1988 or thereabout, I had decided that I was going to travel to Lagos to look for a job in three media houses: Champion, Punch and Vanguard; where Jonathan Ishaku, Chris Mamah and Teye Akiode were editors. I knew only one of them, but I had notes for the others, and I was prepared to give a trial; even if I failed to accomplish my heart's desire.

I had dreamt of being a journalist; wherever it was going to be I had no idea. To be under the tutelage of any of the three then was an honour. Back in Jos then I had in my hand two appointment letters: One by the Plateau State Ministry of Education, and posted to Ganawuri; the other from COCIN, posted to Girls' High School, Gindiri.

While waiting to travel to Lagos, I remember it was the late Barnabas Gomam, one of Miskom Martin Puepet's closest associates that insisted I went to tell him my problem. I told him I didn't know him to the point that I should approach him. He insisted if it was Miskom Puepet, he never had room for protocol; meaning I was free to see him without a prior appointment. He insisted I visited his office, even if I was just going to establish a relationship for tomorrow.

I did. And it was a sweet experience, if you must know. That started a relationship that made me get in contact with several names. Several years later, I was to share a neighbourhood with him at his office at No 4 Barracks Road near St Theresa's Catholic Church. Each day, it was difficult to escape his face and of the several friends, associates and workers who made the place, the people's office.

I saw several people; men and women of different political persuasion come to visit him on a daily basis. He had as guests Christians, Muslims, Italians, Arabs and all manners of people needing assistance and or counsel. Of course, there were political associates who needed to settle certain issues about politics; and to be fair to him, to be assisted.

Several times, I avoided him; but when it became obvious that I was always talking to those who came to see him, he would tell them: 'Gobum is my neighbour, he sees more of my visitors than I do'. Truly, I stole none; yet his humility and warmth were thoroughly infectious. They both stuck, and for no reason have I regretted meeting him.

I told him it was a learning process which I needed, and he understood. To tell you, it helped me when I led the Plateau State Council of the Nigeria Union of Journalists. Such people I often met in his office, I saw in them a desire for a formation of a

Miskom Puepet: Remembering a man of peace



Late Miskom Puepet

movement to move Plateau State and place it where it should be. He often told me, there are lots of things we needed to do, only then can the state sell its potentials. No wonder, in his quest to change what he perceived was lacking, he once contested to be the governor of the state.

Before long, the office was sold to another politician, Senator Solomon Ewuga. Sadly to many who wanted him close by, he had to relocate to Abuja to start an office of his law firm, Miskom Puepet and Company on Suite 2/3, Silla Zeika Plaza, Utako District, Abuja Municipal, Abuja, Nigeria employing several vibrant young hands. Today, they are a testimony of what he wanted them to become later in life.

It is not for us to state the reasons for his relocation, however, there comes in the life of a man, when certain decisions, though painful could be taken. Today, people leave where they were used to ply their trade in the federal capital. That does not mean one should be restricted to an environment. Perhaps moving to Abuja was by all means traumatic, but settling down may have been less stressful given the connections that his name could draw.

This was one of such. It was gathered that the relocation took many by surprise; and made some even angry. But a man has got to be one: He established himself as soon as he got to Abuja. Such can be seen in the capacity of his conviction and quality in reasoning, if he was to take a decision.

Those who know the late

Miskom Puepet are quick to point out that he was dogged on the fight for justice; above all he was a patriot 'simple, approachable, calm but firm on issues when established to be serious. In conviction, he is assertive on them and so never take him for a pushover'. If anyone did that, such a person, would, for long remained surprised.

It may not have been out of place that several of those who came to see him must have been assisted in their cases on pro bono basis. He was a man for all. And always, people were about him. I just wonder if he had time for his family, because he was always involved in causes for the sake of people. He did because he gave the same measure of discipline at home as much as for those outside.

The organization I work for benefited from his services. He was, we were told co-counsel with Barr Isaac Dimka for the Standard Newspapers in Jos when they defended Clem Oluwole, Editor, SUNDAY STANDARD and his crime reporter, Steve Raymond, on trial under Decree 4. Such period was a difficult one for the media and its practitioners generally, as the capacities of many media houses and souls of practitioners were tried by the obnoxious decree.

Suave as ever, he couldn't have been a push-over, if you ever thought so. He was determined for several causes that are needful, but particularly for a united Plateau. His calculative mien and assertive disposition was perhaps one of the reasons he ventured into politics. Politics, without doubt was in the family, if one

considers Miskom and his brother, Oumar Shittien.

Don't get me wrong, initially I thought it was 'a people's office for assistance. I thought he ran an NGO where people came to receive assistance. He was such a generous person, and gave time and resources as if both were going out of fashion. One wonders if all lawyers are in his mold: Give and never be bothered that one was helping the causes of people, who would not give him anything in return. When several years he had come to know what I do for a living, he gave me leads on what to write and or analyze.

His death on November 21, 2018 was a rude shock to those who know him. But they may not have known that he had prepared himself to travel 'home'. It has been on the lips of many who should know that he sought for confession and forgiveness from those he may have wronged in the course of life's journey.

He played politics as one who indeed understood Plateau and its people. If he is kept side by side with any other, he would first go for the people he has come to appreciate over the years. It is little wonder that during the Presidency of General Ibrahim Babangida, he aspired to lead Plateau State in 1991 under the National Republican Convention. His kinsman, Ambassador Fidelis Taggun went on to win that election to govern the state from 1992-1993.

During this period, Miskom coordinated the Presidential Campaign Organization in Plateau State of Mallam Adamu Ciroma under the National Republican Convention in 1992 running to 1993.

Not satisfied that his ambition was not fulfilled, he again tried his luck in 1998. This time around, it was under the banner of APP. Luck was again not on his side as the candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party, Chief Joshua Dariye coasted home to victory by becoming the occupant of the Rayfield Government House.

Sometimes in 2003, he was on the side of PDP as Coordinator, Obasanjo/Atiku Presidential Campaign. Such was the character of the man, who, once he had taken a stance on an issue he pursued it until it came to an end.

I moved to his office neighbourhood in 1998 and saw how people trooped to his law office on number 4, Barracks Road. Such was his acceptability with the ranks that months after, on a daily basis; he received people from all walks of life on solidarity urging him to keep faith alive with their aspirations.

After all, I have heard several

people confirm that, if given the opportunity, he would have made an excellent governor; and some added: He was 'another governor Plateau never had'. He was a stickler to the cause of his people. He believed he had something to offer to Plateau, it was however not to be during his life time. But he was able to serve the state and country in various ways.

He loved Plateau passionately; and because of that love, it consumed his time and energy. If you thought there was one who loved the state, wait until you hear of what he used to do for the state and had his plans materialized, they would have changed the course of things. God never wanted it that way.

Since leaving the services of the Plateau State Government as Ag Chief Magistrate in 1980 and going into private practice; he was board member of various organizations and blue chip companies, one being that of Julius Berger Plc representing Plateau State Government and that of Community Development Foundation, 'a poverty alleviation foundation put together by a number of NGOs notably the renown Ford Foundation'.

He dared to be different, no matter what it cost. He had certain principles that he could die for while alive, as such became points others used to see him as a 'hard man'. Indeed even his family misunderstood him for that. I guess not now anymore, given the tributes said about him on his burial day, November 30, 2018.

Today, this can be rightly said of him as recalled Matthew Kuju of the EggonNews: You were a great, passionate, relentless but decent fighter against whatever you perceived was wrong. Another Governor Plateau State never had! His gentleness and humility are rare to find. I never got close to him but I knew him from some people who worked closely with him and I really admired his simplicity. His transparency was such that he would neither fence his house nor even put curtains to cover the sitting room. From afar you could see through his house. That was one of the things I liked about him. I don't know if that's how he lived through because since the creation of Nasarawa State, I never got to hear much about him again. But truly, when he aspired for governorship of the then Plateau State, I rooted for him. What a loss to humanity and I guess gain to the angels!

After it all, it is time like Obed Dashan wrote to 'take consolation from his life and replicate in generations to come. We come, live and die. We touch lives negatively or positively. Blessed be those whose life impacts others'.



Wickedness in high placed

ONE of the best steps President Buhari has taken is change of currency. It was revealed by the Central Bank that more than 50 percent of Nigeria's cash was in the hands of a negligible number of wealthy Nigerians. They won't deposit it in the bank to be used up for loan and better our economy. The money has been stashed away, probably in anticipation of the election, to influence votes or buy them out rightly.

We have heard of those who hid cash in septic tanks. There are those who hid so much money in damp area for a long period of time that it developed mildew and stuck together. The owner was forced to bring out the money when he heard about the new directive that everyone has till January 2023 to change his currency. And any large amount being changed at once will attract EFCC at one's tail.

Like magic, after the FG's directive, we have seen a marked improvement. There is more money in circulation than and the situation is improving by the day. But trust Nigerians, they must always look for a way out.

There has been a lot of traffic to village markets on their market days. Since the announcement co-incided with the harvest period, the wicked cabal have decided to use the cash they have stashed away to buy grains which are being hoarded. The unfortunate thing is that instead of the normal fashion that harvested grains used to go down, the prices have skyrocketed instead.

Chatting with a villager, she said, the prices had to go up because the stinky rich who have stashed away I'll gotten wealth have enticed the simple farmers into selling them as much farm produce as they wanted by paying more for them. That is why the prices of the new corn, beans, millet, rice, guinea corn etc are competing with the old price which used to be much higher.

The middlemen whose stock in trade was buying grains harvested from farmers to hoard and sell when the prices have tripled or doubled in price, are in a delima. Tori don baje! It is not business as usual.

As usual, consumer protection mechanism is silent. The common man is left to navigate his way out of the woods. The government cares less as far as they are untouched. Can you believe that the price of unprocessed rice is #30, 000 from the farm?, Something that used to go for seven thousand Naira. Where are we heading to?

In the past, no matter how bad thing got, our local foods were untouched. Currently, the reverse is the case. The situation has gone from bad to worse.

Who would have thought any governor would owe civil servants salary in this dispensation. But from every indication, civil servants have not seen the end of it. This is injury time.

Some months ago, my sisters in company of my maternal uncle went to an exclusive bar in Abuja. The drinks in that place was ten times the price in a normal bar. My sisters said they felt terrible taking a simple drink in a wine glass dressed complete with cucumber at the tip, at the cost of fifteen thousand Naira. Next to them, some young stars sat down and without much ado, began ordering for champaign. Each order came with candle lightening that sparkles and illuminates the place which attracts attention. It looked childish until my sisters noticed the amount charged for each order: #250, 000 and they ordered it 5 times.

The young boy footing the bills won't be more than 18 years. My sisters said all the while, he was shaking his head sideways to the music steadily moving his hands to the rhythm like nothing matters. You could say son of a rich man or woman spending his parents money (most likely, I'll gotten wealth).

By the time my sisters left, it was one million and two hundred and fifty. One of my sisters said she could not boast of two hundred and fifty thousand in her account and yet a child came and ordered for himself and cronies drinks worth for N250, 000 each five times amounting to one million, two hundred and fifty thousand. How unfair.

In this country, such wicked acts are not surprising. Remember the Mainagate, the pension fund saga where an individual would damn all consequences and divert funds meant for a specific purpose to his pocket. In the case of Dadukigate, funds meant for equipping our security operatives were diverted to private pockets. And due to that insensitivity and wickedness, most of Nigeria's vibrant security operatives perished at the warfront.

Such wickedness abound in Nigeria. Among the common people, the people who take the trophy in wickedness are those who make fake or counterfeit drugs. Their actions have killed so many people, including babies, children directly or indirectly.

Second in line are people who sell harmful substances. Sellers of goskolo, hard drugs etc don't deserve to live among decent people. Their business is a death sentence on the lives of their customers, the leaders of our tomorrow.

Thirdly, are people whose profession has earned them the trust of the people but turn around to use the same profession to haunt the public, innocent souls. These include bad eggs among security operatives, journalists, medical staff, those in the legal profession.

Whatever we do, let's remember that we will give account of all our actions on the last day. As 2023 approaches, may God help us to choose the right leaders.

NEWS

By EZEKIEL DONTINNA

Our gift is the completion of Jebu-Bassa/Vom road- Barry

FORMER Plateau State Commissioner and elder statesman, Hon. James Barry, has appealed to the Rescue Administration of Governor Simon Bako Lalong, to fulfill the promise made to complete the road linking Miango town and mobilize the contractor handling the contract to site as their parting gift.

He made the appeal Thursday, in an interview with **SUNDAY STANDARD** shortly after the commissioning of APC Coalition Support Group campaign office in Miango town of Bassa Local Government Area of Plateau State.

The elder said, "I want to use this medium to appeal to the government of the day that our beautiful party gift as APC members living in Jos-North and Bassa LGAs of the state is the completion of the road from Jebbu Bassa to Vom. Let the contractor be mobilized to site and that will be our party gift and you will see the votes that will come for APC."

"I know that the Captain of the Rescue Administration is a man of his words and will fulfill the promise made recently to Irigwe people. We want to remind him that we are still hoping and waiting to see the contractor handling the road back to site so that it will serve as a beautiful party gift to the APC members in the state", he appealed.

On his part, the District Head



Lalong

of Miango, His Royal Highness, Daniel Chiga, prayed that the APC wins so that it would continue with the good work of completing the Miango/Vom road for business activities to strive in and around the axis because the Irigwe people have been faithful to the APC government since 2015.

He commended the Rescue Administration for ensuring that peace returns to Irigwe land and prayed that peace would permanently be in the land so that normal activities

would return because no society strives in the face of insecurity and attacks.

Also, the APC Chairman of Bassa Local Government Area, Hon. Chogo Yakubu, appealed to the Governor, Simon Bako Lalong to redeem the promise made to Irigwe Chieftdom about the road construction so that, they would be able to confidently move from one house to another canvassing for votes. This is because all the big shots of Irigwe land are in APC.

NDIC to strengthen consumer protection mechanism

By **DORCAS PANKYES, Abuja**

THE Managing Director/Chief Executive, Nigeria Deposit Insurance Corporation (NDIC), Mr. Bello Hassan stated that the Corporation will continue to strengthen its consumer protection mechanism towards effective resolution of complaints made to it over transactions with insured institutions.

Speaking at the Corporation's Special Day at the 43rd Kano International Trade Fair On

Thursday with the theme "Unlocking AFCFTA for Nigeria Economic Growth and Development", Bello stated that the NDIC, in collaboration with other safety-net players, will continue to be resolutely committed to keeping the financial system safe and sound, not only to bolster confidence, but to strongly serve its role of intermediation in support of the AFCFTA implementation in particular, and the economy in general.

According to him the mandate, vision and mission of the Corporation is centred on protecting depositors and contributing to the stability of the financial system.

Bello further explained that the Corporation has always demonstrated strong and unwavering commitment to its depositor protection mandate through deposit guarantee, banking supervision in collaboration with the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN).

"I am happy to inform you that between January and November 2022, the Corporation has successfully resolved 248 complaints and helped depositors recover over N8.3billion from their respective banks."

"While all our complaint platforms are active and effective, we have observed that over 95, representing 38.3% of total complaints came through our zona offices, 24% through our Toll-Free Help Desk and 37.7% through our other platforms."

He however encourages all depositors and other bank customers to continue to avail themselves of the opportunities provided by all complaint channels towards resolving issues with their insured institutions.

"We also like to call on depositors of banks in liquidation to continue to utilize the same platforms to file their claims to the Corporation for reimbursement."



Mr Bello Hassan

POLITICS

Engage in active politics to ensure credible leaders

By DUMAH RANDONG

- GovLalong

GOVERNOR Simon Bako Lalong of Plateau State has tasked Church leaders and followers to engage in active politics and ensure the emergence of credible leaders.

The governor said power is not given on a platter of gold and as such Christians must actively participate in the political process so that the right people would be elected into office. He noted that the era where Christians used to assume the bystander status only to lament at the end was over.

Lalong stated this at the 102 General Church Council (GCC) of the Church of Christ in Nations (COCIN) holding at the Church's headquarters in Jos, recently.

Represented by his deputy, Professor Tyoden, the governor further called on Church leaders to guide their followers on the electioneering process especially now with the tempo of political activities on the rise.

The 102 General Church Council which began Monday is expected to end on Friday on 2023 theme of the Church: "Seeking the Peace of the Land". It will offer an opportunity for it to take stock of its achievements within the year under review and focus on the future.

While congratulating the church for the annual event, Governor Lalong however thanked the church for its close collaboration and constant prayer and support to his administration.

President of the Church of Christ in Nations, Rev Dr. Amos Mohzo while presenting the report of the Church' activities within the period between May and December this year, appreciated God for his sustenance in line with the vision and mission of the church.

Dr Mohzo thanked the collective efforts of the Church to fight undesirable elements within it who wanted to thwart the unity in the Church, noting that the task of taking the gospel to the unreached could only be achieved by united and one body of Christ.

According to him, those who still believe in the ideology embedded in tribalism, selfishness, greed and egocentrism should be considered as a fresh field of evangelism within the Church as these sectional interests were cancerous to the Christian faith.

The COCIN President who spoke on national issues bothering on security and the church, expressed disappointment over the failure of the government to protect its citizens even as he said recent attacks in Bokkos which resulted in the dead of many people and properties without a single arrest leaves much to be desired.

He advised Christians to defend themselves within the provision of the law while also urging them to be prayerful and watchful.

Mozho said the church in this season of politics and election plays a vital role and called on denominational leaders, national and state Christian Association of Nigeria, CAN to be careful and listen to God clearly and emphatically by doing what God desires as individual Christians and not as church denominations, so that the tragedies that have befallen the church in Nigeria in recent times



Lalong

don't repeat itself.

On evangelism and mission which was the core task of the church, the COCIN President said all hands must be on deck to ensure that the mandate given by God was fully adhered to.

He frowned at the rivalries between pastors especially in Pieteritzburgand Mpumalanga, South African Mission Fields while in Malawi and Uganda, there was a steady growth. He added that in the United Kingdom, there was much need for the church to serve on the diaspora mobilisation which will deepen its involvement with pioneers and open more doors for synergy.

He disclosed that efforts have reached advanced stage to begin academic activities at Karl Kumm University Second Campus Gindiri starting with the Faculty of Science and Computing next year.

Also on fraudulent transaction carried out by some FCMB staff on gratuity account belonging to the church to the tune of 57169557.25million, Mozho said they were able to recover it through the efforts of police, EFCC and court.

In their goodwill messages, the Agwomizere, Rev Isaac Wakili and the AttahAtten of Ganawuri, YakubuChaimang commended the Church for its vision and evangelism.

The royal fathers advised the

government to be proactive in protecting citizens. They consoled the church for the loss of members who died as a result of insecurity. And also charged the Church on the need to be cautious in issuing Certificate of Occupancy to people with questionable character.

North East stakeholders throw weight behind Obi/Baba



Obi

WITH few months to the 2023 general elections, the North Easterners across the country under the umbrella of North East stakeholders has thrown its weight Behind Labour Part (LP) presidential candidate, Peter Obi and senator Yusuf Datti Baba

Ahmed. During the Interactive session on the theme: "Good Governance: The Gateway to secure our people and the land," the convener of the group, Isaac Balami said they are supporting Peter Obi, Datti for the sake of justice, equity, fairness and to also fight for their own right.

From JIDAUNA YANUNG Abuja

HoR to executive: Reverse decision on rail project

THE House of Representative has urged the Executive arm of the Federal Government to reverse its earlier decision on the East-West coastal rail project by continuing its implementation, considering its economic importance to the Nation.

The green chamber also urged the Federal Government to review its 25 year Railway strategic plan part of which is to unbundle and commercialise the Nigeria Railway Corporation (NRC).

The House further mandated its committee on land transportation to liaise with Federal Ministry of Transportation and other relevant government agencies to ensure that the East-West coastal Railway project is captured in the 2023 budget estimates.

This is coming on the heels of motion and adoption of the motion on "Need to continue the East-West rail line project" sponsored by Hon. Dozzie ferdinard Nwankwo who recalled that the Federal

Executive Council (FEC) had, in April 2017, granted approval for the construction of 1,400km Standard Gauge East-West coastal rail line linking Lagos-Benin-Sapele, Warri Akamkpa-Ikom, a branch line from Benin to Asaba Onitsha - Port Harcourt onne Deep seaport.

He noted that the opting out of Exim bank of china the

contractor to execute the project, the Federal Government, in March, 2021 made arrangements for \$ 11 billion alternate counterpart funding with Standard Chatter Bank out of the \$4 14.4 billion required to execute the project adding that in August 2021, the FEC approved the award of a contract valued at \$11.175 billion.



Gbajabiamila

Atiku's wife canvasses Northeast women's votes

From ABBAS GUNGURA, Bauchi

growth and development of the society.

According to her "we are gathered here in Bauchi State today in order to sensitize our fellow women on what they should do in 2023 and the need for them to obtain their voters card which they will use to send APC off", she said.

She said women should not be seen selling their votes for whatsoever reason, as doing so, will mortgage the future of the generation yet unborn thereby further degrading the image of women in the eyes of their male counterparts politically.

"I beg you in the name of God, don't give your vote to anyone for whatever amount, shun moneybag politicians who will be coming

to buy your votes with N2000 or N3000", MrsAtiku cautioned.

Princess RukayyaAtiku said that the occasion has the presence of PDP women representatives across six states of the Northeast and was meant to mobilize the entire women in the geopolitical zone to vote massively for the PDP across board.

While thanking Governor Bala Mohammed and his wife, Hajiya Aisha Bala Mohammed for hosting the event, Mrs. Atiku expressed appreciation for the massive turn out of women at the venue.

The Princess said from what she saw today in Bauchi, she was convinced that Governor Bala Mohammed and his wife, Gimbiyan Bauchi are in total control of the state and will surely deliver the state to PDP 100 percent.

Earlier speaking, the First Lady Bauchi State, Hajiya Aisha Bala Mohammed, urged the PDP women in the region to vote for God-

fearing leaders in the forthcoming general elections.

She assured that despite APC's maladministration in the country, Nigeria is going to bounce back and record more development and economic growth when the right people are voted into leadership positions.

Aisha Bala Mohammed, warned the women against selling their votes for instant gratification from politicians. She said that God will not come down to elect leaders for them. Adding that every woman should wake from past dreams and elect Atiku Abubakar at the top and Bala Mohammed as second term Governor of Bauchi State as well as all candidates of PDP in the Northeast, for the good and peace of Nigerians.

"You have to make the right choice by voting the right leaders through the use of your PVCs. And we all believe that the right people to vote are in PDP from top to toe," Gimbiya advised women.



Hajiya Rukayya Atiku Abubakar left with Hajiya Aisha Bala Mohammed right at Multi-purpose indoor Sports Hall Bauchi, during Northeast Women Town Hall meeting in Bauchi

SUNDAY POLITICS

Bature commissions APC support group's campaign office

BY EZEKIEL DONTINNA

PLATEAU State Chairman of the All Progressive Congress (APC), Hon. Rufus Bature, has commissioned an office for the APC Coalition Support Group Campaign donated by Hon. (Mrs) Martina Kure, to kick start strategic campaign ahead of the general elections.

This took place recently in Miango town of Bassa Local Government Area, Plateau State.

Commissioning the campaign office, the APC State Chairman, commended Irigwe chiefdom for supporting the party and the Rescue Administration promising that their hardwork would be compensated and Irigwe sons and daughters would be appointed both at the state and national levels.

He sympathized the the Irigwe chiefdom for the unfortunate happening that claimed the lives of their loved ones.

Earlier, the Council Chairman of Bassa Local Government Area, Hon. Engr. Stephen Andy Igmala, described the Irigwe people as straight forward and could say yes for yes and no for no and that he was confident that Irigwe nation and the entire Bassa LGA would bring out the highest number votes for APC more than any local government in the state.

On her part, the Coordinator of the support group, Hon. (Mrs) Martina Kure, said, the twenty-two (22) different groups at the occasion were being matched understand one umbrella and that would collectively work together and ensure that APC wins from top



Bature

down saying, "we better when we are together. There no going back voting our APC candidates come 2023.

An illustrious son of Irigwe chiefdom and former Commissioner, Elder James Barry, said, the Irigwe people had worked for APC in 2014-2015, 2018-2019 and that they would repeat same saying, "nobody need to convince you that the house of APC, mother of APC, grandfather of APC and great grandfather of APC is in Irigwe land because of the love, passion and support given to APC".

Also, the APC Chairman of Bassa LGA, Hon. Chogo Yakubu, prayed that APC wins the election come 2023 so that they would have a permanent peace in Irigwe land and Plateau State so that, they would enjoy the dividends of democracy outlined by the APC government.

One of Irigwe chiefdom son, population.

He said that through the effort of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) as well as civil society organisations like YES Project, a lot of young people participated in the Continuous Voters Registration (CVR).

According to him, the new register witnessed the registration of youths between ages of 18 to 34 making up a total of 7,286,871 accounting for 76.56 per cent of the total newly registered voters of 9,518,188.

He said that although the feat was important, however, getting registered was a first step in the electoral compliance process but registered

Chief Sunday Audu Gwa, said the Irigwe people would not disappoint APC and that, Plateau State would rise again in love and unity with Dr. Nentawe Yilwatda Goshwe as the Governor, "because together we stand, divided we will fall. I am very happy with number of supporters here".

The Northern Zone APC Chairman, Agwom Ata Azi, thanked the Irigwe chiefdom for massive turn out and urged the support groups to work votes and not for money and ensure that they use their PVCs wisely by voting APC from top down.

Meanwhile, the APC gubernatorial candidate of Plateau State, Dr. Nentawe Yilwatda Goshwe, who was represented by his campaign organisation's Secretary General, Prof. Shem Binds, called on #Generation Next# supporters preach the message peace when canvassing for votes and promised develop the Irigwe land when elected.

voters could still be disenfranchised if Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs) were not collected and votes cast.

"It is quite shocking when in September this year, INEC confirmed that the number of uncollected PVCs is over 20 million.

"There is need for us to tactfully engage the youths through community to ensure they complete the the electoral process of transitioning from PVC registration to collection and voting.

"With a total of 93,522,272 the number of uncollected PVCs account from 19.2 per cent registered voters ;we need to keep the pace of engaging citizens especially youths in politics.

"To change this trend and ensure that 60 per cent young voters collect their PVCs and vote ,YES Project came up with various initiatives to surmount the challenge," he said.

Edeh said the group launched the Value Your Vote campaign in August, toward PVCs collection mobilisation and through the support of Yaga Africa the project would run till February 2023.

He said that YES Project carried out a survey to know how to tackle the challenges

Plateau APC felicitates with Hon. Donjur @ 59

THE Plateau State Chairman of the All Progressives Congress, Hon. Rufus Bature has heartily felicitated with Hon. Noel Donjur, Chief of Staff Government House Administration on the auspicious occasion of his 59th birthday.

This was contained in a statement by the state publicity secretary of the party Sylvanus Namang and made available to **SUNDAY STANDARD.**

According to the statement, reaching this milestone in one's life is God's divine grace and the entire party structure in the state joins in celebrating this joyous moment.

It adds, "You have lived a very worthy and impactful life given your contributions under successive governments in the state, first as the Honourable Commissioner of Works from 1999 to 2007 and now, the Chief of Staff to the Governor of Plateau state."

It maintained that, "As a renowned technocrat and

politician, you are known to be a very unassuming, meticulous and calculative person, attributes which have added value to governance in the state."



Donjur

CDD unveils War Room for tackling disinformation

A policy think-tank, CDD, has announced the formation of an Election War Room ahead of the 2023 general elections.

According to a statement by the director of the organisation, Idayat Hassan, the War Room will be used "for tackling disinformation, misinformation and the activities of bad actors ahead of the 2023 general elections in Nigeria."

Nigeria will hold state and federal executive and legislative elections between February and March 2023.

Read the full statement by Ms Hassan below.

CDD unveils War Room for tackling disinformation ahead of 2023 elections

The Centre for Democracy and Development has unveiled an Election War Room for tackling disinformation, misinformation and the activities of bad actors ahead of the 2023 general elections in Nigeria.

Africa's largest democracy is going into what many hope will be the country's turning point election. As part of its mandate to help the nation deliver free, fair and credible elections, CDD's Election War Room will play an important role in making this election free from the narrative influence of bad actors.

On a weekly basis, our team of detailed, vibrant, and tech-savvy youths will publish a brief about our findings within the disinformation and fact-checking ecosystem in Nigeria. This will educate the public on how the ecosystem works and what processes the bad actors use in an attempt to shape election narratives and possible voting patterns. The team already monitors all political players, news organisations, security agencies, fact-checkers, electoral umpire and all other stakeholders.

Our weekly briefs will arm Nigerians with verifiable information on possible points of misinformation and disinformation provide insight into controversial and contentious issues, and prepare citizens for expected waves of disinformation within the political arena.

Why Is This Important?

In the 2019 election, disinformation spread across northern Nigeria claiming a coalition formed by the LGBTQ community in Nigeria had endorsed Atiku Abubakar, candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), for president. In the same election year, doctored images were shared across social media alongside claims that Muhammadu Buhari, the candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC), had died and was replaced by a body double infamously known as Jibril of Sudan. With the benefit of hindsight, both claims were false.

This gives insight into the minds of the peddlers of disinformation. They knew Atiku's core supporters in the north were not in favour of homosexuality, and the purported endorsement was simply to harm his campaign. The body-double narrative was also to harm the Buhari campaign and distract Nigerians from the key issues surrounding that election.

For the 2023 elections, CDD Election War Room will deal with such disinformation by highlighting seeders and bad actors who begin and drive such narratives across the major social media platforms. The team will also produce prebunks to act as fact shields against misinformation ahead of the elections.

In this War Room, our goal is simple: to make this the most factual elections in Nigeria's history.

Group to mobilise Nigerians for 2023 poll

A youth advocacy group, YES Project says it plans to mobilise at least 60 per cent of Nigerian youths to collect their Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs) toward active participation in the 2023 general election.

Mr Oche-Precious Edeh, the Founder and Executive Directors, YES Project, said this at the "Value Your Vote Naija 'Campaign news conference in Abuja on Tuesday.

Edeh said the move was imperative to galvanise the inclusion of youths in politics.

"Nigeria is a country with around 200 million population with young people around 15 to 35 per cent, accounting for the highest demography of the

population.

He said that through the effort of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) as well as civil society organisations like YES Project, a lot of young people participated in the Continuous Voters Registration (CVR).

According to him, the new register witnessed the registration of youths between ages of 18 to 34 making up a total of 7,286,871 accounting for 76.56 per cent of the total newly registered voters of 9,518,188.

He said that although the feat was important, however, getting registered was a first step in the electoral compliance process but registered

voters could still be disenfranchised if Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs) were not collected and votes cast.

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"With a total of 93,522,272 the number of uncollected PVCs account from 19.2 per cent registered voters ;we need to keep the pace of engaging citizens especially youths in politics.

"To change this trend and ensure that 60 per cent young voters collect their PVCs and vote ,YES Project came up with various initiatives to surmount the challenge," he said.

Edeh said the group launched the Value Your Vote campaign in August, toward PVCs collection mobilisation and through the support of Yaga Africa the project would run till February 2023.

He said that YES Project carried out a survey to know how to tackle the challenges

of voter apathy and drafted some interventions.

He listed social media promotion and door to door PVC mobilisation campaign as one of such interventions to create more awareness on PVC collection.

Mr Osere Daniels, Board Member, YES Project, called on Nigerians especially youths to believe in the electoral system, expressing optimism that it would work in 2023.

Daniels encouraged citizens to forget the notion that their votes do not count because it was no longer true.

He said the drive to make youths collect their PVCs was to make Nigeria better for all citizens.

LP manifesto empty, vacuos- Tinubu

From **JIDAUNA YANUNG, Abuja**

THE presidential candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC) Bola Tinubu said the campaign manifesto of the Labour Part (LP) presidential candidate Peter Obi is "empty and vacuos".

Tinubu specifically said Obi has nothing to offer on security if "he is oly promising what Buhari has been doing for over 7

years". Party presidential candidate.

The former Lagos State Governor also listed out some alleged fallacies in Obi's manifesto, saying that the 62 page document titled, its possible: our pact with Nigerians; has nothing to offer Nigerians. Tinubu in a statement by the director media and publicity, APC Presidential Campaign Council, Bayo Onanuga said one of the fallacies in Obi's manifesto was the declaration of Nigeria as a failed state by the Labour

The statement emphasized that the former of Anambra State did not know the meaning of a failed state. According Bola Tinubu, another fallacy in Obi's manifesto was the Labour Party (LP) presidential candidate claimed that Nigeria recorded modest gains between 199 and 2015 during the PDP led government.



Olave

Politics



Stakeholders and electoral initiatives

Stakeholders in the social protection sector, have tasked the electorate to demand for social protection initiatives from politicians during their electioneering campaigns for 2023 general election. They said this at the inauguration of the Social Protection Electoral Advocacy Campaign organised by the National Social Protection Forum (NSPF) in Abuja on Thursday.

TAIWO Benson, Chairman, National Technical Committee, National Social Protection Forum, said the call became imperative to improve the living standards of citizens and tackle poverty.

Benson also called on politicians to prioritise social protection plans to improve the living standard of citizens as the nation headed for election.

He added that there was need for politicians to ensure that every Nigerian was empowered to live a life of dignity.

"The coalition will implement several initiatives including media campaigns, community outreaches, town halls, policy dialogues and individual engagements to achieve its objectives.

"As a result, the coalition in collaboration with stakeholders is launching the social protection to end poverty campaign (#SP2EP2023).

"The campaign is geared towards ensuring that electoral candidates and their parties understand the importance of social protection in lifting millions of Nigerians out of poverty.

"The campaign is also aimed at mobilising the electorate to use their votes to demand for increased coverage of social protection initiatives across the country," he said.

Benson said that the coalition would put in place measures to hold elected candidates and their parties accountable to the commitment made during campaigns.

This, he said, was to ensure

these engagements translated into meaningful impacts in the lives of poor and vulnerable Nigerians.

He said that poverty eradication required collective efforts of governments at all levels, citizens, development partners, international community and civil society organisations to drive progress.

"This need underscores why the Coalition of Social Protection Civil Society Organisations and Partners is organising the National Dialogue on the Poverty Situation in Nigeria," he said.

He said multidimensional poverty index report revealed that regardless of the spirited efforts of the government and other stakeholders to eradicate poverty, it was on the increase.

He said this showed that it would really take a collective effort to tackle and using the 2023 election to draw the attention of politicians to it was a great way to go.

Mr Amanuel Mamo, Director of Advocacy, Campaigns, Communication and Media, Save the Children International Nigeria, said according to a recent report by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), 82.9 million Nigerians were considered poor by national standards.

"In a country richly blessed with human and natural resources, this is simply unacceptable.

"No Nigerian should have to go without food, no Nigerian child should be out of school because their parents are poor and cannot afford to send them to school.

"No woman should die needlessly due to childbirth because they are too poor to afford basic health care. No persons with disability should live without access to basic services.

"Addressing these issues needs to be treated as a matter of urgency and it requires an innovative approach, an out of the box thinking that will ensure that

all Nigerians, especially children, irrespective of age and social status are able to live a life of dignity," he said.

Mamo said Save the Children International worked in 17 states in Nigeria, with offices in 14 states while they implement programmes through their partners.

He added that Save the Children has been supporting for the past three years through the Expanding Social Protection for Inclusive Development (ESPID) project.

He said that ESPID project was funded through support from the UK Government and part of its objectives was to support federal and state governments to strengthen social protection system in Nigeria and strengthen civil society to advocate for improved social protection services.

"I strongly believe that if stakeholders and policy makers can come together regularly to discuss identified challenges and have a common national development agenda, I believe change is possible, poverty eradication is possible," he said. (NAN)

"This need underscores why the Coalition of Social Protection Civil Society Organisations and Partners is organising the National Dialogue on the Poverty Situation in Nigeria," he said. He said multidimensional poverty index report revealed that regardless of the spirited efforts of the government and other stakeholders to eradicate poverty, it was on the increase".

SUNDAY PEOPLE

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE GARKAWA MAIDEN CONVOCATION

The Maiden Convocation Ceremony of the Plateau State College of Agriculture Garkawa, Mikang LGA, held at its convocation ground on Friday



Governor Lalong (right) being received by the Commissioners of Agric., Higher Education and the Provost, College of Agriculture, Garkawa, Dr. Madang Dasbak (left)



Executive Chairman of Mikang LGC, Hon. Augustine Bako (left) with the Commissioner of Lands, Survey and Town Planning, Barr. Terkuk Naanmiep Pingwai



Plateau State Governor, Rt. Hon. Simon Bako Lalong (CON) Visitor, College of Agric delivering his convocation speech



Secretary to Government of the State, Prof. Danladi Abok Atu (right) and the Chief of Staff Government House, Hon. Noel Dongjur



From left are, Commissioners of Secondary Education, Hon. Elizabeth Wapmuk, Justice, Barr. Chris Ahmadu and Chief of Staff to D.G PCC, Hon. Yakubu Dati



Cross section some commissioners at the Maiden Convocation



Representative of the Speaker, PLHA, Rt. Hon. Saleh Shehu Yipmong (right) with the House Majority Leader, Hon. Naanlong Daniel (left)



Cross section of Deans of College of Agriculture, Garkawa

PHOTOS: DANLADI DUK

LAST week's plenary of the Plateau State House of Assembly (PLHA) which had the Speaker, Rt. Hon. Yakubu Yackson Sanda presiding was held in a solemn and somber atmosphere. The pain and grief from the loss of their colleague was still evident. Even though a sad occurrence, the lawmakers had to put aside their grief and attend to legislative matters which are of utmost concern to the welfare and well-being of the Plateau people. As the Majority Leader Hon. Naalong Gapyil Daniel puts it, 'life must go on, and we must also go on with our legislative duties'.

The day's agenda commenced with a presentation of the 2023 appropriation bill for second reading. Presenting a synopsis of the 2023 Appropriation Bill before the floor of the House, the Majority Leader and member representing Mikang constituency Hon. Naalong Gapyil Daniel noted that based on the income, expenditure and other components of the budget estimate captured, the budget when carefully implemented will no doubt be a realistic one. He also added that the various sectoral allocations will be geared towards impacting the Plateau people.

After their separate submissions, and debate on the merits and demerits of the bill, the lawmakers unanimously agreed that the 2023 budget would be attainable. It was subsequently referred to the House Committee on Appropriation for further scrutiny while the other committees are also expected to make inputs where necessary to the bill. However, the speaker did not hold back as he charged the committees to ensure they followed all due process as they discharge their legislative assignments.

The plenary also witnessed the passage of a bill to establish the Plateau State Erosion and Watershed Management Agency (PSEWMA). This followed a report of the House Committee on Environment and Solid Minerals presented by the Chairman Hon. Pirfa Tyem, member representing Langtang North North constituency. The much anticipated law will empower the agency in its responsibility of tackling environmental issues such as erosion and land degradation that have so far constituted hazardous to the state by posing serious threat to lives and property.

As part of his constitutional responsibility in providing quality representation to his constituents, the member representing Bokkos constituency Hon. Amurudu Usaini raised a motion of urgent public importance, calling on the state Ministry of Health to ensure the deployment of health personnel to the Comprehensive Hospital located at Siken in Kulere Chiefdom of Bokkos LGA. According to the lawmaker, since the completion of the health facility about a year ago, it is still dormant and has not been put to use while members of the

community and other surrounding communities who would have benefited from it are still in dire need of medical attention.

Still making a case for his people, the legislator used the opportunity to appeal to the House to carry out an assessment visit to the hospital with a view to ascertaining the true nature of things. He equally made an appeal to the ministry of health to ensure it deployed qualified health personnel to keep the hospital afloat by rendering medical services to the people. The hospital is said to be equipped with 12



Plenary proceedings, PLHA activities



Sanda

wards, a surgical unit with an ambulance on ground in case of emergency situations.

At the end of all submissions and contributions, the Speaker Rt. Hon. Yakubu Yackson Sanda in his prayers resolved that the House Committee on Health be mandated to investigate the facility, including other health facilities in similar situations and report back findings within two weeks to the House. Before then, a bill for a Law to Establish the Plateau State Performance Management Office, sponsored by the Majority Leader Hon. Naalong Gapyil Daniel scaled through first reading.

Meanwhile, in line with its mandate on oversight the House Committee on Information held an interface and interactive session with all Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) under its purview. The reason for this is not farfetched, it was an avenue for the new committee chairman to familiarize himself with the MDAs, get acquainted with their

“Meanwhile, in line with its mandate on oversight the House Committee on Information held an interface and interactive session with all Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) under its purview. The reason for this is not farfetched, it was an avenue for the new committee chairman to familiarize himself with the MDAs, get acquainted with their operations as well as their challenges and successes. Most importantly, it was hoped that the interface will pave way and set the tone for the forthcoming budget defense.”



Daniel

operations as well as their challenges and successes. Most importantly, it was hoped that the interface will pave way and set the tone for the forthcoming budget defense.

It will be recalled that sometime last year, the state assembly made some changes in the House standing committees which is the first since the inauguration of the ninth assembly. As a result, the new Committee Chairman on Information became the House Majority Leader Hon. Naalong Gapyil Daniel who also represents Mikang constituency. The interaction afforded MDAs the opportunity to meet with him for the first time.

The session kicked off with the state Ministry of Information and Communication which had the Permanent Secretary, Mr. Sunday Davou Dung and other directors in attendance. The state government owned media stations, that is Plateau Publishing Corporation (PPC), publishers of the Nigeria and Sunday Standard newspapers and the Plateau Radio Television Corporation (PRTVC) also took turns as they highlighted some of the challenges bedeviling the corporations. Most of the complaints were centered on issues of non releases of approved budgetary allocations, worn out and obsolete broadcast equipment, shortage of manpower etc. Both General Managers to the corporations were on ground and personally attended the meeting.

Other agencies present were

the State Library Board and Plateau State Printing Press who all had almost similar challenges. At the end of the parley, chairman of the committee assured that all the issues raised would be looked at and tabled before the appropriate person(s). Some members of the committee present were Hons. Livinus James Kwapfuan and Mohammad Ballo representing Shendam and Qua'an Pan South constituency respectively.



Tyem

SUNDAY MAGAZINE



PLAFEST: The celebration of cultural unity

For a week running, the maiden Plateau Festival of Arts and Culture was staged in Jos, bringing together cultural groups in the state and outside to a cultural extravaganza. Plateau State has been blessed with abundant culture, if anything; the utilization of such can sustain the peace the state has yearned for ages. KATDAPBA Y GOBUM revisited the Festival, taking a look at the implication and what it portends to the state if continued.

IT is not for the fun of it that the Plateau State Government conceptualized the Plateau Festival of Arts and Culture. What would have been held in the last week of October 2022 had to be shifted to November 29, 2022. Whether it met its objectives can only be determined by what you read here and the subsequent actions of government to prepare grounds for what it promised when the Festival was staged.

Why Festival may have been delayed

Several reasons accounted for it not being held early, but finance perhaps may have been far removed from it. Just when the festival was to be held, the State Executive Council was affected by a gale of resignation; one was the Hon Mrs. Tamwakat Weli, then Commissioner for Tourism, Culture and Hospitality. The other two were, Hon Yakubu Datti, who was made Chief of Staff to the Director General of the Presidential Campaign Council of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Governor Simon Bako Lalong and Hon Jerry Werr, then Commissioner for Special Duties.

The three had taken leave of being members of the

Executive Council to be on the Tinubu/Shettima Presidential Campaign Council on request. It was reported that they were asked by the Director General of the Presidential Campaign Council, Governor Simon Bako Lalong to come and serve as members of the team, hence their resignation.

It was expected, the new Commissioner appointed for the position vacated by Hon Tamwakat Weli, Hon Cecilia Mermwakat Yilkorah needed time to be briefed on the details of the Festival and be at home with why the state was hosting the event. Whether the above postulations are right or not, the idea behind the Festival were positive and a welcome development to those who know.

If it took a while, it was understood; a Festival of such magnitude could not have been taken lightly. Therefore, given the importance attached to it being staged, the state wanted a Festival that could stand the test of time. Some had suggested that the Festival should have been shifted to a date before the tenure of the government elapses. That calculation was to enable the government celebrate in grand style

before it leaves office.

Theme of the festival

Aptly staged with a theme: Cultural Heritage: A tool for curbing terrorism, it was held at no better time than it took place. No one is stranger to the fact that terrorists attacks have occurred in several communities in the state than in some parts of the federation. Take the cases of attacks in Bokkos, Bassa, Barkin Ladi, Mangu, Wase, Kanam, Jos North, Jos South and Jos East, and Riyom, they leave a reminder that Plateau State has had a terrible share of the harvest of deaths arising from them.

In the last decade, no week passes without an attack taking place in these local government areas. The gory number of deaths often recorded from the attacks tells of the danger terrorism threats poses to the state. No wonder, the communities are often left to rue in greater measure their losses both in human and material proportion.

Land grabbing and terrorism

Apart from the harvest of deaths and loss of property, members of the ravaged communities no longer occupy their ancestral lands. They have been dispossessed of large expanse of land by land grabbers. Any attempts

for them to return to their ancestral lands have always been rebuffed with disastrous consequences. It is yet known who the land grabbers are; however, there are indications that they are terrorists who have planned to take over the lands for ages. They are only fulfilling the grand plan now.

It is no exaggeration that peace can be endangered by the celebration of culture; in fact, culture unites the world in no small measure, let alone its celebration by bringing together several groups. Those who were part of the invitation to celebrate say with certainty the place of culture in the lives of people.

All over the world, the place of peace in development of any society comes highly recommended. Societies that are often in crisis can use culture for the search for peace in those communities. In a state such as Plateau that has been plagued by insecurity, there are lots of initiatives to be organized that can bring peace. In a situation such as this, is it possible for communities to tolerate each other and to use the cultural diversity obtainable here as a tool for peace That is the essence of the Plateau Festival of Arts and Culture.

Culture can unite Plateau through dialogue

There are several factors that can unite Plateau people under the umbrella the state has always dreamt of. There are also areas of division that may be worked upon. If showcasing and coming together far more unites the groups as Plateau people and for its development, the process can be driven to a conclusion.

There is no denying that fact, PLAFEST was targeted to bring the cultural groups to celebrate the diversity that is obtainable in the state. Establishing peace and unity in the state and beyond, have been some of the things fought for by government, communities and individuals over the years. It is believed that the challenges experienced in the state can be surmounted and laid to rest for good.

Communities have a responsibility to explore means of living as a united people. How is that possible, it has always been asked? The need for dialogue, as always conceptualized by the government through the Plateau State Peace Building Agency in the cases of several communities affected by attacks over the years is

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NEWS

Lalong tasks well wishers on PHC system

By PALANG KASMI

PLATEAU Governor, Simon Bako Lalong has tasked distinguished sons and daughters of communities to support the primary health care system for better health of vulnerable groups.

He made the call Friday, December 9, 2022 while commissioning a model Primary Health Care facility at Hanbiak, Samiya in Shendam Local Government Area of Plateau State.

Lalong said he was impressed with the level of commitment of some distinguished personalities, and people of the entire community towards bringing the project to fruition.

He said the facility will provide quality health care and access to the rural people and also prevent health complications.

"People will get access to quality healthcare without spending much resources and maternal mortality ratio will reduce".

"The commissioning of the modelled healthcare center will serve as a snake bite center" he said and stressed his administration's commitment to reversing the poor health indices of Plateau especially in rural areas.

He said the project is an offshoot of the Saving One Million Lives – Programme for Results, geared towards achieving Universal Health Coverage on the Plateau.



Lalong

And that the facility was built to serve as a referral centre that will provide access to quality and affordable healthcare services to Plateau residents from the Southern zone of the state. That is why it is

strategically positioned and located in Shendam, but with proximity to Langtang South, Langtang North, Quan-Pan and Mikang LGAs.

"This will greatly reduce the constraints that distance poses to accessing quality care, thereby improving health outcomes by reducing incidences of complicated medical conditions.

"It is worthy of note that beyond providing comprehensive care to rural

dwellers, the facility will serve as a snake bite management centre in Plateau South," he said and assured that Plateau State Government is committed to sustaining the drive towards attaining and sustaining Universal Health Coverage across the length and breadth of the state through the Plateau State Primary Healthcare Board and the Plateau State Contributory Healthcare Management Agency (PLASCHEMA)".

The Governor said so much resources are being invested in strengthening the Primary Health Care Sector across the state, and gave the assurance that with operations in the facility, great gains will be made in halting and reversing some of the poor health indices in the state.

He expressed excitement that arrangements have been made for unabated posting of NYSC doctors to the facility while the host community had pledged to partner with the facility to provide quality inputs in the spirit of community ownership.

Speaking on behalf of the community, Barr. Cletus Kangkum disclosed that distinguished sons and daughters from the community have purchased an ambulance for the facility and enlisted 100 vulnerable members including children, women, People with Disabilities and the aged to have access to free health care services for the next one year.

There was goodwill messages speaker, Plateau House of Assembly, Hon. Yakubu Sanda who commended the Governor for establishing enabling health laws since assumption of office.

Also in a goodwill message Executive Secretary, Primary Health Care Development Board, Dr. Livinus Miapkwap said citing the model clinic close to the rural communities will address proximity challenges which is a major hindrance to access healthcare services. Mohammed Getado equally advised farmers not to burn the residue of their farms in the spirit of the African brotherhood.

LP: Court dismisses Margif suit, upholds Dakum

By EZEKIEL DONTINNA

THE Federal High Court sitting in Jos, the Plateau State capital, Friday, stroked out the lawsuit filed by Ambassador Yonana Margif, declaring Dr. Patrick Sunday Dakum, as the authentic Plateau State gubernatorial candidate of the Labour Party (LP) for the forthcoming general elections.

The presiding Judge Jos Division of Federal High Court, Hon. Justice Ageshi, affirmed that the complainant, Amb. Margif, withdrew his candidature by virtue of the documents tendered by Dr. Dakum and thereby dismissed the suite and upheld the defendant as the authentic gubernatorial candidate of LP.

Addressing Journalists shortly after the court ruling in his favour, Dr. Patrick Sunday Dakum, thanked God Almighty for the victory and his campaign team members, Consolidation for Greater Plateau 2023, friends and well-wishers for their prayers.

He said, "I think the decision of the court has provided a platform for Plateau State today with another option and to say that, look, Plateau State have a manor that is very clear now and it is left to you

choose the manor.

"And if you want the manor that is family centred then, look for the logo that there is a family where you will see Papa, you will see Mama and

you will see Pikin. That is where it happening and I believe that Peter Obi is going to be the President and Dr. Patrick Sunday Dakum and Barr.

Edward Pwajok, by God's grace will go to Rayfield because they are the team that the combination is meant to enable us start well", Dakum enthused.

Prof Bogoro receives NPL award

FORMER Executive Secretary of Tertiary Education Trust Fund, (TETFund), Prof Suleiman Bogoro will be bestowed the Nigeria Prize for Leadership this coming Monday 12th December 2022.

The investiture of Prof. Bogoro is based on his intellectual contributions to the advancement of research based technology for nation building which has earned him great respect amongst his contemporaries the world over. It would be recalled that a few

months ago, the erudite scholar was conferred with national honors of member of the Order of the Niger, (OON) by the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Muhammadu Buhari which was necessitated by his excellent contributions towards refining the status of our educational sector for the better.

This aside, the OON award bestowed on him was also in recognition of his turnaround strategy in reviving the status of Nigerian universities through the efficient and effective policies put in place by ensuring that institutions

in the country were encouraged towards becoming amongst the best in the world.

Prof Bogoro had promised that the money for the Nigeria Prize Leadership Award which is about N25 million would be channeled for the actualization of the Baba Gwonto Foundation intended to provide skills acquisition programmes for vulnerable youths of his area.

The Gwonto Foundation is a brainchild of the immediate past Executive Secretary of TETFund in Nigeria whose desire is to sustain and consolidate the legacies of the man, Baba Peter Gwonto, a symbol of struggle for the Zaar people situated in southern Bauchi State.

The foundation was officially announced on December 31, 2022 during the book launch in his honor titled "Vision and Courage Personified: Life and Times of Baba Peter Gwonto."

The event which would be held at Ladi Kwali Hall, Abuja Continental Hotel (Former Sheraton Hotel) Wuse, Abuja is under the Chairman of NPL Governing Board, Prof. Anya O. Anya, OFR and Voice Chairman, NPL Governing Board and Chairman Prize Presentation Ceremony, Prof. Jerry Gana,



Bogoro



ASUU: FG review university autonomy laws

The Vice-President, Professor Yemi Osinbajo, SAN, has revealed that Nigerian university system has lost a cumulative 50 months to strike actions by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) from 1999 till date.

He has accordingly called for a review of the Nigerian University Autonomy's Laws so as to address the challenges of incessant strike action by the various staff unions in the nation's university system.

Plateau NHRC sensitizes RCM Primary School pupils on their rights

In commemoration of the 16th Day activism against Gender Based Violence and the International Human Rights Day, the Plateau State chapter of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), has sensitised pupils of RCM Primary School Abattoir, Jos, on knowing their fundamental human rights and responsibilities.

This took place as part of the 16th Day activism lined up activities and the need to respect the rights of children to live and be educated tagged: "Talking Points For School Sensitization" led by the Assistant Director, Public Affairs National Human Rights Commission Jos Office, Mr. Ronke Mudi, where hundreds of pupils gathered to listen.

CBN New Currency Policy Effective January 9, 2023

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), has released policy guidelines to be effective on January 9, 2023 with the following rules: Daily ATM withdrawal should be maximum of #20,000; Daily POS withdrawal: #20,000 and anything above #20,000, must be done electronically.

This is contained in a statement signed by the CBN Director, Banking Supervision, Haruna B. Mustafa, and made available to **THE NIGERIA STANDARD** in Jos, the Plateau State capital last week where other policies included weekly withdrawal limit should not be above #100,000.

According to the statement, the highest denomination that should be dispensed by ATM will be #200 notes, the maximum withdrawal at the counter weekly by an Individual should be #100,000, maximum withdrawal at the counter weekly by corporate organizations should be #500,000 and the processing fees for withdrawal above limit of an Individual should be 5%, with that of the corporate organization being 10% processing fee.

INEC: Plateau State receives another batch of PVCs

PLATEAU State Department of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), has received another batch of the Permanent Voter's Cards (PVCs) amounting to over three hundred and sixty-two thousand, four hundred and sixty-five (362,465) for distribution soon.

The Plateau State Resident Commissioner of INEC, Dr. Oliver Tersoo Agundu, disclosed this Monday, while addressing journalists at the press briefing organised by INEC at the INEC Secretariat in Jos, the state capital.

Bature commissions APC Coalition Support Group campaign office Miango

Plateau State Chairman of the All Progressive Congress (APC), Hon. Rufus Bature, has commissioned an office for the APC Coalition Support Group Campaign donated by Hon. (Mrs) Martina Kure, to kick start strategic campaign ahead of the general elections.

This took place Thursday in Miango town of Bassa Local Government Area, Plateau State. Thousands of supporters and various support groups trooped in to witness the ceremony amidst different cultural dances and display.

PLHA passes Bill to establish the PSEWMA

The Plateau State House of Assembly, has passed a bill for the establishment of the Plateau State Erosion and Watershed Management Agency (PSEWMA) following the report of the House Committee on Environment and Solid Minerals presented by the House Committee Chairman, Hon. Pirfa Tyem last Tuesday.

The House also at plenary passed for second reading, the 2023 appropriation bill and subsequently committed the bill to House Committee on Appropriation for further inputs by the various house committees.

Okonofua emerges winner of CBN Governor's Cup

Isaiah Okonofua, has emerged overall winner of the 2022 Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Governor's Cup of the Annual Golf Competition staged inside the IBB International Golf and Country Club Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

Compiled by EZEKIEL DONTINNA

SUNDAY FEATURE

X-raying surrendered terrorists

The push by the Nigerian Armed Forces to end insurgency in the North East of the country has so far led to the surrender of 82,237 fighters and their families since July 2021. The bulk of the surrendered fighters of Boko Haram and Islamic States West Africa Province (ISWAP) terrorist groups, were women and children of the fighters and others rescued by the military. ISAAC AREGBESOLA writes.

THE administration of this huge number of combatants and their families has raised immense interest from local and international stakeholders.

Nigeria has been confronting insurgency and terrorism in the North Eastern states of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe for over a decade.

Borno being the epicenter of the insurgency have also had to battle with the devastation and destruction of lives and property occasioned by the war.

The challenge of insurgency had led to militarization of the entire region since 2010 with the operationalisation of Joint Task Force Operation that has transformed in name and scope since 2013, till date.

The current Joint Task Force NorthEast Operation Hadin Kai, which was reorganized and recalibrated in 2021, has achieved milestone in dealing with the menace leading to mass surrender of Boko Haram and ISWAP terrorists alongside their families.

So far, available records show that over 82,237 fighters and their families have surrendered since July 2021, out of which 16,577 were active male fighters, 24,499 women and 41,161 children.

These figures exclude those that were arrested and awaiting prosecution, or rehabilitation and reintegration.

This category of terrorists are being held at the Joint Investigation Centre (JIC) at Giwa Barracks in Maiduguri, the Borno capital and Kainji in Niger State.

The JIC is for temporary holding and investigation of suspected and confirmed arrested terrorists.

Currently, there are a total of 1,893 of such suspects in custody, out of which 886 are awaiting transfer to Giwa Project in Kainji for prosecution.

A total of 323 of them were recently transferred to Operation SAFE CORRIDOR in Gombe for the de-radicalisation, rehabilitation and reintegration programme.

At the JIC, there are a number of female detainees who also have children with them. One of them is Aisha Ibrahim, mother of little Muhammadu, who have spent a year and some months at the detention facility.

Majority of the female detainees are wives of suspected and arrested Boko Haram terrorists who have been profiled and categorized for either prosecution or deradicalization, rehabilitation and reintegration.

Aisha was pregnant at the time she was apprehended. She gave birth to little Muhammadu, her only son, on May 15, exactly seven months ago.

When asked by the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on whether she ever thought of aborting the pregnancy after her rescue, her response was no.

Also asked if she was ever told to get rid of the pregnancy by anyone, be it the military or government



officials, she also responded no. According to her, she was adequately taken care of during the pregnancy up to delivery.

Aisha added that since she gave birth, little Muhammad has been receiving immunisation to prevent him from contracting childhood killer diseases.

The immunization card of the little boy cited by NAN revealed that he took another immunization on Nov. 28, at the military medical facility.

Repentant or surrendered Boko Haram/ISWAP terrorists

At the Hajj Camp, one of the holding facilities where about 15,000 repentant terrorists and their families were being housed by the Borno State Government, there are well over 10,000 women and children including new born.

The Medical Officer in Charge of the camp's health facility, Muhammed Saleh said a total of 252 babies were born between July and October this year, adding that majority of the women came into the camp with pregnancy.

Saleh said that the camp currently has hundreds of pregnant women who were being catered for adequately, adding that new babies were being delivered on daily basis.

Pregnant women

Falmata, a 19-year-old pregnant woman, told NAN that she had spent six years in the bush with her terrorist husband before she surrendered alongside other families about six months ago.

Falmata who revealed that her husband was still in the bush, said that she was two months pregnant before coming to the camp.

She said the government has been taking care of her medical and other needs, and expressed

hope of reuniting with her parents soon.

Rescued Chibok School girls At the Bulumkutu Interim Care Centre (ICC) where 14 Chibok school girls recently rescued by the military were being rehabilitated, it was a story of joy and pains for 25-year-old Rejoice Sanki (serial no.70), who was rescued with her two children.

Narrating her ordeal, Sanki told NAN that she was forced to marry a terrorist, who she intensely "detested even while remembering his name and face". Sanki said she was tortured when she initially refused to marry the terrorist, but had no option than to do what they wanted.

The Chibok girl said she was lucky to escape with her children and was rescued by the military.

She thanked the government for taking care of her and her children, adding that reuniting with her parent and being able to go back to school remained her earnest expectations.

"When I was in Chibok school, I was a science student and my ambition was to become a medical doctor. I have suffered very well because this is not who I was and what I wanted to become," she said.

Also, Yana Pogu (24), serial number 19 on the missing Chibok girls list, who was rescued with her four kids, including a set of twins, said her greatest desire is to reunite with her parents and take good care of the children.

Pogu said the Borno government had been taking good care of them and their kids, but would like to go back to school to be educated again, so as to be useful to her family and the society.

Separated Children

At the same centre, there are about 1,000 children separated from their parents as a result of the insurgency. Their parents are yet

to be located.

The children are however being catered for educationally, medically and mentally by the state government.

The Commissioner for Women Affairs and Social Development, Hajia Zuwaira Gambo, said that 118 of the children would be reunited with their parents in a couple of days.

The role of the military and NGOs

The Theatre Commander, Joint Task Force North East Operation Hadin Kai, Maj.-Gen. Christopher Musa, said the counter-insurgency operations of the military was 75 per cent non-kinetic, with just 25 per cent kinetic activities.

Musa said the military, being the first responder and first point of contact with the terrorists at the point of capture or surrender, had been actively involved in humanitarian support services for both rescued and surrendered Boko Haram and ISWAP terrorists and their families.

He also said the military had continued to operate within the provision of humanitarian laws in line with global best practices with regards to handling of arrested and surrendered terrorists, as well as rescued victims of insurgency.

Musa said the military remained committed to providing needed support to the state government, public agencies, as well as local and international NGOs and CSOs operating in the state.

However, an interaction between journalists and NGOs on Nov. 29, showed that foreign NGOs shy away from talking to Nigerian media as they were evasive about disclosing the role they play in addressing humanitarian issues in the North East.

Brian LaGuardia, Head Civil-Military Coordination, United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN-OCHA), who spoke on behalf of the 245 INGOs and domestic NGOs said he would not be able to speak on the issues.

He was evasive when further asked to give assessment of the ongoing operations and the handling of rescued women and children.

The Commander, 7 Division Medical Services and Hospital Maiduguri, Lt.-Col. Adeniyi Ogunsakin, said the hospital was largely dedicated to managing wounded troops and barracks' residents.

He however said that the facility had attended to few cases of wounded and rescued victims of Boko Haram insurgency.

Ogunsakin said the military had also attended to the rescued Chibok girls and their children because of the peculiarity of their case.

He said one of the Chibok girls who was rescued, came in with pregnancy and two babies and the hospital had to take care of her and the children.

Ogunsakin said she was later released to the theatre command and subsequently handed over to the state government after the hospital ensured that she was clinically stable.

On whether the hospital performs abortion for women that came out of terrorists' dens with pregnancy, Ogunsakin said the hospital had never performed abortion on any of the women, either on request or through any other person.

"We don't have the power to terminate anybody's pregnancy in this hospitals and even if a mother tells us, we don't grant such request because it is against our practice," the commander added. (NANFeatures)

SUNDAY FEATURE

Taming new sexual revolution, its contradictions

Make no mistake about it, human beings are social and sexual beings. The reality of this construction means that where two or three opposite sex meet, they are most likely to attract each other, exhibit courtship behaviour and possibly indulge in sexual intimacy over time irrespective of faith or ideological background. The speed and extend with which this happens vary with individuals or groups who might be more sexually active than others. AYUBA YILGAK'HA writes.

SEXUAL intercourse is hard to define in contemporary world. At the most basic level, however, it is the intimate and physical interaction of sexual organs between two adults, especially, husbands and wives who have erotic love for each other for the purpose of ecstatic pleasure, satisfaction and procreation. This activity is often preceded by several other activities tagged foreplay, e.g caressing which enhances quality sex between the partners. When sex activities exceed the scope clearly defined here as it is the reality of today's world, it amounts to 'extramarital affair' which should be carefully watched, discouraged and, if possible, avoided.

Incidences, tendencies or trends in sexual adventure and exploitation can be tamed but not easily among sexually active people. In a community of eunuchs, castrated, raped or virgins, curtailing or controlling sexual anxiety is easier than when people who have experienced sexual pleasure are involved. Those who abstain from sex in response to religious and/or diabolic considerations are also there but, in any case, are social accidents waiting to happen when the conquering reality and power of sexual urge is underestimated by them.

Sexual motivation is a passion. It has its root in emotion which like fire, is a good servant but bad master. Sex, fear and anger are in the same emotional equation. In other words, they are of emotional construction that have consuming powers, especially, when they take hold of a person.

Here is the issue, any society that is exposed to untamed sexual seduction is likely to be consumed by it. There is nothing religious about this reality. A religious man or woman who pretense to have sexual immunity when in corner with an opposite sex is sure to indulge in sex over time, especially, when the company is appealing or attractive in anyway. Truth be told, secret sex is more prevalent amongst idealists than realists. In other words, any problem whose reality is ignored or underestimated cannot be solved but rather grows steadily to such a point that it cannot be managed any longer.

Chastity or sexual purity is a virtue but cannot be easily attained by pretence or wishful thinking. Inbuilt and deeply seated in humans is a delicate sex battery which can be charged anytime. Any natural man or woman who runs away from sexually charged environment is wise. Underestimate this escape proposal to your peril if your body chemistry is normal. It is only a fool who steps into a fire and assumes he/she will not be burnt at all.

The need to moderate the sexual orientation of people has become urgent, especially, in the 21st century. In contemporary time, sex has become so common and the most abused provision or endowment to humans. Rather than using it responsibly for procreation and decent marital pleasure, it has been exploited for varying purposes which ranges from commercial to ritual, diabolic and unnatural practices that are outside the frame of its design.

Sex for marital pleasure and procreation is an aged-long and traditional function of man. Through it, decent families are cultivated and raised for the building of functional societies and the promotion of civilisation. Any society whose family units default in taking the responsibility of child bearing seriously is bound to go extinct in time because the available people might be consumed by natural catastrophies, health epidemics/pandemics, old age and death. Through birth control measures like abortion and use of contraceptives, some countries have suffered gross deficit in human population that could have anchored productivity functions. This reality has created urgent and compelling need to accept migrants as short run solution and paying willing citizens to bear more children as long



run solution. Countries like Germany, Spain, etc. have experienced this reality.

Sex drive for diabolic and ritual purposes is another dimension sex revolution has taken. Sex has been found to be a mysterious point of contact for spiritual exchange and impartation with sex partners. For example, a man or woman that is demon possessed could mysteriously but easily transmit those spirit(s) to as many as those they share sexual beds with. It has been insinuated that in a desperate move to gain fame, wealth and power, some have gone so low to the extend of sleeping with lunatics, dead corpses, etc. There is no extend desperate, occultic and diabolic folks cannot go when it comes to pursuing their orgies and reckless ends. This calls for great caution and self-discipline.

The use of sex for commercial purposes is one of the most lucrative but contradictory adventure in human history. It is an aged-long practice that has evolved over time and has taken new dimension with the advent of digital technology. Throughout history, women rocked by poverty have sold sex as a means of subsistence but this has grown into full scale commercial venture from where many have made big but illicit fortunes. For instance, it is reported that Georgian London city, as beautiful as it is was, substantially, built by the proceeds of prostitution in the 18th Century (Dan, 2009:X). In every major cities and towns around the world, varying degrees of prostitution which ranges from petty sex vendorship to call girls branding or modelling class exists and are operated openly or discreetly depending on extant laws governing the host communities of practitioners.

With the advent and sophistication in Information and Communicatin Technology (ICT), sex merchants have built catherals for sex merchandise and distribution. Sex has become a big trade hub after drug carteling in the world's shadow economy. Phenomenal innovations in the sex business which ranges from pimp arrangements sustained by human trafficking, blue filming, pornography, sex dolling, etc. have since become evidential part of the internet world with well developed websites and contacts (addresses) for easy access and patronage. The world today is enmeshed in a new orientation and civilisation that is saturated by an untamed drive towards achieving utopian sex Eldorado.

There is a septre of gay orientation that is permeating most modern civilisations. This septre draws from the Epicurean philoshohy which held that 'we eat and drink for tomorrow we die'. A similar orientation is

"Tantra", which is areligious but mystical "treatise on any subject at all" and "teaches us that by embracing everything in life and delving into it totally, anything can be turned into a transformative, ultimately estatic, experience (Barbara, 2007). This 'everything' include liberal sex drive which is tended towards achieving maximum orgasm or satisfaction. It is in this context that sex merchants and mania converged to explore their divergent yet complimentary motives which are often outside acceptable rule of behaviour in highly religious and conservative societies.

From innovations arising from open-ended teaching in Tantra comes amplified and escalating sexual disorders like lesbianism, homosexuality, surrogacy, transgender, palemony, Pedophilia ('persistent sexual interest in prepubescent children'). The saddest thing is that these abnormalities are welcomed and legalised in some countries within the globalised world. These practices are vigorously campaigned for, promoted with incentives on the one hand and threats of sanction where those proposals or adverts are turned down. For instance, the United States of America (USA) under Obama' administration had threatened to withheld grants to African countries which opposed and refused to legislate and domesticate gay right. I remember with much gratitude to God when the Nigerian government stood its ground and soundly rejected gay rights with a law outlawing it in 2014. The west is not giving up on its campaigns and threat of cultural globalisation with respect to profaned sex. The desperate campaign is visibly present with us today, even in the remotest of communities.

Indecent dressing, increasing cases of abortion, rape and free circulation of pornographic pictures, videos and sex cartoons on social media are fall out of sex revolution in Nigeria as in other parts of the world. How much data is used in accessing, downloading and circulating sex related contents on internet, especially, the social media can only be imagined. It is not an exaggeration to argue that there are more sex partners on the internet than there are in outside it. There is an analogue cum digital sex revolution that is destroying the very foundation and fibre of family life among couples. The family unit which the anchor and custodian of sex freedom has been invaded and it is at the verge of utter ruin. The reality of this development is established in the increasing cases of planned single parenthood amongst adults today. In the past, since

parenthood occured mostly as a result of what was called 'social accident' but this is not so now.

Some of the reported cases of infertility and disease which materialised in most matrimonial lives are fall out from secret and unhealthy premarital expeditions in sex which did not manifest immediately. Extended dangers in sexual recklessness, whether before or within marriage are enormous and the implication is that once family units crumbled, the society is finished. This is the situation this pro-family treatise seeks to deconstruct.

Indiscriminate sex has the tendency to increase the production of bastard population; increase cases of abortion; sterilisation and infertility through the use of contraceptives; high risk of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs); loss of productive energy or abandonment of more production ventures on the altar of sexual pleasure, loss of prestige and trust, etc. Samson in the scriptures cheaply betrayed his nazereine calling in pursuit of pleasure at the seductive and entrapping laps/cleavages of Delilah; King David's throne was desecrated when he slept with Uriah's wife, Bathsheba and, subsequently, prompted into further sin by successfully plotting the killing of the husband.

For a fact, when sex transaction or relationship is involved, there is no guarantee of faithfulness in anything no matter how annointed a man or woman is. When sex is involved there is no guarantee of trust, security and safety. When sex is involved, anything can happen. Sex power has brought down nations and kings; destroyed annointed priests and religious cathedrals and exposed the world it is meant to recreate to destructive mode. In other words, sex is a spring board for recreation but a quick trigger and catalyst for mass destruction too. It can relax or calm the body but could lit the fire of war amongst close friends.

Sexual passion like tongue must be tamed to enjoy its full promises. Do not underestimate the danger that is inherent in illicit sex which, for all intend and purposes, is a subtle pollutant. Like polluting and smelly smoke, once sex disorder takes course or activated, only God knows how far it can pollute the air we breath. Sex profanity is a lead way to the grave.

Sexual endowment which is a social catalyst, nourishing meal for marital intimacy and procreation must be jealously protected. Those who are commissioned to indulge in sex as married adults must do so responsibly and for the purposes for which the endowment was provided by the creator.

Meddling in sexual activities can be tempting and the fall out from them can be quite fearful. Hence, the need for escape keys. In Psalm 119:9 (NIV), the Bible asked, "How can a young person stay on the path of purity? By living according to your word." "Your word" here means the Word of God but what does it say?: "Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body"(Corinthians 6:18, ESV). When it comes to sexual temptations there is no overcoming stamina but to flee it!

Proverbs 5:1-6 (NIV) is cited to draw a conclusion to this prose: "My son, pay attention to my wisdom, turn your ear to my words of insight, that you may maintain discretion and your lips may preserve knowledge. For the lips of the adulterous woman drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil; but in the end she is bitter as gall, sharp as a double-edged sword. Her feet go down to death; her steps lead straight to the grave.

She gives no thought to the way of life: her paths wander aimlessly, but she does not know it." Very profound words to instruct the wise here!

A few weeks ago, a friend of mine who sells cameras and security gadgets asked me why I was hardly seen these days. I told her that I had a couple of schools I was attending and subjects I was studying but the one that took up most of my time was data science and business analytics. In essence, I am learning coding. I told her that it was so grueling that sometimes I would ask myself "who sent me?". Instead of encouraging me, my friend asked me what an old woman like me was still doing in school. Aouch! I felt the cut, but I did not react accordingly. My response was that I was actually studying to acquire skills in preparation for my retirement. I told her that I wanted to be a rich, self-sufficient old lady and if my calculation is correct, \$200 USD per hour is way more than my pension and gratuity. There was silence. So, I asked my friend if she knew anything about Artificial Intelligence and Big Data since she was selling security gadgets. She said no. I smiled sheepishly and pointed her in the direction of a computer and said, "old woman, get busy!". We both busted out laughing.

In today's world, robots are slowly taking over some jobs and replacing human labour in the workplace. These robots make use of artificial intelligence via programming. It is imperative to stay awake and go with the tide of new innovations in order to keep our knowledge of our environment and our world, up to date. It is also imperative to retrain in the event that a robot takes over one's job. This reality is unfolding but it will take a while to become the new normal.

Some employees would rather go with robots for several reasons. The first is that the human capital is the most difficult to manage amongst all the factors of production. If you look at the average human being in the workplace, you will understand why there is a human resources directorate in the workplace. The human being will go on sick leave, casual leave, maternity leave, paternity, and annual leave. This is time taken away from the employer. The human will require the payment of allowances ranging from salaries to death benefits. The machine on the other hand, does not die.

The robot has replaceable parts and is programmable such that it does according to the employer's specification down to the smallest drop. The employer does not have to deal with the problem of illness, truancy, and absenteeism. He does not have to deal with employees who steal or play office politics to the detriment of the employer's return on investment. He simply does not have to deal with human emotion and frailty and the erratic nature of human beings which makes planning exceedingly difficult. The robot is a preferable option for routine work and the human being is only superior in the area of creative management.

Furthermore, some economies are thriving on the sale of knowledge. Countries like the United States of America, China, Germany, India to name a few. It is through knowledge that technological innovations are achieved. These innovations are sold and spend the much-needed foreign exchange. The world is in turn turning towards trade in knowledge.

The knowledge economy is achieved through education and human capital development. When we hear of intellectual property, this is a product of the application of knowledge in the creation of value that could be sold locally and exported internationally. According to Investopedia: Intellectual property (IP) refers to creations of the mind, such as inventions; literary and artistic works; designs; and symbols, names and images used in commerce. IP is protected in law by, for example, patents, copyright and trademarks, which enable people to earn recognition or financial benefit from what they invent or create. By striking the right balance between the interests of innovators and the wider public interest, the IP system aims to foster an environment in which creativity and innovation can flourish. The forgoing is from Investopedia".

Intellectual property is not only found in the areas of scientific inventions but also in the arts. Our musicians and movie writers, producers and Directors are raking in money into our economy with their creation. All types of Intellectual property feed the knowledge economy and since the world is leaning towards technology such as the Artificial intelligence we spoke about, it would be wisdom for our country to dedicate a fraction of its budget towards financing intellectual human capital development.

Nigerians are known for their ingenuity,

Many Nigerians have on their own, created apps that they have sold for huge amount of dollars. Nigerians are also known to hack the most intricate of systems. Imagine if the government can harness these talents. Imagine if these talents are developed for national development. The Indian economy is a knowledge-based economy, and the government is very deliberate in encouraging and promoting this sector of the economy. My teachers in my data science and business analytics class are Americans and Indians and they do not play. It is a culture. It is imperative for Nigeria to develop this culture because it will not only help in building our economy but also develop out intellectual capacity as a nation.

Honour to whom honour is due. This need to build the knowledge economy sector cannot

A knowledge economy for Nigeria



be emphasized if we are going to be part of the global knowledge economy. As such we salute the Government for efforts at developing this sector. We salute Honourable Femi Gbajabiamila, the speaker of the House of Representatives, for throwing his personal weight behind the development of intellectual capacity in Nigeria. The voice of Nigeria says the following: "The Speaker of the House of Representatives, Rep. Gbajabiamila has restated the need to prepare Nigerian children for future challenges and global competition with the right modern tools. Gbajabiamila said the need to make Nigerian children globally competitive was responsible for his several interventions in the nation's education sector through proactive laws and personal efforts. One such effort among others was the Gbajabiamila Summer Coding Camp held across five secondary schools in Surulere 1 Federal Constituency, where children from all parts of Lagos State were taught about coding to introduce and enhance their computer literacy and artificial intelligence".

In order to explore the subject matter further, the following is culled from Investopedia, dated January 22 2021:

Adam Hayes, Ph.D., CFA, is a financial writer with 15+ years Wall Street experience as a derivatives trader. Besides his extensive derivative trading expertise, Adam is an expert in economics and behavioral finance. Adam received his master's in economics from The New School for Social Research and his Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in sociology. He is a CFA charterholder as well as holding FINRA Series 7, 55 & 63 licenses. He currently researches and teaches economic sociology and the social studies of finance at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. What Is the Knowledge Economy?

The knowledge economy is a system of consumption and production that is based on intellectual capital. In particular, it refers to the ability to capitalize on scientific discoveries and applied research. The knowledge economy represents a large share of the activity in most highly developed economies. In a knowledge economy, a significant component of value may consist of intangible assets such as the value of its workers' knowledge or intellectual property.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

The knowledge economy describes the



business product to be sold and exported to yield profits for individuals, businesses, and the economy.

This component of the economy relies greatly on intellectual capabilities instead of natural resources or physical contributions. In the knowledge economy, products, and services that are based on intellectual expertise advance technical and scientific fields, encouraging innovation in the economy as a whole.

The World Bank defines knowledge economies according to four pillars:

Institutional structures that provide incentives for entrepreneurship and the use of knowledge. Availability of skilled labor and a good education system. Access to information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructures. A vibrant innovation landscape that includes academia, the private sector, and civil society.

Example of a Knowledge Economy

Academic institutions, companies engaging in research and development (R&D), programmers developing new software and search engines for data, and health workers using digital data to improve treatments are all components of a knowledge economy.

These economy brokers pass on the results of their research to workers in more traditional fields, such as farmers who use software applications and digital solutions to manage their crops better, advanced technological-based medical procedures such as robot-assistant surgeries, or schools that provide digital study aids and online courses for students.

How Big Is the Knowledge Economy?

Because it is not a clearly-defined category such as manufacturing, it is difficult to put an exact price tag on the global knowledge economy. However, it is possible to gain a rough estimate by gauging some of the major components of the knowledge economy. In the United States, the total intellectual property market is worth \$6.6 trillion, according to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and IP-intensive industries account for over a third of GDP. The market size of the country's higher education institutions accounts for an additional \$568 billion.

What Are the Most Valuable Skills in the Knowledge Economy?

While higher education and technical training are obvious assets, communication and teamwork are also essential skills for a knowledge-based economy, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. Since it is unlikely that any single knowledge worker can generate groundbreaking innovations alone, these interpersonal and workplace competencies are essential to surviving in a knowledge-based workplace.

Which Country Has the Biggest Knowledge Economy?

The factors of a knowledge economy are measured by the United Nations Development Program's Global Knowledge Index, which replaced the World Bank Knowledge Economy Index after 2012. This metric scores each country based on "enabling factors" for the knowledge economy, such as education levels, technical and vocational training, innovation, and communications technology. According to the latest issue, Switzerland is the top-ranked knowledge economy with a total score of 71.5%. The next two are Sweden and the United States with scores of 70.0 each.

In conclusion. It is hoped that Nigeria will also invest heavily in its potentials in order to grow its very own knowledge economy in tandem with global standards for a great reward on investment and a better economy.

LAST week we left off proclaiming that everyone who has named the name of the Lord for salvation and has become a born again believer becomes a partaker of the anointing that is in Jesus Christ. God has made available this anointing to the entire world that we may be delivered from eternity damnation and that we may find help, meaning and fulfillment in this life Praise God.

Today we know that Jesus and his saving anointing is our saviour and deliverer from sin and sickness. 1 Peter 2:24 says **who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.** Meaning that when Jesus paid and took your sin while he was on the cross, He also paid for your healing. The same sacrifice that dealt with sin dealt with sickness and disease.

Therefore, the moment you become born again, not only are you delivered from an eternity in hell but also you are delivered from satanic afflictions and sickness; this is what the gospel says. Isaiah 53:1 says, **who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?** This is saying the one that has believed this gospel message that is the one that the mighty power of God will be revealed to. Therefore the answer to the question, what does it take to walk in all of these dimensions of salvation is simply, believe the report.

Believe what Christ did from your heart and begin to declare it with your mouth that as a result of what Christ did you are delivered from sin, hell, satanic affliction; sin and sickness has no dominion over your life. Declare these things with your mouth.

Isaiah 53:5 says **But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed;** this is saying the punishment necessary, required and needful for us to walk in peace (Peace here in the Hebrew is shalom, a word meaning nothing missing, nothing broken). The price has

been paid for you to have peace with God – your eternal destiny settled; while you also get the anointing of God flowing in your life to help you in this race of life. My friends there is absolutely no situation that this anointing cannot take care of or resolve. If there is any sickness in your body, know that you do not have to be sick anymore because Jesus has taken that sickness.

As a matter of fact I feel stirred right now to pray for

I command your organs to function. Receive a functional heart, kidney, spleen. I command your glands to normalise in the name of Jesus. You foul devil of darkness, come out of their bones, come out of their blood in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, let the anointing of God's spirit rest upon you, from the crown of your head to the soles of your feet to the tip of your toes. Let the anointing drive out every stranger in your



Dominion over sin, sickness & poverty



“
As you believe these scriptures and declare them with your mouth, the power of God will begin to create supernatural occurrences for financial and material provision to come into your life. Any and every aspect of our salvation responds to your declaration of faith. As you believe it in your heart and declare it with your mouth, supernatural begin to take place and you begin to be positioned supernaturally to experience these benefits.”

those amongst my readers who are sick. If you are sick in your body, reading this right now, place your hand upon that area of sickness (you can also stand for a loved one who is sick). I sense the anointing of God right now and I will like to pray for all those who are sick.

Now, in the name of that is above every name; in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, you foul spirit of infirmity, foul spirit of darkness, take your hands off this one right now in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. I command you OUT of their ears; OUT of their eyes; take your hands OFF of their minds in the name of Jesus. I command that yoke of depression; that weight of depression; that band of depression to be purged out of your mind right now in the name of Jesus.

body, every sickness, every disease in your body and I command you to be healed: be healed and be whole now in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. I declare you shall live and not die to declare the works of the Lord. Be healed in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Be free from the infirmity of the flesh, of the mind and of the body. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ be free. Amen.

Right now, begin to try anything that you previously could not and you will discover that that affliction and pain has gone. In some cases it is subsiding and it will eventually be gone in some few hours while for some it may be a few days. Please it will be an honour for use to know what God is doing in your life; do send in your testimonies so we

can rejoice with you. You will find our contact details at the end of this message. Glory to God forevermore!

Now, just as we have established that Jesus is our saviour from sin, sickness, disease and infirmity, so also is He our saviour from poverty, want and lack. The Bible says in Psalms 23:1 **The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.**

As a side note, I want you to know that the power of Christianity lies in your confession of faith; the declaration of the word of God with your mouth. Something happens when you agree with God and speak like He is speaking concerning your life. When you say what the scripture is saying, what God is saying, the power of God comes upon you.

The word of God is spoken to be spoken. For instance, Hebrew 13:5&6 says **let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.** The word of God is spoken to be spoken to bring the required result.

Now back to Psalms 23:1 **The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.** God's plans for you

includes your material needs being met. 2 Cor. 8:9 makes this clear. It says, **for ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.** The number one poverty of Jesus is that He stripped Himself of every divine privilege and came human flesh, though a sinless flesh. Divinity coming down and becoming contained in human flesh, now that is poverty.

The second poverty Jesus suffered is that He became united with sin. He agreed to become our burden bearer and our sin bearer. He took our sin upon Himself; thereby paying and breaking the power of sin so that we will be declared innocent of all guilt; of all the sin of Adam that came upon us.

As you believe these scriptures and declare them with your mouth, the power of God will begin to create supernatural occurrences for financial and material provision to come into your life. Any and every aspect of our salvation responds to your declaration of faith. As you believe it in your heart and declare it with your mouth, supernatural begin to take place and you begin to be positioned supernaturally to experience these benefits. We continue from here next week. God bless.

“Now, in the name of that is above every name; in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, you foul spirit of infirmity, foul spirit of darkness, take your hands off this one right now in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. I command you OUT of their ears; OUT of their eyes; take your hands OFF of their minds in the name of Jesus. I command that yoke of depression; that weight of depression; that band of depression to be purged out of your mind right now in the name of Jesus.”

INTERNATIONAL

China, US: New scramble for the Gulf

China is Saudi Arabia's biggest trading partner, and the kingdom is China's largest supplier of oil, so it's normal for their leaders to meet and talk. MARWAN BISHARA writes.

BEFORE President Xi Jinping has even set foot on Saudi soil, there's already talk of "stepping on Washington's toes" and of interfering in a "US sphere of influence".

Indeed, during his visit to Riyadh only five months ago, United States President Joe Biden told a summit of Arab leaders that the US "will not walk away" from the Middle East to leave "a vacuum to be filled by China, Russia or Iran". Biden has also tried to assure allies that the humiliating US withdrawal from Afghanistan last year will actually free more resources for its long stay in the Gulf and wider region.

But that has not deterred Xi or his hosts from organising, in addition to a bilateral summit, separate summits with Arab states and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) during the Chinese president's visit to Riyadh from December 7-9. To rub salt into the wound, they might even go the extra mile in making the summits appear more prestigious than those organised for Biden.

Why? Well, because US-Saudi relations, much like US-China ties, have been strained despite American attempts to maintain appearances of constructive engagement.

Both Riyadh and Beijing have grown tired of Washington pressuring them to take its side against Russia in Ukraine and preaching the rights and wrongs of their ways in the Western-imposed "rules-based international system". All of this seems to have brought them closer together.

A younger generation of Gulf leaders is showing more agency as they seek greater independence from Washington to diversify their partnerships in energy, technology and security. China's a natural partner for them: it seeks reliable energy sources and markets for its goods and services, and prioritises development and trade over democracy and human rights.

Some if not most of these Gulf leaders oppose Biden's attempts at reviving the Iran nuclear deal and his politicisation of human rights issues. Earlier this year, the GCC even



Chinese President Xi Jinping, right, shakes hands with Saudi King Salman

expressed support for China's controversial policies towards its Muslim Uighurs, which have been condemned by the United States and others.

In 2021, the Biden administration snubbed Saudi Arabia because of its poor human rights record and because it could afford to, with an excess of oil and gas in the global markets. Western nations were also bullish about the transition away from fossil fuels to green energy.

But the Russian invasion of Ukraine earlier this year has changed all of

that. The US and its European allies have suddenly found themselves facing either oil and gas shortages or higher prices that have hurt their economic recovery after the pandemic. Alas, moving away from fossil fuels will prove challenging and drawn out.

Biden's attempt to appease the Saudis in the hope of lowering oil prices ahead of the US midterm elections failed miserably, as the de facto Saudi-led OPEC refused to increase oil production.

Other Western leaders have also

tried their hand, with the German Chancellor Olaf Scholz descending on the Gulf region in the hope of finding a substitute for Russian oil and gas. But China had beat them to it, signing tens of billions of dollars of bidding contracts, though Europe, too, is signing energy deals with the region's monarchies.

Yet while energy has been central to the new scramble for the Gulf, there is more to US frustration than mere oil and gas contracts. Unlike the fun and friendly "golf scramble", the Gulf scramble may prove ferocious and furious.

Biden's frantic – even desperate – attempt to shore up the dwindling authority of the US in one of its most important spheres of influence is driven by the fear that China is willing and capable of filling the void that America may leave behind in the region and beyond.

After all, the US pivot to Asia to contain a rising China has come at a time when Beijing has been increasingly focusing its attention on the Gulf and Middle East, to secure more trade and investments than ever before.

Beijing has established a naval base in Djibouti, deployed a flotilla to the Persian Gulf, and reached strategic partnerships with Algeria, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates and Iran. It has also staged massive naval drills with Russia and Iran.

Unlike the energy-sufficient US, China needs the Gulf region to supply it with the oil and gas resources it needs to sustain and strengthen its economic growth and military machine and to become a world power.

And that's precisely what irks Washington. As the status quo superpower, America has dominated the region for decades whether through soft or hard power, including costly military interventions since the 1980 Carter Doctrine stipulated that

the United States would use military force, if necessary, to defend its national interests in the Persian Gulf.

It is not about to share all of that with what it sees as a revisionist Asian power that seeks to reshape the international order. After the USA team crashed out of the World Cup in Qatar, a popular joke on social media observed sardonically that this was the quickest that the US had ever left the Middle East.

Washington will insist on having a say regarding the shape and form of GCC-China relationships, which is sure to create new diplomatic, even geopolitical tensions. But as I wrote last year, the jury is still out on Beijing's revisionism.

Unlike the Soviet Union, China is deeply integrated into the Western-led international system, and does not seek world domination through an alternative global ideology, even if it does insist on co-authoring the principles of a new world order as an equal partner.

"China's rise does not warrant isolating Beijing or curbing cooperation. But neither does China's growing power justify claims for hegemony in Asia and beyond. No country is the backyard of any other—and that applies to Europe as much as it does to Asia and every other region."

Alas, history tells us that a rising power and dominant power are bound for a costly collision. But history also teaches us to learn from history; to see that accommodation and integration trump collusion and confrontation. With more than its share of conflict and war, no region knows that better than the Middle East.

Source: AP News.



Xi Jinping and Joe Biden

INTERNATIONAL

Mexico considers asylum for Peru's impeached president

MEXICO says it is considering granting asylum to Peru's former President Pedro Castillo, who was impeached and then accused of rebellion in a dramatic turn of events on Wednesday.

Mr Castillo, 53, is now in custody in Lima. His asylum request has been sent to Mexico's president via a lawyer.

The two countries are now discussing the issue, says Mexican Foreign Minister Marcelo Ebrard.

Mr Castillo was removed from office after he tried to dissolve Congress.



Castillo

Facing an impeachment vote, Mr Castillo announced he was dissolving the opposition-controlled legislative body.

But Congress defied him, voted overwhelmingly to remove him from office, and his bodyguards stopped him from seeking refuge at the Mexican embassy in the capital Lima.

Just hours later, Congress swore in his vice-president, 60-year-old Dina Boluarte, as the new president.

In a letter to Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador sent late on Wednesday, Mr Castillo's lawyer requested him to "consider granting asylum ... in the face of the unfounded persecution of justice bodies".

"They intend to prosecute him for mere announcements of will or intention that do not

constitute any criminal offence," the letter added.

According to Mr Ebrard, the Mexican ambassador to Peru, Pablo Monroy, met Mr Castillo in Lima.

"He found [Mr Castillo] physically well and in the company of his lawyer," he said.

Ms Boluarte, was Mr Castillo's running mate in the 2021 election, quickly distanced herself from him on Wednesday when he tried to dissolve Congress, a move she said was an "attempted coup".

Speaking after being sworn in, she urged Peruvians to come together for "national unity" and asked for a "truce" to allow her to fight corruption.

Skirmishes were reported between police and angry Castillo supporters in the capital Lima on Wednesday

Mr Castillo's presidency was rocky even by Peru's standards, a country which in 2020 had three presidents within the space of five days.

The left-wing former school teacher narrowly beat his right-wing rival Keiko Fujimori to the presidency in June 2021.

But with little political experience and facing a hostile Congress, Mr Castillo who often attended official events wearing a wide-brimmed hat, quickly appeared out of his depth.

His cabinet underwent constant change and during his 18 months in office he had five prime ministers.

His time in office was also overshadowed by allegations of corruption, which Mr Castillo said were part of a "political persecution".

IRAN has announced the first execution of a protester convicted over the recent anti-government unrest.

Mohsen Shekari was hanged on Thursday morning after being found guilty by a Revolutionary Court of "moharebeh" (enmity against God), state media said.

He was accused of being a "rioter" who blocked a main road in Tehran in September and wounded a member of a paramilitary force with a machete.

An activist said he was convicted after a "show trial without any due process".

The judiciary's Mizan news agency reported that a Revolutionary Court was told that Mohsen Shekari had blocked Tehran's Sattar Khan Street on 25 September and used a machete to attack a member of the Basij Resistance Force, a volunteer paramilitary force often deployed to quell protests.

On 1 November, the court found Shekari guilty of fighting and drawing a weapon "with the intention of killing, causing terror and disturbing the order and security of society" and convicted him of "enmity against God", Mizan said.

He appealed against the verdict, but it was upheld by the supreme court on 20 November, it added.

Iran Human Rights said Shekari was "denied access to his lawyer throughout the interrogation phase [and] legal proceedings".

It also said the hard-line Fars news agency aired his "forced confessions" hours after his execution. In the video, a bruise on his right cheek is visible.

Iran carries out first execution over protests



Raisi

Opposition activist collective 1500tasvir tweeted: "While his family were still hoping for an appeal and had no news from the case, the Islamic Republic unexpectedly executed him."

The judiciary has so far announced that at least 11 other people have been sentenced to death by Revolutionary Courts on the charges of "enmity against God" or "corruption on Earth" in connection with the protests. The defendants' identities have not been disclosed.

Mohsen Shekari's arrest, trial and execution took less than two and a half months.

A rushed execution of a young protester might deter others from taking to the streets. However, it might prove to be a double-edged sword for the Iranian regime, which is seeking to instil fear but causing anger.

Protesters have proven over

and over again that they no longer have any fear. The funeral of each one killed by security forces has turned into an anti-government demonstration.

The hanging is therefore yet another huge gamble for the regime and one that might give fresh impetus to the protests on the streets.

Amnesty International said Shekari's execution "[exposed] the inhumanity of Iran's so-called justice system as dozens of others face the same fate".

UK Foreign Secretary James Cleverly tweeted that the world "cannot turn a blind eye to the abhorrent violence committed by the Iranian regime against its own people", while German Foreign Annalena Baerbock lamented that "the Iranian regime's contempt for humanity knows no bounds".

Judiciary chief Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejei has said that he has instructed judges to "avoid showing unnecessary sympathy to main elements of these riots and issue tough sentences for them" as a deterrent.

A majority of the members of Iran's parliament have also demanded "decisive action" from the judiciary and "qisas", or retaliation in kind, for those who have "waged war" on the state.

Iran is second only to China in the number of executions carried out annually.

Even before the current unrest there had been what UN human rights chief Volker Türk has called an "alarming increase" in executions in Iran, with the number reportedly passing 400 for the year for the first time since 2017.

Women have led the protests sparked by the death in police custody of Mahsa Amini

The women-led protests against Iran's clerical establishment were sparked by the death in custody of Mahsa Amini, a 22-year-old woman who was detained by morality police on 13 September for allegedly wearing her hijab, or headscarf, "improperly".

They have spread to 160 cities in all 31 provinces and are seen as one of the most serious challenges to the Islamic Republic since the 1979 revolution.

Iran's leaders have portrayed the protests as "riots" instigated by the country's foreign enemies. However, the overwhelming majority of protesters have been unarmed and peaceful.

So far, at least 475 protesters have been killed by security forces and 18,240 others have been detained, according to the Human Rights Activists'. It has also reported the deaths of 61 security personnel.

Iran's Supreme National Security Council has said that more than 200 people have been killed, including members of the

UK, Italy, Japan to develop new fighter jet

RISHI Sunak has announced a collaboration between the UK, Italy and Japan to develop a new fighter jet that uses artificial intelligence.

prime minister says the joint venture aims to create thousands of UK jobs and strengthen security ties.

The nations will develop a next generation fighter - due to enter service in the mid-2030s - that will eventually replace the Typhoon jet.

It is hoped the new Tempest jet will carry the latest weapons.

Mr Sunak said the partnership would "keep the country safe from the new threats that we face" as he visited RAF Coningsby in Lincolnshire on Friday.

He said: "We're one of the few countries in the world that has the capability to build technologically advanced fighter aircraft."

Work on developing it is already under way - with the aim to create a combat aircraft

that will provide speed, stealth, use advanced sensors and even artificial intelligence to assist the human pilot when they are overwhelmed, or under extreme stress.

It could also be flown without a pilot's input if required and could be able to fire hypersonic missiles.

But building such a complex aircraft is extremely expensive - developing the F35 jet was the most expensive programme ever undertaken by the Pentagon - so Britain has been looking for partners.

Italy was already on board, and the addition of Japan is a significant move - at a time when Britain is building closer ties with allies in the Indo-Pacific region worried about a more assertive China.

Other countries could still join the programme. France, Germany and Spain are already working together on their own separate design - as is the United States.

For the UK, this agreement is not just about security but also

economics. The hope is that developing a new fighter jet could create and sustain thousands of UK jobs and open doors to more arms exports.

Ahead of the visit to RAF Coningsby, Mr Sunak said: "The security of the United Kingdom, both today and for future generations, will always be of paramount importance to this government."

"That's why we need to stay

UK sanctions people over human rights abuses

THE United Kingdom has announced sanctions against 30 people worldwide, including Russian and Iranian officials, targeting those it deems responsible for acts of torture, sexual violence and the violent repression of street protests.

The move came on Friday, a day after France announced plans for new European Union sanctions against Iran over human rights abuses in its security crackdown on popular unrest there as well as its supply of drones to Russia before Moscow's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

The British government said its sanctions were coordinated with international partners to mark International Anti-Corruption Day and Global Human Rights Day.

at the cutting-edge of advancements in defence technology - outpacing and out-manoeuvring those who seek to do us harm.

"The international partnership we have announced today with Italy and Japan aims to do just that, underlining that the security of the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific regions are indivisible."

"The next-generation of combat aircraft we design will

UK sanctions people over human rights abuses

They encompassed senior lieutenant on sexual individuals involved in abuse charges during the activities including the torture of prisoners and the Russia, which has said it is mobilisation of troops to conducting a "special military operation" in Ukraine to eliminate threats further to expose those to its security, has denied behind the heinous committing war crimes or violations of our most fundamental rights," foreign secretary James Cleverly said in a statement.

Those sanctioned include Russian Colonel Ramil Rakhmatulovich Ibatullin for his role as the commander of the 90th Tank Division, which has been involved in fighting since Russia's invasion of Ukraine earlier this year.

The government said there have been multiple allegations made against serving members of the division, including the Islamic republic since its conviction in Ukraine of an establishment in 1979.



Fighter Jet



My show should be supported by all

-Kalban Comedian

NO doubt, you are one of the most successful comedians who have continued to dazzle your targeted audience, I will not be wrong to say that you have improved quite significantly, right?

Well, I wouldn't say I am successful yet, and I would say that my audience still has a lot to hear from me. I have improved yes that is part of the rules of growth, to consistently work on oneself and continuously improve one's craft. If not they would have thrown me into the creative dustbin (laughs) don't you think so? lol.

How have you been able to put in your best in this regard?

There's a saying that goes as thus; no man is an island. so in this regard I've always tried to connect myself to my environment that's where I get materials from, day to day happenings, and relating with my colleagues in the industry as well. I learn from their craft too. I have senior colleagues who have succeeded in the industry I try to follow their progress stories as well. I've also learnt to fuel my disappointments into my work, push myself beyond my comfort zone and limitations.



Above all I look constantly and consistently to my creator and the giver of all gifts. He shows me how to harness what he has given me and how to improve myself.

Does comedy really pay in this contemporary society?

Well I won't say it doesn't pay, but it doesn't pay as it ought to. This is as a result of Jos being the melting point of creatives has not learnt to appreciate and value creatives. Most times you hear "you're doing well" but they expect that you put up the best events give a mind blowing show. How many things can I use "you're doing well" to buy in the market? How many "you're doing well" can I use to organize an event? However, I believe that we will get there with persistence, and

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Couples who became close friends after ending marriage

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

Demi Moore and Bruce Willis



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

Channing Tatum and Jenna Dewan



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

Orlando Bloom and Miranda Kerr



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

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EVERYONE'S WORLD

With *Henrietta Gonzuk*

Relationship

Steps to manage a difficult marriage

EVERYONE desires a great marriage and while that is a good thing, you would also agree that the going could get tough at times. There are times when it could seem like nothing is working despite all the efforts and investments you are making. It can be really tiring and frustrating.

Maybe your spouse has remained more adamant as ever and is not even showing any sign of change and you're beginning to wonder if connection can ever deepen again.

Your pain is validated and I've shared below 5 steps to take when you feel stuck and don't know what else to do as regards your marriage.

DO AN EVALUATION: The first thing to do when things are not going as you envisaged is to review the current situation you're facing in your marriage. Reflect on what happened and see where you may be missing it.

You may want to start with these few questions;

- i. How did you both get here?
- ii. What is the pattern around your marriage? What is the pattern around your spouse's parents' marriage and your own parents' marriage?
- iii. Is there a pattern that looks similar to what is presently happening?
- iv. What are the triggers that causes both of you to fight every time?

Asking these questions would help you to gain deeper insight into what is happening and you can strategize on a better way to go about it.

FOCUS ON GETTING BETTER

How about you take your eyes off your spouse for a while (i.e., turn a blind eye to what he/she is not doing right) and shift the



focus to yourself? Except you are dealing with abuse and violence, take some time to reflect on your transformation first.

Why do you look at the (insignificant) speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice and acknowledge the log that is in your own eye?

In the process of waiting for your partner to change, are there behavioral changes you can make from your end?

Maybe all you need to do is to mind the way you think, how you address issues, your approach to matters and situations.

Do you always play the blame game when you should have taken responsibility and admit your fault? Are you always defensive when you should own up? Do you become

aggressive instead of tendering your opinion to your spouse in a respectful manner when you don't share the same view with on a matter? Instead of pointing accusing fingers, how about you look inwards and see how you can become a better spouse?

CLOSE THE GAPS

Looking inwards would help you see your weak points too and how things can change.

If you have discovered some areas that you feel like you can do better at, you can come up with a plan around the books, courses or trainings that you know you can be a part of that can help you. You may need to learn about communication, conflict resolutions and emotional intelligence. And if you can identify certain things you need, take note of these things and observe if you can get better. While you're seeking ways to be better by applying knowledge, you also need to prayerfully arrest the situation by spending some time with God and ask for discernment. Ask God for revelation and knowledge, ask Him to open your eyes to the foundational issues, ask Him to show you what could be wrong, the adjustments that can be made because sometimes you may not be able to see things clearly yet. When you seek God with all your heart, He would show you the things you need to know.

HAVE A SUPPORT SYSTEM

When things are not going well, don't stay alone and keep to yourself. Don't be in isolation when things are getting bad. You should have a trusted elder or spiritual mentor or someone you know you can speak to that can support and guide you so that you don't deteriorate in your mental, emotional and spiritual health.

You need someone that can enhance your spiritual growth in case you sense that you need help in that area. Never walk through the hard times of your marriage alone, there are communities that can empower you. You only need to find your company.

When you decide to leave your marriage, it will not happen in a

day, you still need to plan for it, hence get support, become better and make an informed decision.

SPEAK TO A PROFESSIONAL COUNSELLOR

One of the things I've discovered is that when you finally reach out for counseling, you will be able to see things clearly from a neutral eyes. It doesn't matter if you're the only one seeking for counselling first, just make the effort to go through the process and you will notice how the level of knowledge that you'll get can help you. It might be for you first and then progress to cause a change in your home. You can book a session with me here: www.nikefolagbade.com.



EYE'S WORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Health

Reason you should eat garlic on empty stomach

IN the modern day diet, there is an emphasis on ingredient education. One of the most used ingredients worldwide is garlic. This is because it contains numerous minerals, vitamins and immune system strengthening components. In fact, the way you eat garlic can have benefits that can change your life. Eating raw garlic, for instance, can help improve various aspects of your life from combating depression to purifying your blood. Let's learn more about these benefits.

Amazing Health Benefits of Eating Garlic on Empty Stomach

The answer to the question, "is garlic good on empty stomach?" is a comprehensive yes. Eating raw garlic on an empty stomach has numerous great benefits on your health and general life. Here are some of these benefits.

Helps Weight Loss

Eating a couple of pods of garlic on an empty stomach for weight loss is extremely beneficial. Garlic contains components that help with burning bad and excessive fats in your body. Studies from numerous nutritional journals also claim that garlic can speed up your

metabolism in general. Helps Control Blood Sugar

Garlic is an extremely useful ingredient in a sugar friendly diet. It is rich in a compound known as allicin. This component is known for controlling and lowering blood sugar levels. Allicin is further amplified when you crush or chop a garlic pod. Eating crushed raw garlic pods twice a day can help improve your sugar levels immensely.

Combats Depression

Garlic is a great ingredient for physical and mental health. When consumed raw and on an empty stomach, garlic is known to have natural mood-lifting properties. It is also known that garlic is great at balancing chemicals in your body, and this includes brain chemicals. Depression is caused by an imbalance of brain chemicals, and as such, garlic can help fight depression.

Prevents Cancer

Garlic is rich in anti-inflammatory, antibiotic and anti-carcinogenic properties. When you eat it raw on an empty stomach first thing in the morning, it can help prevent some forms of cancer. This is also in part due to the fact that garlic is very rich in detoxification and



antioxidants.

Fights Infections

As mentioned above, garlic is a great natural antibiotic. Although it does not replace medication, garlic eaten raw daily can amplify medication functions. Eating it regularly also helps keep infections at bay for long periods of time.

Reduces Hypertension

Raw garlic on an empty stomach is known to help fight symptoms of hypertension. Doctors recommend eating garlic on an empty stomach every day as a preventive measure for those who may be at risk of hypertension.

Purifies the Blood

Eating garlic on an empty stomach is great for your blood. The detoxification agents in garlic help remove impurities in your bloodstream and can improve blood vessel health. The antioxidants, antibiotic properties and anti-inflammation properties all play a part in the purification of your blood.

Helps Digestion

Garlic is rich in antioxidants and pre-biotics and probiotics. These components help increase gut health. Garlic also has minerals and vitamins that play a huge role in improving liver, bladder and kidney health. This works in tandem with the anti-stress properties of garlic which stop the increase in excessive stomach acid to ensure a cleaner and more efficient digestive tract.

Improves Lung Health

Garlic helps clear the respiratory tract. Consuming garlic regularly can fight dangerous pulmonary diseases like - asthma, bronchitis, whooping cough and tuberculosis. It also helps ease lung congestion and improves oxygen levels in the body. Add to the fact that garlic has antibiotic and anti-inflammatory properties and it becomes the perfect food for the common cold.

Regulates Blood Pressure

It is a well-known fact that eating garlic on empty stomach for cholesterol and blood pressure is supposed to be immensely beneficial. This is because garlic has many immune system improving components and blood purification components, it is also because garlic is rich in elements that help cholesterol absorption in the body, this helps maintain healthy blood pressure levels.

How Can You Eat Garlic on an Empty Stomach?

You can consume garlic in numerous ways when on an empty stomach, here are a few.

- Crush garlic and eat raw before breakfast
- Chop bits of garlic, make tea with it and drink it with breakfast
- Eat whole pods of garlic raw as snacks
- Pan fry garlic with butter and mix it into your omelette
- Add fresh diced garlic

into chutneys and sambars and eat with idli or dosa

FAQs

Here are some answers to the most frequently asked questions about garlic being consumed on an empty stomach.

Is It Safe to Eat Garlic on Empty Stomach Daily?

Yes, in small amounts, garlic is a great ingredient to consume daily. Be it cooked or raw, garlic is safe for your body and has numerous immune system boosting elements. It is important to moderate this however, as eating too much can cause constipation, blood pressure issues and can cause heartburn.

How Much Garlic Should I Eat on an Empty Stomach?

It is recommended that you eat garlic based on your overall dietary needs. However, it is important to note that you should at most consume 3 pods of garlic per meal at the most if raw. This can increase to one full clove of garlic if cooked.

Remember, garlic should never be the entirety of your diet. It can help your body immensely, but having a balanced nutrition plan is essential. Talk to your doctors about garlic being incorporated into your diet. Garlic does not replace any form of medication. If you are on medication, please follow your doctor's instructions. Garlic is simply a supplement that immensely can boost the functions of your medication and body.





Reality Bites

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Inclusion of PWD's in the 2023 electoral process

As next year's 2023 Nigerian elections is drawing close, campaigns and engagements of stakeholders in the electoral processes is taking place, but are People with Disabilities (PWD's) being carried along?

Section 54 of the electoral Act 2022 provides for participation of PWD's in the electoral process including ensuring the provision of assistive and inclusive devices to enable them participate without challenges.

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) Chairman Prof. Mahmood Yakubu had during an event to campaign and promote the mainstreaming of PWD's in the electoral process organised by the Albino Foundation in Abuja observed that PWD's constitute the category of marginalised groups during elections alongside women and youths.

He however at the forum assured that Nigeria is the first country in Africa to include PWD's in elections stressing that all barriers to their inclusion must be dismantled, reports Leadership.

Yakubu at the forum also said emphasis of the commission is not going to be just on the participation of PWD's as candidates during elections but their involvement in the electoral process in general.

With an estimated population of 19 Million PWD's in Nigeria, Jega said that INEC as helmsman had taken several practical steps to promote inclusivity including the introduction of assistive devices such as Braille ballot guide, magnifying glasses, posters for the deaf as products of INEC's engagement with the disability community.

The Plateau State INEC Resident Electoral Commissioner, Dr. Oliver Tersoo Agundu, in a recent interface with the media community in Plateau State, on December 5, 2022, at the INEC state office Jos, disclosed that the state had taken delivery of 4 trailer load of Non-sensitive materials.

Agundu who had officially taken over office assured of carrying all stakeholders along and called on



citizens to collect their Permanent Voters Card.

The Chairperson, Plateau State Disability Rights Commission, Ms. Kyennan Mizim, in an interview disclosed that the population of PWD's in Plateau is One Million and 15 while eligible voters are 947 Thousand.

The Chairperson who is a committee member of the All Progressives Congress (APC) presidential campaign team said there is a great improvement in the inclusion of PWD's in the electoral processes compared to what obtained in the past.

She said as a member of the Tinubu/Shettima Campaign Committee, they are putting strategies to mobilise PWD's across the 17 Local Government Areas.

"After that, we will go to the ward level and start our door to door campaign to woo voters" she said.

She said efforts are on top gear to ensure PWD's are prepared for the 2023 elections especially in the area of sensitisation and voter education to spur participation.

"There has been alot of sensitization going on since the

commission was established. Alot of sensitization is going on among the Disability clusters in the state concerning the 2023 elections. Each association is trying it's best to see that they are not left behind in the process but there is always room for improvement and we are hoping that we can do more sensitization, most especially in the rural areas across the state".

On the representation of PWD's in her party manifesto, policies and programmes, Mizim said in her Party the APC, the structure accommodates PWD's in party committees, and campaign councils.

"We now have a voice. We are being recognised. During the APC National Convention, PWD's were given a chance to speak at Eagle square, likewise during the Party Presidential campaign flag-off here in Jos. Aside that, the ruling APC party structure has PWD's as members at the National Executive Council down to the ward exco levels. An adequate number of PWD's are also fully represented in their campaign council".

She said the efforts of INEC and the present Executive Secretary of the National Commission for Persons with disability, Hon James Lalu, and other stakeholders at the last election was commendable but there are more efforts by them, to address past challenges and put current structures to make sure every polling unit is accessible to PWD's, in a bid to give them the opportunity to exercise their franchise, just like every Nigerian citizen.

"INEC has also improved on the provision of braille for the visually impaired in the forth coming elections and I believe too that sign language interpreters will be provided too".

She however urged the electoral umpire INEC to consolidate on their achievements so far and continue to synergize with the challenged community.

"My organisation are in talks with INEC at the state level to address some of the issues for a hitch-free outing. We are working to provide sign language interpreters and access to all eligible voters of the

PWD's community, and ensure that among the adhoc staff in every polling unit in the state, there is one Person with Disability".

"At my party level, we are making arrangements to ensure we have 3 persons with disability so that there will be access and the challenged clusters will not face disenfranchisement".

Mizim tasked stakeholders and other political parties to also create an avenue for understanding and accommodating the needs of PWD's in the elections as stipulated in the electoral act to make them fully take part in the process".

She also advised PWDs not to relent but make sure they come out to vote, to exercise their civil rights in the forth coming elections.

"Come out to vote for the right candidates that will give us a listening ear. Vote for those that consider the plights of PWDs", said Mizim.

This year's International Day of Persons with Disabilities has the Theme "Transformative solutions for inclusive development: the role of innovation in fueling an accessible and equitable world".

The observance of the Day across the world aims to promote an understanding of disability issues and mobilize support for the dignity, rights and well-being of persons with disabilities.

The 2022 global observance to



commemorate the International PWD's Day centers around the overarching theme of innovation and transformative solutions for inclusive development, covering in three different interactive dialogues the following thematic topics: Innovation for disability inclusive development in employment (SDG8): this dialogue will discuss the linkages between employment, knowledge and skills required to access employment in an innovative, rapidly changing technological landscape to all and how assistive technologies can increase accessibility to employment and be mainstreamed in the workplace; Innovation for disability inclusive development in reducing inequality (SDG10): this dialogue will discuss innovations, practical tools and good practices to reduce inequalities in both public and private sectors, which are disability inclusive and interested in promoting diversity in the workplace; and Innovation for disability inclusive development: sport as an exemplar case: a sector where all of these aspects coalesce; sport as a good practice example and a site of innovation, employment and equity.

While government and political parties strategise to make the 2023 elections better for the PWD communities in Nigeria, it is also time to put words to action and start implementing the Disability Rights Law at all quotas, especially in areas of employment because there are still jobs that are a no-go area for PWD's in Nigeria.

The country also needs to address the challenges PWD's face in areas like Physical and architectural designs, technological designs, communications and discrimination



EVE'S WORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Beauty-Bytes

What's Your Skin Type?

YOU'VE heard the buzz about normal, oily, dry, combination, or sensitive skin types. But which one do you have?

It can change over time. For example, younger people are more likely than older folks to have a normal skin type.

What's the difference? Your type depends on things such as:

- How much water is in your skin, which affects its comfort and elasticity
- How oily it is, which affects its softness
- How sensitive it is

Normal Skin Type

Not too dry and not too oily, normal skin has:

- No or few imperfections
- No severe sensitivity
- Barely visible pores
- A radiant complexion

Combination Skin Type

Your skin can be dry or normal in some areas and oily in others, such as the T-zone (nose, forehead, and chin). Many people have this type. It may need slightly different care in different areas.

Combination skin can have:

- Pores that look larger than normal because they're more open
- Blackheads
- Shiny skin

Dry Skin Type

You may have:

- Almost invisible pores
- Dull, rough complexion
- Red patches
- Less elastic skin
- More visible lines

Your skin can crack, peel, or become itchy, irritated, or



inflamed. If it's very dry, it can become rough and scaly, especially on the backs of your hands, arms, and legs.

Dry skin may be caused or made worse by:

- Your genes
- Aging or hormonal changes
- Weather such as wind, sun, or cold
- Ultraviolet (UV) radiation from tanning beds
- Indoor heating
- Long, hot baths and showers
- Ingredients in soaps, cosmetics, or cleansers
- Medications

Use these tips to help your dry skin:

1. Take shorter showers and baths, no more than once daily.
2. Use mild, gentle soaps or cleansers. Avoid deodorant soaps.
3. Don't scrub while bathing or drying.
4. Smooth on a rich moisturizer right after bathing. Ointments and creams may work better than lotions for dry skin but are often messier. Reapply as needed throughout the day.
5. Use a humidifier, and don't let indoor temperatures get too hot.
6. Wear gloves when using cleaning agents, solvents, or household detergents.

Oily Skin Type

You may have:

- Enlarged pores
- Dull or shiny, thick complexion
- Blackheads, pimples, or other blemishes

Related

Oiliness can change depending upon the time of year or the weather. Things that can cause or worsen it include:

- Puberty or other hormonal imbalances
 - Stress
 - Heat or too much humidity
- To take care of oily skin:
- Wash it no more than twice a day and after you sweat a lot.
 - Use a gentle cleanser and don't scrub.
 - Don't pick, pop, or squeeze pimples. They'll take longer to heal.
 - Look for the word "noncomedogenic" on skin care products and cosmetics. This means it won't clog pores.

Sensitive Skin Type

It can show up as:

- Redness
- Itching
- Burning
- Dryness

If your skin is sensitive, try to find out what your triggers are so you can avoid them. There are many possible reasons, but often it's in response to particular skin care products.

Why Does It Matter?

Before you buy skin care products, it's a good idea to know your skin type and other things that contribute to the look and feel of your skin, like:

- **Your skin complexion.** Does your skin burn easily, rarely, or never?
- **Your skin care goals.** Are you trying to prevent premature aging? Do you have a skin problem, such as acne or rosacea, or other concerns, such as dark circles under your eyes or fine lines?
- **Your personal habits.** Do you smoke? Do you spend a lot of time in the sun? Do you take a daily vitamin? Do you eat a well-balanced diet? All these factors may affect how you should care for your skin.

This information can help you sort through skin care products for those that suit you. If you need help, ask a dermatologist or an aesthetician at a skin care counter for recommendations.

The Basics of Skin Care

No matter what type of skin you have, these tips will keep it looking its best.

- Use a broad-spectrum sunscreen that blocks both UVA and UVB rays.
- Avoid direct sunlight, and wear a hat and sunglasses.
- Don't smoke.
- Stay hydrated.
- Wash your skin gently but thoroughly every day and never wear makeup to bed.
- 6. Moisturize.



BUSINESS WORLD

Poverty eradication: We need big ideas, not buckpassing

As the debates sparked and now rages over the embarrassing rate of multidimensional poverty as reported by no less than the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), it behooves on me to humbly intervene in the vexed matter with a view to making positive of the hoopla. For as usual, the raging debate stands a chance of dying off like others before it, with nothing gained and with Nigeria remaining where she is or even worse, when as they say, 'it pays never to let a crisis go to waste'. The penchant to allow crises go to waste is partly why we are where we are today. It is generational, such that even young Nigerians are satisfied with dragging the older ones, insulting and cursing them, even beating them up where they can, but never ensuring that real, considered gains come out of the crises they stoke, or that get thrust upon them. TOPE FASUA writes.

AS I had expressed in a Channels TV interview earlier, the debate itself – just as the data that 133 million Nigerians are multidimensionally poor – is an own goal for the government. I have my doubts about such severity of poverty in Nigeria honestly, and even as to whether Nigeria's population is what we say it is, sans politics. We know how our politicians have always bloated population numbers for their constituencies to win elections and get fatter federal allocations. In keenly contested elections, Nigeria has been unable to justify even 50% of the population it claims, if we are to extrapolate. Multidimensional poverty however speaks to not only monetary poverty, but also access to basic factors that add value to life – schools, libraries, health facilities, sporting facilities, parks and what have you. In that regard, yes, many Nigerians have no access and indeed consecutive governments have not been able to provide many of these amenities at scales that may be considered adequate and sustainable. The argument as to who is responsible for the poverty – between federal and state governments – is unnecessary and unproductive. The administration of President Buhari has waited until the end of its tenure to have this debate in the first place. Perhaps we can salvage something from the hullabaloo.

If we are to consider which segment of government should be responsible for lifting the nation out of poverty, we may look to our structure of government and at what the constitution prescribes for every level of government. The controversy still subsists as to whether the Federal Government should arrogate 66 items to itself and leave about 21 to the states. There is however the fluidity of those exclusive and contemporary items as we have seen with the power sector, the transport sector (trains) and what have you. We cannot hide under constitutionality, no matter how easy it is to duck the real issues. The same constitution initially provided for local government autonomy and guaranteed the LGs as a 'federating unit' but the governors showed up and vitiated that position by creating what is called 'joint accounts' by which they collect federal funds meant for local government into a single one they control and disburse what they like. Most of our states have failed to conduct elections into the local government councils, preferring to run that level of government by proxies. What is obvious now is that the states have not shown enough prowess, dexterity, commitment, expertise, fidelity, and creativity, towards governing and administering local governments, just as our federal government has been too feeble in setting the pace for state governments and defining an overarching vision. Of course, the local governments, where the rubber meets the tarmac, development-wise, is totally absent.

In spite of the structural challenges – many of which will keep morphing and never disappear – I believe we should look at big ideas instead. No constitution is perfect, that is why the



Americans have amended their 27 times since 1776. And many nations around the world have developed in spite of imperfect constitution – from China where they run a one-party state, to India – where the local governments are also listed as 'federating units' – to some of our north African neighbors who are already integrating with Europe and of course, the Arab World through the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), in terms of infrastructure and trade. I believe we need to push back against this idea of boiling down every little and simple thing to matters of law and constitution. Like they say, the law is made for man and not man for law. We are also in this trap because we have a surfeit of lawyers in politics (naturally, as they are trained to speak up and get involved), and as they say to a carpenter, every problem looks like a nail needing a hammer.

So, I propose that just like some of the countries I mentioned above, what we need are big ideas. Like China, which had pulled 800 million people from poverty and is on the verge of eradicating poverty entirely from a country of 1.5 billion people (7 times Nigeria's population if we are to believe current National Population Commission numbers), we need an idea as big as their Targeted Poverty Eradication program, which documents every family in the vast country and sets about addressing their very source of stress – be it educational, health, low crop yield, location and so on. The Chinese poverty eradication story could be obvious now is that the states have not shown enough prowess, dexterity, commitment, expertise, fidelity, and creativity, towards governing and administering local governments, just as our federal government has been too feeble in setting the pace for state governments and defining an overarching vision. Of course, the local governments, where the rubber meets the tarmac, development-wise, is totally absent.

investors. He also instituted Swacch Barat (Clean India), and showed personal examples, rallying Bollywood Stars to his environmental cause. By instituting a nationwide idea whereby Indian women went on a toilet-building frenzy by selling some of their gold, Modi has seen to the construction of about 100 million toilets, thus relieving rural Indian women of having to head to the bush like their ancestors have done. Bill Gates in 2019 called this 'the biggest behavioral change project in modern history.'

I also visited Egypt and Morocco in North Africa and saw that they are into big ideas. Egypt just built a new capital. That country leverages on their construction prowess to ensure that roads and bridges are made with ease all over the country. Most Egyptians live in what is called 'compounds', which are blocks of flats. They have also made much capital out of tourism, being the top earner in Africa as the world throngs to visit their pyramids. With tourism alone, Egypt will survive. Morocco has made a big idea out of its beaches. All 400 kilometres stretch of their coastline bordering the sea has been developed into exotic or free beaches, used for oil refineries, several ports, depots for a thriving manufacturing industry or other very useful purposes. That everyone has been convinced to live in flats in Morocco and shanties are clearly an aberration, to me, is a big idea. The aviation industry in Ethiopia, even if they have nothing else, is a big idea. The sheer efficiency, their local content in that industry since they maintain the aircrafts themselves and have one of the best aviation training organisations in the world, is a big idea. My definition of a big idea is one that is VISIBLE FROM SPACE, that affects tens of millions of citizens positively and sets them on a development trajectory, that banishes poverty and elevates the humanity of a people. We are in dire need of these in Nigeria, not the back and forth about who or what level of government caused or promoted our poverty. Like Karl Marx said "The philosophers have hitherto only interpreted the world in various ways. The point, however, is to change it."

lack of housing. These assets have to be put to work somehow. Or at least let us figure out how they can be useful as we reimagine a new nation and economy.

2. Creating new capital; financial, social, etc: By this I mean that Nigeria has to think of how to create new opportunities and generate new capital, from within, not only the fixation with foreign capital. If factors of production are regarded as Land, Labour, Capital and Entrepreneurship, Capital is important, but is not everything. Capital has however taken on growing importance in that mix, even as Labour (which is what we can boast of, aside land), has become less and less worthy. Capitalists have substituted human beings (labour), with machines, technology, apps, robots and what have you, by deploying money (capital) to purchase these innovations which do even better work in many instances, compared to human beings. Before we continue rushing abroad for capital (money), many of which are exploitative and expensive, Nigeria needs to think of how we could generate new capital here. There is what is called social capital and we have an advantage here. I believe Nigeria can get her citizens to do things for the country, for free, rather than go a-borrowing. I will propose some of such ideas below. That is social capital, which can unleash financial capital.

Some big ideas

I hereby propose some out-of-the-box ideas that can get Nigeria to start looking different and that can affect millions of Nigerians positively. My ideas are by no means perfect or exhaustive. The bottom line is to stop bellyaching about poverty and start doing real work about eradicating it:

a. University and polytechnic students pressed to work:

I believe that Nigeria is at war. We have always been. For the most part, it's an economic war. So, when at war, you must use your resources, recruit hands and get your young ones to step up. I believe we have been underutilizing our youths. They can be empowered economically and immediately handed the reins of their country without them getting directly involved in politics. Nigeria has universities, polytechnics, and colleges of all sorts strewn all over the country from north to south. Imagine if we can get these young folks to start getting involved at the local government levels where they are, in public works they can build little roads, help with water projects, get involved in teaching children in the villages, build electricity projects using alternative energy, and generally get involved in the maintenance of infrastructure. These students will get paid a token for their work – many of which will be experimental (who says they must be perfect) – and they will also have something to put on their curriculum vitae from school. We can even get these students to start working on massive language, translation and history projects in the country, stuff that can be put online to start charting another trajectory for Nigeria. I am talking of such massive projects that will be noticed by the largest media houses around the world, no matter their discrimination.

Source: Premium Times

BUSINESS WORLD

No going back on cash withdrawal limits -Emefiele

THE Governor of Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Godwin Emefiele, has said he has no plan to reverse the decision on cash withdrawal limits.

Emefiele made the declaration on Thursday after a visit to President Muhammadu Buhari in his country home in Daura, Katsina State.

Reacting to dissenting voices from the National Assembly and the public over the cash withdrawal policy, the CBN governor told journalists that the limitation was not intended to hurt anyone.

He underpinned that it was instead designed to strengthen the nation's economy, as he assured that there will be no rigidity on the policy and no reversal.

He again appealed to Nigerians to embrace the policy as the apex bank monitors the situation to allay any hardships.

It would be recalled that the Senate and the House of Representatives had earlier faulted the CBN's unveiling of a



Emefiele

revised cash withdrawal limits with a maximum of N100,000 for individuals and N500,000 for companies, arguing that it might worsen the current economic situation.

Emefiele said that the new naira notes have already been disbursed to the various commercial banks and expect that banks would begin distribution to the public.

Banks receive redesigned notes

BANKS receive redesigned notes ahead of December 15 policy commencement date

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has commenced the distribution of the newly redesigned naira to the banks in readiness for issuance to customers as the new policy kicks off December 15, 2022.

Godwin Emefiele, CBN's governor disclosed this on Thursday during a visit to President Buhari in his Daura home, Katsina state.

Emefiele who said the new notes were sent to the banks on Wednesday, insisted that the timelines - in terms of December 15 for commencement and the January 31 deadline were sacrosanct, but signaled that the CBN may tinker with the new policy on cash withdrawal limits.

He also disclosed that since the announcement of the new policy, the apex bank has taken more than N500 billion from the banks and have also deposited close to that number there.

He said his visit was part of the normal presidential briefing which had been overdue and that discussions centered around developments in the Central bank, the economy, and more importantly on the cashless policy under which the notes were being redesigned.

"Only yesterday, the new currency has now reached the banks and we believe that the banks will begin to distribute them to the members of the public who are their customers," the governor stated, adding that the visit was also to assure the president of no hitches so far in the implementation process.

Emefiele, while assuring that the central bank and the entire banking system were already prepared for the policy roll out, also announced that there were already 1.4 million super agents all over the country offering banking services where citizens can explore, particularly the rural dwellers.

When asked to react on the recent push-back especially from the National Assembly, Emefiele assured that the lawmakers would be briefed on

developments but pleaded for an understanding and cooperation for the success of the currency redesign, which he said targets no one but was thought out to drive the cashless policy, the economy and for the good of the citizens.

His words: "We will brief them. But I think it's important for me to say that the cashless policy started in 2012. But on almost three to four occasions we had to step it down because we felt that the need for us to prepare and deepen the payment system infrastructure in Nigeria."

"Between 2012 and now 2022, almost 10 years, we believe that a lot of electronic channels have been put in place that will aid people in conducting banking and financial service transactions in the country."

"We heard people talk about some of the people in the rural areas and the truth is that even as I was coming out today to Daura, I saw a kiosk that has a super agent."

"It's because of the way we have deepened the payment system infrastructure."

"We have 1.4 million super agents that are all over different parts of the country, all local governments, and all villages in this country. Some of their names are already on the CBN website and we will publish the names of all these super agents."

"And having 1.4 million super agents which are different from the banks, microfinance banks, and other financial institutions is as good as having 1.4 million banking points where people can conduct services."

He said as the largest country in Africa in terms of population and economy, it was now time for Nigeria to leapfrog into the cashless economy.

"We cannot continue to allow a situation where over 85 per cent of the cash in circulation is outside the bank. More and more countries that are embracing digitization have gone cashless," he noted.

"I have said it at different fora that this is not targeted at anybody, it's just meant for the good and development of the Nigerian economy and we can

only continue to appeal to Nigerians to please see this policy the way we have presented it."

"We will be reviewing from time to time how this is working because I cannot say that we are going to be rigid. But it is not to say that we will reverse or change the timing, but whether it is about tweaking some amount to be a little higher or a little bit lower, and all the rest of them, we will do so because we are humans."

"We want to make sure that we are making life good for our people. We do not want to make life difficult for them."

Ghana's debt restructuring will impact Nigerian banks

A global credit rating agency, Fitch Ratings, said on Thursday that a restructuring of Ghana's debt would have some impact on some Nigerian banks operating in the neighbouring country.

Ghana is pushing ahead with its plan to restructure its debt in a bid to qualify for a \$3 billion loan from the International Monetary Fund. On Monday, the country started offering domestic bondholders fresh local-currency bonds that won't pay interest before 2024 in exchange for their existing debt, according to Bloomberg.

"Sovereign debt distress is the major risk to African banks' financial profile," Fitch said in its African Banks Outlook 2023 report. "The Ghana debt restructuring will affect domestic as well as regional banks."

It said the debt restructuring would have large implications for the banking system as banks have large exposure to the sovereign through holdings of government securities.

Describing the outlook for Nigerian banks as a

THE Minister of Power, Mr Abubakar Aliyu said that the Federal Government was focused on creating an enabling environment for private sector investment in the power sector.

Aliyu said this at a Roundtable with stakeholders in the power sector organised by the Civil Society Groups for Good Governance (CSGGG) in Abuja on Thursday.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the theme of the discussion is "Boosting Nigeria's Power Sector Performance for overall Socio Economic Development of the Nation."

Aliyu said that the private sector investment would support long term strategic goals and commitment to sustainable power supply and energy source.

The minister said to achieve this, the ministry was focused on the completion of all power projects in the country.

According to him, the projects are, 700mw Zungeru hydropower, 40mw Kashimbilo hydropower and several other small and medium Hydropower under concession.

Others are, the 3,050mw Mambila Hydropower along with other renewable energy

FG to provide enabling environment for private investors

generation projects. Aliyu said that with the enormous Nigeria energy resources and human capital, it was obvious that creating enabling environment was a critical component in the realisation of Electricity Vision 30:30:30.

He said the vision seeks to make available 30GW in 2030 with 30 per cent of the energy mix coming from renewable energy source.

Earlier, the president of the groups and the convener of the roundtable, Mr Ogakwu Dominic said the event was part of their efforts to bridge the divide between the regulators and other stakeholders.

"Today's event is remarkable in our watershed attempts at bridging the divide between the regulators, Nigerian electricity consumers, electricity transmission, distribution and

generation companies," he said. He said that this interaction would help to proffer practical solutions to the epileptic power supply in the country.

"This is so because, the giant of Africa should not be focusing on boosting power supply in the 21st century," he said.

Dominic said with an investment of over 16 billion dollars by previous administrations, Nigeria still generate a paltry 5,000 megawatts for millions of Nigerian consumers.

"More worrisome is our inability to equitably distribute our generated capacity when productivity and industrialisation of any nation depends on power supply."

"As key players in this sector, we are constraint to chat a way forward and offer solutions that will light up our nation" he said. (NAN)



Aliyu

Ghana's debt restructuring will impact Nigerian banks

Fitch manageably. We believe parent banking groups will likely provide capital support to preserve their operations in Ghana through a sovereign default," it said.

Fitch said the losses imposed on the banking system from the announced debt restructuring could be of such a magnitude that it undermines some banks' solvency and liquidity.

"Fitch believes that the authorities will introduce regulatory capital forbearance to help the banking system through a restructuring, while providing liquidity and other support to prevent a widespread financial system crisis," it said.

According to the report, Nigeria's real GDP growth is expected to remain robust in 2023 but operating conditions will weaken due to higher inflation, rising interest rates and hard currency shortages.

The rating agency said earnings would receive a boost from higher interest rates but a material naira devaluation would have a negative effect on capitalisation, and continued hard currency shortages would lead to tighter US dollar liquidity in 2023.

It said banks would continue to experience difficulties

sourcing US dollars from the CBN on behalf of customers in respect of trade finance obligations.

"Banks will leverage relationships with correspondent banks and use their own US dollar resources to manage hard currency shortages, causing foreign-currency (FC) liquidity coverage of liabilities to decline in 2023. However, FC liquidity buffers will remain satisfactory, particularly given the absence of Eurobond maturities in 2023," the agency said.

Fitch expects a moderate increase in impaired loans as borrowers contend with operating environment risks.

Banks have experienced strong loan growth in recent years as a result of onlending to small companies in manufacturing and agriculture sectors, it said.

Fitch expects such exposures to be a source of new non-performing loans.

It said continued high oil prices would provide some support to loan quality despite chronic production issues.

"Profitability will improve in the near-term as a result of stronger revenues. Increased fixed income yields will widen net interest margins (NIMs), while a potential material naira devaluation would result in sizeable revaluation gains due to long FC positions," it said.

Nigeria's punitive cash reserve requirement will remain a key constraint on NIMs and profitability, according to Fitch.

ENTREPRENEUR WATCH

WITH CELESTINE D. ATTSAR

Personal branding's its impact on businesses

Leadership is central to the success of every organisation. It is a vital part of the organization that helps provide clarity of purpose, and then guide and motivate the organization to achieve its goals. To a large extent, the skills and decisions of leaders influence a number of positive outcomes for the business; from increased sales, to customer satisfaction, employee commitment/loyalty, as well as the growth, survival and further expansion of the business. SHEILA MARTINS & PROF. LOUIS NZEGWU writes.



AROUND the world, great business leaders are notable for the impact they create. They initiate significant positive influence on their business, employees, customers, investors and the external audience through the personal brand they have built over the years.

In our world today, the reputation and status of a leader say a lot about the organization he is leading. People often attribute certain level of prestige to a brand based on the profile of the leaders. This is true because, people don't only buy the products, they buy the people. They are influenced by the faces behind the brand in addition to the products; they want to be a part of your personal story.

In Nigeria for example, when companies like Konga, Globacom, Dangote groups, Tony Elumelu's foundation and Forte Oil are mentioned, people visualize the founders' profile and attribute the brand to them. They are also eager to know the personal story of the founders. How did they

make it to success? What are the stories behind their start-up and their choice of products?

Similarly, before investors make decisions to invest in a company, they make choices based on the leadership of the organisation in addition to other business characteristics. They want to find out, "who the founders of the brand are", "what people say about them" and even "their level of influence".

All of this speaks to personal branding. Although branding as a word is usually associated with an organisation or firm, it's far-reaching. Personal branding has become a self-marketing strategy. It is an intentional act of influencing the perception of others about an individual. Personal branding convey the distinct identities, values and goals of a leader which translates to impact and generates maximum value for both the business and the leaders. It is the best strategy for leaders to create a global presence, reach more audience and create a unique connection with stakeholders. Global and African/Nigerian personalities like Elon Musk, Mitchell Obama,

Mark Zuckerberg, Wole Soyinka, Nnamdi Ezeigbo and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie have become household names and attracted awards. It speaks a lot about the level of the quality of brand they have created for themselves. One profound reality about these brands is their ability to influence and raise individuals who are also willing to follow the same pathway and build a good personal brand. As a result, their footprints are abiding in the society.

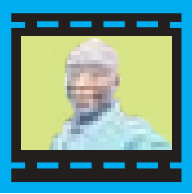
However, it is important to note that, when a leader decides to build and promote a good personal brand, it has a number of implications. It implies that first, the individual is known for a specific service or activity. It also means that the individual has been consistent with what they do. For example, Tony Elumelu's foundation is popularly known for developing young entrepreneurs across Africa and has been consistently

reputation > It also creates a unique way to attract and interact with customers, thereby building good customer relationship.

Further, organisational leaders are encouraged to create a good personal brand for themselves. A company leader who has successfully achieved this could use his personal brand statement to communicate what drives the business to external audience and even tell a story about the purpose of the business and the impact they intend to create through their products and services.

These usually hold great benefits like building successful teams at work, and improving company relevance and competitive advantage above other related businesses in the sector. In the long run, a leader who has a good personal brand has created an easy pathway for the business to thrive. What brand are you building? Do you have a consistent track record?

Source: Business Day



With **BULUS GAMBO**

Continued from page 18

My show should be supported by all

-Kalban Comedian

Continuous pushing our people will understand, and comedy will start to pay.

Who are specifically your target audience?

Everyone is my target audience. The old, the young, the toddler; the aim is to reach all. Laughter is for everyone and is also a binding force. So yes, I want smiles on everyone's faces.

The event is my annual comedy show which is THE WITNESS, it is the 3rd edition and this year's edition is tagged THE DELEGATE. It's election season and we also have a responsibility to our society to generate humour in that direction. It promises to be a great event. Loads of premium laughter will be delivered and something that will shock the audience too. I'm telling you Jos city will be shaken to its foundation with this comedy show.

We are aware of the fact that you are organizing a show in Jos, gave us an insight into the event?

Hmmmmmmmm. The financial consumption no be here oh, you don't even want to know how financially draining it is, but we are grateful to the few people who go out of their way to supply our events. Buletz systems, Toybabs printing and Events, Peniel Model prints, Masters Book World, Finix prime, K T M D entertainment, Marvel pix, Etaria global and many

other individuals. Especially in these difficult times. I'm grateful to them and to others who will chip in their support. We still need heavy weight supporters and I'm using this medium to call out for sponsorship, partnership and support.

It is always financially consuming to put up a show like this, any support from wellwisher?

This year we the Jos base comedians are doing it. It's us that put up these shows so we are the ones to deliver. The special guests we so want to always call on were made by their own communities. Lagos celebrate their own and we extend the celebration, so this is us celebrating us till the world receives us and celebrate us as we deserve.

Are there anything without challenges?

I have money challenges. I need money. There are many things I've not paid for and I need money for them. There are several other challenges but time and space will fail me to mention them. However I need money support me with money.

After this show, what next?

There's a lot in the Pipeline, but I don't want to spoil the surprise. There are more events coming up, plenty skits and a whole lot more. Just stay glued to my page.

Any appeal for help?

Yes. I'd like to appeal to the general public to come and witness this historic comedy show. I want to also call on Corporate bodies and organizations to support my event, there's a lot of benefits, mouth watering benefits if you sponsor.

Final word?

I want to say thank w to you, every single person who has supported me so far, my followers, my family. Thank you. I want to say a big thank you to my mentor Senator Comedian; Dede I appreciate you sir. Please follow my social media handles for premium content

Facebook, Twitter and YouTube @Kalbang Maman Mu
Tiktok @kalbangmamanmu
I n s t a g r a m @kalbang_maman_mu



Couples who became close friends after ending marriage

Continued from page 18

Jennifer Lopez and Marc Anthony



Jennifer Lopez said in an interview that she didn't feel her best during her marriage to Marc Anthony, but after their separation, they became great friends and parents to their twins.

Reese Witherspoon and Ryan Phillip



Although their relationship had its ups and downs, the former couple did everything in their power to offer their children a great childhood. That includes staying on good terms with each other too. Most recently, Reese and Ryan got together for their son's birthday.

Angelina Jolie and Billy Bob Thornton



Angelina and Billy remain good friends even after their split that happened almost a decade ago. Billy Bob Thornton revealed that even if they might not see each other often, they still talk regularly.

SUNDAY FEATURE

Kogi East Multipurpose Cooperative Society bags national award

What started like a joke far back September 10, 2005 with about five cooperators, has grown to be a big Iroko tree that shreds many people. Many doubting Thomases thought it was another form of defrauding people and decided to stay off, watching how it later snowballed into what it became today as Kogi East Multipurpose Cooperative Society. EZEKIEL DONTINNA writes.

A retired public servant of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Chief John Yakubu Omede, with four others started normal monthly contributions for themselves, but later registered it as Kogi East Multipurpose Cooperative Society, (KEMCS) and before they knew it, the membership grew to over two hundred members.

What the Society's Management Committee never thought could happened was its recognition by the Federal Government. All they were so busy doing was how to meet the welfare and needs of their members and never thought it would one day earn them this National Award.

Over the years, the Kogi East Multipurpose Cooperative Society has been operating with individuals monthly contributions by members. The minimum contribution monthly ranges from one thousand naira and above and charged as low as 3% interest when accessing loans and it depends on how much one collects, it has been wonderful.

They have one spectacular way and term of accessing these loan and remittances. For those who apply below two hundred thousand naira, the condition therein that, you must bring two members to stand as guarantors. Also, if one is applying above two hundred thousand, he or she requires three guarantors to qualify him or her and the repayment duration is one and a half years.

This has been awesome and a lot of the members have developed themselves. The only challenge they sometimes have is how battle with loan defaulters. Although, they most times use persuasive means to recoup their money, but in a case of total default, the guarantors pay.

Apart from loan benefits, the cooperative society has a yearly dividends for its members especially during its Annual General Meeting, (AGM). This has also attracted new people who troop to register. Majority of women and young people



operating small and medium businesses around Jenta Adamu community are beneficiaries of KMCS.

Some of these beneficiaries are buying and selling grains, operate provision shops, saloons, vegetables, fish and lots more businesses and has helped put food on their tables. No wonder, the society was being singled out for a National Award at the NICON Luxury Abuja recently.

Speaking to THE NIGERIA STANDARD, in Jos, the Plateau state capital, the President of Kogi East Multipurpose Cooperative Society, Chief John Yakubu Omede, said, "we thank God for this great award. The award came to us as a surprise. We never knew that somebody somewhere out there is reporting our work.

"We got the information from the Plateau State Director of Cooperative, Ministry for Commerce and Industry that, our name is being submitted for National Award. We did not understand what it meant until they called us from Abuja to inform us. They told us what to do and we filled the form and sent it online and our name came out.

"We started this Cooperative Society like a child's play and for

In fact, people who were doubting us when we first started, have seen today that we are being recognised nationally.

To God be the glory and we are very, very happy!

"We are going to formally and officially present the award to the Congress. Although, we had done a little ceremony in our office as Founding Fathers, we were only four left because one of us is late, but up till now the happiness of this award is still there. Our most happiness is, we were privileged to have the Director Cooperative who accompanied us to this occasion".

The President, thanked the State Director of Cooperative for identifying and supporting them to achieve this feat and promised to work hard because the award has motivated and encouraged them to do more for humanity disclosing that, the Kogi East Multipurpose Cooperative Society was working systematically and gradually to migrate into Microfinance Bank.

However, as it is now, the membership of this cooperative society is not only for Kogi East indigenous alone. They have sold 30% space for other tribes like

Berom, Ngas, Afizere, Igbo, Yoruba, Orobo, Calaba, Goemai,

us to be recognised by the Federal Government through Cooperative Rating and Support Association in conjunction with the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, it is a thing of joy to us. While in Abuja, we thought it was going to be mere ceremony only for us to discover that it was a very big ceremony.

"When our name was mentioned. It was as if we should develop wings and fly or tell the whole world to celebrate with us!

Taroh, Irigwe, Rukuba, Mwaghavul and a host of other tribes on the Plateau.

CHANGE OF NAME

AYUBA

I, formerly known as **AYUBA JINGAU PHILIP**, now wish to be known and addressed as **PRINCE AYUBA PHILIP**. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.

Apart from loan benefits, the cooperative society has a yearly dividends for its members especially during its Annual General Meeting, (AGM). This has also attracted new people who troop to register. Majority of women and young people operating small and medium businesses around Jenta Adamu community are beneficiaries of KMCS.

NEWS

Tyoden sues for border communities co-operation

By DUMAHRANDONG

PLATEAU State Deputy Governor and Chairman Plateau State Boundary Commission, Professor SonniTyoden has sued for cooperation among border communities and critical stakeholders towards the amicable resolution of contentious issues between Plateau and Bauchi states.

The issue of boundary according to him was a sensitive matter which should be carefully handled because it deals with inheritance and ownership.

Tyoden made the appeal while playing host to delegation from the National Boundary Commission led by Assistant Director, Research and Policy Analysis I Analysis I, Oluwafemi Oshimake who represented the Director General of the Commission, Surveyor Adamu Adaji who paid him a courtesy callcourtesycall at Government, House, Rayfield in Jos, Tuesday.

The Deputy Governor commended the commission for initiating a town hall meeting which gives everyone the opportunity to say whatever he has to say. He and stressed that the meeting which is also going to involve the two states, Plateau and Bauchi, was a critical opportunity to resolve the issues.

"The administration has barely six months to go and if we are able to handle these conflicting issues, it will entrench lasting peace between the two states," Tyoden stated.

He also charged traditional rulers in the affected



Tyoden

communities, as custodians of the land to cooperate with government officials to carry out this onerous task.

Earlier, Director General, National Boundary Commission, Surveyor Adamu Adaji represented by Oluwakemi Oshimake had said they were in the state for a Town Hall meeting with members of border communities in Plateau and Bauchi Interstate boundary Intermstate Boundary.

He said the objective of the meeting was to interface by way of sensitizing and enlightening relevant stakeholders of the affected communities/Communities/LGAs on the boundary definition process and to also articulate opinions towards finding funding common ground preparatory to the physical demarcation of the boundary.

Adaji also disclosed that the town hall meeting aimed at

harnessing views on the way forward in finding lasting solution to the remaining grey sector of the boundary and work out the programme of action would include study of border communities which was aimed at ascertaining the relationship status of people living along the Plateau/Bauchi interstate boundary as well as eliminate doubts of ongoing crisis.

The DG said the boundary between Plateau/Bauchi has been traced and discussed while the grey areas were being sorted out.

He appealed to border communities along Bassa, Kanam, Kanke, Jos East and Pankshin LGAs to cooperate with government officials and maintain peaceful co-existence while government at all levels expedite actions towards the permanent resolution of the boundary issues.

THE President, Church of Christ In Nations (COCIN) Rev. Amos M. Mohzo, has congratulated the people of Fan District of Barkin-Ladi Local Government Area, Plateau State, for celebrating hundred years mission accepting and sustaining mission work.

He stated this last Sunday, while delivering a sermon on the occasion marking COCIN Fan Centenary for having reached hundred years, held at the Fan Primary School.

Represented by the Vice President, Rev. Dr. Timothy Nwan, the President said the celebration was apt considering God's faithfulness to them to have reached this far. And urged them to wake up to the current challenges of this generation and face the enemy of the church.

The President said, "hundred years is not one day and the grace of God is sufficient to the people of Fan District and it is the day

Mohzo congratulates COCIN Fan at 100

the Lord has made. Thanking God for His mercy, love and faithfulness is what we stand for. God is the solid foundation of the Church and if it were not for God, the Church in Fan would not have stood".

The President prayed that the 2023 general elections would be peaceful, calling on Nigerians to open their eyes and vote people who could support and respect the Church and not people who are bent on destroying the foundation of the Church.

He urged people to see politics as a game and stop displaying bitterness, hence the need to keep aside negative practices and hope that those voted would be people who respect humanity and could perform more than any administration.

Earlier, the Chairman, Provisional Church Council

(PCC), Rev. Ezekiel FomJugu, disclosed that they were celebrating because the COCIN Fan was established in 1921 and they were supposed to celebrate it in 2021, but due to some security challenges faced in the past, they couldn't.

On his part, Da GwomRwai of Fan District, HRH, Da IliyaDashwe, expressed concern that Fan was blessed, but the youth have not followed the route of the elderly, hence the need for them to come back to the church and succeed their forefathers.

The Council Chairman of Barkin-Ladi Local Government Area, Hon. JokAlamba, represented by his deputy thanked the church for their support and prayers and called on people to be security conscious as we move towards elections come 2023.

Kogi monarch seeks patronage of Nigerian products

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

THE BA'ALO-EMU, Oworo Kingdom and Advisory Council Chairman of Built Environment and Building Material (BEBM) Exhibitions in Kogi State, Chief Fejuku Benjamin Bola has pleaded with Nigerians to be alive in the use of local products in building construction.

The royal father made the call while speaking at the opening session of this year's Kogi Build Built Environment and Building Material BEBM Exhibitions held in Lokoja, the state capital, recently on Tuesday.

He said that the BEBM

Exhibitions is aimed at creating a sort of synergy between all stakeholders (end users) in building built industry and the producers of such local materials. He stressed the need for Nigerians to reduce interest in foreign made products and embrace local contents.

"We all know the sad implications attached to relying on foreign materials in construction industry. It depletes foreign reserve as well as creates massive unemployment amongst Nigerian youths.

"I am happy to tell you all that this organisation BEBM Exhibitions, is today championing the need for Nigerians to look inward to make do with those raw materials God has graciously bestowed on Nigeria as a nation," the monarch Monarch stated.

Chief Fejuku Bola said that the 3 days event will look into how best to use various raw materials in the building industry and avoid the use of sub-standard products. This, according to the royal father will help change the face of our environment and that of humanity.

The Commissioner for Environment, Victor Omofaye who was represented by the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Environment, JibrinSeidu in his remarks, commended the organisers of the exhibition saying that it will go a long way in regulating the building industry to ensure standard.

The commissioner said that the event is very important and timely, advocating more of such Programmes to showcase the worth of building industry. He said that efforts must be put in place to shun fake materials and embrace original products.

He gave the assurance that government will not relent in providing necessary support to the building sector. Dr. CallistusAyegba, a lecturer with the Federal University of Technology, Minna who was the Guest Lecturer at the occasion along with other resource persons and experienced professionals harped on current issues relating to building and construction industry with a strong warning against the use of sub-standard materials.

The Theme of the 2022 BEBM is "Building Smart Environment" Using Made in Nigeria Building Materials.

Nigeria Army holds conference in Sokoto

From ANENE AIKE

ALL roads led to Sokoto for the Nigeria Army Chief of Staff Annual Conference 2022 holding at the International Conference Center in Kasarawa of Sokoto State.

Our correspondent in Sokoto also reports that the Army Chief of Staff, Faruq Yahaya used the opportunity to showcase a number of projects designed, engineered and executed by the Nigeria Army in the state for the socioeconomic development in Sokoto.

Among the projects commissioned by the Sokoto State Governor, Rt. Hon. Aminu Waziri Tambuwal include the Chief of Army Staff Command Guest House.

The guest house covering about 1.22 hectares of land can accommodate no fewer than 60 guests and a 300 seater capacity conference hall and car packing slots.

Declaring open the Chief of Army year 2022 Annual Conference at Kasarawa in Sokoto State, Governor Tambuwal commended the Army, especially President Muhamadu Buhari for a job well done despite the economic downturn being experienced in the country.

The Army Chief of Staff, Faruq Yahaya also presented special award plaques to some individuals for their immense support, contributions and

for identifying with the Army in its drive for peace to reign in Nigeria especially during the insurgences in the nation,

The period was also used by the Army boss, Farouq Yahaya

to visit most of the projects executed by the Nigeria Army which includes Kasarawa for the commissioning of

a befitting Mosque, Tangaza - Government Arabic School,

Gindiri compound schools is a divine plan of God

BY EZEKIEL DONTINNA

THE advent of missionaries in Gindiri land of Mangu Local Government of Plateau State, has been described as mount Camel and God's divine plan to breed young Nigerians to the glory of God and to the service of humanity.

The President, Church Of Christ In Nation (COCIN) Rev. Dr. Amos M. Mohzo, disclosed this while playing host to the National Body of Gindiri Old Students' Association (GOSA), who paid him a courtesy visit to intimate him on its activities marking its 50th anniversary at the COCIN Headquarters in Jos, the Plateau State capital yesterday.

The President who is also the Proprietor of all COCIN schools in Gindiri, was represented by the COCIN General Secretary, Rev. Asst. Prof. Benjamin J. Poko, saying, "we are proud of you for the passion and remembering the schools you passed through and giving back to schools in full in the areas of infrastructure and remodeling.

"Gindiri is like mount camel because of the caliber of students and God messengers it has groomed and brought up in

to visit most of the projects executed by the Nigeria Army which includes Kasarawa for the commissioning of a befitting Mosque, Tangaza - Government Arabic School,



Mohzo

different fields. We thank God Almighty for his grace you to have witness this years of the Gindiri Old Students' Association (GOSA) at 50.

Earlier, the National President of GOSA, Engr. Sunday C. Hyat, said they were in the headquarters to intimate him of the line up their activities marking their 50th anniversary which they had started with road work and sanitation Monday and the would climax with Re-Union Service at

Sifawa - opening of the Chief of Army Staff residence.

The Army Officers Wives Association was also present and so were Kebbi, Zamfara and Katsina States Executive Governors.

- COCIN President



Yahaya

NEWS

Kogi PDCRC trains 200 law officers

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

THE Kogi State Office of the Public Defender and Citizens' Rights Commission (PDCRC) has collaborated with the Attorney General Alliance - Africa (AGA - Africa) to train 200 law officers on "Oral Advocacy and Electronic Evidence in Criminal Prosecution and Defence", in the state.

Declaring the workshop open in Lokoja, Governor Yahaya Bello of Kogi, restated his administration's commitment to continue to partner with organisations and relevant stakeholders in promoting rule of law and human rights' protection in the state.

Bello, who was represented by the Secretary to the State Government (SSG), DrFolashadeAyooade, described the training as 'all important' one in ensuring speedy and effective administration of Justice in the state.

The governor appreciated the AGA-AFRICA for the continuous support inform of training and workshop being provided in the Justice sector of the state through PDCRC.

He said his administration had made tremendous achievements in the justice sector with an improved legal framework.

"On assumption of office, as the Executive Governor of Kogi State, we approved the employment of 150 lawyers as a bid to ensure speedy access to justice.

"Today, Kogi has the highest number of lawyers in its civil service among the 19 states of Northern Nigeria," Bello said.

The governor stressed his determination to ensure speedy administration of justice as well as protection and protection of human rights especially provision of free legal services for the vulnerable citizens through the PDCRC.

The governor commended the PDCRC DG for ensuring that the commission remained the watchdog in ensuring promotion and protection of human rights of the residents of the state.

Earlier, the Country Representative of AGA-Africa, Chief Anthony Idige, SAN, said the two-day training was in collaboration with Kogi Ministry of Justice, and Kogi State Office of the Public Defender and Citizens Rights Commission (PDCRC).

Idige, who was represented by the Coordinator AGA-Africa, EbelechukwuEnedah, stressed the importance of electronic evidence as the world continue to advance technologically, and reliant society, adding that the use of technology to commit a crime was also increasing.

Idige said that digital evidence remained a fundamental part of successful and effective investigations and prosecutions of crime.

He added that it enables investigations, by revealing vital information about crimes committed; movement of suspects; and criminal associates, among other factors.

"Indeed, Section 84 of the Evidence Act, 2011 provides for the admissibility of documents generated from a computer and the conditions that must be fulfilled for electronic evidence to be admitted; playing a fundamental role in backing the revolutionary decisions by yourselves to embrace electronic evidence, and moving you towards a future where electronic evidence will be commonplace.

"However, the admissibility of



Bello

this evidence will be greatly determined by how persuasively and accurately you can put across your argument, whilst showing the relevancy of the evidence that you are presenting to the court. Your argument should further be expressed eloquently and clearly.

"This training is therefore important as it provides us with a chance to discuss the issues that can arise about electronic evidence; and the need to formulate and adopt strategies that can address these issues," Idigie said.

He stressed that the seminar would provide a chance to discuss issues arising from electronic evidence; and the need to formulate and adopt strategies to addressing them.

The country representative commended Kogi Government for partnering with AGA -Africa, saying, "this is about the third time the state would host AGA -Africa Programmes".

Speaking with journalists in her own capacity, Enedah, said the theme of the workshop was very apt following the increase in technological advancement.

The AGA-Africa Coordinator described oral advocacy as the way the lawyers present their cases in court and the admissibility of the electronic which hitherto was not known to the court.

She said the training would provide a chance to look at best practices about electronic evidence as well as oral advocacy in criminal prosecution and defence.

Enedah stressed that the training would enable lawyers to understand the right way to present and defend their cases in court either in criminal prosecution or defence.

"At the end of the two-day seminar, we want to see lawyers that have had their tools sharpened and equipped to deal with their cases in court," Enedah said.

She, therefore, urged the participants to take the advantage of this training to broaden their knowledge.

Also speaking, the Hon. Attorney General (AG) & Commissioner for Justice, Kogi State, Ibrahim Sanni Muhammed, SAN, thanked AGA-Africa for the partnership to building the lawyers capacity in the state.

The AG, who was represented by Kogi Solicitor General and permanent Secretary, Ministry of Justice, Habib Abdullahi said the issue of fundamental human rights of residents and citizens of Kogi State, remained a great concern to the government.

The attorney general assured state government's commitment to continue to ensure that the citizens and residents of the state have access to justice.

On his part, the Director

General of PDCRC, Barr. AbdullahiZakari, said the workshop would produce a better-informed set of lawyers, vast and prepared to do very well in the act of criminal prosecution and defence.

The DG said the participants would stepdown the training to others lawyers who were not privileged to attend the training, describing it as a continuous legal education in series.

NDE disburses N4.2m loans to unemployed persons

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

A Nigerian-America Film Director, Mr Taiwo Oduala on Wednesday said two tantalizing and spectacular movies would soon be released into the world entertainment industry.

Oduala made the disclosure in a statement issued to newsmen in Lokoja on his return to Nigeria five years after a successful career exploit in America.

The famous film director gave the names of his movies as "love from Germany" and "dreaming of America" which he said were fantastic movies to watch out for at their release.

Oduala, the Hollywood and Alumni of Colorado Film School, said he has broken new grounds and made history having successfully produced the most outstanding indigenous Nigerian language Hollywood drama movie (Ilu America) shot in various cities in America.

According to him, "Ilu America (Land of America)



Fikpo

THE Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA) has distanced itself from publication on reclaiming some Embassy plots in Abuja.

(FCDA) in a press statement signed by the head of public Relations, Richard Nduul stated that at no time did it announce that it reclaimed plots belonging to any embassy in Nigeria.

Nduul who was making clarification on comments made by the executive secretary of the agency during its end of year press briefing on the activities of the organization held recently insisted that he never stated that he never stated that it reclaimed the Ghana, Malaysia or Thailand embassies, saying that the diplomatic plots was never part of his presentation.

The statement explained that part of the reasons for developing Gyzape diplomatic plots that had to be consumed by infrastructure development.

Meanwhile, the federal government is set to reposition Borstal Institution and Remand Homes, with the

FCDA distance self from error publication

From JIDAUNA YANUNG, Abuja

mandate to reform and reintegrate inmates, most especially children caught-up extremist activities.

The review borders on Borstal Institution and Remand

Centre Act Against this back drop, the ministry of justice and others alongside the Presidential Committee on Correctional Reforms and Decongestion and the Nigeria Correctional Service held a one-day stake holder round session on the review.



Bello

Others are Tina Weisinger (Founder of HAPAwards), Hubert Nakitare (Hip Hop Artist), RochelPamphile (CEO of R o c k y R & P Entertainment), Dr. Lance McCarthy (Business Consultant; Humanitarian), Ade James (African Legendary Photographer; Humanitarian), KandiasConda (Owner of Celebrity Brand), Charmaine Blake (Owner of Charmaine PR Firm), and Madam Lara Okunubi (Philanthropist).

Special presenters include Amarachi Odinma (BET's After Happily Ever After) and many others. Celebrities in attendance included Abby Ayoola (Naija Wives of Hollywood), Won-G Bruny (Rapper), Jordyn Carter JC (Recording Artist), Rodney Allen Rippy (Former Child Actor), Tyrone DuBose (Afro Awards Voiceover Host), Donzaleigh Abernathy (Actress & Civil Right Activist), AdetutuFalana (Tututech LLC), Dar Dixon (Director & Producer), Calvin Hill (Navy Veteran & creator of Mr. & Ms. Military Pageant), and many others.

He said the documentary was part of Oduataj Productions and Entertainment's way of celebrating and honouringAdeleke after his victory at the Osun governorship polls.

"The film documentary on GovAdeleke of Osun State is solely Oduataj Productions and Entertainment grant style of celebrating his political successes and honouring him as a philanthropist.

"We will look at his swearing-in as Governor of Osun and his activities within his 100 days in office to be chronicled into the film documentary," he said.

Oduala, who just arrived Nigeria Wednesday, said while in Nigeria, he would begin editing his two movies shot in colorado USA, Germany and Nigeria.

The director, who described his baby programme, Afro Award 2022, as a "huge success" said plans for the Afro Award 2023 edition has begun in earnest and was scheduled to also take place in Los Angeles, California, USA again.

This year's Afro Awards sponsors includeOduataj Foundation, Top Dreams Universal, Cyril Robinson Tech & Web Design - Boss

NEWS

Kogi plans massive construction of houses, roads

From **AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja**

THE Kogi State Governor, Yahaya Bello has disclosed that priority will be given towards the construction of more houses and roads before the expiration of his tenure.

The governor described provision of shelter and roads for the citizens as most desirable at this period of economic difficulties.

He noted that construction of houses and roads is capital intensive which he said government remains the only alternative to make them available to the masses especially the down trodden citizens.

Governor Yahaya Bello gave the hint while speaking at the on-going building materials exhibitions organised by the Kogi State Built Environment and Building Materials Exhibitions in Lokoja.

The Governor who spoke through the Permanent Secretary, Kogi State Ministry of Works and Housing, Engr Emmanuel Audu, commended the joint partnership between the organisation and manufacturers of building materials to embark on the exhibitions.

The governor said that the project will not only boost standard in the system but encourage patronage of indigenous products.

Bello described the theme of this year's exhibitions as an essential requirement for Socio-economic growth and sustainable development of any society in the provision of life enhancing and reliable infrastructural services.

He further disclosed that out of the 16 road projects awarded by his administration, 14 have been completed across the state, adding that 3 other inherited road projects have also been completed.

He confirmed that Solar-powered street lights have



Bello

been installed in Lokoja, Kabba and Okene, while others are still ongoing.

The governor also revealed that the state government has recorded remarkable milestone in the area of building infrastructure.

In his goodwill message to the event, Director-General and Chief Executive Officer of Standard Organization of Nigeria, Farouk Salim explained that the agency among other objectives is empowered by an act of the National Assembly to prepare standards for all products goods and services produced or rendered in the country.

Salim who was represented at the occasion by Engr. Olowu Alex Daudu, stressed further that the organization prepares standards relating to product measurement, materials and processes.

He expressed appreciation to the organisers for identifying with the organization in its 50 years celebration, assuring that it would continue to partner with the group to the standardization of construction materials

He acknowledged that the event is in tandem with its target of building consonance with requirements of the

environment.

"When you use materials that are substandard, instead of building the environment you are struggling to build, you end up destroying it, because the environment constitutes both the living and non-living components, containing the biosphere and atmosphere, and that's the essence of this program.

If you use product that is not in conformity with the requirement of the standard, you will still not be satisfied", Engr. Daudu concluded.

High point of the event was the presentation of honorary awards to some deserving personalities for their outstanding contributions to humanity.

Notable among the awardees are Governor Yahaya Bello of Kogi State; Engr. Abubakar Ohere, Kogi Central APC Senatorial candidate; Dr. Lami Onayi Ahmed, National Organising Secretary, BUMPAN, Hon. Victor Adewale Omofaiye,

Others are Arc. Mahmud Ibrahim; Barrister Ladi Ahmed Jatto, State Project Coordinator, NEWMAP; Mrs. Rekiya Onaivo Sanni, MD, Kogi State Enterprise Development Agency, Hon. Adam Bakaso, Chairman, Kogi State Forestry.

By **DORCAS PANKYES, Abuja**

THE Minister of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development, Sadiya Umar Farouq has pledged to support and propagate the Hand-in-Hand Initiative in Nigeria.

Sadiya Umar Farouq disclosed this in a statement by her SA media, Nneka Ikem Anibeze in Abuja at the Inauguration of the National Steering Committee for Food and Agriculture Organization FOA Hand In Hand initiative held in Abuja on Monday.

Umar Farouq thanked the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari for fostering agricultural transformation and rural development, while contributing to the extensive elimination of extreme poverty, hunger and malnutrition.

"The humanitarian and livelihood resilience track will support programme on investment plans and interventions in territories at risk of facing shocks and crisis in the North-East, North-West and North-Central states in order to create, sustain and improve resilient livelihoods to withstand shocks and crisis in focus areas within Nigeria.



Farouq

Minister pledges support to HiH initiative

"As we are aware, the Government of Nigeria is participating in the Hand-in-Hand initiative, a country owned and country led initiative, aimed at supporting agricultural transformation and rural development while building the resilience of vulnerable populations.

Inaugurating the committee, the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Dr Muhammad Mahmood Abubakar stated that the HiH programme is meant to practically facilitate and support the implementation of the framework of the National Agricultural Technology and Innovation Policy (NATIP 2022-2027) towards accelerating food systems transformation, promoting rapid rural development and building vulnerable population resilience across the country.

"The Hand in Hand Initiative takes cognizance of the country's economic advantaged and disadvantaged areas in selecting the priority commodities for intervention in selected states.

"The programme is meant to practically facilitate and support the implementation of

the framework of the National Agricultural Technology and Innovation Policy (NATIP 2022-2027) towards accelerating food systems transformation, promoting rapid rural development, and building vulnerable population resilience across the country.

Terms of reference for the NSC members stipulate that the National Steering Committee (NSC) shall be the highest organ in the Governance Structure of HiH Initiative in Nigeria and will provide overall political leadership, strategic direction, and guidance for the implementation of HiH Initiative in Nigeria in line with national priorities.

The NSC will be responsible for providing oversight for the implementation of the HiH Initiative in Nigeria and will receive periodic progress reports on the implementation of the initiative from the Technical Task Team and FAO HiH Country Team who are responsible for the Implementation of the Programme. In addition, the NSC will meet twice a year to receive briefings and reports on the implementation of the Hand-in-Hand Initiative in Nigeria while the chairman may call for meetings to discuss any matter that may require the attention or guidance of the NSC.

The NSC will also be responsible for resolving conflicts or contending matters amongst participating MDAs which are not resolved by the Technical Task Team while implementing the HiH Initiative in Nigeria.

The Chairman charged the members to recommit themselves to the task ahead by providing the needed leadership for the successful implementation of the programme in Nigeria.

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Dr Muhammad Mahmood Abubakar will serve as the chairman of the committee while members include the Hon. Minister of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development, Sadiya Umar Farouq, the Ministers of Environment, Water Resources, Industry, Trade, and Investment, Finance, Budget, and National Planning, the Executive Governor of Borno State, Prof Babagana Zulum,

the Senior Special Assistant to the President on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Statistician General of the Federation, FAO Representative to Nigeria and the ECOWAS, Senior National Consultant to FAO on HiH in Nigeria, President of Federation of Agricultural Commodity Association in Nigeria (FACAN) representing Organized Private Sector, Chairman of All Farmers Association of Nigeria, Chairman Agriculture, Donor Working Group (representing Development Partners) and the TTT Focal Lead of FMARD will serve as the secretary.

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ICPC charged to investigate N-Power

THE Independent Corrupt Practices Commission has been invited by the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development to investigate the Payment Service Provider for federal government's most successful Social Investment Programme, N-Power.

A statement by the SA Media to the, Nneka Ikem Anibeze stated that the invitation followed sharp practices observed by some personnel of the Payment Service Provider (PSP) involved in the payment processes of beneficiaries, which

From **DORCAS PANKYES, Abuja**

was immediately reported to ICPC after it was discovered.

Addressing journalists at a briefing, the Permanent Secretary of the, Dr Nasir Sani-Gwarzo stated that the ICPC has been invited to thoroughly investigate and scrutinize the system and payment providers and apprehend any persons culpable of shady transfers and diversion.

"The Ministry's attention has been brought to recent

publications regarding ongoing investigations in relation to fraud allegations in the programme. We wish to here state as follows;

"The Ministry has deployed a well-rounded mechanism for selection of eligible beneficiaries from across the country and this has been in place since the inception of the programme. Working with our service provider, Programme Beneficiaries are boarded, trained and deployed to pre-selected places of primary assignment.

"When it came to our notice that there may have been sharp practices by some personnel of the Payment Service Provider (PSP) involved in the payment processes of beneficiaries, the matter was immediately referred to ICPC for thorough investigation. We are aware that certain persons have consequently been invited for interrogation as part of the ongoing investigations.

"In the meantime, we have carried out thorough reinforcement of our systems to eliminate all anomalies and prevent similar occurrences in

the future. To this end, we are in close collaboration with ICPC to support the successful determination of the investigation.

"The public may wish to note that in a bid to ensure transparency and accountability in the implementation of N-Power and other National Social Investment Programmes, namely the National Home Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP), Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP) and the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT), the Ministry has over time involved other government MDA's, security agencies and civil society organizations in monitoring and compliance checks across the 36 states of the country and the FCT.

"We want to assure all N-POWER beneficiaries of Federal Government's continued commitment to the programme and the subsequent exit/off-boarding channels activated. All programme beneficiaries should therefore continue to apply

themselves to their utmost at their Places of Primary Assignment. All monthly stipends will continue to be paid in line with programme expectations".

Dr Sani-Gwarzo called on members of the public to come forward with information on any irregularities noticed in the implementation of the National Social Investment programme through the following channels; Email: npowersupport@nsip.gov.ng, npowerinfo@nsip.gov.ng Phone: 0700 CALL NSIP, 070022556747 or 07030859183- WhatsApp

The N-Power Programme has continued to deliver desired impact through the on-boarding of 1.5million Unemployed Nigerian youth (mostly graduates), providing capacity building, targeted tenured employment and structured off-boarding into various career paths; thereby serving as a catalyst conveyor system for unemployed/under-employed Nigerian youth to successful career paths and a stimulus for the Nigerian economy.



Bello

SUNDAY MAGAZINE



PLAFEST: The celebration of cultural unity

Continued from Page 10

to bring the warring factors to the dialogue table to find solutions to their grievances and seek for ways through which justice can be served.

Generally, the best of culture, dances and arts of the 53 ethnic groups in Plateau State came on display as the Plateau State Festival for Arts and Culture (PLAFEST 2022) came under way at the Rwang Pam Township Stadium, Jos. Anytime there is such show, whether on a small scale or not, it is celebrated with pomp and pageantry.

Plateau State Governor, Simon Bako Lalong while declaring the event open, said although the state is not yet an oil producing state, it is however blessed with abundant human and natural resources much more than oil which are yet to be harnessed. The cultures of the people of the state are unbelievably rich and intimidating to many.

The staging of the event coincided with RATTAFEST 2022, the yearly outing of Radio, Television, Theatre and Arts Workers' Union of Nigeria (RATAWU) in Jos in which states like Jigawa, Kaduna, Lagos and the FCT among others also added colour to the Festival.

Political will to develop tourism

At the event, Governor Lalong said, "Our captivating

and scenic environment, the undulating hills and mountains within the Shere Hills, Basalt Rocks, Wase Rock tourism corridor, the lush vegetation, the rivers, several awe inspiring mountain ranges, the gullies and path ways are fantastic and endearing elements incomparable to any other weather in the world".

Culture and tourism cannot be separated, even as it is a known fact that the state is endowed with potentials that are yet to be tapped. If PLAFEST is to make any impact, the state cannot joke with these potentials; they must be harnessed and put to proper use for profitability.

The Chairman of the Northern Governors' Forum said, the clement weather, unique only to Plateau State, is a tourists' delight and the people must seek to maximally utilize the entirety of the potentials God has endowed them with.

In a statement signed by his Director of Media and Public Affairs, Makut Simon Macham said, the state government is always poised to tap into these potentials to strengthen the economic activities of the people. He assured that the government will continue to develop all the identified monuments, historical and heritage sites to a standard that could meet UNESCO's enlistment for recognition as a world heritage sites.

The governor who commended the theme of the Festival which is "Cultural Heritage: A tool for curbing insecurity" said under the State's Tourism Policy, a lot of activities for cultural heritage and reawakening will come up including the setting up of Jos Carnival Commission.

In a keynote address, Director General of the National Council for Arts and Culture, Otunba Segun Runsewe said the Governor's passion for culture and tourism has up scaled the potentials of the state in taking its rightful place as Nigeria's home of Peace, Tourism and Hospitality.

He recalled the hosting of the National Festival for Arts and Culture, NAFEST 2020 which has become a reference point for not only Africa but the world in hosting large events successfully.

In her first major outing, the Commissioner for Culture, Tourism and Hospitality, Hon. Cecilia Mermwakat Yilkorah said the Festival is another window of opportunity guaranteed to showcase the state's cultural potentials in terms of traditional dances, traditional music, games, cuisines and exhibitions of diverse forms.

She said the Festival will equally showcase exhibition of arts, crafts, artifacts and antiquities of various

cultures. Products of cultural industries like the traditional farm implements, farm produces, etc will also be on display.

Next edition of PLAFEST: The way forward

Chairman of the Plateau Council of Traditional Rulers Da Jacob Gyang Buba described the event as a landmark and long overdue which gives an opportunity for people to see Plateau State from a wholistic perspective and be able to appreciate the diversity of the people and the state.

He said for the next edition, it is desirable for all the local governments to host their cultural festivals which will now provide the platform for the PLAFEST.

Other speakers including ALGON Chairman, Alex Naantuam, veteran producer Peter Igho, Chairman House Committee on Culture Hon. Nanbol Listic, RATAWU representative among other all appreciated Governor Lalong for hosting the event describing it as a display of the rich heritage of Plateau State.

If it must be an annual event, every level of government must be expected to play a role. In the maiden Festival, it was alleged that the local government areas' administrators failed to live up to expectation. That should not be expected as leaving it to only the state

government to host cannot create the necessary impact. It is a Festival for Plateau State.

If as it was stated and the initiative praised by the Gbong Gwom, the state House of Assembly must come up with a law that compels all to contribute its quota to the sustenance of the Festival every year. It is not for the fun of it that it is being held; there is more to it than meets the eye. The people will be waiting to get a law that will draw them together to celebrate the uniqueness of their cultures and togetherness.

It is hoped that this gesture if fully utilized, Plateau State, being the "Home of Peace and Tourism" can export its cultures abroad; after all, several groups particularly, Dantala Dewan, Sombi Dancers from Kanke and Asharuwa International Dance Group have since put the state on world map. Its tourism potentials are second to none in Nigeria; only waiting for the political will to sell it to the world.

It will continue to be what it is, only because the state has not shown determination to use the potentials to shore up its revenue collection profile. The governor had stated, Plateau State is not an oil producing state, yet, its potentials can be used to its advantage. It is about time, the state gave time for this to happen.

METRO-FOCUS

Waste management: Not yet uhuru

By HOSEA NYAMLONG

CLEANLINESS is often achieved through cleaning or sanitation. Culturally, cleanliness is usually a good quality of life and wellbeing. There is a common adage that says "Cleanliness is next to godliness". This may be regarded as contributing to other ideals such as health and beauty.

Recently, the Plateau State Government has ensured that the garbage within the city centre of Jos North Local Government Area were cleared by the relevant ministries and other agencies in the spirit of keeping the Jos metropolis clean and free from diseases.

The issue of sanitation and environmental hygiene should be taken very serious in order to avoid any disease outbreak in our environment like cholera, polio, Covid-19, typhoid, diarrhea etc.

In the past, it was quite disgusting that citizens around the Luka Bentu Theatre Hall, Church Street, Jos North Local Government Council dump refuse by the roadside, directly by the fence of the Luka Bentu Theatre and its surroundings, littering the whole environment.

These heaps of garbage which do not only produce offensive smell, are also very detrimental to the health of the people operating their businesses, offices which includes church worshippers and residents within the vicinity. Even though it has been observed that everyone living in that area is guilty of dumping his or her refuse in that place, which has been frowned at.

Apparently, environmental issues and the challenges of refuse dumping remain a daunting issue that has defied solution within the surroundings of Jos metropolis, which is the capital city with a lot of business activities taking place.

Government's efforts over the years in keeping the state clean



through its agency, Plateau Environment Protection Agency (PEPSA), which has been saddled with the responsibility to ensure that all dirt and refuse collection in the state was done appropriately has not yielded the desired result.

But recently, it was also noticed that PEPSA has cleared all the refuse within the city centre, making the environment neat and clean. Now, the big question remains that what is the role of citizens in keeping the environment clean now that government has done its part? And what is government's thinking about other environs that are left uncleared of garbage?

To a large extent, cleanliness is linked with proper hygiene. A person who is said to be clean

usually depicts cleanliness.

METRO FOCUS in a chat with some business men and women name withheld appreciated the step by the government in ensuring that the city centre has a new look by clearing the garbage.

They frowned at the attitude of some traders and citizens that dump dirt, not appropriately by the use of Dano-bin provided by government to dispose refuse. This has constituted a major problem. It is now a common sight to see polythene bags flying freely and to see streets littered with refuse. In most cases, a bad stench emanates from the garbage polluting the air. So many areas in Jos have become eyesore because of that.

They appealed to the state government to kindly provide

more Dano bins to areas that are in need and to ensure that garbage dumps are evacuated on a regular basis.

In another chat with some passer-by along Church Street, behind Luka Bentu Theatre Hall, they alluded to the fact that before the evacuation of the heaps of garbage along their street, they were no longer able to ply the road because of the unpleasant smell that use to emanate from the refuse site.

They appreciated government for doing the needful by evacuating the garbage and making the environment clean and safe, because some citizens have turned the refuse dump site as their public toilet, defecating mostly at night.

It is extremely important for government to ensure that the

city centres and environs are kept clean by its concern ministries and agencies.

To this end, Ministry of Environment, Jos Metropolitan Development Board (JMDB) and PEPSA are mandated to see that Jos city and environs remain clean and free from any disease outbreak of any sort. In that regard, they should ensure they keep to their mandate.

As a matter of fact, government should ensure that those concerned authorities saddled with the responsibility to maintain the cleanliness and waste management are provided with the necessary tools and be monitored with all seriousness.

Imbibing the hygiene culture does not only mean taking baths ten times in a day or wearing well-ironed clothes, because that certainly amounts to nothing if you don't see it fit to look after your environment as much as you look after yourself. It is the responsibility of every citizen to package his garbage well and deposit in the designated areas. One of the areas the community is found wanting is lack of packaging and random disposal of dirt.

A dirty environment is the perfect setting for all sorts of troubles to occur: it breeds both communicable and non-communicable diseases, especially those which affect mostly children. Adults also tend to have non-communicable diseases, heart disease, cancer, and chronic respiratory diseases, etc.

Health cannot be achieved without a healthy environment. All hands must be on deck for us to maintain Plateau State's beauty as the 'Home of Peace and Tourism'.



SUNDAY PEOPLE

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE GARKAWA MAIDEN CONVOCATION

The Maiden Convocation Ceremony of the Plateau State College of Agriculture Garkawa, Mikang LGA, held at its convocation ground on Friday



Governor Lalong (right) presenting certificate to one of the graduands



One of the female graduands receiving her certificate from the Governor



Cross section of graduating students during the College Maiden Convocation ceremony



Graduands watching procession at the convocation ceremony



One of the students receiving certificate from Governor Simon Bako Lalong (CON)



College of Agriculture Registrar, Richard Dingsan (left) with the Deputy Chief of Staff, Governors' office, Alhaji Idris Kwando



Royal father of Garkawa, HRH. Peter Dabup (right) with Royal father of Dertena. Miskoom Thomas Yunkwap, Shendam LGA at the convocation



Cross section of well-wishers at the convocation ceremony

Photos: DANLADI DUK



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On drivers absent-mindedness

THE attitude of drivers has to compliment the safety features fitted to their car and not be overshadowed by them. Safety design and equipment of cars should never replace our own obligations of just prudence and duty of care. We have the ability to judge all road situations, anticipate the movement of others and prioritize our safety continually. Inanimate objects like airbags don't compete on our level, yet because we have them fitted, our level of complacency may rise due to their presence. Stand by any road side and observe drivers on their driving demeanor and the answer will only concur.

Sit on any of today's family hatchbacks and compare it to what was available less than ten years ago. The interior design of today's state of the art automobiles should immediately welcome you into their mobile living rooms. Quality carpets, supportive seating, nice décor, good lighting, good ventilation complete with factory fitted stereo system, all for your maximum pleasure and comfort. Indeed, since we transcended from primordial transportation system to modern motorized transportation system, our mental and physical dexterity has greatly improved alongside our ability to build quite phenomenal trans-global motor transport. Powered

windows and mirrors, assisted steering and anti-lock braking systems from the standard equipment on most cars.

The fact that each and every car has a laminated front windscreen has long subsided into significance. The hairline cracks that appear in windscreen hit by foreign objects are generally accompanied by expletives and derogatory terms regarding the perpetrator. No one ever gives thanks to for the lamination that prevents the said object from entering the car and inflicting grievous bodily harm on the occupants. The side and rear windows offer no such lamination.

The recent trends of creating Darth Vader's cars by the post purchase fitting of darkened film to the car windows is fraught with danger. While such lamination has an undoubted security value, this can be totally surpassed by the danger of restricted vision to the driver.

As a nation, we are often preoccupied with the weather. Our sometime terrible weather has great demands on the driver to get and maintain a clear view in the typical Nigerian weather. It rarely makes a difference whether it is dry or rainy season as both have their unique challenges.

Looking through clear glass is onerous enough, yet people have shot themselves in the legs by devising extra sensory perception by their ability to

ride around at night peering through shaded windows, akin to driving in darkness wearing sun shades. It is rather alarming how sexy designs have now superseded all other safety considerations. Techno phrases now in vogue include: Anti-lock braking system (ABS), Electronic Brakeforce Distribution (EBD), Electronic Stability Programme (ESP), Emergency Brake Assist (EBS). Supplementary Restraint System (SRS), Automatic Stability Control (ASC). Etc. let's analyze the Airbag (SRS) briefly.

Supplementary Restraint System (SRS) Airbag

Written and embossed on most airbag systems, the key word here is 'supplementary'. Airbags are only as good as the driver's deportment and the additional use of seatbelts. Drivers who sit too close to the steering run the risk of injury if the airbag activates. Remember the contact with the airbag should occur when the bag has fully inflated and just prior to deflation. Seatbelts in most new cars will pull tight in an impact, forcing the driver/ passenger into the seat thereby ensuring that all-important safety space between them and the inflating airbag. Always adjust headrests to their proper position cupping your head as you lean back. In a nutshell, airbags are only supplementary and designed to be used alongside seatbelts.



NEWS

See agriculture as a business - Lalong

By PALANG KASMI

PLATEAU State Governor, Simon Bako Lalong has challenged Nigerian youths to see agriculture as a business that has huge potentials for job creation and employment rather than a vocation for those who have no opportunity for white collar jobs.

He stated this while speaking at the maiden convocation of the Plateau State College of Agriculture Garkawa held on 9th December 2022 at the college premises.

He was optimistic that agricultural courses will continue to be relevant, pointing out that since white collar jobs are not available, such shift in mindset is necessary because the youths have the capacity to approach agriculture from a perspective of knowledge and research unlike in the past.

"Many youths unfortunately, still see farming as a demeaning occupation and would rather stay idle looking for white collar jobs that do not exist. We have trained thousands through PLASMIDA, ITF and other partners, as well as empowered them to establish their farming businesses. Many of them today are doing well and putting food on the table," he said.

He said his rescue led administration has worked to ensure the accreditation of courses of the institution in the field of mining and agriculture and maintained that Plateau State is one of the most blessed destinations in Nigeria and the world with abundant agricultural potentials that are supported



Lalong

by the clement weather and natural endowments.

While congratulating the graduands, the Governor said although the school has never conducted a convocation since its creation, the Rescue Administration has intervened to ensure that students are not stranded anymore.

He said "An institution such as the Plateau State College of Agriculture plays very important role of producing the skilled manpower that will interface with farmers and train them on modern farming techniques which give more value".

Lalong tasked the college to work hard in carrying out research and field work that will assist farmers address the challenges of crop diseases, marketing and storage of farm produce as well as mechanised farming which will go a long way in making farming attractive and profitable.

Commissioner for Higher Education, Prof. Barnerd Matur

Malau and his agriculture counterpart, Dr. Hosea Finangwai said the Lalong Rescue Administration has done a lot to improve higher education in the state through improved funding, infrastructure and manpower.

Provost of the institution, Dr. Madang Ayuba Dasbak said the event marks the first convocation of the institution since it was established in 1998.

He appreciated the Governors support in the area of accreditation of some of its programmes by the National Board for Technical Education NBTE while stressing that based on his efforts, 6 courses are waiting for NBTE approval.

He promised scholarships for students of Mikang Local Government to encourage and spur them to enroll and access education.

23 best students from different departments were awarded prizes for academic excellence by the Governor.

Bauchi Governor signs 2023 budget proposal, other bills

From **ABBAS GUNGURA, Bauchi**

GOVERNOR Bala Mohammed of Bauchi state has last Friday signed the over N202 billion 2023 appropriation bill and three other executive bills into law.

The Governor at the signing of the budget held at the new executive chamber of the Government House, said the appropriation bill came out without much changes apart from some adjustments normally done by the state assembly to ensure parity, equity, justice and state character in the distribution of resources.

Bala Mohammed appreciate and commended the state assembly members for the timely scrutiny of the documents and its approval.

He said the sum of N202,641,558,614.46 which he recently presented to the house of assembly for consideration and approval has been brought to him for assent after a thorough scrutiny.

"The document came out in a record time because we took it the house of assembly on the 15th November and because of the improvement that I noticed, is coming out on the 9th of December", he said.

"We really appreciate the proficiency, the efficiency and of

course, the competency of the house to be able to go through all this voluminous document and the synergy established between the executive and the legislature because even the process of budget matter", Bala noted.

He added, "We appreciate that we are doing this thing together and we will forever remember that there was a time when the house and the executive is always doing things together".

Other bills signed alongside the 2023 appropriation bill include Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) bill that has been passed into law but was returned to the assembly to amend some grey areas, bill seeking the establishment of State Penal code and a bill for law to provide the

Administration of Criminal Justice in the state.

Earlier speaking, the Speaker of the state assembly, Rt. Hon. Abubakar Y. Sulaiman had informed the governor that he was at the government house to present four important executive bills which he sent to the assembly for approval.

Abubakar Suleiman said in exercising the constitutional powers bestowed on them, the state assembly have scrutinized all the bills sent to them which have been passed to law and are ready for his assent.

"Like I have said earlier, in exercising the constitutional powers bestowed on us, we have scrutinized the bill and we passed it into law and it's here today for you to assent" he said.



Gov. Bala Mohammed of Bauchi State left congratulating his predecessor, M.A Abubakar after his recent conferment of SAN during a special dinner held at Government House.

NEWS

NIS unveils Servicom Centre

By Dumah Randong

THE Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS), Plateau State Command has unveiled its Servicom Center to improve service delivery.

Towards achieving efficiency, the service has also introduced the queuing system as part of efforts to sanitise the passport process devoid of any bureaucratic bottleneck that characterized the process in the past.

Comptroller General of the Nigeria Immigration Service, IsahJere disclosed this at the launch of the Servicom Centre at Command's Headquarters in Jos, Friday.

He said as a service provider, the Nigeria Immigration Service was committed to giving prompt, adequate and satisfactory service to Nigerians and urged the general public to give them the necessary support in it's collective resolve towards a better and more secured country.

The NIS boss said as part of its core mandate, the service was conceived to promote, effective and efficient service delivery as well as customer satisfaction especially the issuance of visa and resident permit.

He said because of the security situation in the country, the Federal Government has issued a directive to NIS to harmonise it's data base with NIMC because of the several challenges Nigerians have with names arrangement among others.

Governor Simon Lalong represented by his Deputy, Prof SonniTyoden in a remark, congratulated NIS for the initiative which was first of its kind and urged other state commands to take cue.



Areghbesola

Along said the initiative has demonstrated the NIS was committed to better service delivery noting that with the launch of this facility, the public expects quality service and commended the service for the construction of a clinic to provide healthcare for it's personnel.

Former Comptroller General of the NIS, David Paradang in a remark, said servicom was not only about passport alone but contribute to the economy of the country as well through issuance of resident permit and called on the CG to ensure that delay in the issuance of passports was a thing of the pass.

In a welcome address, Comptroller of NIS, Plateau state Command, Christopher Nomhwange said the

servicomcentre was aimed at providing quality service to its customers and appreciated all who contributed towards the actualisation of the centre.

He thanked the Plateau state government for its untiring support to the command especially the recent construction of 750 meters access road to command office complex, provision of security vehicles among others.

Nomhwange also thank the CG for his continued support to the command in the area of training and capacity building.

The Nigeria Standard reports that the event was attended by other heads of security agencies in the state while the building commissioned would housed the servicom unit, anti-corruption unit as well as transparency unit.

By PALANG KASMI

THE 6th edition of the Governor Lalong Business Dinner and Dialogue with the business community has been held in Jos.

The event which took place on Friday December 9, 2022 at Government House Jos attracted businessmen, women and stakeholders from the state. It was organised by PLASMIDA, PIPC, and other bodies including Pro-Poor growth and promotion of employment in Nigeria, SEDIN and GIZ.

In his remarks at the forum, Lalong said since he came into office in 2015, he had embarked on

Innovative reforms in business processes with the aim of creating jobs and improving livelihoods of the people.

He said building a robust economy was his goal, that is why his administration has institutionalised the Business Dinner and dialogue as a major platform for brainstorming and recording successes in the business economic sector.

He said such efforts had helped in improving the Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) and Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the state including improvement of the lives of many citizens.

While commending the business community for their

Lalong holds dinner with business community



Lalong

investments in the state for boosting economic growth, he said his administration had made concrete efforts to empower youths to become entrepreneurs rather than job seekers.

He urged the incoming administration to continue such Public Private Partnerships with stakeholders in the business community and commended the GIZ and other economic partners for sustaining and funding the business

meetings for the past 6 years. He also commended the Small and Medium Industry and great skilled talents from Plateau like Jerry Mallo and other winners of national honours for their innovations and for making Plateau state proud by winning the best in SME's in the country.

In a goodwill message, Director General of Plateau State Microfinance Development Agency P L A S M I D A , MrVongkamWuyep said his organisation had since inception been engaged in enhancing capacity building, empowerment, and self development of citizens through skills acquisition projects.

He said about 27,000 people have been empowered under the Simon.

BakoLalongempowerment Programme and his agency has been involved in partnerships with the Industrial Training Fund (ITF), adding that the organisation has been approved by Central Bank of Nigeria as a skills acquisition center.

He added that PLASMIDA is implementing N-CARES programme in Plateau, has created over 9 thousand jobs, and is also collaborating with many bodies for economic empowerment of citizens.

Representative of GIZ Akin Omowore commended the Plateau Government for creating the forum for engagement with the private sector which has become a major boost for the state economy.

He called for the sustenance of the forum through creation of an institutional framework.

Chairman Plateau Economic council MrEziekielGomos did a presentation on reforms undertaken by the Plateau State Government to ease business since 2015.

Highlights of the dinner was the presentation of an award of honour and appreciation to Governor Simon BakoLalong, by the association of artisans on the Plateau, and the launching of a compendium on reforms of the state produced by GIZ.

WAEC de- recognizes 61 secondary schools in Kogi

SIXTY-ONE secondary schools in Kogi have been de-recognised by the West Africa Examination Council (WAEC) over examination malpractices.

The Kogi State Commissioner for Education, Science and Technology, Hon. Wemi Jones disclosed this during the inauguration of the distribution of free Chemistry

and Physics textbooks to 95 public school students in Kogi West Senatorial district at Saint Augustine College Kabba.

He threatened heavy and evil.

"In view of the above, we as the executive officers of the two unions wish to react as follows; that the allegation of 'nepotism, lopsided appointments and promotion of workers and monetization of the processes' the NHRG and Sahara Reporters are (sic), merely trying to 'give a dog a bad name in order to hang it.

"This is because since the assumption of office of the DG, the ITF has operated transparently and in keeping with his pledge to heal wounds and work as unto God in the discharge of his duties. Therefore, every activity, be it employment, promotions and appointments and others have followed due process which account for the industrial harmony that has prevailed in the Fund since his appointment", the two unions highlighted

However, they called on the public to disregard the publication as it was an issue of lies and untruth that have no basis. In fact, they are challenging Sahara Reporters to crosscheck the information they got from what is clearly a faceless and non-existent organisation before going to public sphere.

ITF unions raise alarm over malicious report

BY EZEKIEL DONTINNA

THE Senior Staff Association of Statutory Corporations and Government Owned Companies (SSASCGOC) and Amalgamated Union of Public Corporation Civil Service Technical and Recreational Services Employees (AUPCTRE), have raised alarm over Sahara website report accusing the management of Industrial Trust Fund (ITF) of lopsided appointment and promotions.

The unions raised the alarm

Friday while addressing journalists at the press briefing held at the Plateau State headquarters of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) Jos, the state capital led by the President and Secretary Kayode Alakija and Othman Balara be respectively.

The unions said, "Our attention has been drawn to the publication that was published on the website of Sahara Reporters on 8th December, 2022. The story which is attributed to a faceless group – the Coalition

of Northern Human Rights Groups (NHRG) – was based on a protest letter by the group, to the office of the Minister of Trade and Investment (Sic), alleging lopsided appointments and monetization of the promotion process.

"It also states that there is fraudulent awards of contracts, mandate, nepotism and outright diversion of public funds, against the Director General and the Management of the Industrial Training Fund (ITF). It is not in our place to hold brief for the Direct (SIC) highlighted and management, who are quite capable of defending their integrity that is clearly being assailed and tarnished.

"We, as representatives of the entirety of the ITF workforce are constrained to react to this malicious publication whose purpose is to sow discord and cause disaffection within the Fund. This is based on our firm understanding of the operations of the Fund, our deep appreciation of what the DG has done since his appointment in 2016 and implication of the story on the image and reputation of our dear institution is baseless



SUNDAY SPORTS



What happens next to first temporary World Cup stadium?

THE World Cup's first temporary stadium will soon be dismantled after hosting seven matches in two weeks at Qatar 2022.

Stadium 974 - named after Qatar's international dialling code and the number of shipping containers used in its construction - was one of seven grounds built for the tournament, while an eighth was extensively redeveloped.

The entire steel structure of Stadium 974 can be repurposed for another World Cup or major sporting event as either a venue of the same size or several smaller facilities.

Qatar called the stadium its "beacon of sustainability" as part of its pledge to deliver the first carbon neutral World Cup.

As well as seven new stadiums, Qatar has a new airport, metro system, roads and about 100 new hotels - but has faced intense scrutiny and criticism over the way it has treated the tens of thousands of migrant workers used to build the infrastructure.

Stadium 974 will be used for a fashion show and concerts in the coming days with a Qatar 2022 organising committee spokesperson saying the "precise timeline for the full dismantling and repurposing" is not yet finalised.

So how sustainable is the Stadium 974 project? And where and when will the stadium be reused?

A glimpse of the future?

Construction workers moved on to the site on 9 December to "take the stadium out of tournament mode"

The 44,089-capacity Stadium 974 - on Doha's waterfront - features a modular steel frame and multicoloured shipping containers, which can be seen from outside the stadium and house toilets and food and drink stalls.

It was the only stadium built for the World Cup without air conditioning, so hosted only evening matches, culminating in Brazil's last-16 victory over South Korea on 5 December.

The use of shipping containers and recycled steel helped reduce waste generated and construction time compared to the other new venues.

Qatar and designers Fenwick Iribarren Architects said they aimed to avoid building a "white elephant" - a venue unused or rarely used after a tournament, as has proven the case following the three previous World Cups in Russia, Brazil and South Africa.

Environmental watchdog group Carbon Market Watch said if reusing existing dismantlable structures could be widely replicated, it could make bidding for major sporting events "more accessible to developing countries" because costs would be shared between several countries hosting different editions.

A report into Stadium 974

commissioned by Fifa and delivered by emission reduction experts also pointed to that benefit, and added it could allow stadiums to be built in more central and "easily accessible" locations, reducing "intra-city fan travel" during tournaments.

Organisers have also said they will donate 170,000 seats from other stadiums to developing countries to try to make them more sustainable and avoid them becoming underused in future. However, Carbon Market Watch said "no concrete plans could be found" for the distribution of seats.

The claim the Qatar World Cup will be carbon neutral has also been described as "dangerous and misleading" by environmentalists, who say the tournament could have a carbon footprint three times higher than stated.

- 500 flights daily cast doubt on Qatar's green pledge
- World Cup 2022: How has Qatar treated foreign workers?

The importance of reuse
Will the 2022 World Cup be carbon neutral?

Fifa's report compared the emissions produced by the building of Stadium 974 to the average emissions of the four permanent stadiums that have a similar capacity of 40,000-45,000.

It found the temporary stadium "initially emits more carbon emissions due to the use of carbon-intensive materials such

as metal and steel" - as opposed to mainly concrete in permanent stadiums - which allows it to be dismantled and reassembled multiple times.

So, as it stands, Stadium 974 has a higher carbon footprint than the comparable permanent stadiums built for Qatar 2022.

For the temporary stadium to have a lower total footprint than multiple permanent stadiums, Carbon Market Watch said it "depends on how many times, and how far, the stadium is transported and reassembled".

Fifa's study assessed three different scenarios for the future of Stadium 974, in which it is reused once, twice or three times in a series of differing locations.

It found if the temporary stadium is reused only once, it must be relocated "within a total sea and road travel distance of 7,033km" to be more "environmentally advantageous" than building two permanent stadiums. It also highlighted the environmental benefits of the stadium being repurposed within the region, or specifically in Qatar.

That maximum travel figure rises to 40,118 km overall for two reuses and 72,616km for three.

All three scenarios were also modelled on the temporary stadium spending four years in the first location and in each subsequent location, before operating the remainder of a 60-year lifespan at its final destination.

Where is the stadium going?

No decision appears to have been made on the future uses or locations of Stadium 974.

Carbon Market Watch said while organisers have "highlighted the dismantlable nature of the temporary stadium, we could identify no specific plans showing where the stadium will be moved, if at all".

There are reports that Stadium 974 could be sent to Uruguay,

which is set to be part of a joint bid with Argentina, Chile and Paraguay for the 2030 World Cup.

Uruguay is approximately 13,000km from Doha, so if the temporary stadium is moved there, it would have to be reused again in a third location in order to be more environmentally advantageous than building separate new stadiums in each place.

When asked about future plans for Stadium 974 and any possible locations, the organising committee said: "Qatar is on track to deliver the first carbon neutral Fifa World Cup.

"That means all infrastructure projects - including the eight stadiums - must meet stringent sustainability benchmarks.

"During their construction, we have recycled and reused wherever possible and implemented a vast range of energy and water efficiency solutions. In addition, materials from sustainable sources were used and innovative legacy plans have been implemented to ensure the tournament doesn't leave any 'white elephants'."

SUNDAY SPORTS

Plateau musters more bronze, improves medal haul

From **ANDRE D. BISYIT, Asaba**

AS the days of the National Sports Festival wind down and expectations growing, Plateau State added four bronze medals to raise the total number of medals to 20.

Weightlifting hit the ground running by winning another bronze from the efforts of Yohanna Jack in the 67kg snatch event to record his name on the medal table.

In spite of his injury, Abubakar Sadiq escaped with bronze in the Taekwondo +67kg class at the expense of Anambra.

In Para athletics discus, Juliana Markus' 14.56m throw, was able to fetch her the bronze medal.

The last medal of the 8th day of hostilities by Plateau was won in the 57kg class kungfu fight by Chidimma Benjamin.

Other results showed that female handball team incurred a shock defeat by Oyo, 31-29, relegating them to the bronze contest with Imo.

Plateau's Volleyball male team revived their hope of progression to the knock out stage with a 3-2 win over Imo.

In Gymnastics, Adams Lawal progressed to the male finals in the vault event, while also qualifying for the finals in parallel bars.

Also in the High bars event, again Adam Lawal and Nonso Egbo both reached the finals.



Markus

In the Squash male doubles, Titah Jama and Daniel James made it through to the semi finals.

In other disappointing results, Badminton male team lost to Edo as Scrabble Team bowed out of the Games with the only bronze they won few days back. Also to join in the exit from the Games is Kokuwa while events in Golf has been brought to a close.

Some technical decisions in cycling has added one more bronze medal on the one they won to Plateau cycling team in the 12km mixed relay. One for

males and the other for females.

Similarly, the bronze medal won by Deborah Pam in the 73kg class of Powerlifting has again been upgraded to silver, due to technical decisions. This is the second time such decision is favoring Plateau state in this Festival.

Of the 20 medals, Plateau State won only 2 of them which are gold, 6 silver, and 12 bronze.

Events will continue in Chess, Badminton, Athletics, Handball, Volleyball, Boxing, Weightlifting, Gymnastics, and Kungfu.

CP Onyeka lauds Plateau Command's sportsmen over medals win

By **BULUS GAMBO**

DESPITE the fact that the just concluded 13th Biennial Police Game held in Uyo, the Akwa-Ibom State Capital was tough and highly competitive, Plateau State Police Command sportsmen who participated in various games at the event won and brought medals home.

It is cheering to note that one of the Command's sport contingent, Sergeant Kefas Williams emerged the overall champion in 5,000/10,000 metres races simultaneously.

While receiving the Sportsmen at the Police Officers' Mess, Jos recently, the Commissioner of Police Plateau State Command, CP Bartholomew N. Onyeka commended them for their impressive performances at

the Police Biennial Games.

According to the CP, he and his management team specially received the Sportsmen at the Officers Mess in order to appreciate them for the exploits, boost their morale and exhort them to sustain the tempo.

Also, the Officer in Charge of Police Sport Unit of the Command, ASP Bulus Jatau while fielding questions from newsmen shortly after the CP's debriefing, thanked God for the success recorded at the sport

event. He further stated that his men went to the event with high expectations and he was glad that virtually all of them won medals in during the competition.

"When asked what should be expected for his team next sports season, ASP Jatau said, "We have learnt a new lesson with what we encountered this sport season. I assure you that we are going to train harder so that when we go back, we will create more records than the one we just created."



CP Onyeka (middle), Sgt Kefas Williams (in yellow Sports wear) and O/C Sports, Plateau State Command, ASP Bulus Jatau

...As Naomi Samuel beat Nigeria's No:1

From **ANDRE D. BISYIT, Asaba**

IT took the state 3 days after the last gold medal to add another, in the ongoing National Sports Festival, holding in Asaba, Delta state.

The gold is just one of the 7 medals Plateau amassed for the day.

Naomi Monday who announced her presence in this festival in a grand style by defeating Nigeria's number one, maintained the

winning streak through 9 matches to seal the Gold medal in Chess ladies singles.

In Gymnastics, Adamu Lawal won silver in High bars.

The following also secured bronze in their respective events, Adams Kehinde, -70kg class, kungfu Gabriel Idagu, 73kg, clean and jack,

Weightlifting, Daniel Joshua, boxing, 67kg category, Titah Jama and Daniel James, Squash men's doubles.

Female Handballers dominated their Imo counterparts to also claim bronze with a 32-22 score line.

In Boxing, Ephraim Onwuania, in the 80kg bout, put his Bayelsan opponent to the sword to

grab a berth in the finals seeking to do same to his Abia foe.

Volleyball bid farewell to the the sports fiester haven exhibited great potentials. The male side failed to advance from the group stage after they suffered a 3-0 lose to Sokoto.

Most of the events are through except for Athletics, Weightlifting, Boxing, Wrestling and

Badminton Plateau has 27 medals made up of 3gold, 7silver and 17bronze.

NSF 2022: Organisers Confirm Death Of Boxer

The Chairman local organising committee of the 21st national sports festival tagged Asaba 2022, Mr Charles Aniagwu has confirmed the death of one athlete at the ongoing sports festival in Asaba Delta state.

The athlete, Chukwuemeka Igboanugo, represented Imo State in the 81kg

The boxer collapsed after he was hit by his opponent, Amagor Favour, from Anambra State during a fight and was attended to, rushed to the hospital where he was confirmed dead.

Giving a breakdown of what transpired, the LOC chairman said information at his disposal showed that the deceased was said to have high blood pressure and the medical personal

stopped him from participating in the fight but returned after a while and was certified fit after which he he was allowed into the ring.

Mr Aniagwu debunked insinuations that the late

boxer was not physically fit or having serious health issues prior to the match but insisted that if the family agrees for an autopsy, the LOC will not hesitate to do that.

He said the autopsy would also help in identifying the cause of his death and how to further prevent future occurrence

Mr Aniagwu who is also the Delta state commissioner for information said medical experts are available in all venues of the sports festival to run background check on athelets before they participate in games.

Journalists covering the festival alongside the chairman of the local organising committee and other top officials observed a minute silence for the late Imo state boxer, Chukwuemeka Igboanugo.

Meanwhile, a fight at one of the rings was suspended for over four hours after the fight between Ondo and Oyo resulted in a crisis and exchange of words by officials.

The game's referee was accused of partiality after declaring Oyo boxer winner while other spectators resisted the victory, stopped other fights and started throwing chairs into the ring.



Chairman LOC charles Anlaqwu observing a minute silence in respect of the late boxer

SUNDAY SPORTS

Who is Afraid of Habu Gumel?

By **CONCERNED STAKEHOLDERS**

IT is a matter of days before the 2022 Nigeria Olympic Committee, NOC congress billed for Jalingo, Taraba State. As usual, permutations are rife as per the eventual outcome of the convergence of stakeholders who elect a new executive board after every four years.

Some of the progressives amongst the stakeholders believe in the continuity of positive dividends to the nation's sporting community and are poised, as always to defend their belief not just by their votes, but also by their interactions, contributions and actions for the betterment of the industry in Nigeria.

Amongst the stakeholders also, are some who will stop at nothing to derail the course of progress and growth of the industry for their interests, and deny the nation of immense sporting fortunes.

This group of members have been at war with themselves over the forthcoming congress.

They are united under one mission, which is to unseat Engr Habu Ahmed Gumel as the President of the committee.

This group has gone to town, albeit lately, with campaigns of calumny to smear the hard-earned reputation of the incumbent President who is seeking re-election. Friends in the day and enemies at night, they have cooked up fallacies to stir division among stakeholders in their hateful and blinded desire to tarnish a man whom God has bestowed with sterling leadership qualities and remarkable achievements in different endeavours of life including sports.

The traitors and betrayers all of whom have roundly failed to advance the course of their respective sporting constituencies have gathered again in pursuit of shadows. As if their individual and collective devilish plots are not enough, this cowardly and faceless group have taken their campaign to the media, disguising itself as 'United Sports Stakeholders', to cast unnecessary aspersions on Engr Habu Gumel.

Their sponsored article published on various online outlets on December 4, 2022, remains the height of their mischief and desperation. The article urges Engr Gumel to shelve his ambition of re-election as President of NOC, citing **complacency**, reprehensible laxity, lack of transparency, corruption and age as reasons.

While the group reserves the right or privilege to make such a call, it is pertinent to remind it that it



Gumel

could also go ahead and substantiate its accusations.

For starters, the corruption allegations against Engr Gumel alongside Mustapha Berraf, President of the Association of Olympic Committees of Africa, ANOCA is unfounded.

On that, the accusers are merely bidding time and they know it. They claim both administrators are facing corruption charges, a claim both deny.

For God's sake, we are not

existing in a vacuum. When and where under the earth have Gumel and Berraf been drafted to answer to such charges?

Today, against all odds, ANOCA headquarters is domiciled in Abuja, Nigeria. How could that and other milestones ever be achieved by a corrupt duo? Transparency has been Engr Gumel's watchword in his years of service both as a government functionary and sports administrator.

Records are there to speak for him from his days as a Corps Member (NYSC) at

Brazil fans, 'sadness is too much'

IT would be an understatement to say Brazil's stunning defeat to Croatia on Friday at the Qatar World Cup was simply a disappointment that fans of Selecao Canarinho will get over in a few days.

"The sadness is too much. We had the best team in the world," Brazil supporter Paolo Souza told Al Jazeera after the match at Education City Stadium.

"We were very confident that we could win it this year but it was not meant to be. The defeat is so painful," said the 37-year-old Brazilian.

The five-time World Cup champions were on course to defeat the Balkan nation after Neymar scored in the first half of extra time, the game's first goal.

But, Croatia - losing finalists at the 2018 World Cup - scored an equaliser in the closing minutes of extra time, eventually emerging victorious on penalties.

Brazilian supporters, who made up the vast majority of fans at the stadium, arrived to the game with warmth, fervour and infectious music. But after the nail-biting game ended, there was no samba, no **Surdao drum solos** or tambourine performances but just groups of Canarinho fans heading for the exits as sadness lingered in the air.

The look on their faces tells it all as Brazil supporters watch the quarter-final between Brazil and Croatia at a FIFA fan zone in Doha, Qatar, on December 9, 2022 [Sorin

THE former Ballon d'Or winner blasts the football fans in his home country

Kaka and Ronaldo Pablo Rey

Kaka, former Real Madrid player and World Cup winner with Brazil in 2002, has complained that many Brazilians do not support their national team and do not treat football legends as they deserve to be treated.

Having won every major prize in football, **Kaka** believes several of his compatriots do not receive the adulation they deserve for what they have accomplished in the beautiful game.

Speaking to **BeIN Sport**, **Kaka** used **Ronaldo Nazario** as an example to illustrate his point.

"**Ronaldo Nazario** in Brazil is just a fat man walking down the street," **Kaka** stated.

"It's strange to say this, but many Brazilians don't support Brazil. It happens sometimes. If you see **Ronaldo** walking around here, you will say 'wow', he has something different here. In Brazil, he's just a fat guy walking down the street.

"Of course, many Brazilians love **Ronaldo**. I love **Ronaldo**, but the way he is respected in Brazil and abroad is different, I see more respect for him outside the country than there.

The 40-year-old ex-footballer also explained that several of his countrymen don't speak fondly of current Brazil captain **Neymar**, stating the politics could be a reason.

Kaka: In Brazil, Ronaldo is just a fat man

"At the moment, a lot of people in Brazil are talking about Neymar, but in a negative way," **Kaka** continued.

"Maybe it's because of politics, but Brazilians sometimes don't recognize our talents."

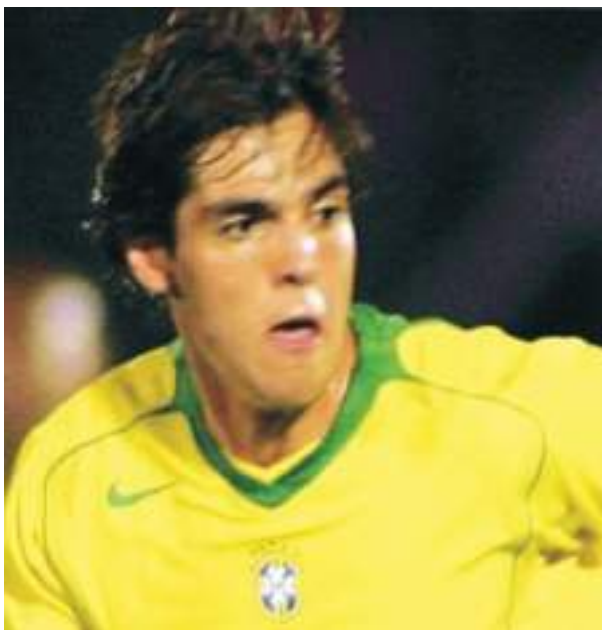
At the end of September, **Neymar** recorded a video showing his support for **Jair Bolsonaro** during the Brazilian presidential election, which was eventually won by **Lula da Silva**.

"Back home we have a lot of poor

people. The only happiness they have is Brazilian football. We are very proud of our national teams," she added.

Disa's husband, Diego, said the couple would stay in Qatar until the end of the tournament on December 19. They have tickets to watch the semi-final and final.

"Right now we are all cheering for every team but Argentina," he said. "For us, Portugal is Brazil; Morocco is Brazil."



'Be state good ambassadors'

PLATEAU State contingents to the 21 edition of the National Sports Festival holding in Asaba the Delta State

capital have been charged to also be good ambassadors of the state.

SP Amb. Usman Ahmed Abdul Dimka, Commander Special

Tasks Force of Delta State gave the challenge when he hosted them to a dinner at the conference hall of Orchid Hotel in Asaba on Thursday, noting that it is his desire to always identify with not only the people of his state, but all he comes across.

He maintained that "I'm excited to see my people in the state I'm serving as a police officer. When heard that you were here, I was in Abuja but I quickly come back to let you know you have a brother here", he said.

SP Dimka stressed that he like serving humanity and making all that comes around him happy and advised them that they should desist from any act that will bring disunity in the state and the country at large.

He further commended them for making the state proud and applauded the Plateau State government for ensuring that sports move to the higher level.

On his part, Mr Simon Moven, Plateau State Director Sports, represented by Mrs Dorcas Lengkat, Director of Technical describe the gesture as a privilege to be hosted by a brother and thank him for identifying with them.

"Though we are not surprised because this is the attitude of a Plateau man", he ended.



Brazil fans said the quarter-final loss was a "painful" one that will take a long time to recover from [Showkat Shafi/Al Jazeera]

SUNDAY SPORTS

Messi's World Cup dream lives on

LIONEL Messi's World Cup dream lives on after Argentina edged out the Netherlands on penalties after a hugely dramatic quarter-final at Lusail Stadium.

Messi looked to have inspired Argentina into a last-four meeting with Brazil's conquerors Croatia when he set up Nahuel Molina's opener 10 minutes before the break and then added the second from the penalty spot in the 73rd minute after Denzel Dumfries fouled Marcos Acuna.

Louis van Gaal, in his final game as Dutch coach, went for broke and it paid off as substitute Wout Weghorst led a sensational comeback by scoring twice, the second following an audacious free-kick routine 11 minutes into stoppage time.

A game of many flashpoints, including 17 yellow cards plus a red for Dutch defender Denzel Dumfries at the end, went to penalties, during which Aston Villa's Argentina keeper Emi Martinez emerged as the hero, saving from Virgil van Dijk and Steven Berghuis.

Messi scored his penalty and even though pressure mounted on Argentina when Enzo Fernandez dragged his spot-kick wide, Lautaro Martinez made the decisive contribution to spark wild scenes of celebration.

The ecstasy in the vast stands at Lusail Stadium and among Argentina's players carried extra joy because they knew how close they came to throwing away a position of comfort in this thunderous World Cup quarter-final. Argentina were cruising with a two-goal lead in the final 10 minutes but even the hordes of blue and white clad fans were silenced momentarily as their team, seemingly gripped by desperation as the Netherlands utilised the giant duo of Weghorst and Luuk de Jong, conceded those two late goals.

It needed Emi Martinez's rescue act in the penalty shootout, although it was Argentina making all the running and the Dutch hanging on in the extra period, with Enzo Fernandez hitting the post with virtually the last kick of the added period.

Argentina held their nerve to win the shootout and will now meet Croatia in the semi-finals after they also won on penalties against Brazil, a result which added another layer to the celebrations as they not only saw a historic rival go out, but also one of the main threats to their hopes of winning the World Cup.

This was a close-run thing for Argentina but they now stand only one game away from reaching the World Cup final, having falling victim to one of the biggest shocks of the tournament when they lost their opening game to Saudi Arabia.

Louis van Gaal disguised what was surely bitter disappointment in his final game as Netherlands coach as



he clasped opposite number Lionel Scaloni in a warm embrace at the conclusion of a sometimes chaotic quarter-final.

Van Gaal must have been dreaming of another World Cup semi-final to follow 2014, which he lost on penalties to Argentina, when the Netherlands drew level in the closing seconds of that lengthy period of added time.

And what an equaliser it was, a superb free-kick routine which fooled Argentina completely as they waited for Tein Koopmeiners to shoot, only for him to slip a perfect pass into the waiting Weghorst to score.

Van Gaal can leave his post with his head held high, as can his team, after they showed resilience and character to overcome Argentina's supremacy, only to lose out on the lottery of penalties.

Neymar hints at retirement

NEYMAR has disclosed that he "cannot 100% guarantee" he will continue playing for Brazil after their World Cup exit, while coach Tite confirmed he will step down.

The favourites went out at the quarter-final stage for the second World Cup running, losing on penalties to 2018 runners-up Croatia after a 1-1 draw.

Tite, 61, says he "goes in peace" after six years as Brazil manager.

But Neymar, 30, will take stock before confirming his decision, adding: "I need to think a bit more about this."

The Paris St-Germain forward equalled Pele's 'official' goalscoring record of 77 in 124 appearances for the Brazil men's national team after firing them into the lead against Croatia in extra time.

But Bruno Petkovic's 117th-

Time will tell whether 71-year-old Van Gaal, an occasionally divisive but always a charismatic and entertaining figure, will resurface elsewhere but his finale as Dutch coach was a case of so near and yet so far again in a World Cup.

US sports journalist, grant Wahl dies in Qatar

A prominent football journalist from the United States has died while covering the World Cup in Qatar.

Grant Wahl, 48, collapsed as extra time began in the Argentina-Netherlands game on Friday night.

Early reports suggest he may have had a heart attack, but this has yet to be officially confirmed.

Last month Mr Wahl was briefly detained by Qatari authorities for trying to enter a stadium wearing a rainbow

NEYMAR has equalled Brazil legend Pele's 'official' goalscoring record of 77 for the men's national team with his goal against Croatia at the World Cup.

World governing body Fifa recognises the record, but the Brazilian Football Confederation and Pele will not because they say he scored 95 goals.

Fifa only counts games between two nations and some of Pele's goals came in friendlies against club sides.

Neymar has made 124 Brazil appearances, equalling Pele's tally from 92 games.

Pele - who won three World Cups with Brazil in 1958, 1962 and 1970 - is currently receiving treatment in hospital in Sao Paulo.

Neymar's tally is not an overall Brazilian record, with Marta having scored 115 for the women's team since 2002.

shirt, in support of LGBT rights.

In a statement, the US Soccer Federation said it was "heartbroken" by the news.

"Fans of soccer and journalism of the highest quality knew we could always count on Grant to deliver insightful and entertaining stories about our game, and its major protagonists," it said.

In a tweet, Mr Wahl's wife, Céline Gounder, said she was in "complete shock", adding

Neymar equals Pele's 'official' Brazil scoring record

He equalled the record at the end of the first period of extra time in Brazil's quarter-final against Croatia when he combined with West Ham's Lucas Paqueta, shrugged off Borna Sosa and fired into the roof of the net from four yards.

However, his side lost 4-2 on penalties, with Neymar not taking one as Brazil missed two of their four spot-kicks, after Bruno Petkovic equalised with Croatia's first shot on target in the 116th minute.

The 30-year-old made his debut on 10 August 2010, scoring his first international goal in the 28th minute of a 2-0 win over the USA.

Eight of his goals have come in World Cups - four in 2014, two in 2018 and two so far in this tournament in Qatar - with another five coming in the Copa America.

He won the Confederations Cup in 2013, but his best World Cup run came when Brazil reached the semi-finals in 2014, while his best Copa America campaign ended with a runner-up spot in 2021.

Speaking on BBC One, former England midfielder Jermaine Jenas said: "Finally, one of the best players in the world turns up."

"What a goal that is. He has one thing in his mind to drive through the heart of Croatia."

"The balance, the composure, the brilliance - it has not been there all night, but when it mattered he delivered."

Former Germany coach Jurgen Klinsmann called him a "difference-maker", while Alex Scott said Neymar "produced a moment of magic".



Grant Wahl at work in Qatar last month

that she was "so thankful" for the support she had received from friends.

Mr Wahl celebrated his 48th birthday on Thursday with friends in Qatar, a day before he collapsed. He wrote on his website on Monday that he had been unwell in the last 10 days and was on a course of antibiotics for suspected bronchitis.

"My body finally broke down on me," he wrote. "What had been a cold over the last 10 days turned into something more severe on the night of the USA-Netherlands game, and I could feel my upper chest take on a new level of pressure and discomfort."

"I didn't have Covid (I test regularly here), but I went into the medical clinic and the main media center today, and they said I probably have bronchitis."

FIFA President Gianni Infantino said Mr Wahl's love for football was "immense", adding that his reporting would be "missed by all who follow the global game".

Tributes have poured in from several UK journalists. Piers Morgan described Mr Wahl as a "brilliant journalist", while the Times' Henry Winter said he was a "fine man" and "giant of the press box".

BBC Sport's Dan Roan tweeted: "Grant Wahl was a renowned and hugely respected journalist and the flood of tributes is testament to the esteem in which he was held."

Major League Soccer

commissioner Don Garber tweeted: "We are shocked, saddened and heartbroken over the tragic passing of Grant Wahl. He was a kind and caring person whose passion for soccer and dedication to journalism were immeasurable."

US tennis icon Billie Jean King also paid tribute to Mr Wahl, describing him as an "advocate for the LGBTQ community and a prominent voice for women's soccer".

A spokesperson for the Qatari body responsible for planning the World Cup, the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy, said: "We are deeply saddened by the death of the US journalist Grant Wahl."

"Grant was known for his enormous love of football and was in Qatar to cover his eighth Fifa World Cup."

"He fell ill in the Lusail Stadium media tribune, during last night's quarter-final match between Argentina v Netherlands. He received immediate emergency medical treatment on site, which continued as he was transferred by ambulance to Hamad General Hospital."

"We are in touch with the US Embassy and relevant local authorities to ensure the process of repatriating the body is in accordance with the family's wishes."

Earlier this week, Mr Wahl was presented with an award by Brazilian football legend Ronaldo for reporting on eight consecutive World Cups - his first was in the US in 1994.





Ex-Super Eagles Coach Augustine Eguavoen has revealed his plans for the Super Eagles of Nigeria.

Eguavoen sets target for Super Eagles

In an interview with Brila FM, the now-Super Eagles technical director said that he intended to send the Nigerian national team to the next World Cup.

According to Soccernet.ng, the Sapele native guided the Super Eagles of Nigeria to the AFCON 2021 competition, where they were eliminated by Cameroon and their Tunisian counterparts in Garoua.

Prior to their AFCON elimination, though, there may have been some chance for them to qualify for the World Cup. That is until they came across the Black Stars of Ghana, who gave it all they had to defeat the Super Eagles of Nigeria and advance to the World Cup.

After the underwhelming performance, the 57-year-old, Eguavoen, quit and was subsequently succeeded by the Portuguese manager, Jose Peseiro.

In an interview, the former Enyimba coach admitted fault for the nation's poor performance and failure to qualify for the World Cup.

"I failed to take the country to the world tournament when I had the opportunity to; I was trusted with the responsibility," he said

He did, however, admit that the absence of the Nigerian national team from the World Cup had prevented him from seeing many of the tournament's games.

"For this reason, I have only been able to watch very little of the games as it makes me even sadder."

According to a previous report, The NFF retained and



approved the former Gent player as the technical director, who promised to use his position to help the Nigerian Super Eagles qualify for the upcoming World Cup.

Meanwhile, Super Eagles head coach Jose Peseiro has been impressed with the contributions of Africa's five representatives - Ghana, Senegal, Cameroon, Tunisia, and Morocco - at the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar.

The CAF campaigners pulled off notable victories in the group stages. Ghana beat South Korea, Tunisia defeated reigning champions France, and Cameroon stunned Brazil but only Senegal and Morocco made it to the knockout stage.

England ended Senegal's fine run but Morocco edged Spain on penalties to become the only African side in Qatar - and the fourth in history - to reach the World Cup

quarterfinals.

And coach Peseiro has applauded the Moroccans for their excellent exploits, ranking the Atlas Lions the best African team of Qatar 2022.

"I think Ghana, Cameroon, and Tunisia achieved good results but lacked the consistency to advance to the round of 16," Peseiro told NFF TV.

"Cameroon played a

fantastic match against Cup; Senegal, Ghana, Serbia and they beat Brazil, Ghana also defeated South Korea.

"Senegal had a great performance in the group stage, but the big surprise at this year's World Cup are Morocco.

"They are a well-organised team and conceded fewer goals. Only three teams in Africa have reached the quarter-finals of the World

Cup; Senegal, Ghana, Cameroon, and Morocco make the fourth team.

"They showed qualities and they are the best African team in Qatar.

Morocco will play Portugal in the quarter-finals on Saturday at the Al Thumama Stadium and the Lions could become the first African team to reach the World Cup semifinals with a win.

Delta dominance not good for sports festival- Olympians

OLYMPIANS Deji Aliu and Falilat Ogunkoya have played down the competitiveness of the National Sports Festival following the recent dominance of the event by Delta State, noting that most states are not competing to win, but for participation sake.

Team Delta has won the last six editions of the festival, and the coast looks clear for the hosts of this year's edition to claim a seventh consecutive title on home soil.

As at Day 8 (Thursday), Delta had taken an unassailable lead with 369 medals: 194 gold, 116 silver, and 59 bronze.

The closest state to Delta, second-place Bayelsa, are far behind with 189 medals (78 gold, 57 silver and 54 bronze medals) while third-place Edo has 186 medals (38 gold, 51 silver and 97 bronze).

"Most states are not ready to compete for the festival, lots of states are just competing for the fun of it, not to make an impact, Aliu told *The PUNCH*.

"Apart from Delta State, other states are just there to make up the numbers and that is sad for Nigerian sports.

"Delta is giving more attention to sports than any other state, good facilities and a sports-loving Governor that supports sports. The state prepares for the sports festival more than other states, the medal table is proof of this."

"No it was never like this during my days. Then, it was difficult to predict who wins; the chase for medals was intense, every athlete tried to bring their A-game to the table, working so hard. Nobody could just walk in and say he would win. It was very competitive then, but now, it is just about making up the numbers."

Aliu also faulted the timing of the festival and urged other states to invest more in grassroots sports development, as well as make sports a big business and not recreation in Nigeria.

"Delta's dominance at the sports festival doesn't portray anything good for us,

the authorities need to go back to the drawing board and try to make amendments," he added.

"First, the timing of the sports festival is wrong, looking at the sporting calendar. December is not the right time to host a festival, this is like a rest period for the athletes. At this time of the year, most athletes are done with the year's activities and resting in preparation for next year.

"The sports ministry needs to draw a proper plan that will work with the athletes, then also try to talk to other states to invest more in sports development.

"Many state governors see sports as recreational activities, but the athletes see it as a career. So, we need to motivate the athletes and make it more competitive, or else we will continue to get the results we are getting now."

Also, Olympic silver and bronze medalist, Ogunkoya, said, "Delta's dominance at the festival is not good for Nigerian sports, and this is because they pick the best athletes and coaches for the

festival, while other state governors do not pay attention to sports.

"During my time, the sports festival was not like this, we participated in many competitions that prepared us for the festival."

Meanwhile, Rivers State Commissioner for Sports, Chris Green has lamented poaching at the 21st National Sports Festival, which ends in Asaba, Delta State on Saturday (today).

Green stated this after Rivers a wrestler claimed a hard-fought victory over an Edo opponent in the men's wrestling final on Friday at the Indoor Sports Hall of the Stephen Keshi Stadium to claim the gold medal.

The former NFF board member was pleased with the gold medal but used the opportunity to kick at the rampant poaching at sports festivals by states.

"When I came in as sports commissioner, I didn't find any athlete, so, we decided to rebuild. A lot of our athletes had been poached, and we didn't know they had been poached by Delta and some

other states, but that is it, which is one of the things I don't like," he said.

Green urged the different states to build talents from the grassroots.

"If we want to continue with the festival this way, the objective of the festival will

not be achieved. That is why I keep saying they should go back home, all the athletes should have at least a minimum of five years residency in the states they represent in the competition, so, this can bolster unity in the states," he said.



Olympians Deji Aliu and Falilat Ogunkoya have played down the competitiveness of the National Sports Festival following the recent dominance of the event by Delta State, noting that most states are not competing to win, but for participation sake.