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have made tremendous
sacrifice for peace
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Jonathan cautions against bitterness in 2023 elections



Governor Simon Bako Lalong CON of Plateau State releasing pigeons as sign of peace on Sunday during the Armed Forces Remembrance Day celebrations at the JD Gomwalk Secretariat Cenotaph, Jos, watching keenly are GOC 3rd Armored Division, Major General Ibrahim Ali, and NAF Commadore Edward Gabkwet
Photo: DANLADI DUK

Former President Goodluck Jonathan has warned Nigerians against perceived level of bitterness in the political scene as the 2023 general elections approach, saying that such an attitude is capable of stalling development in the country.

He, therefore, pleaded with politicians that politics is about marketing ideas and not fighting or insulting, and it is not about a busing political opponents.

Speaking during the commissioning of the 1.15km Afi-Uko Ntighe bridge in Mbo Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State, on Monday, Jonathan stated: "We have noticed some levels of bitterness that will not bring development in the build-up to the general election."

The former President, who was accompanied by former Governor of Kogi State, Capt Idris Wada, noted that developments strides by Governor Udom Emmanuel in the state were possible through sustainable peace and urged Nigerians to replicate the same peace in their various states during the election.

"In the past seven and half years my younger brother, His Excellency Governor Udom Emmanuel, is the one who has been serving as

enabler to all we are seeing.

"His strategic development plan has delivered great dividends to the people of this great State. Today we are here again to commission a special project, which like governor Udom's other projects, is designed to promote economic growth and improve the lives of the people.

"Governor Udom has delivered several projects and built many Bridges, but this particular bridge we are commissioning today is a flagship project. Of course, we've been told that it is the fourth-longest bridge in the country.

"And the most unique thing is that it is the longest bridge ever built by a state government. It takes somebody with total

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Jonathan

Nigeria's inflation rate recorded a drop to 21.34 percent in December 2022, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) said in its report on Monday.

The country's inflation rate had risen for 10 consecutive months, up to November 2022, when it reached 21.47 per cent.

Inflation rate drops to 21.34% in December 2022

However, the NBS said the latest inflation rate of 21.34% showed a decline of 0.13% between November and December 2022.

On a month-on-month basis, it is the first time the inflation rate is decreasing

in the last eleven months.

"However, on a year-on-year basis, the headline inflation rate was 5.72 percent points higher compared to the rate recorded in December 2021, which was (15.63 percent).

"This shows that the headline inflation rate increased in the month of December 2022, when compared to the same month in the preceding year (i.e., December 2021)," the report reads.

"On a month-on-month

basis, the percentage change in the 'all items index' in December 2022 was 1.71 percent, which was 0.32 percent higher than the rate recorded in November 2022 (1.39 percent). This means that in the month of December

2022, the general price level was 0.32 percent higher relative to November 2022.

"The percentage change in the average CPI for the twelve months ending December 2022, over the

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commitment to improving the quality of life of his people to embark on such a project. Congratulations your Excellency". Johnathan eulogised.

Governor Emmanuel had earlier told his guests that the inaugurated bridge was a fulfilment of his second term election promise for the people and warned critics to stop casting aspersion on the state expenditures as the Federal Government was still owing oil-producing states outstanding of over one trillion naira.

"Don't follow such people. Even when the Federal Government openly came up and expressly stated that they are owing oil-producing states over one trillion naira and they only gave us only N62b in one year."



Jonathan

Governor Emmanuel said the bridge will not only rekindle economic activities in the area but it is capable of linking all Local Government Areas in the state.

Residents of the area, who spoke reporters said efforts to construct the bridge started about 74 years ago but were happy that the bridge has finally been completed.

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average of the CPI for the previous twelve months period was 18.85 percent, showing 1.89 percent increase compared to the 16.95 percent recorded in December 2021", the report added.

On food inflation, the NBS said the index eased to 23.75 percent in the month under review, a decrease compared to the 24.13 percent recorded in the preceding month.

But on a year-on-year basis, the figure is 6.38 percent higher in relation to December 2021.

"The food inflation rate in December 2022, was 23.75 percent on a year-on-year basis, which was 6.38 percent higher compared to the rate recorded in December 2021 (17.37 percent)," the report said.

"The rise in the food inflation was caused by

Inflation rate drops to 21.34% in December 2022

increases in prices of bread and cereals, oil and fat, potatoes, yam and other tubers, fish, food products, etc.

"On a month-on-month basis, the food inflation rate in December was 1.89 percent, this was 0.49 percent higher compared

to the rate recorded in November 2022 (1.40 percent). This increase was attributed to increase in prices of some food items like oil and fat, fish, potatoes & tubers, bread and cereals, and fruits etc."

The report added that the average annual rate of food

inflation for the twelve months ending December 2022, over the previous twelve-month average was 20.94 percent, which was a 0.53 percent points increase from the average annual rate of change recorded in December 2021 (20.40 percent).



The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS).

Nigerians worse off than in 2015 -Atiku

The presidential candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Atiku Abubakar, has told the Nigeria Economic Summit Group, that the ruling party, All Progressives Congress (APC), has left the condition of Nigerians worse off than it was in 2015.

Honouring an invitation by the group in Lagos on Monday to speak on his plans for the country if elected president, he observed that citizens' well-being has fallen progressively since the ruling party assumed power.

The former vice president said: 'Nigeria's economy is barely growing. Per capita income, a measure of citizens' well-being, has progressively fallen since 2015 because of declining output and a fast-growing population. Our people are worse-off today than they were in 2015.'

"The oil and gas sector, which is the country's main foreign exchange earner has declined for most of the period since 2014. For many economic sectors and for the ordinary citizens it still feels like we are in a recession."

"Under the current administration our people are not working. More than 23 million people are out of jobs. In just 5 years between 2015 and 2020, the number of fully employed people dropped by 54%, from 68 million to 31 million people. This is frightening in a country of 200 million people."

"And the majority of the unemployed are young men and women, who lack not only the means to survive but any hope for the future. The number of unemployed youths increased by 9 million from 4 million in 2015 to 13 million in 2020."

"High youth unemployment and limited employment opportunities pose serious economic and security challenges. It is, therefore, an urgent matter to ensure that there are enough jobs for Nigeria's youth."

"Basic commodities are now beyond the reach of the

average Nigerian. A price of a loaf of bread has risen by more 100% since 2020. Farmers now pay more than 200% more for a bag of fertilizer - if they see it - than they did in 2020."

"Figures from the National Bureau of Statistics show that the public sector accounts for less than 8% and the private sector nearly 79 percent of national consumption expenditure. Indeed, 85% of the investments in the Medium-Term National Development Plan 2021-2025 are envisaged to be funded by the private sector."

The PDP flag bearer accused the APC-led government of dressing Nigeria in borrowed robes, comparing it to a doctor who had administered poison on their patients and still seeking to provide solution.

Atiku stated: "A household that is borrowing money in order to feed would be considered broke. In that sense Nigeria is broke. Nigeria under the APC-led government has consistently run budget deficits since it came to power in 2015. These budget deficits are often above the 3% threshold permissible under the Fiscal Responsibility Law."

"For the first time in Nigeria's history, the FGN paid more in debt service than it earned. By spending more than 100% of its revenue for debt service, the government is breaching one of the applicable debt-sustainability thresholds."

"Capital has taken a flight. Policy incoherence and flip-flops combined with internal insecurity continue to pose a significant risk to investment and thus output growth. We have lost our esteemed position as Africa's preferred investment destination to less endowed nations."

"The failure of leadership by the APC-led government is staring every Nigerian in the face as the country's economic, social, political and security challenges

persist and assume frightening dimensions."

He added: "Many of the challenges facing our dear country are connected to poor economic performance and its consequences for our people. It is critical, therefore, that we get the economy right."

"I have been a private business man for a long time and have also been a public servant at the highest level of decision-making and implementation. Thus, I feel comfortable among captains of industry and public sector economists and practitioners. And I am uniquely positioned to understand the economic challenges facing the country and what we must do to get our economy growing, provide jobs, incomes and wealth for our people and thereby reducing hunger, unemployment and related social problems, including insecurity."

"When we create economic opportunities for our people it will have significant positive impact on social cohesion and national security."

"Increased jobs and income opportunities will reduce the likelihood of our youth being involved in crime, violence and conflict motivated by the manipulation of religious or ethnic differences."

"Our country is in transition as the APC leaves the stage and, with your support and goodwill, the PDP takes over in May this year. Therefore, you have a responsibility to take stock of the assets (if there are any) and liabilities (which will be massive) of the APC administration."

"You also have a solemn responsibility to interrogate those who aspire to govern this country. You must assess their understanding of the environment, their policy priorities, and their strategies for dealing with a plethora of local and national issues."

"We can only proffer accurate and workable solutions if we start with proper diagnosis. Elegant

slogans, social media insults and misleading statistics are not a substitute for sober diagnosis and analysis of where we are, how we got here and what we must do to get our country back on its feet and take our rightful place in the comity of nations."

"This is election season. So, you will see and hear from snake-oil salespeople, false prophets and purveyors of false hope and misleading statistics. There is, therefore, need for caution."

"We must also remember that we cannot trust the doctor that poisoned and continues to poison the patient to be the one who provides the curative treatment. The stakes are too high, so we must get it right. This may well be our last chance to do so."

He pointed out that the Nigeria Infrastructure Master Plan shows that Nigeria has an infrastructure financing deficit of approximately \$3 trillion over the next 30 years.

"This means a financing requirement of approximately \$100 billion per annum which, we know, cannot be met by the public sector alone," he said.

Atiku stressed the need for government-private sector collaboration, saying: "A warm handshake with the private sector is therefore needed for any economic policy or programme to succeed."

"Indeed, private sector leadership in driving growth is the first of the three key principles of my economic growth and development agenda."

"Nigeria has the potential to double its GDP by 2030 and achieve a per capita income of approximately US\$5,000."

The main opposition party candidate outlined his solutions for the nation's numerous malaise.

Irate residents burn Niger Police Divisional office

Aggrieved women and youths in Kafin-koro in Paikoro local government area of Niger State on Tuesday morning razed the Kafin-koro Police Divisional office.

The incident took place three days after the parish priest of St Peter and Paul Catholic Church, Kafin-koro, Reverend Father Isaac Achi, was burnt to death by terrorists who invaded the parish's residence.

Trouble began when some Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA) and Catholic women groups converged on the premises of the burnt parish as early as 7 am on Tuesday to pray against those who gruesomely murdered Rev Achi.

But a police detachment from the Kafin-koro Police Division was drafted to the church, stating it was directed to provide protection for the praying congregation.

Still distraught over the inability of the police to respond on time and prevent the death of the Father, the women refused and resisted the protection

provided by the police.

The women were said to have accused the police of not doing anything to rescue the late Reverend Father and asked the operatives to leave.

The women threw stones and sachet water at the police to state their point, forcing the operatives to retreat to their station.

After the prayers, some youths joined the women to march peacefully through the major roads of the town to the Police Division, chanting anti-police slogans to register their grievances.

They asked the police to leave the town, alleging their presence was of no security value to the community.

To disperse the crowd, the police began shooting into the air with one of the bullets said to have hit a middle-aged man who died immediately on the spot, turning the protest into a violent exercise.

In the course of the protest, some unidentified people set the Police Division on fire, leading to the burning down of the entire building.



Alkali



Russia-Ukraine war: Can Nigeria exploit gas market?

Following the instability in the European gas market occasioned by Russia-Ukraine war which started in February 2022, the European Union (EU) looks up to Nigeria as an alternative to supplement its gas needs. Afonne Emmanuel writes.

FOLLOWING the instability in the European gas market occasioned by Russia-Ukraine war which started in February 2022, the European Union (EU) looks up to Nigeria as an alternative to supplement its gas needs.

The EU currently imports 14 per cent Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) from Nigeria. Reports in the international oil and gas market indicate that the bloc could double this figure.

As EU seeks alternative to dwindling gas supplies by Russian, Nigeria's Ministry of Petroleum Resources says it has a number of enablers and initiatives to fill the gap as well as lift the nation's oil and gas industry to greater heights.

The enablers to realise potential of gas sector include the development of critical infrastructure and systems such as the declaration of the Decade of Gas.

In March 2021, President Muhammadu Buhari declared Jan. 1, 2021 to Dec. 31, 2030 as "The Decade of Gas Development for Nigeria", primarily to set the road map towards a gas-powered economy by 2030.

Others are the Ajaokuta-Kaduna-Kano (AKK) Gas pipeline, Nigeria-Morocco Gas Pipeline (NMGP), Trans Saharan Gas Pipeline (TSGP); and the Nigerian Gas Transportation Network Code projects.

The EU in partnership with the Federal Government had also expressed renewed interest to increase funding gas project in Nigeria to guarantee meeting local demands and earning foreign exchange from the international market.

To that effect, Chief Timipré Sylva, Minister of State for Petroleum Resources, received and discussed with an EU delegation led by Mr Matthew Baldwim, Deputy Director-General, EU Energy Platform Task-Force, on partnering on technology and policies to drive the project.

The minister said the development would hasten the desire of EU to guarantee alternative to the gas it imports from Russia and enhance Nigeria's presence in the



Kyari

international oil and gas market.

"We have always said that we are committed to gas as a transition fuel and today we are speaking the same language with the EU," the media quoted Sylva saying.

As Nigeria targets Europe and Trans-Saharan markets with on-going AKK Gas Pipeline construction, the minister has said the project was on track and would present a huge opportunity for Nigeria and others to tap into the European market.

The 2.8 billion dollars project which is being handled by the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPC Ltd) is the biggest single gas project in Nigeria and expected to boost domestic gas consumption, power generation and industrialisation.

When completed, the 614 kilometers pipeline will be Nigeria's biggest domestic gas transmission infrastructure and

conceived to stimulate domestic industrial growth. The pipeline will be delivered by a consortium of indigenous and international engineering firms.

This is also good for the manufacturers, because they now have incentives to produce more as people will be linked up and have access to gas then invest in a gas-based industry. The project will also eliminate gas flaring completely in the country," he said.

To further enhance the quest for gas exploit, the Federal Government recently moved to fix the critical missing link in its effort to develop the country's gas sector with the inauguration of the Governing Council of the Midstream and Downstream Gas Infrastructure Fund (MDGIF).

The nine-member Council will mobilise funds to provide critical infrastructure for gas industry and identify relevant stakeholders that can increase

domestic utilisation of natural gas, Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) and Auto Gas.

The council will also develop a roadmap for transforming gas to a value addition product in Nigeria.

Sylva said although there are programmes towards achieving the decade of gas initiatives and developing Nigeria's huge gas potential, the missing link remained paucity of basic gas infrastructure to propel the initiative.

The minister said that a major cause of low gas production, gas flaring and low domestic gas utilisation was infrastructure deficit in the country.

He said that it was estimated that more than 20 billion dollars would be required yearly over the next 10 years to bridge these gaps.

The Fund, established under Section 52 of the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA), is a Directorate in the Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority (NMDPRA) while Section 52 (3) provides for the Governing Council to supervise and make investment decisions for the Fund.

As a Directorate within NMDPRA, the Minister said the Fund would be expected to benefit from its internal reporting, operational and organisational processes adding that in accordance with the PIA, 2021, the Council "shall supervise and make investment decisions for the Fund".

Similarly, at a recent meeting with the U.S Special Presidential Envoy for Climate Change, Sen. John Kerry, Sylva also sought U.S and global community's support in funding, and technology to tackle climate change and transition to cleaner energy.

The meeting was also a boost for Nigeria to step up its efforts to reduce gas flaring and venting, and explore the opportunity of exploring the international market.

Also in pursuit of EU gas market, the Nigeria-Morocco Gas Pipeline (NMGP) project recently received a boost following the signing of an MoU by the partners and five West African Countries.

The NNPC Ltd, Morocco's National Office for Hydrocarbons and Mines (ONHYM) and the National Oil Companies and commercial entities of Gambia, Ghana, Guinea Bissau and Sierra Leone executed the MoU in Moroccan capital, Rabat.

The NMGP is a 5,600Km gas pipeline project, transversing 13 countries namely Nigeria, Benin Republic, Togo, Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau, Gambia, Senegal and Mauritania to Morocco and subsequently to Europe.

In September 2022, NNPC Ltd. and ONHYM signed MoU with ECOWAS Commission while in October 2022 it executed an MoU with Petrosen of Senegal and SMH of Mauritania, all on the NMGP Project.

Mele Kyari, Group CEO, NNPC Ltd. during the signing of the MoU said it represented a significant step in fulfilling the federal government's drive towards harnessing Nigeria's abundant gas resources through NMGP.

Kyari said other benefits of the project include creation of wealth and improvement in the standard of living of the citizenry, enhanced diplomatic cooperation while militating against desertification; among others.

He described natural gas as a critical fuel in the transition towards net-zero, adding that NNPC Ltd. was well positioned to progress the NMGP project by leveraging its experience and technical capabilities.

"The NNPC Ltd will facilitate the continuous supply of gas and provide other enablers such as the required land for the first compressor station to be deployed in Nigeria which is among the 13 stations earmarked along the pipeline route," he said.

Similarly, Kyari, while speaking on the AKK project explained that the pipeline, which was also conceived to connect demand from the northern part of the country with supply from the south would be the biggest infrastructure development in the country's recent history.

The AKK pipeline project is itself a section of an ambitious pipeline project to supply gas to Europe through the proposed Trans Sahara Gas Pipeline and Nigeria Morocco Gas Pipelines.

"It will also mark a significant shift in the nation's energy policy; from revenue, targeted export programmes to development-focused domestic supply programmes," he said.

Some oil and gas experts also lent their voice towards meeting EU demand of gas from Nigeria, which they said could be possible through the Trans-Saharan Gas Pipeline project.

Mr Olabode Sowunmi, said the industry, particularly the gas sector, offered Nigeria a very clear road for industrialisation.

Sowunmi, Senior Legislative Aid to the Senate President on Gas and Power, called for consistency in the Nigeria Gas Master Plan, especially on projects such as AKK, Trans-Saharan Gas Pipeline and West African Gas Pipeline. (NAN)

"As Nigeria targets Europe and Trans-Saharan markets with on-going AKK Gas Pipeline construction, the minister has said the project was on track and would present a huge opportunity for Nigeria and others to tap into the European market. The 2.8 billion dollars project which is being handled by the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPC Ltd) is the biggest single gas project in Nigeria and expected to boost domestic gas consumption, power generation and industrialization. When completed, the 614 kilometers pipeline will be Nigeria's biggest domestic gas transmission infrastructure and conceived to stimulate domestic industrial growth. The pipeline will be delivered by a consortium of indigenous and international engineering firms."



AfCFTA: Buhari urges Africa to boost int'l trade

President Muhammadu Buhari has urged African countries to expand and diversify their participation in international trade to explore the benefits of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA).

Buhari made the call at the ninth African Shippers' Day with the theme: "African Continental Free Trade Agreement: A Veritable Platform for African Shippers' to Mainstream into Global Trade," recently in Lagos.

Buhari said that the participation of African countries in international trade would create wealth, generate employment and reduce poverty.

He noted that the volume of African export in the global trade was still very low at three per cent in spite of the growth in the continent.

Buhari was represented at the event by the Minister of State for Transportation, Mr Ademola Adegoroye.

He noted that deepening regional integration to scale up supply capacity and build regional value chain was essential to the continent's economic transformation.

"For AfCFTA to have a positive influence on long-term investment in productive capacities, African government must develop appropriate supporting policies, build the requisite infrastructure and ensure an educated work force.

"We will need to actively promote productive employment and decent work place, women's empowerment, food security and reduction in inequalities," he said.

Buhari, however, said in Nigeria, AfCFTA would be a game-changer when it comes to stimulating intra-African trade because the more ambitious the trade liberalisation, the greater the expansion of Nigerian exports to its African partners.

"Specifically, Nigeria's exports to the rest of African will increase by more than 15 per cent in fishery, textile, leather, wood and papers, metals, electronics, vehicles and transport equipment and machinery.

"Following the AfCFTA reform, Nigeria's exports will increase significantly to other African sub-regions, outside West Africa, with most impressive expansions to countries such as Botswana, Cameroon, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe," Buhari added.

He said making AfCFTA a reality would require creating national institutions for implementation of the agreement.

The president also stressed that the need for collaboration between the public and private sectors as well as donor



Buhari

agencies. "That is why the Nigerian government have intensified efforts aimed at identifying new opportunities for diversification and value chain development under the AfCFTA, and complementary actions considered necessary to overcome the existing constraints to intra African trade.

"This, we will, achieve through cross sectoral approach, considering not just trade, but also closely related areas such as agriculture, industry, macroeconomic management and infrastructure development," he said.

He noted that for AfCFTA to be the platform that would propel African importers and exporters onto the global trading platform, participating member countries must undertake bold domestic structural reforms to scale up the supply capacity of the region.

In his contribution, Dr Bashir Jamoh, the Director-General,

Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA), urged the forum to come up with roadmap that would place Africa ahead of others in the international market.

Jamoh noted that collaboration between shipping, port and logistics would go a long way in ensuring efficiency and sustainability in the industry.

On his part, Mohammed Bello-Koko, the Managing Director of the Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA), said that automation remained vital tool for port efficiency.

Bello-Koko said that was why the NPA was working with the International Maritime Organisation to deploy Port Community System in Nigerian Ports to bring all stakeholders under one platform for ease of doing business.

Earlier, Mr Emmanuel Jime, the Executive Secretary, Nigerian Shippers' Council, said the re-orientation and re-organisation of intra-African trade should start from the sub-region.

IMF: 15% of low-income countries suffer from debt

According to the International Monetary Fund, approximately 15 per cent of low-income countries are already in debt distress.

In a new report titled 'Confronting fragmentation where it matters most: Trade, debt, and climate action', the IMF said an additional 45 per cent of the population is further at high risk of debt distress, according to Nairametrics.

The report stated that debt is a challenge in many countries, and fragmentation will make it harder to resolve sovereign debt crises, especially if key official creditors are divided along geopolitical lines.

The IMF noted that about 25 per cent are at high risk and facing default-like borrowing spreads among emerging markets.

The monetary body said that there were signs of progress on the Group of Twenty's Common Framework for debt treatment.

It said while Chad recently reached an agreement with its official and private creditors, Zambia was progressing toward a debt restructuring. Ghana also reportedly became the fourth country to seek treatment under the Common Framework, sending a signal that it had seen as an important pathway for debt resolution.

According to the IMF, countries seeking debt restructuring under the Framework will need greater certainty on processes and standards, as well as shorter and more predictable timelines.

For countries not covered by the framework, however, the report partly said, "To support these improvements, the IMF, World Bank and Indian G20 presidency are working with borrowers and public and private creditors to quickly establish a global sovereign debt roundtable, where we can discuss current shortcomings and make

Amid waning investor appetite, the Nigerian oil sector regulator says it will collaborate with Wood Mackenzie, an international energy consultancy, to ensure its latest oil bid round complies with international best practices.

Gbenga Komolafe, chief executive of the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC), at a pre-bid conference event in Lagos, recently, said this move will ensure that the 2022 mini-bid round is conducted in line with international best practices.

But it is not clear whether this would be enough to encourage interest in the country's oil sector where huge projects have been stalled due to lack of final investment decisions by oil majors.

"It is highly remarkable that the approval of the exercise by Mr President is the first in the last 15 years," Komolafe said. In accordance with the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) 2021, the commission has issued a licensing round guideline and published a licensing plan for the total of seven deep offshore oil blocks.

"The seven deep offshore blocks cover an area of approximately 6,700 km² in water depths of 1,150m to 3,100m," he said.

Komolafe said the blocks on offer have extensive 2D and 3D seismic data coverage including multi beam and analogue data. The exercise is scheduled to approximately last for four months.

He said: "Be rest assured that the mini-bid round will be fair, transparent, and competitive in line with best practices. The exercise will attract competent investors

progress to address them.

"These and other pragmatic actions, such as further progress on majority voting provisions in sovereign loans and climate resilient debt

ECOWAS appoints six new ambassadors

The President of the Economic Community of West African States Commission, Dr. Omar Touray, has appointed new ECOWAS ambassadors.

According to a statement on the commission's website, Touray named the new ambassadors recently at the ECOWAS Commission Headquarters in Abuja.

The accredited envoys are; Ambassador of Sweden to the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Ms. Annika Hahn-Englund; Country Representative UNICEF to the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Ms. Cristian Munduate; Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Poland to the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Ms Joanna

Nigeria brandishes Wood Mackenzie to woo oil investors



Sylva

both internationally and locally.

"The mini-bid is expected to be a huge success for Nigeria and is a big step towards growing the nation's oil and gas reserves through aggressive exploration, and development efforts, boosting production and expanding opportunities for gas utilisation and development."

Komolafe said it will also strengthen energy security and the economy, providing the opportunity to gainfully engage in proof of competent commerce in the oil and gas sector.

"It will create employment opportunities, and enable transfer of technology. In addition, the mini-bid round presents us with the opportunity to reinforce Nigeria's commitment to openness and transparency in line with principles of the extractive industry transparency initiative," he said.

Timipre Sylva, minister of state for petroleum

resources, who was represented by Gabriel Abuda, permanent secretary at the ministry of petroleum resources, said one of the key mandates of the ministry is to increase petroleum reserves from its current 37 billion barrels to 40 billion barrels by 2050.

Nigeria is committed to develop its upstream petroleum resources, especially gas of over 200 trillion standard cubic feet. With development and focused exploration, these reserves can go up to 600 trillion standard cubic feet.

He said the PIA provided regulatory support for the mandate of providing terms that industry players and operators can utilise and deploy world-class cutting-edge technologies to de-risk exploration offshore and hydrocarbons discovered in the listed offshore blocks will significantly contribute to Nigeria's energy sufficiency.

"The country is looking for ways to achieve self-sufficiency and this will affect the way the country's natural resources will be exploited," Sylva said.

"Nigerians can be assured of prompt decisions that will aid the expedient exploitation of resources for the benefit of the general population."

In her welcome remarks, Rose Ndong, executive commissioner, exploration and acreage management at NUPRC, said the bid round is based on the actualisation of value creation, transparency for Nigeria and all stakeholders.

She described it as a golden opportunity for investors in the oil and gas sector. "The Nigeria deep water is one of the most prolific hydrocarbon basins and has on record above average geological exploration success," she said.

"We look forward to working with the winning bidders to build on previous deepwater experience to increase our national hydrocarbon results and production, among other benefits."



NITDA Bill 2021 towards economic renewal

There is no denying the fact that Nigeria has a competitive advantage to become the global talent factory in the technology sector with the capacity to earn over \$40 billion annually. RAHMA OLAMIDE OLADOSU writes.

THE Director-General of the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA), Kashifu Inuwa Abdullahi, at an event recently, disclosed that there is currently a vacancy of about four million programmers globally and Nigeria, with its huge reservoir of human talents in the technology sector, has the capacity to produce two million which can be plugged into the global value chain.

He referenced a PwC report which noted that an average tech developer or programmer earns between \$30,000 and \$150,000 per annum. He said PwC confirmed that if Nigeria can have two million developers working remotely, with each earning about \$20,000, the country can generate over \$40 billion annually. This, he added, is a significant amount capable of addressing the country's forex challenge.

"The digital economy is about innovation, about people, about talent. So, talent is the people component of technology which I think is where Nigeria will have the competitive advantage over any nation in the world," Abdullahi said.

Meanwhile, it is necessary, due to recent controversies and debate on NITDA Bill 2021, to examine the law that empowers the agency which is NITDA ACT 2007, ACT NO. 28 published in the Federal Republic of Nigeria Official Gazette No 99, Vol 94 dated October 2007.

As part of the functions of the agency, the Act states that NITDA "shall (a) Create a frame work for the planning, research, development, standardisation, application, coordination, monitoring, evaluation and REGULATION of information technology practices, activities and systems in Nigeria ... provide universal access to Information Technology and systems penetration including rural, urban and under-served areas; (b) Provide guidelines to facilitate the establishment and maintenance of appropriate for information technology and systems application and development in Nigeria for public and private sectors, urban-rural development, the economy and the government; (c) Develop guidelines for electronic governance and monitor the use of electronic data interchange and other forms of electronic communication transactions as an alternative to paper-based methods in government, commerce, education, the private and public sectors, labour, and other fields, where the use of electronic communication may improve the exchange of data and information; (d) Develop guidelines for the networking of public and private sector establishment and (e) Develop guidelines for the standardisation and certification of Information Technology Escrow Source Code and Object Code Domiciliation, Application and Delivery Systems in Nigeria."

The law also stipulates that NITDA shall: "(f) Render advisory services in all information technology matters to the public and private sectors; (g) Create incentives to promote the use of information technology in all spheres of life in Nigeria including the setting up of information technology parks; (h) Create incentives to promote the use of information technology in all spheres of life in Nigeria (h) Create incentives to promote the use of information technology in all spheres of life in Nigeria and Nigerians are up to date



Abdullahi

guidelines for setting up of information technology systems and knowledge parks; (i) Introduce appropriate regulatory policies and incentives to encourage private sector investment in the information technology industry; (j) Collaborate with any local or state Government, company, firm, or person in any activity, which in the opinion of the agency is intended to facilitate the attainment of the objective of

this act; and (k) Determine critical areas in Information Technology requiring research intervention and Development in those areas."

Similarly and in conclusion the Act empowers NITDA to "(l) Advice the Government on ways of promoting the development of information technology in Nigeria including introducing appropriate information technology legislation, to enhance NATIONAL SECURITY and vibrancy of the industry; (m) Accelerate INTERNET AND INTRANET penetration in Nigeria and promote sound Internet Governance by giving effect to the Second Schedule of this Act; and (n) Perform such other duties, which in the opinion of the Agency are necessary or expedient to ensure the efficient performance of the functions of the Agency under this act."

The above exposes the repeatedly told lie that NITDA is just a development agency and not a regulatory outfit. The fact is that NITDA is not just a development agency but also a strong regulator empowered by relevant laws in Nigeria. In recent times it has accomplished some milestones in its mandate under the supervision of the Ministry of Communication and Digital Economy, where Professor Isa Ali Pantami is the Minister.

As part of efforts to fulfill its mandate, NITDA has been working round the clock to ensure that Nigeria and Nigerians are up to date

With a total population of over 200 million people, training Nigerians on proper utilisation of digital content would present massive opportunities for Nigerian youths who are in a desperate search for jobs to become useful to themselves and the society.

It is necessary to highlight some of the workings of NITDA which to a large extent require the amendment of its law to make it more effective and efficient in service delivery. As a regulator, apart from inaugurating the Data Breach Investigation Team in partnership with the Nigerian Police Force, it merged Office of Innovation & Entrepreneurship and Office of National Contented Development to Office of Nigerian Digital innovation.

The agency registered over 75 Domain names for MDAs, States, and Local Government; Certified Indigenous IT Companies; licensed over 103 Data Protection and Compliance Organisations (DPCOs); licensed 12 indigenous OEMs and issued 172 Certificates for Indigenous IT Contactors, Service Providers towards promoting local contents.

On its statutory mandate on IT, it established a renowned Computer Emergency Readiness and Response Team and also Digital Transformation Working Group across 100 MDAs to support the Nigeria ICT Innovation Entrepreneurship vision.

Similarly, NITDA as a foresighted IT agency, it launched Nigeria Digital Agriculture Strategy (NDAS 2020-2030) and also established the National Centre for Artificial Intelligence and Robotics (NCAIR)

Through NITDA Academy, it facilitated research and training with 67 plus active courses, 57,774 plus active students and 54,829 plus active

training sessions. In addition, it established training partnership with multinational corporations and National Adopted School for Smart Education (NASSE) to promote digital literacy and skills among students.

NITDA has gone far in providing key frameworks, guidelines and strategy. Apart from developing Public Private Partnership regulatory framework for ICT and eGovernment projects, it also developed the Public Service Network (PSnet); Document Management System Guidelines for Federal Public Institutions (FPIs); Government Digital Service Framework (GDSFrame); draft National Outsourcing Strategy 2020-2025; National Block Chain Adoption Strategy Document.

Meanwhile, it launched Nigeria Digital Agriculture Strategy (NDAS-2020-2030); Nigeria Digital Innovation & Entrepreneurship and Startup Policy (NDIESP); the Nigeria Cloud Computing Policy (NCCP) and Government Digital Transformation Performance (Readiness) Assessment Toolkit (GDT/PAT).

Even with some of its enabling laws being obsolete and unable to support the dream to move to the next level, NITDA has done a lot as shown above. The agency will therefore do a lot more if it can get the National Assembly to give the right attention to the NITDA Bill of 2021.

Why NITDA Bill 2021? The digital economy is an increasingly important sector of the

Nigerian economy, and it is likely to continue to grow and evolve rapidly in the coming years. Ensuring that this sector is regulated in a responsible and effective manner will be critical to its long-term success and to the overall development of the Nigerian economy.

The digital economy presents a number of unique challenges and opportunities that may not be adequately addressed by existing regulatory frameworks. For example, the rapid pace of technological change in the digital economy may require NITDA to be more flexible and responsive in its regulatory approach.

Amending the law establishing NITDA to enable the agency to more effectively regulate the digital economy would help to ensure that the agency has the necessary powers and resources to carry out this important function. This could include, for example, the authority to set standards and guidelines specifically tailored to the needs of the digital economy, or the ability to investigate and enforce penalties for noncompliance.

Ensuring that the digital economy is regulated in a responsible and effective manner will be important for protecting the interests of Nigerian citizens and businesses. For example, it may be necessary to ensure that digital platforms and services are used in a fair and transparent manner, or to safeguard personal data and privacy.

No Overlap with NCC
It is important to reiterate at this juncture that there is no overlap between the laws establishing NITDA and the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC). While both agencies play a role in regulating the use of information and communication technology in Nigeria, they do so in different ways. NITDA is responsible for developing and enforcing policies and guidelines related to the use of information technology in the public and private sectors, while the NCC is responsible for regulating the telecommunications industry. By amending the law establishing NITDA, the agency will be better equipped to carry out its important role in regulating the use of information technology in Nigeria, without conflicting with the mandates of other regulatory agencies.

Finally, it is worth noting that NITDA is a regulatory agency in the same way that the NCC is. Both agencies are responsible for developing and enforcing policies and guidelines related to the use of their respective technologies, and both have the authority to investigate and penalise organisations that violate these standards or otherwise fail to comply with their regulations. By amending the law establishing NITDA, the agency will be better equipped to carry out its important regulatory function, and to ensure that the digital economy is used in a responsible and ethical manner in Nigeria.

Without amending the relevant laws governing the operation of the digital economy as recommended by the NITDA Bill of 2021, it will be difficult if not impossible for Nigeria to fulfill her potential and meet up with her counterparts across the world in digital fulfilment.

Source: Vanguard.

Politics

Motor accident claims lives of PDP supporters

BY EZEKIEL DONTINNA

THE gubernatorial candidate of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) in Plateau State, Barr. Caleb Mutfwang, has expressed shock over the tragedy that occurred claiming lives of seven (7) persons with many others sustaining varying degrees of injuries during the unfortunate accident that occurred along Mangu LGA asking for prayers and support for the grieving families and healing for those injured.

This was contained in a press statement signed by the head of Media and Publicity Directorate of Atiku/ Datti and Mutfwang/Piyo Campaign Organisation, Pastor Yiljap Abraham, and made available to THE NIGERIA STANDARD in Jos, the state capital Saturday.

According to the statement, "it has been confirmed that seven people lost their lives in the road accident on Saturday evening involving supporters of the Plateau State chapter of the Peoples Democratic Party. They were returning from the PDP flag off and zonal rally held at Pankshin when their truck crashed on a slope between Pushit and the Panyam bridge in Mangu Local Government Area.

"32 of the passengers sustained varying degrees of injuries. 21 have been taken to NICI Dominus Hospital Mangu, one is at Nanret Clinic Mangu and ten are at the Jos University Teaching Hospital - JUTH. Two have been adjudged to be in critical



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conditions with one undergoing emergency surgery at NICI Dominus Hospital.

"Meantime, the corpses have been removed from the scene and deposited at Allah na Kowa Hospital, NICI Dominus Hospital and Mangu Cottage Hospital. The evacuations were coordinated by the Medical Team of the Campaign Council headed by Dr Juryit, some personal staff of the PDP governorship candidate, Barr Caleb Mutfwang with the aid of many sympathisers", it disclosed

Reacting to the incident, the PDP gubernatorial candidate, Barr Caleb Mutfwang said, "These were indeed gallant soldiers of democracy who

gave their lives. They are heroes of our democracy, and they deserve that we celebrate them while at the same time comforting their families.

"We assure them that their sacrifices will not go in vain. Their memories must remain ingrained in our minds as true partners of our determined march toward an authentic rescue of our nation and Plateau State", he enthused.

On his part, the Director-General of the Campaign Council, Hon. Letep Dabang, expressed profound sadness at the loss of lives and injuries sustained by some and prayed for God's strength for the bereaved families and God's miraculous healing upon the injured.

THE Executive Governor of Bauchi State, Senator Bala Mohammed, has denied having any rift with the presidential candidate of his party, People's Democratic Party (PDP), Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, who he described as a father and leader in the North East sub region of Nigeria.

The Governor made this clear at the Sir, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa Memorial Stadium, Bauchi, Saturday during the distribution of empowerment packages provided by his wife, Hajiya Aisha Bala Mohammed to over 3000 women, where he described the insinuations as lies by some enemies of progress.

"There are some liars, the Abuja politicians who have become like fishes that have found themselves in a dry land because the water has dried up on them. We are not in politics because of materialism. We don't do anti-party, we don't support one and leave the other", the Governor said.

"I want to assure you that it is a blatant lie from people that are saying I am not with Atiku, it's a capital lie", Bala said.

The Governor challenged any one with proof that he has told him that he is not with Atiku to come forward and prove to the world.

"If there is any body that I have ever told him, whether in secret or in the open that I am not with Atiku Abubakar, come out and say it", he charged.

Governor Bala Mohammed told Mrs Atiku to inform her husband that he is solidly behind him for the sake of God, saying that he is into

Atiku Abubakar is the right person for Nigeria -Mohammed

From ABBASS GUNGURA, Bauchi

real politics and not a joke.

"We are doing real politics and not after material things, we are not doing politics of anti-party or staying in Abuja. We are always grateful to Allah because we ride on the back of the PDP to become what we are today", the Governor said.

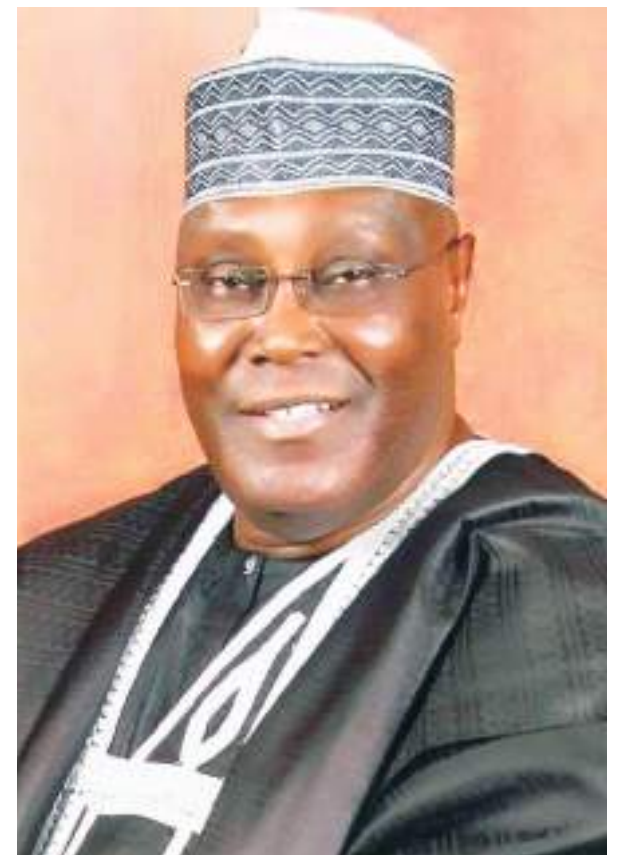
"So like you have said, we have done many of this empowerment and other developmental projects that have direct bearings in the lives of our people", he added.

Bala Mohammed assured Nigerian women that with Alhaji Atiku Abubakar as president and his wife Titi as first lady, more dividends of democracy will come their way.

"I had problem with our elder brother who will by God's grace become the president of Nigeria but now it has become history, it has past", the governor assured.

He said it was pertinent on him to maintain unconditional support for Atiku's presidential bid, being a father and a leader in the North East, a zone that has stayed a very long time without having the opportunity to produce a president.

Bala Mohammed who vowed to canvass votes for Atiku Abubakar ahead of the February 25th presidential election, expressed optimism that the former Vice President will by the grace of God, emerge victorious as president.



Reject PDP, APC, pro-Peter Obi group tell Nigerians

AHEAD of February 25 presidential election, a pro-Peter Obi group, Paradigm shift, has called on all Nigerians of goodwill to reject the People's

From JIDAUNA YANUNG, Abuja

Democratic Party (PDP) and All Progressive Congress (APC) and vote Labour Party

(LP), for genuine change and progress in the country.

Making the call in a statement issued by its National Publicity Secretary, Mr. Torbunde Tengu, the group said "Voting out the two dominant parties is the only way to see the end to the ongoing mass pauperization, unemployment, ballooning corruption, economic mismanagement, unprecedented blood-letting and general insecurity inflicted on Nigerians by the PDP and APC since the return to democracy in 1999"

The movement further urged Nigerians to visit www.paradigmshiftng.org to join the fight for the Nigeria of our dream. He added that "well meaning Nigerians must join hands now to rescue Nigeria from the PDP and the APC as the return of any of these two parties to power in the 2023 general elections will return Nigeria into a jungle and an irredeemably failed state, with the destination of present and future generations of Nigerians ruined.

The statement said "Paradigm Shift is a platform to mobilize the vast masses of Nigerians who desire to see a shift in patterns of leadership and governance in Nigeria, who desire an end to the dominance and misrule of PDP and APC, to take over the reins of

government in Nigeria in 2023."

It described Peter Obi as a revolutionist out to make impact in all sectors of national life, having demonstrated capacity, discipline and zeal to rescue the nation.

Senator sponsors 15 youth in Pakistan University

From ANENE AIKE, Sokoto

Nigeria is known for during their stay in Pakistan.

The candidates include: Abdulkadir Abubakar and Abubakar Sadiq, who are to study Masters in Business Administration, MBA, respectively.

Others, include Auwal Aminu who is to study Pharmacy, while Sagir Abubakar Lemi will study BS Social Sciences (Political and International Relation).

Said Aminu, BS Media and Mass Communication, Ahmad Yusuf Maccido and Naziru Abubakar are to study BS Diet and Nutritional Sciences in the same institution.

Accordingly, Musa Bello and Mande Kasimu were given BA Business Administration, while Saifullahi Shehu got BS Visual Communication Design to study.

Also among them was the

only female candidate, Salamatu Ahmad Umar, alongside Gaddafi Abubakar, who will both study, BS Computer Science, while Mukhtar Isah Sadiq and Al'amin Liya'u Alkali will study BS Electrical Engineering, respectively.

The last but not the least, Yasir Harande Mahe, got admission to study BS Social Science (Political and International Relation).

However, a cross section of the beneficiaries acknowledged and expressed appreciation to Senator Wamakko for his sustained and invaluable gesture while pledging to study hard as expected.

The candidates according to a statement by Bashar Abubakar, Special Assistant Media and Publicity to the Senator, will be leaving soonest for the Republic of Pakistan as their visas were ready.



Okoye

Politics

Former SAs forum reaffirms loyalty to Wamakko

THE Forum of former Special Advisers (SAs) in Sokoto State has restated its loyalty to Sen. Aliyu Wamakko (APC-Sokoto North) and the All Progressives Congress (APC) in the state.

Alhaji Abdullahi Ahmad, the forum's Chairman stated its decision at a press conference in Sokoto. He said the news briefing was necessitated by stand of 13 out of over 180 members of the forum claiming to represent the majority in the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

Ahmad emphasized that it is therefore instructive to note that no less than 93 per cent of the forum's members are still united and solidly behind the APC Sokoto under the leadership of Sen. Wamakko. He also stated that the Forum has been and will continue to support the APC following the PDP-led government's failure to meet the yearnings and aspirations of the good people of Sokoto State in all areas of human endeavor and socio economic development of the state.

The chairman alleged that the state government had for the past seven years of its administration crippled local government councils in the state. He stated that business communities are totally neglected throughout this period and security of lives and properties has not received the attention it deserves. "This has continued to drive our state to be at the top of the national table in poverty and hunger; he added.

It is in view of these challenges, numerous to mention, that we wish to align ourselves with the APC, its leaders and candidates to pilot the state affairs come May 29,

From ANENE AIKE, Sokoto



Wamakko

2023.

Ahmad appreciated the APC leaders in the state for their teamwork in holding the party together, while

calling on supporters to resist all forms of pressure, threat and intimidation to vote all the APC candidates.

Candidate pledges to complete predecessor's projects

From MATHEW JWANTU, Minna

THE gubernatorial candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Niger State, Umar Mohammed Bago has pledged to complete all the developmental projects initiated by his predecessor across the state.

He made the pledge while flagging off Niger East Senatorial zone campaign in Kontagora, the zonal headquarters.

Addressing the mammoth crowd that received him at the Kontagora Mini-Stadium, Bago assured that all his campaign promises would be fulfilled if elected.

He said the principle of his administration would be based on maximizing

the state resources by building on legacies of his predecessors.

He said his administration would specifically focus on addressing youth restiveness through empowerment and quality education to make them relevant in the society.

Earlier, the North-Central Zonal Vice

Chairman of the party, Mu'azu Bawa received 4,780 decampes from various political parties. He said 87 of the decampes were officials of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), adding that 261 were women, 173 men from the New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP).

Bawa said the APC was ready to create enabling environment for citizens to enable them excel in their various political endeavors.

PLATEAU State Governor Simon Bako Lalong has expressed shock and sadness over an accident involving some supporters of the PDP in Plateau State in which some lives were lost and injuries recorded.

The accident was said to have occurred in Jwak village, Panyam, Mangu Local Government while the supporters were said to be returning from a Zonal campaign rally of the party in Pankshin.

While commiserating with the families of the victims and those who sustained injuries in a statement Sunday, the Governor described the tragic event as a huge loss to the state.

He also sympathised with the PDP family in the state as well as its gubernatorial candidate, Barr. Caleb Mutfwang over the sad incident, praying that God will grant eternal rest to

Lalong commiserates with PDP car crash victims

By PALANG KASMI

those who lost their lives and quick recovery to those who sustained injuries.

He used the forum to appeal for caution among motorists and supporters of political parties and politicians during the electioneering period where vehicular movement is heightened across the state and the country at large.

He urged them to put safety first and observe road safety regulations to minimise cases such as this.

Meanwhile the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) has on Sunday confirmed that 16 PDP supporters

died in the car accident while 83 were injured in the road accident.

The details were contained in a statement released by the Public Enlightenment Officer, FRSC Plateau State, RC Peter Longsan.

Longsan explained that the accident happened on Saturday.

"99 PDP supporters, who were going for rally were involved in the accident, but 16 died while 83 sustained various degrees of injury".

"The injured victims were taken to hospitals in Panyam and Mangu town, both in Mangu LGA", the statement disclosed.



APC uncovers plans to destabilise it

By JIDAUNA DARING

AS the 2023 general elections draw closer, the All Progressives Congress in Plateau State has uncovered grand plans by some highly placed and disgruntled individuals in the state to destabilise the party ahead of the general elections.

According to a statement signed by its Publicity Secretary, Hon. Sylvanus Namang, the agents of distraction, fully aware that there is no way the APC would not win the general elections, especially the gubernatorial election with the credible combination of Dr Nentawe Yilwatda Goshwe and Hon. Pam Botmang, these subterranean forces have been recruiting some willing youths to cause confusion in order to distract the party from concentrating on its legitimate, awesome and novel campaign strategies.

As part of this dastardly act, these shameless so-called leaders who had looted and bled the state dry in the past have hired

hoodlums with mouth-watering sums to embark on violent protest at the APC state secretariat along Yakubu Gowon Way with the aim of installing a so-called factional Chairman in the person of one Ishaya Itse who has since been expelled from the party.

The statement further revealed that an opposition party in the state, in league with some disgruntled characters and former members of the party, realising that there is no way

they can stop Dr Nentawe from winning the governorship election, having lost all the court cases against the party, have decided on the planned violent option.

"We have it on good account recorded statements of their nocturnal meetings and plans to cause mayhem and disrupt the relative peace the state is presently enjoying" the statement read in part.

The party has informed

security agencies in the state to take all proactive measures of keeping an eye on these individuals and to forestall any breakdown of law and order.

The party would be left with no option than to reveal the identity of these characters working behind the scene as the APC would not sit and watch on the sidelines these harbingers and agents of destruction and destabilisation stand on its way to victory outside the ballot box, it warns.

"We call on our members, supporters and well wishers whom our candidates have fully engaged and interacted with individually and severally to keep faith and trust in the ability of array of credible candidates of our party to deliver on their well-invented and articulated campaign promises of the Plateau of our collective dream woven around the peace building efforts of Governor Simon Bako Lalong who has changed the trajectory of governance in the state", the statement concluded.



Governor Lalong (right) his Deputy, Prof. Sonni Gwanle Tyoden during the Armed Forces Day celebration.



Bature

IMAGES

PICTURES AT THE 2023 ARMED FORCES REMEMBRANCE DAY

The 2023 Armed Forces Remembrance Day and Emblem Appeal launch in Plateau State took place on Sunday at the Joseph Gomwalk Secretariat Cenotaph, Jos



Special guest of honour and Plateau State Governor, Rt. Hon. Simon Bako Lalong CON taking national salute by the Nigeria Armed forces and Legions on arrival



Officers at the 2023 Armed Forces Remembrance Day taking salute in honour of fallen heroes



Governor Lalong (right) his Deputy, Prof. Sonni Gwanle Tyoden (middle) and the GOC, 3 Armoured Div and Commander, Operation Safe Haven, Major General Ibrahim Ali



Entry of the colour party at the ceremony



Plateau Publishing Corporation, General Manager, Dr. Boniface Gwotbit (left) with Barr. Charles Puepet of the State Ministry of Finance



Cross section of commissioners at the 2023 Armed Forces Remembrance Celebration



Medical team of the Army Health Unit attending to the health need of a Veteran Soldier, Nde Baba Bako



Admiral Samuel Bitrus Atukum, former Military Governor, Plateau State (right) flanked by serving and retired Generals at the event

PHOTOS: DANLADI DUK

Politics

Unsustainability of elections costs, election petitions

THE high cost of conducting elections, particularly the coming elections, is even more sobering when the country's dwindling revenues and debt profile are considered. In addition to the costs of the elections, the uncertainty surrounding Nigerian elections causes a lag in new investment inflows, leading to reductions in business activities ahead the general election, and usually until the new government settles in. Even judicial activities suffer a lag as a result of elections.

Election tribunals would be constituted not later than 30 days before the elections and open their registries for business seven days before the elections, pursuant to Section 130 of the Electoral Act. The Chief Justice of Nigeria (CJN) swore in 307 judicial officers into election tribunals for the forthcoming elections on 7 November 2022. By the provisions of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution, the members of the election tribunals, i.e., the National and State Houses of Assembly Election Tribunals and the Governorship Election Tribunals, are appointed from among judges of a High Court, kadis of a Sharia Court of Appeal, judges of a Customary Court of Appeal or other members of the judiciary not below the rank of a Chief Magistrate. These 307 judicial officers for not less than six months, i.e., the first half of the new year will abandon their regular dockets for election petitions. Litigants already before their courts have to wait for the return to regular duties to continue their quest for justice.

Election petitions are a special specie of court cases and are in a special class of their own. Hence, the Electoral Act prescribes the persons who may institute an election petition, the



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grounds upon which a petition may be based, and the reliefs which may be sought for and granted by the Tribunal.

An election petition may only be presented by a candidate in the election and or a political party that participated in the election. Such a candidate and or his or her political party may only sue the person returned as winner of the election and INEC where there are allegations regarding the conduct of the Commission or its officers. An election may only

be challenged on three grounds: that the person returned as winner was, at the time of the election, not qualified to contest the election by failing to meet any of the requirements and qualifications as prescribed in Sections 65, 66, 106, 107, 131, 137, 177 or 182 of the Constitution as may be relevant; that the election was fraught with corrupt practices or non-compliance with the Electoral Act which substantially affected the result of the election; and that

the person returned as winner was not duly elected by majority of lawful votes cast at the election.

Despite these provisions aimed at streamlining election petitions, hundreds of petitions are filed after each election. It was reported that the Court of Appeal received 805 appeals arising from election petitions across its 16 judicial divisions after the 2019 general elections. Several factors responsible for this include our multi-party system, distrust of the electoral process, the high volume of irregularities that mar most of our elections, and the do-or-die nature of politics in Nigeria. Yet, only a handful of election results are overturned.

Tribunals have two options upon the success of a petition: nullify the election and order a re-run within 90 days of either the decision of the tribunal where the decision is not appealed or the nullification of the election by the court having final appellate jurisdiction where the decision is appealed. An order of the nullification of an election and an order to INEC to conduct a rerun can only be made where the tribunal finds that the election was fraught with corrupt practices or non-compliance with the Electoral Act, which substantially affected the result of the election.

Where the tribunal or court finds that the person who obtained the highest votes at the election was not qualified to contest the election, the tribunal or court would nullify the election and declare the person with the second highest number of valid votes cast at the election who satisfies the requirements of the Constitution and the Electoral Act and is still a member of the political party under which he contested as the winner of the election and as duly elected. Also, where the tribunal or court finds that the person returned as the winner of an election did not score the majority of valid votes cast at the election, the tribunal or court would declare the candidate who scored the highest number of valid votes at the election and satisfies the requirements of the Constitution and the Electoral Act as the winner of the election.

Over the years of Nigeria's democracy, the mistrust in the electoral process has extended to the outcome of election petitions. Election tribunals are an important part of the democratic process of conducting elections, as there must be an avenue for aggrieved parties to seek redress for electoral malpractices and irregularities. It also provides a system of checks and balances to keep the electoral body, INEC, accountable. Election tribunals and the judiciary as a whole, especially when it comes to political cases, however, operate under a huge cloud of mistrust,

allegations of impropriety, and partisanship.

An example is what many perceived as upholding technicality to work an injustice in the Adeleke v Oyetola election petition case in a judgment delivered by the Supreme Court in 2019. The Tribunal had nullified the election, but the decision was overturned by the Court of Appeal and Supreme Court, on the ground that one of the members of the Tribunal who delivered the lead judgment did not sign the attendance sheet of the Tribunal's proceedings on a specific day key evidence was presented, signifying his absence from the proceedings of the day.

Many decisions relating to the appointment or removal of judicial officers carry insinuations of cherry-picking for the purposes of the next election cycle and the attendant election petitions. We thus have a situation where the country spends a humongous amount of money on elections, another huge sum on election petitions – with the regular court business of the members of the tribunals put on hold – yet many Nigerians do not believe that the outcome of the process reflects the choice of the voters.

The Punch newspapers reported a survey conducted by Anvarie Tech, ResearcherNG, and Bincika Insights on Freedom of Expression, Political Participation, Rule of Law and Corruption with a focus on the trust of respondents in independent government institutions. The survey was funded by the Washington D.C.-based National Endowment for Democracy and revealed that 40% of participants do not believe elections are free and fair, 71% lack trust in the judiciary, and 65% lack trust in anti-corruption agencies.

We must reduce the costs of elections generally and the number of judicial resources and personnel dedicated to election petitions. They are becoming unsustainable. Already, the President of the Court of Appeal, Hon. Justice Monica Dongban-Mensem, a few months back while exercising her powers and performing her duties to constitute election tribunals decried the delay in funding the process.

Three factors capable of reducing the huge costs of conducting elections and the huge judicial resources and personnel dedicated to election petitions are reducing the number of our political parties in the country; making political office less attractive than it is currently where contestants fight till their last breath; and running credible elections thereby reducing the chances of their contest.

"Maintaining Nigeria's democracy entails the conduct of an expensive project called elections every four years. The costs of conducting the elections have increased with each election cycle but the current budget of N305 billion for the 2023 elections, excluding the Independent National Electoral Commission's (INEC) annual allocation of N40 billion, is by far the largest. Daily Trust newspapers estimates that INEC has expended not less than N1.24 trillion in conducting elections over the past ten years . The high cost of conducting elections, particularly the coming elections, is even more sobering when the country's dwindling revenues and debt profile are considered. In addition to the costs of the elections, the uncertainty surrounding Nigerian elections causes a lag in new investment inflows, leading to reductions in business activities ahead the general election, and usually until the new government settles in. Even judicial activities suffer a lag as a result of elections."

News

Electricity distribution company disconnects Sokoto, Zamfara MDAs

FROM ANENE AIKE, SOKOTO

THE Kaduna Electric Electricity Distribution Company has disconnected Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) of Sokoto and Zamfara state governments states government over a N2.5 billion debt.

Our correspondent also reports that the disconnection followed the states governments' failure to comply with the demand warning and final disconnection notices issued to them by the company.

A statement made available to our Sokoto correspondent by the spokesperson of the company, Abdulaziz Abdullahi, revealed that Sokoto State government owes N1,496,313,156, while the Zamfara government owes N1,040,506,730 as at December, 2022.

According to him, the debt is not only hindering the operations of the company, but also making it extremely difficult for the company to discharge its obligations to the electricity market as well as make the needed investments to improve service delivery.

The statement added that since it is compulsory for the company to make 100 percent remittances of energy



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consumed, it becomes poor, non or irregular payment of bills by our customers", the company added.

The statement further pointed out that they are obligated to make 100% remittance for cost of energy consumed, as well as transmission services without failure in its effort to always avoid attracting severe penalty.

"This is an obligation we are struggling to meet every month but to no avail due to

consumed, it becomes poor, non or irregular payment of bills by our customers", the company added.

That the Kaduna Electric was forced to disconnect power supply to all Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) and other facilities belonging to Sokoto and Zamfara state governments after the two states were issued demand as well as final disconnection notices by the Company three weeks ago.

That the Disconnector became the last resort for it and Kaduna Electric is pained to embark on this course of action.

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

EGUME Ome Descendants Union has renewed commitment towards contributing its quota towards execution of viable projects that will impact on the lives of the people of the area.

The Chairman of Lokoja branch of the association, Comrade Noah Ocheni gave the assurance at the weekend in Lokoja while speaking during the annual get-together organised for members to usher in the new year.

Ocheni called on Egume Ome community not to relent in complementing government's efforts towards the provision of basic infrastructure such as potable water, electricity, hospitals, schools and roads among others.

"The era of looking up to government alone to provide all needed basic infrastructure that would boost the living condition of the people is gone, hence the need for communities and well to do citizens to join hands through self-help to achieve the goal.

"I appreciate members of Lokoja branch of Egume Ome Descendants Union for embarking on meaningful ventures that would help promote unity and development of their fatherland

"As we intend to start our town hall project this year, I

Association pledges commitment to self-help projects



Bello

call for synergy between our male and female groups to ensure that the project is achieved."

The chairman of the occasion, Mohammed Aikoye in his welcome address, commended Lokoja branch of the union for facilitating the supply of medical equipment

to the hospital at Egume.

He also praised the national body of the union in its task to end insecurity at Egume.

He therefore, solicited the support of the people of Egume to the union to enable it live up to expectations towards the development of their fatherland.

Tambuwal reassigns commissioners, creates new ministries

IN its effort to restructure the state ministries for effective and better service delivery in Sokoto State public service, the Governor, Rt. Hon. Aminu Waziri Tambuwal has approved the creation of six new ministries, and reassigned some of the commissioners in his cabinet.

A press release by the S. A. Media indicates that the new ministries are Technology and Digital Economy, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Welfare, Internal Security, Transport, Industry, Trade and Investment.

To run these ministries are Dr Kulu Haruna Abubakar, the Commissioner for Science and Technical Education who will also oversee the new ministry of Technology and Digital Economy while Hon. Aminu Ibrahim will be in charge of Innovation and

Entrepreneurship Development; just as Hon. Abubakar Abdullahi Dange will be the Commissioner for Humanitarian Affairs and Social Welfare.

In the same vein, the Commissioners of Internal Security, Transport, as well as Industry, Trade and Investment are: Hon. Abubakar Maikudi Ahmed, Hon. Alhassan Ibrahim Rarah and Hon. Abdullahi Yusuf Hausawa respectively.

Gov. Tambuwal also approved the postings of Hon. Abdullahi Muazu Hassan to the Ministry of Environment, Hon. Muhammad Lema Abubakar to the Ministry of Health, Dr Muhammad Ali Inname to the Ministry of Finance.

Others are Hon. Bashir Muhammad Gidado to the Ministry of Youths and Sports and Muhammad Isah Tsabre to the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Amaechi, others canvass votes for APC guber candidate

From Abbas Gungura, Bauchi

A former Minister of Transportation, Rotimi Amaechi, former Chief of Army Staff, Lt. Gen. Tukur Buratai (rtd), Attorney-General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Abubakar Malami, SAN, among others, have declared support for the gubernatorial candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Bauchi State, Air Marshal Sadique Baba Abubakar (rtd), ahead of the March 11 gubernatorial election.

The trio disclosed this at a fund-raising dinner and unveiling of the manifesto of the Bauchi State APC gubernatorial candidate in Abuja at the weekend.

Other dignitaries who attended the event were the state APC Chairman, Babayo Aliyu Misau; his deputy, Mohammed Hassan; Bauchi State APC deputy

governorship candidate, Shehu Aliyu Musa; former Governor of Bauchi State, Mallam Isa Yuguda, APC National Women Leader, Dr. Betta Edu, Minister of State for Transportation, Ademola Adewole Adegoroye; former Chief Justice of the Federation (CJN), Ibrahim Muhammad Tanko, Senator Salisu Matori, Sanator Abubakar Maikafi among others.

Amaechi described Baba Abubakar as a visionary leader, saying that there was no other better choice for the people of Bauchi State other than what the APC has presented to them.

He therefore, called on the people of the state to vote for the candidate that has proven integrity and transparency, particularly as it regards public funds.

"When you indicated interest to run for the governorship of Bauchi State,

I supported you in every possible way that I could, including prayers.

"Today, I ask you people from Bauchi to think twice about governance in Nigeria. It has been very bad.

"The reason why it's bad is that you vote for people who don't know what governorship is about. We vote for people who seek appointment to make money. And unfortunately for all of you, people are not held accountable for anything they do and the worse is Nigeria doesn't hold anyone accountable for anything.

On his part, Gen. Buratai said the recorded success of counter-insurgency operations carried out in Port Harcourt, Rivers State including the fight against oil bunkering, came partly as a result of Abubakar's resilience, dedication, and cooperation to work with the Nigerian Army.

He urged the people of Bauchi State to vote for Abubakar, saying: "Today, Bauchi State has oil, and to protect your oil, you have the right person to protect it which is Amb Air Marshal Sadique Baba Abubakar."

Also speaking at the occasion, AGF Malami said Abubakar has brilliantly performed in fighting insecurity as the immediate-past Chief of Air Staff, adding that if elected as governor of Bauchi State, he would improve the fortune of the state.

The fact remains indisputable that as of 2015 when this administration of President Muhammadu Buhari came on board, about 17 local governments in Borno State were indeed controlled by Boko Haram. So, what happened with the emergence of President Muhammadu Buhari and the coming on board of Sadique Abubakar as the Chief of Air Staff? The complete turnaround

of security architecture, and, by extension, decimating Boko Haram, recovering our territories, the national territory, and the Nigerian integrity, among others.

Meanwhile, speaking to journalists on the sidelines of the event, the APC gubernatorial candidate, Amb. Baba Abubakar, promised to re-engineer the political landscape of the state by making policies geared towards bettering the economic, educational, and security situation of the state.

"What we want to do is to re-engineer the political landscape in Bauchi State so that people will have a sense of ownership of the state.

"People must understand that the state is all about them and the only way to achieve that is to reverse the disturbing figures. We want to get those 1.4 million children back to school. We want to do everything we can to show concern and support our women.

"Unemployment rate, especially among the youths, is very disturbing. We want to create a platform where these youths would be empowered, have the skills required and be able to contribute to the development of Bauchi State. In the agricultural sector, production is so abysmal.

"What we want to do is to re-engineer the entire process so that production will go up and once it goes up, you know the impact of agriculture on the economy. Small-scale industries at the local level will increase. These are programmes that are going to boost the economy of Bauchi State and that way, we can help with the security of the state because there is a relationship between security



Abubakar



Tambuwal

News

CAN condemns killing of Catholic priest

From **MATHEW JWANTU, Minna**

THE Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Niger State strongly condemns the gruesome killing of the Catholic priest of Saint Peter and Paul Catholic Church, Kaffin Koro, Very Rev Fr. Isaac Achi in Paikoro Local Government Area of Niger State. His burial has been fixed for Friday.

In a statement signed by the spokesperson of Christian Association of Nigeria, Mr. Daniel Atori, called for investigations into the attacks, adding that the culprits must be brought to book.

CAN Chairman, Niger State, Most Rev Bulus Dauwa Yohanna while condemning the dastard act, condoles with the Catholic Diocese of Minna, parishioners and the entire Christendom as well as the immediate family of the murdered priest. He prays for the repose of the soul of Very Rev. Fr Achi and souls of all the faithful departed to rest in peace.

The CAN chairman is calling on the government, the police and other security agencies to double their



Achi

efforts in tackling banditry and insecurity.

"Enough of the attacks and wanton killings of innocent Nigeria citizens.

One of the primary responsibilities of government is to protect lives and property of the people you govern".

In the early hours of Sunday, the bandits announced their entry into the community by shooting sporadically. They set ablaze the Catholic Parish house, killed the Parish Priest and injured his assistant.

Until his death, he was the CAN Coordinator of Paikoro LGA, the Dean and Parish Priest of Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Church, Kaffinkoro in Minna Diocese.

Meanwhile, the burial for late Reverend Isaac Achi has been slated for Friday 21 January 2023.

A letter signed by Very Reverend Amanchukwu Emeka G., Chancellor of the diocese, indicated that the funeral mass and final interment will hold at St Machael Cardedral Boss, Niger State.

General and the General Officer (GOC) Commanding 3rd Armoured Division, NAF Commander, Commissioner of Police.

Other stakeholders who performed the wreath laying in honour of the fallen heroes were the Chairman Nigerian Legion, Plateau State Chapter, Col. Sati Yilwat, representatives of wives of the fallen heroes, Helen Sabo, the Plateau State Traditional Council represented by Agwon Izere Isaac Wakili.

A symbolic part of the occasion was the release of white pigeons as a mark of peace by the Governor.

Lalong earlier inspected the military Guards of Honour who were colorfully clad in their military regalia.

Aside rendering the symbolic 3 gun salutes, prayers were also offered for the repose of the souls of fallen heroes who died while serving their country and protecting its territorial integrity.

Armed forces have made tremendous sacrifice for peace - Lalong

By **PALANG KASMI**

Governor Simon Bako Lalong has commended members of the Armed Forces for the role they have played in Plateau and Nigeria to sustain peaceful coexistence.

The Governor spoke on 15th January 2023 shortly after laying the wreath at the tomb of the unknown soldiers at the JD Gomwalk Secretariat Cenotaph Jos, to mark the 2023 Armed Forces Remembrance Day

"Officers and men of the security services have made tremendous sacrifices towards ensuring that there is peace and security in the country and should therefore receive commensurate respect and goodwill", Lalong told newsmen in Jos after the ceremony.

He promised to empower the ex service men and their families

with skills acquisition programmes before he leaves office this year.

The Governor said despite the security challenges being experienced in various parts of the country, the security personnel must not be condemned or their morale dampened.

The Governor emphatically expressed appreciation for the role that the security agencies have played in restoring peace to the state and are still doing to make it difficult for criminals to make a foothold in any part of the state.

The Governor spearheaded the traditional ritual of laying of wreaths to honour the unknown soldiers, joined by other top government officials and stakeholders including Speaker, House of Assembly, Rt. Hon Yakubu Sanda, Chief Judge of Plateau State, Justice David Mann,



Our prayers for 2023

A new year has just roled in. Two weeks into the year, we bring our supplications to the creator of the universe and most of all to our fellow country people. We know last year was plagued with a lot of misfortunes but we are sure lessons were learnt and these lessons will serve as the compass for us to navigate the new year and chart a new path. These lessons would surely help us decide what course of action to take and not to take so as to avoid the pitfalls encountered in the outgone year.

As we start the year in earnest therefore, we must be deliberate and conscious of what is good and would help the generality of the people. We must steer the course of our journey away from the many petty and self-imposed crises that have served as drawbacks to our collective development. We must run away from divisive religion as it has not done us or any country any good. Even though we claim to be a highly religious country, our profession of our various religions do not transcend or go beyond our lips. We only mouth these religions but in truth, we are highly deceptive. That must change if we are to grow our country.

We must accept that ours is a secular state where everyone is free to practice whatever religion he chooses to rather than the present attitude where some feel that theirs is the only religion and all others must subscribe to their ways. We must look at other countries and see how religion has helped or marred their progress and take a cue from there. Afghanistan for example has remained a poor and backward country even though it professes a firebrand of Islam. But the Arab would have generally come to the realisation that religion should be a means to an end not an end in itself. This has led to the opening up of their society and they are the better for it. Dubai has become a mecca of sort

and everyone is trying to compete with others. We have his presence there. But to achieve the aforesaid, the citizenry need to be educated. And, to do this, we must restructure our education. We must stop this piecemeal attitude of attending to the educational needs of our country. We must fashion forward looking and progressive policies that would ensure strong foundations are laid for education. If we get our education right, then we would be on the way to redeeming our country.

Also, we must strive to achieve universal health coverage for a majority of the population. As it is often said, a healthy nation is a productive one. As health is wealth, we can only realise our potentials if we are healthy and able to think well and positive. Those countries that have succeeded showcase very high levels of healthcare systems for their citizens. This allows them the luxury to think properly and create wealth for their country.

We must look at infrastructure too if we want to develop and

Unless we have oneness of purpose and work towards deliberately repairing our society, we will continue to wallow in want and not be taken seriously by other countries. We have all the resources and even more that we can hold our heads high with. What is left and which is absent is our ability to organize ourselves and reach for the stars.

must ask ourselves if we are doing enough in the provision of infrastructure for the enjoyment of our people. Deliberate efforts must be done to ensure that we meet basic minimum so as to attract investors to our clime. We must also take seriously security issues. No one would want to bring his money to a country he cannot make some gains. If we are to grow, we have no option than strengthen our security and ensure we deal with security issues promptly to convince investors and have them trust us to secure their investment.

Corruption has remained endemic even though we have put in place mechanisms to fight them. The country needs to allow these institutions function and do the work they were created to do.

We must also show patriotic zeal in all that we do. Because the world perceives us to be corrupt, they fear dealing with us. They see us as a people never to be trusted. That needs to change. We must diligently work and live within our means and not dip our hands into the common till to feather our nest or satisfy our appetite. The general good must always be priority in whatever we do.

We must also give equal opportunities to all and sundry so that we can have the best of everyone not just those who are from well to do backgrounds. And, to cap it all, we must elect leaders who will serve us diligently as we prepare for the 2023 elections. Sentiments of tribe and religion must take back seats and capacity and capability promoted.

Unless we have oneness of purpose and work towards deliberately repairing our society, we will continue to wallow in want and not be taken seriously by other countries. We have all the resources and even more that we can hold our heads high with. What is left and which is absent is our ability to organize ourselves and reach for the stars.

News

10 die in motor accident in FCT

From **JIDAUNA YANUNG, Abuja**

IT was a black Sunday as no fewer than 10 persons were crushed to death around 1.15pm at the popular Gishri end of the NICON Junction, Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

It was gathered that the accident involved a Toyota Camry and a Mazda which crashed into each other as other vehicles were coming from the Kubwa axis in Bwari Area Council heading towards the city centre.

An eyewitness, Samaila Isyaku, said three other vehicles around the scene of the accident suffered collateral damages.

He said other victims of the crash included people in the affected cars as well as those waiting to cross the expressway and the prospective passengers waiting to board.

According to him, "We counted at least 10 dead bodies beside the numerous people that were fatally injured."

"The crash resulted from dangerous over-speeding and



Biu

eventual loss of control. We suspect that those in the Toyota Camry were high on drugs and alcohol."

Meanwhile, officials of the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) had cleared the expressway of the wreckage

and conveyed the injured to the hospital while the dead were taken to the morgue.

Efforts to reach the FRSC Sector Commander, Ochi Oga, for a formal statement on the accident were not fruitful as the time of filing this report.

From **JOHN FWAH Kaduna**

THE remains of seven personnel of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), ambushed and slain by bandits in Birnin Gwari Local Government community of Kaduna State on Monday, 9 January, 2023, while on routine duty of protecting a mining site in Birnin Gwari LGA of Kaduna State, were laid to rest.

A statement by Director of Public Relations NSCDC National headquarters, Abuja, DCC Olusola Odumosu, on Sunday said their corpses were handed over to families and loved ones at the NSCDC Kaduna Command after a brief interment ceremony.

The Commandant General of the Corps, Dr. Ahmed Abubakar Audi, bid the officers and men goodbye when he paid his last respect at the lying in state ceremony, held on Saturday, 14 January, at the Kaduna State Command of the Corps.

Dr Audi expressed rude shock while consoling families, friends and loved ones on the sad loss and prayed for the repose of their souls.

Represented by the

Slain NSCDC personnel buried in Kaduna



Alkali

Commandant, Kaduna members of the Corps who will be greatly missed by the CG praised the efforts of colleagues and friends at work. "They paid the supreme price their lives in defence of the country and described them as "Heroes, never to be forgotten."

"The world is saddened. The President and Commander in Chief is sad, officers and men of the Corps are also sad.

"What has happened has happened. We however, look unto God, and pray for forgiveness of their sins and for acceptance on the last day," he said.

"Although the loss is painful and the tears are many, but God knows best.

"We cannot question God; The CG assures families and therefore, let us live right, be in next of kins of the deceased of peace, love and harmony with timely dispatch of benefits our fellow men because one day, all of us will die.

He thanked the seven Commander in Chief of the personnel who died as Armed Forces, Muhammadu Buhari, for remembering the Corps at this trying period.

According to Audi, "Mr President's condolence message motivated us greatly. It renewed our strength and rekindled our hope that we are not alone.

"This means a lot to us as a service and we are grateful for the support we are getting from the presidency and we feel services to expect at the proud serving the nation."

Mashair to know what to tell our pilgrims at home, he assured.

February polls: Cleric reveals events before, during, after

WITH few weeks to the conduct of the February 25th, 2023 presidential and national assembly elections, a Ghanaian cleric resident in Abuja, the nation's capital and General Overseer, Authority Arena, Abuja, Prophet T. B. Boateng has given prophetic declarations on the outcome of the elections.

Prophet Boateng gave the prophecies in Makurdi during a prayer conference saying the All Progressives Congress Party (APC) will win the Kaduna State governorship election just as the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) will record landslide victories in Benue and Rivers states.

According to the prophet, presidential candidate of the Labour Party (LP) Peter Obi will lose out in the election. There will be a shift in date for the presidential election while a lot of confusion will trail the entire presidential and national assembly elections.

From **TERESE TUHWA, Makurdi**

Prophet Boateng declared that the governorship election in Enugu State will be won by the candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Dr. Peter Ndubisi Mbah while the All Progressives Congress Party (APC) will lose much members to the PDP before the polls.

The cleric declared that the presidential candidate who everybody has concluded on his lost bid will eventually emerge president of the country and urged Christians to pray fervently against Nnamdi Kanu's death since his death will spell grievous calamity that will lead to the emergence of a new leader to champion the Biafran agitation with more havoc that has never been experienced.

The Authority Arena Ministries General Overseer said God has revealed to him a dragon on the country's map

spitting fire signifying much bloodshed in certain regions in the country including the FCT, Kaduna, Lagos, Enugu, Ebonyi and Imo state.

He said there will be heightened banditry activities across the affected regions and called for sustained prayers to avert the impending calamity.

NAHCON, Mussassah collaborate for Hajj services

From **JIDAUNA YANUNG, Abuja**

AHEAD of this year's Hajj, the National Hajj Commission of Nigeria (NAHCON) and the Mutawwif Company of African non Arabs otherwise known as Mussassah have signed an agreement on services to be provided during the Hajj at discount rate.

NAHCON has also commenced the screening of accommodation and catering service provider applicants for the exercise.

The commission in a statement by its Assistant Director Information and Publications, Mousa Ubandawaki, said major highlight of the meeting between NAHCON and Mutawwif Company of African Non Arabs was the commitment made by the Mussassah to upgrade the feeding and catering services at the Mashair and with the grant of 5 percent discount over what was paid last year.

According to the agreement, Nigeria will pay less of what was charged last year. The pact was signed by the Chairman/Chief Executive Officer of NAHCON, Alh Zikrullah Kunle Hassan and the Chairman of Mutawwif company, Ahmad Sindy.

The statement read in part: "The agreement is part of the preparation for this year's Hajj which is due in late June and is a follow up to the earlier meeting held between the teams on Thursday at Super

The prophet said Nigeria and Ghana will lose one famous pastor each to a mysterious death even as there will be massive killing of civilians without justifiable reasons by security agents which will eventually degenerate to full blown riots in many parts of the country. Boateng also revealed that the nation will also lose a

Dome Centre, Jeddah, on the side line of the Hajj and Umrah Expo 2023. "The pact focused on the roles expected of the two parties during the Hajj. It also covers the services to be provided to the pilgrims in the areas of enlightenment, guidance, movements transportation especially during the Mashair.

'Fish out killers of Rev Achi'

GOVERNOR of Niger State (DR) Abubakar Sadiq Sani Bello has condemned in its entirety the rude and shocking killing of very Rev. Fr. Isaac Achi, who until his death was the Parish Priest of SS Peter and Paul, Kafin-Koro, calling on security to as a matter of urgency fish out the killers

In a statement signed by the Honourable Commissioner, Ministry of Information and Strategy, Niger State, Dr. Emmanuel U. Musa (KSM), the governor directed all the security agencies to fish out the perpetrators of this dastardly act and bring them to book.

It pointed out that the governor is saddened with this unfortunate incident and condoles the entire Christian community in the state, particularly his Lordship, Rev Dr. Martin Uzonkwu and his Auxiliary, Bishop Shuster Gropep over the killing of one of the state's indigenous and dedicated priest and shooting of his assistant, Rev. Fr. Collins



Bello

Omeh, all of the Kafin-Koro deanery.

Recall that Reverend Fr Isaac Achi was burnt to death by unknown gun men and the entire Parish house burnt down by fire in the early hours of Sunday, the 15th of January 2023.

He therefore On behalf of the good people of Niger State and

entire members of the Executive Council, prays that this ugly incident will not be repeated again.

He urged the people of Kafin-Koro and the entire parishioners of the Church to be calm and allow the appropriate security agencies to continue to search for the killers.



Mahmood

Foreign Commentary

Israel - Ascension of far right party makes Palestine Jittery

I came to talk to Yasser Abu Markhiya about the attacks on his home in Hebron but he ended up lying speechless in pain in his garden after getting kicked in the groin. Our cameras had just started recording in their house when it began. TOM BATEMAN Writes

WE run outside with the Palestinian family as two young Israeli men storm into their garden, followed by soldiers.

One of the settlers heads straight towards us yelling at the family: "Get out of here, leave!"

Mr Abu Markhiya strides up to him, trying to face off the threat, filming on his phone as a soldier blocks him, but the Israeli man lunges forward and kicks the Palestinian homeowner.

The assault is a sudden illustration of what we came to interview the family about: Palestinians in Hebron say they feel increasingly vulnerable to attack after Israel's recent election.

The vote saw a massive rise in support for the far right, empowering an ultranationalist hardcore of the settler movement in Hebron and elsewhere, and reigniting a culture war within Israeli society over the role of the military in the occupied territories.

After Mr Abu Markhiya is kicked, there is a standoff as we keep filming.

A Palestinian activist helping the family, Badee Dwaik, shouts: "The soldiers do nothing to protect the Palestinians. If a Palestinian did that, you would take him to jail or shoot him!"

He is voicing a frequent complaint of systematic discrimination: That Israeli settlers who commit violence against Palestinians in the occupied West Bank rarely face accountability.

As if to prove the point, the man who kicked Mr Abu Markhiya walks towards his car, is given a handshake by one of the soldiers, and then he is gone.

The settler who kicked Mr Abu Markhiya was let go by the soldiers with a handshake

Mr Abu Markhiya, meanwhile, is lying hurt as a neighbour tends to him.

Asked about the incident, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said soldiers are required to stop acts of violence against Palestinians and if necessary detain suspects until police arrive. The police routinely say they do investigate settler violence, but rights groups say these are usually a whitewash.

November's election saw the far-right Religious Zionism alliance win 14 seats in Israel's 120 seat parliament, set to make it the second most powerful force in Prime Minister-elect Benjamin Netanyahu's coalition.

Appointed to the newly expanded post of National Security minister, in charge of police in Israel and the occupied West Bank is Itamar Ben-Gvir - leader of the ultranationalist pro-settler Otzma Yehudit (Jewish Power) party, which espouses racist, anti-Arab policies.

He made his name among a young national-religious base as a gun-wielding street agitator who calls for the deportation of "disloyal" Arabs and for the shooting of Palestinians who throw stones.

Itamar Ben-Gvir, who will be in charge of Israel's police force, was once convicted of anti-Arab racism

Mr Ben-Gvir has previous convictions for racist incitement and supporting a Jewish terrorist group, and is well known to the Palestinians of Hebron as he comes from one of the city's Jewish settlements.

Many fear his promotion from the radical fringes into the political mainstream will usher in a dangerous new phase, with the region already gripped by deadly IDF arrest raids in the West Bank and the most lethal wave of Palestinian attacks in years.

In Hebron this year, two



Netanyahu



Abbas

Palestinians including a 16-year-old boy have been shot dead by Israeli forces during protests in the city, and a further two during alleged knife attacks on Israeli forces. One Israeli man was killed in a gun attack by a Palestinian who was subsequently shot dead.

On the day we filmed, Israeli peace activists were leading a tour meant to look at the daily realities of life here.

Hebron is a city of checkpoints and a flashpoint of the conflict and occupation. At its core are several hundred Israeli settlers who have the protection of an army and full political rights, surrounded by hundreds of thousands of Palestinians who have neither.

Many consider it the occupation in its most concentrated form.

Streets in its historic centre are a dystopian mix of civilian homes and

shops with doors welded shut amid militarised fences, walls and watchtowers - an area hollowed out of its once bustling Palestinian life, as only residents may enter. The Israeli army refers to these as "sterile" zones necessary for security.

Hebron is a political heartland for the Israeli far right: settlers here voted overwhelmingly for the alliance jointly led by Mr Ben-Gvir and Bezalel Smotrich, another ultranationalist figure due to be minister of finance and in charge of Israel's day-to-day running of the West Bank, governing the lives of the Palestinians there.

Settlers in Hebron voted overwhelmingly for Itamar Ben-Gvir's alliance in November's election

The Israeli peace activists have come to show solidarity with

Palestinians after a fortnight of growing violence and intimidation. In the weeks after the election, during an annual Jewish pilgrimage, hundreds of young Israelis attacked homes. The following weekend, an IDF soldier beat a left-wing Israeli activist who came to support Palestinian residents, while another soldier was filmed praising Mr Ben-Gvir, saying the firebrand politician would "sort this place out."

The UN's envoy to the region Tor Wennesland condemned the violence, as did the outgoing Israeli defence minister Benny Gantz, who warned during the election that Mr Ben-Gvir threatens to set the country on fire.

Among those who had their homes attacked in the violence were Mr Abu Markhiya and his neighbour, Imad Abu Shamsiyyeh.



A young Israeli settler (2nd L) kicked Mr Abu Markhiya (R) as an Israeli soldier tried to intervene

They have worked with the Palestinian group Human Rights Defenders over the years which has documented violence against Palestinians, something activists believe could put them at greater risk.

"They stood in this exact place and started throwing stones madly, cursing us with obscene words, and shouting racist slogans: 'Death to Arabs' and 'Get out of these houses that belong to Israel, we will take them back,'" Mr Abu Shamsiyyeh tells me.

"I was very scared for myself, my wife and my children, as there were a large number of settlers. Especially now with Ben-Gvir in the government, who has come to my house more than once," he says.

A closed-off street in Hebron with

an Israeli military checkpoint and watchtower

Mr Abu Markhiya continues: "Since the Israeli elections, the attacks have increased and grown more fierce."

Later, the soldier who was recorded supporting Mr Ben-Gvir was jailed for several days. It fed into a heated row in Israel, with nationalists arguing the military leadership was bowing to liberal pressure to punish the country's defenders.

One of those making the case was Mr Ben-Gvir himself, suggesting the activists provoked or hit the soldiers - a claim for which there was no evidence.

An old fault-line in Israeli society was being aggravated in occupied

Hebron: That between hawkish nationalists and what remains of the peace camp. I watched the tensions mount in the city, as settlers rallied against visiting anti-occupation activists.

Yishai Fleisher, a well-known voice of the settler right who describes himself as the international spokesman for the Jewish Community of Hebron, talks to me as his allies yell "traitors" at the arriving activists.

I ask him why they are shouting, aren't the visitors just trying to expose the discriminatory realities of the city?

"Their opinion has become a total minority in Israel," he says. "The jihadism that is in this town and the [Palestinian militant group] Hamas that rules this town, that is the real

segregationist and apartheid-ist type of rule that can come into this place if Israel doesn't control it."

"In this plot of land which is a tiny plot of land, our tribal lands, we certainly should have control. It's our land," he adds.

Yishai Fleisher says Israelis "want anti-jihadism, pro-family and pro-God"

I put it to him that it just sounds like racism - an assertion he rejects.

"We want our minorities to be successful and to be upwardly mobile. We have no problem with our minorities as long as they're law-abiding and non-jihadist," he says.

In the occupied West Bank there are around three million Palestinians. Around 500,000 Israelis live in settlements, all of which are considered illegal under international law - something disputed by Israel.

We leave the right-wing rally and are told by soldiers we cannot come back if we go to the peace camp activists.

We head over. Among the crowd is Tal Sagi from the group Breaking the Silence, made up of former soldiers who oppose the occupation and who try to expose its daily humiliations for Palestinians.

She was conscripted as a soldier in Hebron, where she describes an interdependent relationship between the IDF and the settlers. The message from the latter, she says, is that Palestinians are "all enemies".

"I know what it's like to be here as a soldier. You are in such close connection with the settlers the whole time and they give you food and they talk to you and... you hear these messages all the time," she explains.

"I also grew up also as a settler, so something that I heard from a very young age [was]... that everyone wanted to kill me and that every Palestinian is a threat."

"Now, after Ben-Gvir's victory, [the settlers] have even more energy and they are here with a lot of confidence and they know they have a lot of power with them in the government. So they feel very confident to say all those things and act like that," she adds.

As we talk the army stops the crowd moving - they have declared a closed military zone, say the activists. Eventually one of the Palestinians they were due to visit comes to them.

Issa Amro addressed a gathering of Israeli peace activists touring Hebron before being arrested

Issa Amro is a well-known activist and founder of Youth Against Settlements, which leads tours of Hebron. He is a vocal critic of both the Israeli forces and the Palestinian Authority, and has been arrested by both.

He has been declared a human rights defender by the EU and the UN, both of whom have previously condemned his repeated arrests.

After his speech to the Israeli peace camp, Mr Amro tries to show me how he is unable to go to his own home due to his latest arrest conditions.

But as we film, he is pulled away from us. Four undercover Israeli police, including the officer we spotted earlier, put him up against a wall and search him. He is told he is being detained for "obstructing justice".

Like the Israeli activists and the Palestinian family attacked as we filmed, he believes the authorities simply do the bidding of the city's settler movement - now feeling more emboldened than ever after the election. But he cannot explain further as he is taken away, silenced for a few more hours again.

BBC News, Hebron

Foreign News

Germany appoints defence chief for key Ukraine meeting

GERMANY has appointed a new defence minister as pressure mounts on Berlin to allow European nations to send German-made Leopard 2 tanks to Ukraine.

The government of Chancellor Olaf Scholz on Tuesday named Boris Pistorius as the defence chief to replace scandal-hit Christine Lambrecht, who resigned a day earlier.

Pistorius, from Scholz's governing Social Democrat Party (SPD), will leave his position as the interior minister of the state of Lower Saxony. He gained a national profile during the 2015 refugee crisis and is known for taking a hard line on security issues.

"Pistorius is an extremely experienced politician who is tried and tested in administration. [He] has dealt with security policy for years," Scholz said.

"With his competence, assertiveness and big heart, he is exactly the right person to lead the Bundeswehr [armed forces] through this turning point," he said in a statement.

Pistorius's appointment comes before a meeting planned for Friday at the United States's Rammstein airbase in southwestern Germany, where Ukraine's allies are expected to discuss boosting military support for Kyiv.

His predecessor Lambrecht was criticised for months for her perceived failure to modernise the German army quickly enough, her stance on the Ukraine war and her public image.

Until now, Germany has been cautious about approving the dispatch of heavy Leopard tanks over fears that such a move could escalate the war.

In a statement seen by the Reuters news agency, German economy minister Robert Habeck said, "There are important decisions to be made in the short term, in particular, the urgent question of how we continue to support Ukraine in its right to self-defence."

"Germany bears a responsibility here and has major tasks to accomplish."

While other European countries have stocks of the sought-after German tanks, they can only be sent to Kyiv after first being approved by Berlin.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said the sidelines of the World Economic Forum in Davos, "I have said since the beginning of the war, we should give the Ukrainian armed forces the military equipment they need and that they can handle. If these are advanced technologies, I have the same position still, and I



Steinmeier

think there will be important discussions in Rammstein on January 20, and I hope good decisions will be taken." The UK confirmed the first delivery of 14 Challenger 2 tanks to Ukraine.

In his speech to Parliament, British defence

secretary Ben Wallace said that Germany would not be alone if they sent tanks to Kyiv.

In response, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said the British tanks would "burn just like the rest".

UN Yemen envoy indicates new truce

The prospects of a renewed truce in Yemen have grown, according to the United Nations special envoy for Yemen, as regional and international diplomatic activity to end the country's eight-year conflict intensifies.

Hans Grundberg, addressing a UN Security Council briefing on Monday, more than three months after an initial truce pact expired, said there had been "a potential step change" in the conflict's trajectory, though the situation remained "complex and fluid".

Grundberg, a Swedish diplomat who has served in his position since 2021, urged the warring parties to work towards "a shared vision" with concrete steps to restore peace to the Arab world's poorest nation.

A UN-backed truce initially took effect in April 2022 and raised hopes for a longer pause in fighting, but it ended on October 2 after just six months, after the Houthi rebels, who control the capital, Sanaa, and much of northern Yemen, refused to agree to a further extension.

Along with a stop to the fighting, last year's truce deal allowed some fuel shipments into Houthi-held Hodeidah port and commercial flights from Sanaa, but it did not lift a partial Houthi blockade on the central city of Taiz, a primary goal for the government.

Despite the absence of a truce extension, fighting has not escalated.

"The overall military situation in Yemen has remained stable," Grundberg told the UNSC. "There has been no major escalation nor



Hadi

changes in the disposition on the front lines."

"However we continue to see some military activity in particular along the front lines ... these military activities have regrettably, also resulted in civilian casualties."

The UN is now pushing for an extended and broader deal encompassing a mechanism to pay public sector wages.

The Iran-allied Houthis and the Saudi-backed Yemeni government disagree on who should be paid however, with the government saying that payments should only be made to those in Houthi-controlled areas serving as civil servants before the Houthi takeover. The Houthis want the payments to be made according to the payrolls they have updated.

The Houthis seized Sanaa

PAKISTAN Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has called for talks with India to discuss "burning issues such as Kashmir" while asking the United Arab Emirates to play a role in resolving the differences between the two neighbours.

Terming the UAE a "brotherly country" while on a visit there last week, Sharif, on Tuesday, said: "I will give my word that we will talk to India with sincerity, but it takes two to tango."

"My message to the Indian leadership and Prime Minister Narendra Modi is that let us sit down on the table and have serious and sincere talks to resolve our burning issues like Kashmir," Sharif said.

The Himalayan territory of Kashmir has been a flashpoint between the two countries since they gained independence from British rule in 1947. Since then, the two nuclear-armed neighbours have fought three wars, two of which were over Kashmir, which both claim in its entirety but control parts of it.

"We are neighbours. Let us be very blunt. Even if we are not neighbours by choice, we are there forever, and it is up to us to live peacefully. We have learned our lessons. We have had three wars with

Pakistan PM seeks India talks on 'burning issues'



Alvi

India and the consequence of those wars has only brought more misery, unemployment, and poverty," he said.

Four years ago, India's Hindu nationalist government, headed by PM

Modi, revoked Article 370 of the Indian constitution, which granted Indian-administered Kashmir partial autonomy.

The decision resulted in a surge of strong anti-India sentiments in the region and led to a wave of protests by a large section of the population, followed by a harsh government crackdown.

India alleges Pakistan continues to provide support to armed rebels in the valley, charges which Pakistan steadfastly denies, saying it provides only diplomatic support to Kashmir's struggle for the right to self-determination.

Sharif referred to the Indian state's actions in Kashmir as "flagrant human rights violations taking place day in and day out" and said both countries must think of their future.

"This must stop, so [the] message can go around the world that India is ready to have talks and we are more than ready to talk. We want to convert our resources into tools to provide prosperity ... that's the message I want to give to Mr Modi," he said.

"We are both nuclear powers. God forbid, if a war takes place, who will live to tell what happened? This is not an option."

In a subsequent statement issued by Sharif's office, it was clarified that the prime minister has consistently maintained that talks with India can only happen once the revocation of Article 370 is reversed.

"The Prime Minister has repeatedly stated on record that talks can only take place after India had reversed its illegal action of August 5, 2019; without India's revocation of this step, negotiations are not possible.

The settlement of the Kashmir dispute must be in accordance with the UN resolutions & the aspirations of the people of Jammu & Kashmir," the statement read.

However, he advised against a "piecemeal approach" focused on individual needs, saying talks on short-term steps should be part of a broader approach towards a sustainable resolution of a multifaceted conflict in which several parties are vying for power.

The UN envoy said "escalatory political and economic measures" could reignite violence.

UN humanitarian chief Martin Griffiths, who was Grundberg's predecessor as envoy to Yemen, was also present at the meeting, and echoed his successor, saying the new year "brings a genuine opportunity to move the political process forward".

"The international community - and more importantly the parties to the conflict - must not let this chance go to waste," he said.

But Griffiths said he feared 2023 would be "another extremely difficult year" with an estimated 21.6 million Yemenis needing humanitarian assistance "as the country's economy continues to weaken and basic services hang by an ever-thinning thread".

Griffiths called on the international community to support the UN's humanitarian appeal and to redouble efforts to boost Yemen's economy.

The head of the Houthi Supreme Political Council, Mahdi al-Mashat, said in remarks on Houthi-run media on Monday that talks with an Omani negotiating team were positive and, departing from past rhetoric, stressed the movement's desire for regional stability.

Feature

Media and realities of future generations

'Generations are a lens through which to understand societal change, rather than a label with which to oversimplify differences between groups,' Michael Dimock, president, Pew Research Centre. TOLU OLAGUNJU writes.

MARSHALL McLuhan in his book 'Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man' asserts that media, beyond the message it carries, shapes society mainly by its unique characteristics. He identified anything that aids or extends human acts or abilities as media. It can therefore be inferred from Marshall's assertion that the media began with or perhaps preceded the creation of humans.

By implication, everything originating from human creativity is an extension of the human person, and of course, a medium, or a means to another end. This includes languages, art and culture, religion, ideologies, cities and states, civilizations, wars, technologies, and soon.

Interestingly, while humans create these mediums, they are in return recreated by them. In fact, every generation of media has recreated humans and history in one form or another.

Human history has seen several civilizations, each with its unique attributes from the Pre-Neolithic to the emerging future of hyper-connectivity and singularity that is bringing an unprecedented transformation to the human race. It is therefore important we have an idea of the unique attributes of the past, and the influencing media while envisioning the yet-to-be-properly deciphered future.

This will not only aid in managing the existential threat common to media novelties but also improve intergenerational communication and positioning. It is, however, important to note that while the different attributes as identified by various scholars provide the lens for understanding generational differences, they are in no way a basis for hasty generalization. Nonetheless, the media in whatever guise remains the core of every civilization and most certainly will continue to have a huge influence on the human race.

Limiting ourselves to the 20th to early 21st-century generations, we will look at media in terms of technologies, art and culture, languages, religious beliefs, socio-political viewpoints, economic realities and peculiar events in each generation, how they are connected and have influenced, or influencing the realities of the past, present, and future.

For clarity, recent researches classify these generations as the Greatest Generation, i.e., those born between the years 1901-1924; the Silent Generation i.e., those born between the years 1925-1945; the Baby Boomers i.e., those born between the years 1946-1964; Generation X i.e., those born between the years 1965-1979; Generation Y i.e., those born between the years 1980-1996; the Generation Z i.e., those born between the years 2000-2009; and the still emerging Alpha Generation i.e., those born and still being born between the years 2010-2024.

Every generation indeed reflects the attributes of its influencing media. For instance, the World Wars and the great depression are the key influencers of the early 20th century, those who were born and survived this period (1901-1924) are regarded as the greatest generation for the same reason.

While they are generally believed to have experienced much hardship as a result of the wars, they are, however, identified as self-driven and motivated, ethical, patriotic, loyal, and team players.

They majorly pressed for social and political change and saw the rise of the communist and socialist states, and also a turning point in the development of capitalism. Their era was a period of rapid innovation in economics, medicine, global politics, and technologies like the emergence of now-traditional media of radio, television, telegraphs, and automobiles.

The print media that has become fully mature during this period played a key role, particularly in the more literate world. Literature, arts, music, and cinema culture also thrived greatly during this period. It was during this era



Chris that nations like Nigeria (in its current form) were formed.

Right behind the greatest generation was the silent generation, i.e., those born between the years 1925 and 1945. This was the generation that grew into the consciousness of freedom and eventually the civil rights and anti-colonialism movements.

While most of the civil rights and anti-colonialist movement leaders came of age in this era, it is also widely held to consist of a silent majority who believed it was unwise to speak out or be expressive due to the experience of their predecessor.

This generation like their immediate predecessor experienced a significant level of childhood hardship mostly due to the wars and economic downturn. The era witnessed the fall of Nazism and the rise to global significance of the Soviet Union and the United States.

They were greatly influenced by the innovation of the prior generation (particularly the radio), they are in fact regarded as the 'radio babies' having grown up in the golden age of radio. Nevertheless, they were mostly traditional and conservative in their approach to life, less risk-takers but yet loyal, patriotic, selfless, ethical, and highly productive.

The League of Nations evolved into the United Nations towards the end of this period with most colonies starting to demand self-determination and independence. The foremost Nigerian nationalists came of age during this era.

The boomers or the baby boomers closely followed the silent generation, this is the era of those born between the years 1946-1964 during the post-World War II baby boom. This era saw a great improvement in human capital, particularly in education and healthcare with a noticeable influence on the global birth rate.

It was an era of global ideological confrontations majorly between communism, socialism, and capitalism. It was characterized by political instability and counter-culture activities like the sexual revolution, women empowerment, and feminist movements among others that gained prominence during this period.

Those born within the era are goal-centric, self-assured, resourceful, and value relationships; they currently make up some of the most influential people in almost every aspect of life all over the world.

The era basically saw the emergence of capitalism, consumerism, democracy, and Americanism as global phenomena. They were relatively comfortable with access to

opportunities and a level of social security. Most colonies gained independence and were tending towards prosperity, Nigeria for instance gained independence and discovered a huge deposit of oil with great potential for prosperity during this era.

It, however, ushered in military interference in the governance of Nigeria as in most of the former colonies. Those born in this era are perhaps the oldest digital immigrants with a significant presence on digital media platforms like Facebook and LinkedIn.

Generation X also regarded as the 'middle child' generation follows the baby boomer generation and precedes the millennial generation, they are those born between the years 1965-1979. The generation is also known as the "latchkey generation," because it is widely held that they have mostly grown up with no significant adult supervision with most parents prioritizing personal rights and economic survival over familial responsibilities.

They find alternatives to traditional family time in movies, music, and other pop cultures of that time. Reproductive and abortion rights, divorce, and the decline in birth rate particularly in the West gained a level of prominence during this period. Those born within this period are believed to be generally self-confident and optimistic, entrepreneurial, and market-oriented.

The era saw the rise of individualism, globalization, Hip-hop music, high tech, the internet, and the beginning of media decentralization, democratization, and audience empowerment. It also saw the eventual fall of communism and the dissolution of the USSR.

In Nigeria, the era witnessed the civil war. Labour and students' union struggles such as the famous 'Ali must go' were of this period. Indigenization, industrialization, and promotion of national unity though with little success were prioritized during this period particularly, with the creation of relevant regional research institutions, initiatives like the NYSC, Unity Schools, and the like. The era experienced three military coups and an aborted coup. Those born during this era are probably currently the most active digital migrants, particularly on Facebook.

The years 1980 to 1996 ushered in the Millennials with Generation Y or Gen Y, i.e., those who became adults at the turn of the new millennium. Their era saw a great global technological change, digital creativity, and economic and political disruption particularly, in their early years with global events like the fall of communism, the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and the global triumph of democracy. The millennials are highly

globalized and hyper-connected, especially through social media platforms, mobile devices, and the internet with possibilities of access to globally relevant knowledge, skills, and markets.

They grew into the digital culture with high levels of creativity and numerous technological innovations. Although massively empowered due to their unprecedented access to information and digital savviness, they, however, prioritize immediacy over detailed scrutiny requisite for understanding, hence they are regarded as the 'shallow generation. Unlike their predecessors, millennials are less religious and prefer to identify with physical and artificial realities than transcendental realities of faith.

They also experienced a fair share of hardship mostly due to a series of global economic instability and recessions and most recently the COVID-19 pandemic. They are majorly having a relatively late arrival to adult responsibilities and seem to prefer smaller family units. They also seem to prefer access and sharing over ownership, thereby responsible for the emergence of the sharing economy.

Millennials are also believed to be generally confident, assertive, extroverted, and highly expressive but at the same time regarded as lazy, and highly entitled with narcissistic tendencies and unrealistic life expectations thereby resulting in an unprecedented rate of suicide in their time. While they are assumed to be liberal, flexible, open-minded, and more supportive of minority rights as reflected in a series of global and local resistance to existing political orders, they have ironically displayed signs of voter apathy all around the world.

In Nigeria, the early years of this generation experienced three military coups, one attempted coup, and an eventual transition to democratic rule. They also witnessed a series of economic, political, and social instability especially due to the structural adjustment program (SAP) with its stories of hardship.

Their young adult years are, however, witnessing a bit of stability in government, the emergence of Nigerian digital tech entrepreneurs and unicorns, and the rise of the Nigerian creative industry. They were the major instigators of the popular #EndSARS movement and currently make up the largest population on social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube.

Closely behind Gen Y, are Generation Z or Gen Zers those who were born between the years 1997-2010, they are mostly parented by Gen Xers. They are generally believed to be the most ethnically diverse, and digitally savvy having grown up not knowing the world without social media and related technologies; they are in fact, the real mobile and digital natives. They are more pragmatic than idealistic, smart but restless having grown up in an era of speedy access to information, constant updates, and multitasking.

Gen Zers have an uncommon ability to process information faster than any other generation before them, they, however, have a lower attention span of 8 seconds down from 12 seconds as with the Millennials. Unlike the previous generations, Gen Zers don't understand lasting loyalty, especially to the workplace and brands. They are very competitive, trendy, and momentary and have also been classified as group thinkers.

Even though they grew up during an economic recession, Gen Zers are far more optimistic about the future than millennials. They are, however, showing signs of anxiety and radical disposition towards ethnic, racial, climate, gender, alternative energy, and other contemporary issues. Although majorly born into a democratic Nigeria, they have also witnessed an unprecedented rate of corruption, terrorism, massacre, kidnapping, epidemic and pandemic outbreaks, flooding, and other climatic issues. They are mostly present on social

media platforms like Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Tiktok, and Snapchat.

The Alpha is the youngest and the emerging generation of those born and still being born between the years 2010 and 2024, they are mostly the children of Gen Y (millennials) and younger Gen X. They are the typical 21st-century babies with countries like India, China, and Nigeria at the top of their birthplace. The greatest impacts on their childhood are probably the COVID-19 pandemic which was described by UNICEF as the greatest threat to children in seventy-five years, and the rapid evolution of digital media and technologies.

Having been born to parents who spent most of their time and exposed to every event of their lives on social media, they might end up not having a contrary sense of privacy. While the actual picture of Generation Alpha is still very blurry because they are still emerging, it is predicted that they will be vastly educated, ever learning mostly through screens, live streaming, and various immersive technologies like the virtual, artificial, and other extended realities. They have also been described as the Metaverse babies, digital citizens that see little or no distinction between entertainment, information, and education.

They will find more relevance in the knowledge of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), social and emotional competencies, and entrepreneurial skills. Others include strength and coordination skills, financial and digital literacy, innovation, creativity, and resourcefulness. The currently emerging sharing economy will likely evolve into a sense of collective ownership in their time. The main challenging issue of this era will be energy, climate, and environment-related. It has, in fact, been said that they will likely experience 2-7 times as many extreme weather events as ever before, particularly heat waves, flooding, drought, and deforestation among others.

Others will be economic, socio, and techno-political unrest. Alpha generation will by 2030 grow into a workforce that is highly inclusive, digitalized, data-oriented, diverse, decentralized, collaborative, flexible, and technically immersive. Their digital media platforms of interest include TikTok, WeChat, Roblox, Minecraft, and the emerging Metaverse media.

In essence, the emerging future, although certainly with its unique challenges, affords unimaginable possibilities for nations, groups, and individuals especially those who are adequately prepared and well-positioned for it.

Big data that is massively being generated on social media (the internet of human and social interactions), and the internet of things (IoT) will allow highly volatile, flexible, decentralized, and automated creativity like never before. Virtual existence will, in fact, be as real as the physical world with businesses, sports and entertainment, education, medicine, and almost every human activity including crimes, insecurity, and war being conducted digitally.

Nations in their attempts to tackle insecurity and defend their virtual territorial integrity are in fact setting up the fifth domain of warfare after land, sea, air, and space in cyberspace known as the cyber command. Nigeria, for instance, has taken a lead in Africa by launching its cyber command in the year 2019.

There is no doubt that the dynamism of digital media and technologies is at the core of emerging civilization. With the few attributes and available facts, imagining the possibilities and positioning for the emerging world of overall connectivity and singularity has become very essential for individuals, groups, and nations. The possibilities are indeed vast but in two directions: good and evil alike.

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FEVE'S WORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Relationship

Are you a parenting partner ?

BY SYLVIA SMITH



Do these complaints sound familiar? Do you feel like you are being treated like a child in your relationship?

There is a word for treating someone like a child – it's called parenting!

Many couples have a parent-child dynamic happening in their relationship, but that doesn't mean it's healthy. Having excessive rules and babying your partner can suck the fun – not to mention romance – out of your partner.

Nobody wants to feel like they have to boss their partner around. Similarly, no spouse likes being treated like a child in a relationship.

Not sure whether your relationship is suffering from a parent-child dynamic?

Keep reading to find out the signs of parenting behaviors in romantic relationships and tips on how to get back on the same playing field.

Are you a parenting partner who can't seem to stop babying your spouse?

As a mother or father, you're used to keeping your kids on a schedule. You wake them up, make their meals, remind them of their school assignments, and drive them around. These are all responsible things you do to keep them on track.

But remember that you are not your spouse's parent. And people usually do not appreciate being treated like a child in a relationship.

You love your partner, and you mean well when you help them out, but there are some behaviors that – while fine for your children – should never be done to your spouse without their permission.

Here are some behaviors that show your relationship has crossed a boundary:

- You always feel like your partner is doing something wrong
- You buy all of their clothes/dress them
- You make them chore/to-do list
- You keep track of their belongings
- You keep track of their social events
- You keep track of their spending
- You give them an allowance
- You're always picking up after your partner
- You dish up your spouse's meals
- You notice yourself frequently belittling your spouse
- You constantly cater to your partner

• You find yourself embarrassed of your spouse and frequently apologize for them

• You fill out your spouse's legal forms

Not all of these are inherently bad. Your spouse may appreciate that you serve them food or help them keep track of their business or social gatherings.

But when you parent your spouse so often that you start to believe they are helpless without you, you create an unhealthy thought process for both partners.

Your spouse may start to feel like they can't do anything. Your constant reminders that they would be lost if you weren't around may start to eat away at their self-esteem.

On your end, you may start inadvertently disrespecting your spouse or thinking less of them.

Why treating your partner like a child can destroy your romance Being treated like a child in a relationship is not the sexiest feeling in the world. Here are just some of the reasons why treating your partner like a child will doom your relationship:

1. You are exhausted

When you are with your partner, you want to relax. You don't want to be lectured about doing the dishes wrong, not getting up on time, or saying the wrong thing.

On the other hand, constantly nitpicking your spouse or worrying about them is exhausting. You don't want to be a nag or a parent to your partner.

A spouse's childish behavior is exhausting and can make you feel like you're turning into someone you don't like.

2. You feel disrespected

If you are the one being treated like a child, the constant lectures can sometimes feel degrading. You do not want to walk on eggshells around your partner.

If you are the parenting partner, you are likely to feel disrespected and may feel that

your spouse doesn't listen to you or respect you enough to help out and lighten your load.

It takes the romance out of your relationship

Nobody wants to be reminded of their parents while in the bedroom.

Being treated like a child in a relationship/viewing your partner as incapable of taking care of themselves is the least sexy thing you can bring into a relationship.

Not only will such behavior ruin your sex life, but it'll also suck the romance out of your relationship.

Tips for the partner being treated like a child

If you are being treated like a child in your relationship, you may be left feeling belittled, disrespected, and sometimes worthless. "Stop treating me like a child!" you may want to scream.

If you want your partner to understand how frustrating their behavior is, you have to learn to communicate clearly.

- Don't just say, "Don't treat me like a child." Instead, communicate how their actions make you feel. Use clear terms

your spouse can understand and try to get them to see things from your point of view.

- Establish healthy boundaries with your spouse that will help re-establish respect in your relationship.

Understand that sometimes your behavior may come off as irresponsible. This is why you are being treated like a baby by your girlfriend or boyfriend.

- If you act like a baby you'll be treated like a baby! So, look for ways to be more responsible. Don't rely on your spouse so much to cook meals and manage your life.

Take charge and show them they don't have to parent you if you really wish to stop being treated like a child in a relationship.

Tips for the spouse who is parenting their partner

Showing concern for your spouse is a natural, loving part of any relationship. The same can be said for doing caring things for your partner like cooking them dinner and buying them clothes, but it's important to recognize that some of your behavior can come off as controlling.

"I'm only trying to help them," you might say. But controlling where your spouse goes, when they wake up, and what they wear are toxic habits that can harm your relationship.

Instead of seeking to control everything, give your partner a chance to show responsibility for themselves. Otherwise a time will come when they will detest being treated like a child in a relationship.

If you are the one parenting your spouse, you also need to communicate your thoughts and feelings. You can't just say, "if you act like a baby, you'll be treated like a baby," and expect your spouse not to be offended.

Here are some things you can do to stop treating your lover like your child:

- Acknowledge your spouse does not like or does not want to be treated like a baby.
- Explain why you feel frustrated by their lack of drive.
- Reassure them that you don't want to parent them.
- Do not use parental tones with your spouse. Speak to them with respect.
- Create a family calendar that clearly marks everyone's responsibilities in the household.
- Be mindful of moments when you treat your partner as less than your equal.
- Apologize when you are in the wrong.
- Speak with your partner about issues that come up. For example, if you feel you are picking up after them all the time or that they are not taking their work responsibilities seriously.
- Don't criticize or correct your partner for doing something just because they didn't complete a task the way *you* would do it.
- Practice letting things go. When something bothers you, ask yourself: "Is this really worth getting in an argument or lecturing my partner over?" or "Will this still matter to me tomorrow morning?" Learning to let go of the little things will bring peace back into your relationship.
- If your partner makes a mistake, don't rush to clean up their mess. Let them face the



EVERYBODY'S WORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Living

Ways to manage the effects of rejection

By **RACHAEL PACE**

THE psychological effects of rejection include the fear or reaction to an event that causes you to pull away from others. Often, that leads to anger, resentment, reservation, anxiety, depression, and sadness. Everyone wants to feel loved and accepted – it is one of the necessities you need to survive in the world. Therefore, it stings when someone neglects or abandons you emotionally or physically.

Naturally, rejection takes a toll on everyone, including those perceived to have high self-esteem and confidence. Feeling rejected hurts and can make you question many of your ingrained self-beliefs.

What does rejection do to a person
The reactions to rejection take different forms, but the initial response is usually sadness and emotional pain. Fortunately, people can recover from different types of rejection pretty quickly if they are minor ones. For instance, you are more likely to quickly forget a stranger who snubbed you or when a group of people refused to admit you into their groups. However, being left out by your friends during a party decision or getting a negative response from a potential partner can have serious consequences. You will be faced with many questions, uncertainties, and self-doubts. You immediately seek ways to reconnect or know the reason behind the rejection. These are some of the psychological effects of rejection.

On the other hand, some people react to the pain of rejection through aggression. If someone feels another has thwarted his self-esteem, they may decide to force their way in or lash out angrily. Unfortunately, that may result in more significant consequences. Aggression and undesirable behavior can't help you become socially acceptable.

Also Try: [How Well Do You Handle Rejection Quiz](#)

Reasons rejection hurts so much

Why is rejection so painful? Why must we feel the pain of rejection at all? Why does the spirit of rejection in relationships affect many people? Why should you be bothered when a stranger snubbed you?

Rejection hurts because being loved, cared for, and appreciated are deeply-ingrained necessities of life.

According to [Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs](#), love and belonging needs, such as family bonds, intimacy, and membership in social groups, is essential to be great in life. Without fulfilling these needs, it's impossible to develop.

Learn more about Maslow's Pyramid in this video:

In addition, rejection hurts, mainly because our brain is programmed to respond to any painful event.

Scientists have discovered that the same area in the brain gets triggered when we experience both [physical pain and emotional rejection](#). A seemingly tiny rejection episode will hurt more



than we think and elicit pain, anguish, and aggression.

Nevertheless, the psychological effects of rejection are significantly felt through self-infliction.

Indeed, it's natural to feel emotionally down after a rejection reply to a second date or non-acceptance letter from a company you have been eyeing. But being self-examining can help us build our self-esteem back as soon as possible.

Getting rejected is enough damage to your emotional and mental well-being, but feeling disgusted and lamenting will continually push you down. The best way is to look for healthier ways of responding to rejection in a relationship or the pain of rejection. It helps to focus on rebuilding your self-esteem than licking your wound.

Related Reading: [9 Effective Ways of Dealing With Rejection](#)

5 revealing facts about rejection

We have established that rejection hurts no matter the circumstances or who did it. But it can take a significant toll on some people. So, why are the effects of rejection more significant on some people than others? Learn more as we shed light on some facts

you may not know about rejection.

1. The brain's response to rejection is similar to physical pain

The brain areas that respond to physical pain get triggered when we are rejected. In other words, how you feel when you hit your toe against a bed frame or a door is the same way you feel when your love interest rejects a second date or when your coach refuses to pick you up for a football match. That is why rejection hurts so much.

2. Rejection is more likely if you are sensitive to rejection

Again, everyone experiences the pain of rejection at one point or the other. The difference lies in how quickly you recover from it. Unfortunately, many people have been through rejections that they unconsciously envisage in any social gathering or meeting.

In other words, someone with the emotional traits of looking out for rejection cues is more likely to be sad, angry, and socially withdrawn. As a result, people may avoid such a person since they are perceived as defensive. This phenomenon is called a vicious cycle.

A vicious cycle is a condition rejection-sensitive people who are alert to rejection face. As they face more

rejection and dwell on it, it corroborates their rejection thoughts, leading to more rejection sensitivity.

3. Relive emotional rejection more than physical pain

One of the psychological effects of rejection is that it elicits the same response even after years of occurrence. Try recalling the last time you experienced physical pain. You can express disgust at the incident, but the chance of experiencing the pain again in the same body part is low.

However, recall the time you were left behind by your friends to attend a party or when your teacher didn't pick you for the choreography class in junior class. You will feel the same emotions (disgust, hatred, or anger) as you felt years ago. Our brain responds this way because social acceptance is an essential way of life.

4. Rejection destabilizes your need to belong

The need or urge to belong to a social group is vital for anyone to move up the social ladder. When people reject you, it makes you feel worthless. Reconnecting with family members, friends, and lovers helps us become emotionally stable and more capable of handling the psychological effects of rejection.

It gives us hope that we are valued and appreciated. On the other hand, feeling rejected hurts our emotions and mental well-being. Some people have been known to commit suicide or murder over rejection in a relationship.

5. Rejection damages your self-esteem

Positive self-esteem is what makes people appear confident even when they have nothing. It defines your self-worth and self-respect. When we get rejected, it often results in self-blame, self-criticism, self-doubts, wallowing in our inadequacies, and feeling disgusted. These reactions do nothing but kick you when you are already down.

Rejection in a relationship or rejection by friends and family members happens due to different reasons, including incompatibility, lack of chemistry, and desires or different things. Blaming yourself intensifies the emotional pain you feel and makes it challenging to recover.

6 ways to manage the psychological effects of rejection

Now that you know the effects of rejection, how do you manage the signs of

ejection in a relationship? How do you cope with the pain of rejection without letting it affect your life?

Learn about healthy and constructive ways to deal with emotional rejection in the following paragraphs:

Related Reading: [How to Overcome Fear of Rejection in Any Aspect of Life](#)

1. Embrace the rejection

One way to cope with the spirit of rejection in relationships is to accept it. Allow yourself to feel and experience the pain of rejection. Don't hide from it or bury it in your subconscious. Research shows that [accepting negative emotions](#) can truly result in positive mental health benefits by reducing stress levels.

Do a quick mental assessment: "Okay, I've been rejected by this person, and it's painful. It makes me want to shout, lash out or insult the person." Acknowledge his feeling and let it flow freely through you. This step will direct you to the next line of action, leading to recovery.

2. Understand the pain

It's normal to understand why being snubbed by an unfamiliar person hurts. Just because they are strangers doesn't mean you should wave the pain of rejection off. It is best not to live in denial so that you can analyze your feelings well.

Know that you are well in your right to hurt after a potential lover rejects your proposal. After all, you thought you could bond with the person. The realization that it's not possible is enough to cause emotional damage.

Acceptance of the pain is the beginning of your healing process when dealing with the psychological effects of rejection.

3. Don't blame yourself

When people reject you, especially in a romantic relationship, it's typical to think you are the problem. As such, you blame and dwell on your weaknesses. However, it is a wrong move when dealing with the psychological effects of rejection.

Besides, remember it takes two of you so that it may be about the other person.

4. Allow for self-compassion

Besides not blaming yourself, you should take a step further and be compassionate with yourself. After getting rejected, use a counter-attack action by moving close to people that love and support you. They are always right there for us, but we always choose to focus our efforts on others.

Now that you feel the signs of rejection in a relationship embrace those who care for you. Know that you are not doing this for social approval but because you deserve to be around people that value and respect you. Besides, these people are more likely to listen to you without judgment.

5. Don't let it affect you

While many people won't know why they are rejected, others are lucky to understand the reasons. Whatever the reasons for getting rejected, don't let it define you and your actions when dealing with the psychological effects of rejection.

Feel the pain, but don't let it linger for long. Know that you are more than your present feeling, and only you have the power to change things in your life.

6. Seek help

Once you know the reasons for getting rejected, see if it's something you can work towards. For instance, it's worth self-examining if people avoid you because you are usually defensive.

Conclusions

Rejection involves pushing another person away. The psychological effects of rejection can negatively impact one's life if not managed well. Unfortunately, you can't avoid rejection as you live your life. Learning how to cope and manage the signs of rejection in a relationship can help mitigate the effects.



Editorial

Stop these senseless killings of clergymen

Clergymen have lately become the deliberate target of Islamist insurgents with their outmoded and outdated fight for the institutionalisation of the Islamic faith as a state religion in the country. This view echoes the seeming government lack of action in curbing the activities of these agents of darkness and retrogression.

Sunday January 15, was a black Sunday in Christendom when Rev. Fr. Isaac Achi of the St Peter and Paul Catholic Church in Kafin Koro, in Niger State was murdered and his body burnt to ashes by Islamists shouting 'Allahu Akbar'. Sadly, the police took hours to arrive at the scene even after the dastardly deed had been committed, reinforcing the already popularly held view that government agents deliberately look the other way, allowing these criminals wreck-havoc on their perceived enemies.

And, because government has refused to rise to the occasion and tacitly seem to support the activities of these groups, they continue to disregard the spirit and letter of our constitution which guarantees the right of everyone to worship whatever god he deems fit. We do not think that those who crafted our constitution made a mistake by emphasizing the secularity of the Nigerian nation.

As a matter of fact, Rev. Fr. Achi has been a target of the Islamists movement. He was in 2011, the Pastor in charge of St. Theresa's Church in Madalla where Boko Haram rammed a car packed with explosives on Christmas day. He was again abducted in 2013 by a militant group but was released shortly after.

On the same day Fr. Achi was killed, 25 protestant worshippers were kidnapped in Northwestern Nigeria, when their prayers were reportedly interrupted by a motorcycle riding gang. As if to add salt to injury, in Ekiti, Rev. Fr. Michael Olubummi Olofinlade was also abducted on January 14 and the kidnappers are yet to make contact.

On April 24, 2018, two Catholic Priests, Rev. Frs. Joseph Gor and Felix Tyolaha were among 17 people killed by suspected Fulani herdsmen in Gwer East Local Government Area of Benue State. In May 2021, Fr. John Bako Shekwolo was kidnapped by unknown gunmen, he remains missing. In May 2021, Fr. Alphonsus Bello was killed in a midnight attack on St Vincent Ferrer Catholic Church in Sokoto while Fr. Joseph Keke was abducted. In March 2022, Fr. Joseph Akete Bako of Kaduna diocese died after more than a month of abduction. And Fr. Vitus Borogo of the same Kaduna diocese was killed in June of 2022 after a raid by a terrorists gang on a farm he was visiting.

According to Aid to the Church in Need (ACN), at least 18 priests have been kidnapped in Nigeria since the beginning of 2022, five in the first week of July alone. Statistics indicate that although most were released unhurt, three were killed. This is not to talk of the Owo massacre of June 5, 2022 which claimed over 40 lives and the burning down of Catholic Seminary in Kaduna and the Rectory of several priests.

It is our considered view that government needs to up the ante in the fight against these agents of the devil. We cannot continue to allow miscreants' stunt our development in the name of religion. We must find ways of protecting ourselves since government seems to be incapacitated in that regard. And our politicians must steer clear of the activities of some of the supporters of these deviants. Since it is election, Nigerians must resolve to vote only people who would ensure the protection of our constitution not those who would look the other way when they are flouted.

EXAMINATION is regarded as the means of measuring the level of knowledge or cognitive ability of students within a specified period of time.

Unfortunately, examination of different levels have caused a lot of problems to some people due to their various engagement corrupt practices tagged; examination malpractice'. This is indeed a problem that requires urgent attention because the importance of examination in any other forms cannot be over emphasized. Such is the only way one's ability or capacity can be assessed.

Today, the spate of examination malpractice seems to be very rampant in primary, secondary and tertiary institutions which to a large extend affects the standard or quality of education of our students in the country.

Some of the causes of

examination malpractice include; Poor preparation for examination, poor conductive environment, bad parental and peer group influence.

The implication of examination malpractice is that the students will loose the



The effects of examination malpractice

ability to depend on his or her personal knowledge acquired and therefore finds a shortcut to cheat which at the long run the certificate acquired may not be defended by the individual. This trend affects not only the individuals included but a complete back to the society.

The adverse effect is the fact that the nation will have to depend quacks who may not actually be suitable for certain positions or responsibilities in life or in the society.

I wish to therefore,

seize the opportunity to appeal to the Government to review the present examination process by setting standards so as not to scare the students sitting for examinations.

Secondly, examiners must also understand that they are only testing the ability of the student and not setting a trap for failure. Perhaps that may be a recipe for a better time ahead and a training point in our education system.

In my view attaching so much attention or

importance to paper qualification may be the likely reason why there is the craze to past examination at all costs.

It is time for government to also look at one's personal skills above certificate and these would in my opinion reduce or even do away with the negative trend of examination malpractice in our country.

Ezekiel James Nyam,
I.T Student of Plateau State Polytechnic Jos Campus.

Traffic burden at British American Junction

JOS the Plateau State capital is gate way to some states in the North East, especially for commuters traveling from Abuja, on their way to Bauchi, Yobe, Gombe and Adamawa States.

For the past 11 months, the road has been a construction site with all usable paths of the road now blocked which has given way to the fly over being constructed.

This has however affected both travelers and commuters alike. The only alternative route now is for vehicles to divert their route and because of that, there's a regular traffic jam along the junction especially with the volume of motorist and

tricyclist all struggling their way to their destinations.

Another worry on the traffic holdup is usually how to contend with heavy duty trucks that usually ply the road.

Unfortunately this same route is used to convey goods to different parts of Jos city centre and also the only used by residents of millionaire quarters Tina Junction and Angwan Rukuba who used that road to convey their children to school on a regular basis.

One can therefore understand the confusion, the time lost and the health hazards associated with going through the British American Junction for each passing day.

Travelling to the Jos University Teaching Hospital (JUTH) is always a huge problem for those heading towards that direction.

I therefore wish to appeal to the Plateau State government to a matter of urgency collaborate with the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) with the V.I.O unit, the police to restore sanity law and order for those who always choke up the road which is not only narrow but poses senses danger for the users who always have to contend with one lane due to the expansion of the other lane of the road.

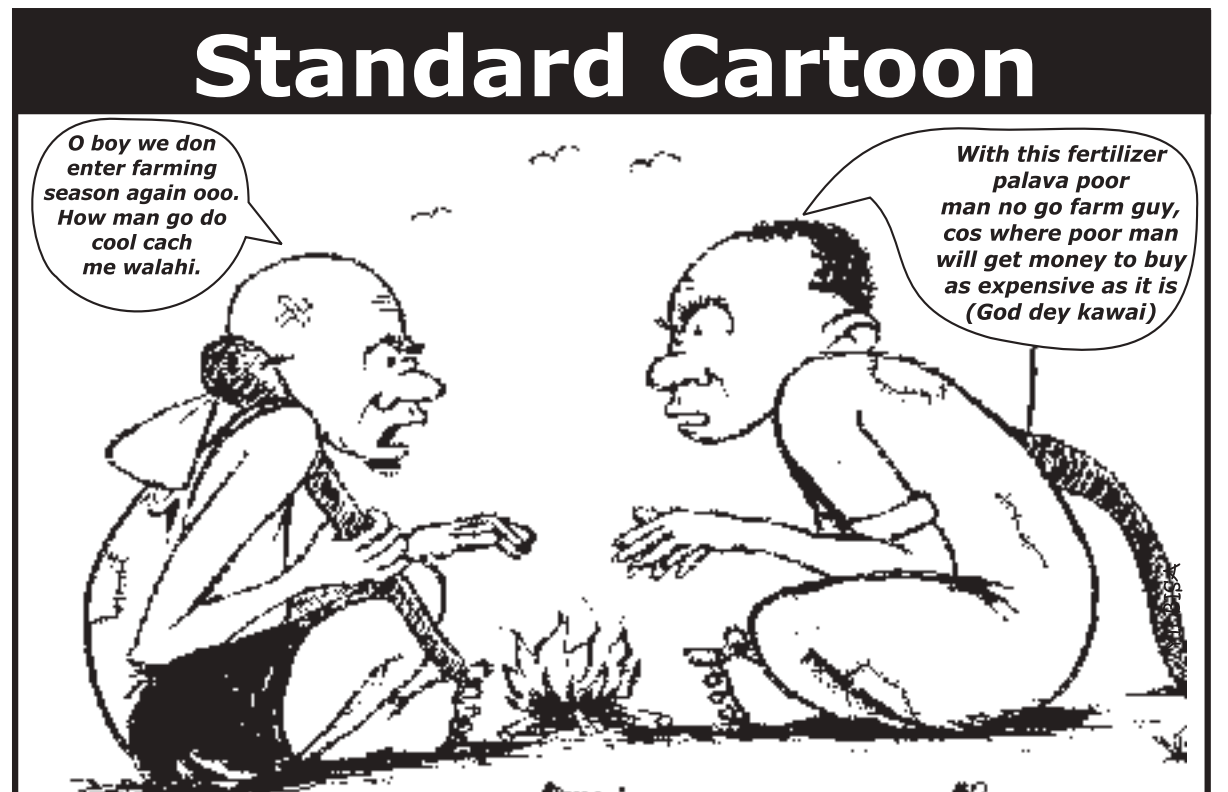
Another appeal is for government to expedite on

action on the work so that people using the road can go back to their normal lives on a smooth dual road.

While appreciating the government for this bold initiative, it is expected that the government should be mindful of the suffering, and the burden people usually encounter as the result of the construction work.

I also want to suggest that alternative routes should be opened in order to ease the challenges so that the masses can also appreciate and reap the dividends of democracy of the present administration in the state.

Jemimah Othniel Wakili
Is an I.T Student University of Maiduguri.



Opinion

By CEES HARMON

Nigeria: Brain circulation and brain drain

WITH the sustained *japa trend* over the years, many Nigerian policymakers and well-wishers are worried there is a looming skilled labour crisis due to brain drain.

However, international migration researchers are increasingly noting a new phenomenon they call "brain circulation" whereby talented people leave, settle down abroad and later return to their home countries with their intellectual assets, and yet are not fully "lost" to either place.

Studies point, at least partially, to the economic success stories of countries like China, India, and Israel. For example, by 2000, over one-third of Silicon Valley's high-skilled workers were foreign-born, and overwhelmingly from Asia. These U.S.-educated engineers are transforming developmental opportunities for formerly peripheral regions as they build professional and business connections to their home countries.

In a process more akin to brain circulation than brain drain, these engineers and entrepreneurs, aided by the lowered transaction costs associated with digitization, are transferring technical and institutional know-how between distant regional economies faster and more flexibly than most large corporations.

Dr Akintoye Akindele, an investment professional with over 25 years of experience, propounded just that in a working paper titled ***Beyond Remittances: Unlocking the True Value of the African Diaspora***. According to him, Nigeria's economic breakthrough could very well be made possible by diaspora assets, not necessarily from the current annual remittances of \$22 billion but from knowledge and skills circulation.

He opined that Nigerians abroad, who have marinated the wealth of knowledge and skills of those developed countries, should transfer the same to the homeland. As of 2020, more than 17 million Nigerians live abroad and have acquired various skills in developed countries.

There is no gainsaying the fact that Nigeria's diaspora population is endowed with knowledge and skills.

For instance, Nigeria has the third-highest number of foreign doctors working in the UK. The only certified cardio nephrologist in the country is of Nigerian origin.

37% of Nigerian Americans hold a bachelor's degree and 17% hold a master's degree. Although Nigerians account for less than 1% of the black population in the US, they make up 25% of all black students at Harvard Business School.

About 100,000 Nigerian students go abroad for studies annually. Paradoxically, \$1 billion is spent annually on medical tourism in Nigeria. Doctor to patient ratio is 1:6000, 10 times less than the World Health Organisation's recommended 1:600. That is due to poor availability of skilled personnel and poor health facilities. The number of practising medical doctors in Nigeria is approximately 35,000.

Education-wise, about 10.5 million children in Nigeria are out of school; 40% of primary school teachers in Nigeria are not qualified.

The rate of education accessibility in Nigeria is 20.1%. Nigeria's share of the global shortage of teachers is a staggering 12%.

There is a huge knowledge and skills gap between the diaspora population and the homeland that should be narrowed to catch up with global development speed.

Nigerians in diaspora are willing to return home, but...

The Chief Executive Officer of Anthill Concepts Limited, Dr Emeka Okengwu told Nairametrics that Nigerians that have acquired skills abroad are willing and eager to invest their technical assets back home but in many instances are denied the capacity to do so because they may not fit into the system back home. This, he said, is due to poor infrastructure and facilities back home, where highly skilled professionals cannot fit in.

Also in an interview with Nairametrics, Professor of capital markets, Joseph Uwaleke, said

whereas most Nigerians are willing to come back home, challenges such as insecurity and lack of opportunities put them in a difficult position. As a result, most opt to stay in the host countries where life is better and opportunities abound. He contrasted the Chinese, Indian and Israeli experiences to Nigeria's, citing that the environment to return to those countries are far more attractive compared to Nigeria.

Also, professor of economics, Gbenga Gbangbose, said for some Nigerian professionals living abroad, knowledge circulation is not possible because their fields of specialization are not practised in Nigeria.

He said such professionals as nuclear physicists, for example, would be idle in Nigeria because there are no facilities to support their practice.

The view cited above syncs with the experiences of other African countries. For example, in a forum organized by the Africa Development Bank in 2018, participants identified reasons why well-trained people remain abroad. The reasons include poor policies and governance at home and a lack of incentives and infrastructure to attract them to return.

China was cited as a good example where the government established infrastructure to attract thousands of students sent annually to America and Europe to study. There is a close relationship between the Chinese government and the students abroad that enables skills to be 'repatriated' back home and this has been partly responsible for China's fast development and economic boom. Dr Thomas Auf der Heyde, the Deputy Director-General for South Africa's Research and Development Support Department of Science and Technology, shared his country's experiences on the subject. He said South Africa has reached the equilibrium point where the number of highly skilled people leaving the country is equal to those coming into the country.

According to him, "This involved a

lot of innovations to attract the best brains to remain in, or come back to the country. For instance, South Africa developed strategic national programs such as the Astronomy Radio telescope. The country also created the right conditions at home."

Heyde added that scientists are also paid handsomely.

Nigerians abroad still connect to Nigeria

While Nigerians in the diaspora have flourished abroad, they have also tried to engage the homeland but have been met with some stiff challenges.

Many Nigerians in the diaspora are willing and able to provide support to key sectors such as education, health, and engineering but do not know the channels to follow.

Akindele said that is due to pertinent underlying issues including trust, civil and political unrest and the uncertainty that stokes fear of political and security situations across the country, poor enabling environment to foster growth, inadequate infrastructure and lack of understanding of local terrain and policy.

These issues hamper the willingness of the diaspora to make long-term home-based investment and contribution decisions.

Nigerians abroad have often had difficulty planning and coordinating their investments in the country without their physical presence. There is always the issue of how they will monitor progress remotely and get true updates, infrastructure challenges, etc.

Many Nigerians that have acquired knowledge and honed their skills abroad are eager to come back.

That is demonstrated in the fact that most professors in Nigerian universities today were in one way or another trained abroad, but came back and are serving the homeland.

The willingness to return and circulate knowledge is intrinsic in Nigerians. But the right environment to serve should be created, as it was in South Africa.

Nigeria needs all of her brain assets to circulate for development and

prosperity.

Given some semblance of the right environment, that trend seems to be playing out already. Listing examples from the known to the unknown, we see that in the fintech subindustry, Nigerians are already shoring up brain circulation.

Olugbenga Agboola, a co-founder and CEO of Flutterwave, obtained his Master of Business Administration from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Sloan School of Management, Cambridge. Olugbenga Agboola also possesses a master's degree in Information Technology Security and Behavioural Engineering.

He obtained his standard IT security certifications from EC-Council University, located in Albuquerque, New Mexico. After that, he obtained his Project Management and Advanced Computing degree from the University of Westminster in London, England.

Upon bagging the above-listed degrees and more, Agboola returned to Nigeria to circulate his wealth of knowledge, hence the national asset in Flutterwave.

Tayo Oviolu is the founder and group CEO of Paga, a mobile payments company that is focused on digitizing cash in emerging economies. Oviolu is a graduate of Electrical Engineering from the University of Southern California and also has a master's degree in Business Administration from the Graduate School of Business, Stanford University. He formerly served as Manager of Corporate Development at Cisco Systems in San Jose California.

Oviolu is circulating his brain in the fintech subindustry. With his intellectual investment, we have at our service, Paga.

Examples in other industries abound. And it's from the known to the unknown. In the medical field, and engineering, to name a few, Nigerians are demonstrating interest in giving back to their home country what intellectual assets they have acquired.

By
OPEOLUWA DAPO-THOMAS

Reducing cost of governance is what Nigeria needs

FOR a country to achieve its objectives, it needs the **buy-in** of its citizens. That is the hallmark of democracy. Government of the people, for the people, by the people as Abraham Lincoln puts it.

Unfortunately, this is not the case in Nigeria today. And the disconnect between the Nigerian government and Nigerians has seen the country struggle to attain its goals.

The hypothesis today is that prudent governance would help a country blossom much more than the actual savings of the government could.

Cost of governance is a much-talked-about concept in the Nigerian political discourse – politicians are seen as flamboyant and earn some of the largest salaries compared to their counterparts in other parts of the world. There have been times when stakeholders have asked for a leaner presidency and National Assembly. But those discussions never pass the political commentary stage. There is never a political will to implement these changes.

Let us talk about the national budget. Everyone complains about how 40% of the national budget goes into recurrent expenditure. The budget expenditure of

N20.51 trillion represents the highest in Nigeria's history and is to be (partly) funded by expected revenue of N9.73 trillion. The country's highest recorded deficit of N10.78 trillion (4.78% of estimated GDP) is to be financed by new borrowings, privatisation proceeds and drawdown on loans already secured for specific projects.

Put into perspective, Nigeria needs to generate an additional 111% of its current revenue (i.e. more than double its revenue), to be able to meet its expenditure needs without borrowing. This technically implies that some of Nigeria's borrowings will fund consumption which isn't healthy for the country in the long term. Loans should largely go into capital assets that bring returns on investments to pay back debt.

Apart from the quantifiable effects of reducing the cost of governance and recurrent expenditure, there are some intangible ripple effects it has. Over the years, Nigeria has been in long battles with the academic union and the labour union. When you hear their leaders speak or threaten

imminent strikes, they point at several places the government can reduce costs and divert funds to address their issues.

They point at subsidy costs, they point at National Assembly salaries, they point at costs of white elephant projects, they look at the calibre of schools children of politicians study. These things make them ignore the government's excuses for not meeting their demands even if their demands would jeopardise the fiscal health of the country. For example, government funding tertiary institutions have proven to not be a sustainable model but it is hard to explain that when they see politicians spending hundreds of millions on elections.

Additionally, Governments can generate more revenue if they can judiciously prove they can spend the country's resources well. Expanding the tax net has been one of the most difficult things previous administrations have tried to achieve – but a lot of people do not feel they should pay taxes, especially as they do not trust their governments to judiciously use the tax resources.

Taxes are an important source of government revenue worldwide. In the UK and US – different forms of taxes constitute above 90% of government revenue. In Nigeria, only 40 million Nigerians are in the tax net and on a global scale, the West African country has one of the lowest tax-to-GDP ratios in the world.

If citizens believe the government spends proper use of their tax revenue, they will be compelled to understand increases in taxes as well and the government can depend on less borrowing.

The bridge between the Nigerian government and its people has broken to a point that people want the country to fail to justify their political points. A mere interest in running for political office is greeted with cynicism as people would view you as a potential "national cake" eater.

Conclusively, The ethos of public office should be sanctimonious and that can only be displayed in reducing the cost of governance by reducing salaries, merging agencies, and making public office unattractive as people will understand that only those who want to serve are in public office. Public office should be seen as a service and not as an occupation.

NEWS

HYPPADEC harps on asset declaration

MANAGING Director of the Hydro Electric Power Producing Areas Development Commission (HYPPADEC) Abubakar Sadiq Yelwa, has called on staff from the six HYPPADEC states in the country to comply with the Federal Government's rule and regulation on assets declaration.

Yelwa (Katukan Yauri) made the call while declaring open, a two-day workshop on "Strict Compliance With Asset Declaration and Code of Conduct for staff of the Commission organised in collaboration with Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB) in Lokoja Monday.

Yelwa stated that the Commission was committed to assets declaration with a view to aiding the Federal Government in tracking the assets and liabilities of its staff vis-a-vis their income.

The Managing Director whose speech was read by Alhaji Bala Mohammed, Assistant Director (Accounts), in the Commission said the training also aimed to mitigate unethical conducts including corruption, money laundering and fraud.

He held that the training would sensitize the staff on the need to declare their assets as at when due and as well, sensitise them on the provisions of the Code of Conduct to prepare them for high ethical standards in the discharge of their duties.

According to him, the Federal Government, under President Muhammadu Buhari's leadership, is unprecedentedly committed to fighting corruption and improving accountability in the Nigerian civil and public service.

"Let me use this opportunity to quickly unravel a false impression that assets declaration is limited to only top-tier public officers.

From JOSEPH AMEDU, Lokoja



Yelwa

Transparency and accountability are the life-support of democracy.

"As a result, the 1999 Constitution (as amended) stipulates that all persons on the payroll of the Federal, State and Local Government, from the President to the lowest ranking personnel in a local government office, should declare their assets and that of their spouse(s) who are not in civil and public service and their children under 18 years age.

"Public officers are expected to declare their assets immediately after taking office and thereafter at the end of every four years. They are equally required to do so at the end of term in office.

"It is the mandate of HYPPADEC to conceive, plan and implement projects and programmes to prevent and tame ecological and environmental hazards and to ensure development in Nigeria's power producing areas.

"This cannot be achieved without an honest, committed and ethically upright workforce.

"Apart from assets declaration, therefore, the facilitators of this workshop would coach you on how to link the Commission's mission,

values and principles with standards of professional conduct", he said.

Earlier in her opening remarks, Engr (Mrs) Joan Ogwuche, Kogi State Coordinator of HYPPADEC, commended the initiative of the management of the Commission in organising the training to enable the staff bring out the best in their conduct as civil servants.

Ogwuche reiterated the need for the staff, many of whom were newly employed civil servants to be transparent, diligent and ensure better service delivery.

The facilitator of the training Koyonda Edward, Assistant Director, Education and Advisory Service, Code of Conduct Bureau, said the organization was mandated, in line with the constitution, to prevent corruption at all levels.

According to him, the Code of Conduct is the ethical standard for all public officers which they must all be aware of and adhere to adding that all public officers were entitled to enlightenment to help them avoid pitfalls.

The workshop is simultaneously taking place in the six HYPPADEC states in Nigeria including Kebbi, Plateau, Niger, Benue, Kwara and Kogi States.

Change of Name

PAULINA

I, formerly known as **PAULINA SHITTU**, now wish to be known and addressed as **PAULINA SHITTU GAUDE-JIWUL**. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

SPACE FOR SALE

SPACE FOR SALE

**BASSA LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCIL
PLATEAU STATE
INVITATION TO TENDER FOR THE EXECUTION OF
CAPITAL PROJECTS FOR 2023 FISCAL YEAR**

1:00 INTRODUCTION

The Bassa Local Government Council wishes to invite experienced and competent contractors with proven capacity to submit Tenders for the following jobs:

**2:00 PROFILE OF PROJECTS:
ELECTRIFICATION**

Kishika
Zikke
Kawam
Nyakala -Akasaru-Igbako
Purchase of 2 No. 300KVA Transformer
Purchase of 3 No. 200KVA Transformer

ROAD WORKS

Kasuru Road
Dantanko -Hukke Road (Phase 1)
Zallaki Road (Phase 1)
Kwanan Lauje-Attashen-Zagun Road

WATER.

25 No. Hand Pump Boreholes
3 No. Motorized Boreholes

CULVERTS.

The Construction of Box culvert along Hukke Raod
The Construction of Box culvert along Chokobo Road
The Construction of Box culvert along Binchi Road (Kasancham)
The Construction of Box culvert along Kamare Road.
The Construction of Box culvert along Buhit-Esau Road.
Laterite Backfill and completion of Dundu Road Box Culvert.
Stabilization/Erosion control on Mafara Road

CONSTRUCTION/RENOVATIONS

Construction of 2 No. classroom, an office and store at Nomadic Primary school, Assak
The construction of 2 No. classroom, an office and store at Kamare, Kadamo ward.
The renovation of the Local Government Council's Red Bricks Estate, Jebbu-Bassa.
The renovation of the Local Government Council's Social Works Building, Jebbu-Bassa.
The renovation of a block of 3 classrooms, an office and store in LEA Primary school, Igbako

PHC CLINICS

PHC Clinic Kpasho
PHC Clinic Rimi
PHC Clinic Kishi II
PHC Clinic Katumai
PHC Clinic Mafara (PHC B)
PHC Clinic Agingi
PHC Clinic Rewienku
PHC Clinic Kamare
PHC Clinic Kwasha
PHC Clinic Igbako

PURCHASE OF PROPERTY

The purchase of a Building Located in Jebbu-Bassa

3:00 ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS OR TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

The following are the requirements that should be submitted by Tenderers on or before the closing date.
Evidence of Company Registration with Cooperate Affairs Commission (CAC).
Evidence of Company's Registration with the Bassa Local Government Council.
Evidence of company Income Tax Clearance Certificate for the last three (3) years (2020,2021 and 2022.).
Evidence of VAT Registration and Remittance.
Evidence of Tax Identification Number (TIN).
Evidence of similar and variable projects successfully executed within the last 5 years.
Comprehensive company profile.

COLLECTION OF TENDER DOCUMENTS

Interested Companies are to collect the standard Tender Documents from the Office of the Director of Works, Bassa Local Government Council, Bassa upon the presentation of evidence of a non-refundable fee of N100,000=only (One Hundred Thousand Naira Only).

SUBMISSION OF TENDER DOCUMENTS

The completed Tender documents are to be spiral bound and duly signed on each page and should be addressed to

**"THE EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN,
BASSA LOCAL GOVT. COUNCIL,
BASSA, PLATEAU STATE"**

NOTE: The completed Tender documents should be deposited in the tender box in the office of the Director of Personnel Management (DPM), Bassa LGC.

6.00 CLOSING DATE/TENDERS OPENING

The submission of Tenders shall be closed by 12 noon on Friday, 3rd February, 2023.
The Tender documents shall be opened by 2:00pm same day (Friday, 3rd February, 2023) in the Legislative Chambers of the Local Government Council, Bassa.
The representative of companies, Civil Right organization and the public are invited to witness the Tenders opening on Friday, 3rd February, 2023 at 2:00 pm.

7.00 IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Only qualified Tenders would be awarded the contract or supplies.
Original documents on any aspect of company's submission may be requested for sighting.
Bassa LGC shall not be liable for any cost on the parts of companies that Tendered.
The advert of "Invitation to Tender for the execution of capital project for 2023 fiscal year" shall not be construed as commitment on the part of Bassa LGC nor shall it entitle any company to make claims or seek any indemnity from the LGC by virtue of having responded to the advertisement.
Bassa LGC reserves the right to reject/accept any Tender document without assigning any reason(s) whatsoever.
Late submission shall not be accepted.
Bassa LGC reserves the right to verify any claims by companies. Companies should therefore include necessary guarantees for such verification.

**Mrs. Kanang Fom Bot,
Director of Personnel Management (DPM),
For: Executive Chairman.**

News

Beni releases 10 million in support of Tarok students

By **BULUS GAMBO**

MEMBER Representing Langtang North and Langtang South at the House of Representatives, Hon. Beni Butmak Lar has made good her N10 million pledge intended to support indigent Tarok students studying in tertiary institutions across the country.

Hon Lar had during the Iium Otarok Day celebration held on the 14th May 2022 pledged the large sum of money as part of her constituency project for education support to students of the area studying in various institutions.

A press statement signed by the National President of the Ngwang Ishi O'Tarok, (NIO), Amb. Nanpon Danjuma Sheni disclosed that the amount has been released to the leadership of the (NIO) as trustee to not only cover tuition but also departmental fees for qualified students from Langtang North and Langtang South Local Government Areas of Plateau State.

The statement further quoted the president as saying that "the facility which is targeted at assisting indigent Tarok students in tertiary institutions is accessible to all those who are qualified to benefit from the fund."

He added that "it is non-partisan and aimed at boosting education in Tarokland. It is being administered under the trusteeship of the National body as an indication of its nonpartisan nature."

Amb. Sheni then appealed to all Tarok students studying in tertiary institutions in Nigeria who are eligible to apply and benefit from the fund to do so.

The President noted that "interested students should collect forms from the NIO National Secretary or phone 08033859565 for further



Beni

details and return all completed forms with full details of the applicant including a copy of the admission letter as well as a photo ID card as applicants would be treated on first come basis'.

Sheni appreciated Hon. Beni Lar for this positive impact on Tarok students which will go a long way in uplifting the standard of education in the area urging others to emulate this kind gesture.

Guluwa appreciates Nigerian Legion for sacrifices

Executive Chairman Bokkos has laid wreath in honour of Fallen Heroes who paid the ultimate prize to ensure a safe society

Speaking in Bokkos at the closing ceremony of Armed Forces Remembrance Day, Hon Guluwa has this to say.

"I have the singular honor as today presents us with another privilege to address our heroes as we mark the 2023 Armed Force Remembrance Day Celebration. This annual event is to remember the sacrifices as a mark of honor to the dead and the living who suffered various deprivation as a result of several wars they participated in and around the globe.

As humans, we have the duty to reflect soberly and care for the plights of their families in our little ways which is quite symbolic in several ways. These are heroes both death and standing before us who had

fought gallantly in the World Wars, the Nigeria's Civil War and many peace keeping operation with courage, unalloyed patriotism and bravery to keep the internal and other world peace. Nigeria is reckoned with amongst polity of nations for their gallantry.

Today, nobody would wish for war but we must be prepared to contend with elements who do not mean well towards us. I am saying this with every sense of responsibility because Bokkos has experienced its share of heightened security threat in 2022 as a result of attacks and killings of innocent people in several communities by enemies of our people. These are not times to mince with words but to call to brace to the fact that we have a real threat in our hands and together we will find a permanent and lasting solution.

Governor Simon Lalong has challenged stakeholders of the All Progressives Congress to mobilise massively for the victory of the Party at all levels in the 2023 General Elections.

Governor Lalong threw the Challenge at the inauguration of APC campaign Ward Coordinators and 20 State Ward Chairmen of Jos North Local Government Area, held at the Jos North Local government Secretariat in Jos.

Governor Simon Lalong, who said the APC is sure of victory in the forth coming General Elections because of its acceptability, however encouraged party faithfuls to intensify strategies of mobilizing the electorate to participate in the exercise.

Represented by State Commissioner of Science and Technology, Benjamin Jang, Governor Lalong reminded Citizens on the need to obtain their Permanent Voters Cards as it is the only way for them to elect credible leaders.

Governor Lalong commended the Chairman of Jos North Local Government Council, Shehu Bala Usman for synergizing with the INEC to

APC Campaign Council receives 5000 decampees



Lalong

bring voters cards collection nearer to the people of the LGA.

Chairman of Jos North, Shehu Usman while inaugurating the Ward Coordinators and Local government Campaign Council, Chaired by Secretary to the Government of the

State, Professor Danladi Atu, Former Speaker Plateau State House of Assembly Peter Azi, Ahmed Nazifi, Former Commissioner of Special Duties and Inter-government affairs Jeremiah Werr, and Bashir Sati assured that the LGA will give APC block votes in the General Elections.

Usman added that Jos North remains the heart beat of APC in the State, stressing that the inauguration of the Ward Coordinators is to fortify the campaign process towards victory for the Party at all levels.

Jos North Local government APC Chairman, Sani Gangare who received decampees also inaugurated State Ward APC Chairmen at the event, called on them to hit the ground running noting that the party will not condone anti-party activity (es) by any member or members

Leader of the decampees, Nasiru Abubakar explained that the peace initiatives and inclusive leadership style of Bala Usman led administration in Jos North, endeared the over five thousand members of various political parties to join the APC.

Members of the central working committee include Secretary to the Government of State, Prof Danladi Atu, Former Speaker Plateau State House of Assembly Peter Azi, Former Commissioner of Information Muhammed Nazifi, Former Commissioner of special Duties and Inter-Governmental Affairs Jeremiah Werr and Special Adviser to the Governor on Inter-Party Affairs Bashir Sati Musa.

Responding on behalf of the committee, Peter Azi assured of their resolved to work asiduously in college to deliver all the party candidates to Victory.

There were goodwill messages from the Senatorial Candidate of the All Progressives Congress for Plateau North, Chris Giwa; Former Speaker of the State Assembly, Peter Azi; Special Adviser to Governor Simon Lalong on Political Matters, Bashir Sati and Former Management Committee Chairman of Jos North, Theresa Azi; among other dignitaries.



Guluwa

The Local Authority in collaboration with the State and other structures have been working all round for a solution to this as we are all aware. To this end, we have formulated Inter and Intra local government approach network for which measures have been taken and communicated to us through various traditional and community leaders in bid to curb further challenges.

The 2023 general election is just next month. It is incumbent on us to give our contribution and support for a smooth and successful transition of government come June 2023. This is important in democracy, as transition is part of its success.

I wish to commend Mr President in no little amount for signing the electoral bill into law which has given more credence and will greatly smoothen as well improve the integrity of elections in the country where experts have already given a high mark.

I assure us that this administration shall continue to pay attention to things that has direct well being of our people. I implore us therefore

Bokkos APC stakeholders vow to deliver candidates

All Progressives Congress (APC) Party Bokkos LGA today has held strategic stakeholders meeting to strategize on how to deliver all the candidates of the Party from

The party elders, leaders, principal appointees and party stakeholders all brainstormed on ways and means to secure a very good outing for Tinubu/Shetima Presidency, Nentawe/Botmang Governorship in Plateau State, Diket Plang at the Senate Plateau Central, Hon Lalu Ishaya for House of Reps Mangu/Bokkos and Hon Sylvester Wallangko for House of Assembly Bokkos Constituency. The meeting appraised the state of the party in Bokkos LGA and

proffered solutions to return Bokkos to its "Doma Vote" position it was known for.

The LGA Party Chairman Hon Danjuma Mabas thanked party faithful for turning up enmass which was a great sign of commitment to the party and called on all to put aside minor differences to enable a good showing in the elections. He unveiled the planned commencement of campaigns locally planned across the 5 axis to boost activities at the Wards pending the state party schedules. He revealed that, in collaboration with the Executive Chairman Bokkos LGA, the party has approved the Engagement of Party Facilitators/Canversers to

boost suppose base at the polling units.

The Executive Chairman Hon Joseph Guluwa further buttressed the necessity of all hands to be on Deck to secure the success of Tinubu and Nentawe at the Polls and all the other candidates as Bokkos stands to gain more if we deliver Plateau and Nigeria to APC in the next elections.

Baba Chief Samuel Mafuyai while giving his closing remarks called on all to remain faithful in party activities as the reward comes in various forms. He also dedicated a car donated to the LGA Party Office by Hon Joseph Guluwa.

News

Buhari reappoints seven ICPC Commissioners

PRESIDENT Muhammadu Buhari on Tuesday urged the Senate to consider and approve the nomination of seven persons for reappointment as National Commissioners of the Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC).

Buhari's request was contained in a letter read on the floor by Senate President Ahmad Lawan during plenary in Abuja.

The letter reads in part: "In accordance with Section 3(3) and (7) of the Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Act 2000, I write to forward for confirmation by the Senate the under-listed names of seven (7) persons for reappointment as members of the Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC)."

The names of the



Buhari

National Commissioners of the ICPC forwarded to the Upper Chamber for screening and confirmation include Justice Adamu Bello (rtd) from Katsina State to represent North West; Hannatu Mohammed (Jigawa state) to represent North West; Mrs Olubukola Balogun (rtd) from Lagos State to represent South West and Dr. Grace

Nkechiyere Chinda from Delta State to represent South-South.

Others are Barr. Obiora Samuel Igwedibia from Anambra state to represent South East, Abdullahi Maikano from Niger state to represent North Central and Prince Dauda Yahaya Umar from Nasarawa state to represent North Central, in the commission.

Nobody will rig elections in Benue - Gov ortom

From TERESE TUHWA, Makurdi

The Benue State Governor, Samuel Ortom has assured the people of the state not to be swayed from voting the candidates of their choice in the forthcoming elections because of fear that the elections may be rigged.

He said the introduction of Bimodal Voting Accreditation System, BVAS by the Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC will make it impossible for anyone to attempt to rig the elections.

Governor Ortom who spoke Monday, January 16th, 2023 while addressing PDP supporters at campaign rallies in Tarka, Buruku and Gboko Local Government Areas where scores of APC members and those from other political parties dumped their former parties and joined the PDP, expressed confidence that Peoples Democratic Party, PDP will win all its elections in the state.

The massive defection of members from other parties into the PDP came as traditional and religious leaders in Tarka, uruku and Gboko LGAs offered prayers for the election of Ortom as Senator to represent Benue North-West and Engr. Titus Uba as Governor in the February and March elections.

Addressing the party supporters, Governor Ortom stated that with the overwhelming acceptability of the PDP in the state, he was confident that the party will win its gubernatorial, senatorial, House of Representatives and State Assembly seats by landslide victory.

He maintained that the APC administration at the federal level has failed Nigerians and particularly Benue state.

He cited insecurity, poor economy and oppression of the people as reasons Benue people must vote against the party.

The Governor urged the people to vote massively for PDP candidates in the state to enable them to collaborate as a team to sustain the fight against oppression of Benue and its people and all other injustices meted out on them.

He charged Benue people to shun saboteurs and traitors in the APC who were conniving with enemies of the state to mortgage the future of the state by surrendering our ancestral lands to them.

Governor Ortom stated that the people must rise up and resist intimidation over their God-given heritage.

He maintained that the PDP guber candidate, Engr Uba, having been tested and trusted in leadership responsibilities, has proven himself competent to take over the reins of governance from him and continue to move the state forward, calling on the people to vote overwhelmingly for Uba.

On his senatorial election, Ortom maintained that he had given his all in protecting the interest of Benue and when elected to the Senate, he will continue to collaborate with his colleagues in the National Assembly to ensure that Benue was not shortchanged.

Senator representing Benue-West Senatorial

District, Barr. Orker Jev in his remarks, urged the people to vote Governor Ortom to the Senate and Engr. Uba as Governor, stating that the duo were leaders with the interest of Benue at heart.

Senator Jev particularly told the people of Jemgbagh that Governor Ortom had done so much for them in terms of appointments and infrastructural development as well as the elevation of their son, Senator Iyorchia Ayu as PDP National Chairman. He added that the people had every reason to elect Ortom to the Senate and vote other candidates of the party.

Also speaking, Senator for Benue North-East Senatorial District, Dr. Gabriel Suswam stated that PDP as a party was led by Jemgbagh sons both in the state and at the national level, hence the people must vote for the party's candidates in the forthcoming elections.

Senator Suswam who is the immediate past Governor of Benue State, particularly charged the people to vote Ortom to the Senate and Engr. Uba as Governor, emphasising that they have shown impressive leadership in standing firm for Benue's interest.

PDP governorship candidate, Engr. Uba who addressed the campaign rallies along with his wife, Mrs. Pauline Uba and his running mate, Sir John Ngbede stated that he remained committed to the course of Benue. And if elected, he would do everything to sustain the gains of the fight against insecurity and work for the progress and development of the state.

The Niger Command of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) says it will go after peddlers of illicit drugs to sanitise the political process before the general elections in February.

Mr Haruna Kwetishe, the NDLEA Commander in the state, made this known on Tuesday in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Minna.

According to him, the action is part of measures to ensure that drugs do not determine actions and activities during the general elections.

This, he added, was necessary for peaceful, free and fair elections in the state.

"Since the general elections is around the corner, we will go after suspected illicit drug abusers, peddlers and barons in Niger."

"This is to ensure that the elections are conducted peacefully which will result in free, fair credible and transparent elections in the state."

Engr. Uba extolled Governor Ortom's uncompromising disposition in protecting Benue's interest, stating that he deserved to be elected to the Senate.

Acting State Chairman of PDP, Hon. Isaac Mffo who received the decampes into the party, urged the supporters to deliver victory to the PDP, while Director, State Campaign Management Committee, Dr. Cletus Tyokyaa said the party had fielded the best candidates for all its elections and victory was assured.

Some chieftains of the party in the three LGAs including Yimam Aboh, Ujila Peter, Engr. Victor Ukaha, Sam Tumba, Tarhule Nev, Maryam Anshongu, Shija Akaayar among others in separate remarks pledged overwhelming support for the party and all its candidates to win the election.

'NDLEA to crackdown on drug peddlers in Niger'

"Political thugs use hard drugs to enable them commit electoral violence, therefore, we will not allow drugs to determine the actions and activities during the general elections in the state," he said.

He, therefore, warned illicit drug abusers, peddlers and barons to stay clear of the state as the agency would go tough on them.

"We want to sound a note

of warning to all illicit drug users, peddlers and barons in Niger state to desist from the unwholesome practices.

"We want to tell them that we will go after them until we arrest and prosecute them," the NDLEA commander added.

Kwetishe told NAN that in 2022 the command received two awards from the national headquarters of the agency as the best in drug demand reduction.

(NAN)

Vote leaders with interest of the nation at heart- LWAN president

From Abbass Gungura, Bauchi

The National President of Legionnaires Wives Association of Nigeria (LWAN), Hajiya Fatima Idris, has advised members of the association to secure their Permanent Voters Cards (PVCs) and shun the act of selling their votes to dubious politicians.

Fatima gave the advice while commemorating Armed Forces Remembrance Day and distribution of wrappers to their members on Sunday in Bauchi.

She charged the Legionnaires' wives not to sell their votes to politicians who have been boasting to induce the electorate with money, detergents and other materials.

The president urged members to always keep their PVCs safe and ensure that they vote for credible candidates that would serve the country and the people as well free the country from economic quagmire, insecurity, proffer solutions to education and other social activities that affect youth and women.

"Vote for a trusted and detribalized Nigerian who has the experience and

capacity to find lasting solutions to various challenges facing the country.

"Again don't agree to sell your conscience for money or material things that would not last. Use the PVC wisely for electing credible leaders for our dear country," she said.

The President also urged those who have not collected their PVC to use the window of opportunity created by the electoral body to do so.

Mrs Idris urged governments at all levels, individuals and organisations to support the families of fallen heroes and the Nigerian legions.

Responding on behalf of Legionnaires Wives, Hajiya Sa'adatu Mohammed commended the doggedness of their president for fostering unity among their members.

She called on members to always be available during meetings and conferences for the cause of their well-being.

Sa'adatu used the opportunity to appeal to the Bauchi State government to look into the plight of the legions and their families as well as the families of fallen heroes in the state.



The National President of Legionnaires Wives Association of Nigeria (LWAN), Hajiya Fatima Idris, receiving Permanent Voters Cards (PVCs) for her members.

Water scarcity and health hazard



By VICTOR ALI

WATER is life, goes a very popular saying: This cannot be distant from the truth. "No homo sapiens and even animals and other things can survive without the usage of water. It is an inescapable necessity for human existence.

Its multi-purpose usage is legendary we need water to

bath, we need water to wash our dirty cloths we need water to cook, we even need water to wash our cars and fill the watertanks.

Of recent, Jos city and its environs have been enmeshed with water scarcity. Virtually, all the communities in Jos have been witnessing unprecedented, severely biting water scarcity. People cannot properly undertake their domestic chores because of scarcity of this very "essential commodity". While being austere with the usage of water, if available at all some domestic chores are left undone.

Needless to say, water vendors nay water tankers have now taken the centre stage, in the provision of this necessity. Apart from makng brisks business, the water vendors have become lords onto themselves. An ugly incident was averted recently in one community in Jos.

The story goes thus: A desperate person who was desirous of water to cook his meal came across a water vendor to buy. The water vendor reported that the water was not available. Angered by the reply from the water vendor while he was seeing jericans full of water, the man lost his temper and was ready for fist-cuff.

It took the intervention of a passer by before the looming fight was aborted. Why the refusal to sell the water to the patronize? The water vendor dutifully reveals that, they said water had been booked. You find it funny and ridiculous? No, that was visibly the home truth because the water vensor saidhe was in business and if the water was not booked, he would have sold same and went back for another round of water supply. And what about the cost of the water, Hitherto, a 50 liters jericans of water in the said



community sold for twenty (25) to thirty (30) naira, has now lip-frog to fifty (50) naira and above. In the face of the economic hardship, the poor folks who can not afford this "exorbitant" costs have only one rescuer only water-the dirty river of streams in the neighborhood.

Though boreholes (with all the attendant effects on the earth surface) abound in some of these vicinities, water scarcity still persists. It is either the boreholes are malfunctioning or those being powered by NEPA (sorry, JED) are out of use as a result of the "usual" power outage. In spite of this, whenever the water is available at the borehole, it is the same typical story of the Nigerian shylock. Must sell at the same price like the known water vendors.

Indeed, apart from the boreholes, where those water vendors and the water tankerdrivers ferry their products' to the un suspecting consumers remain unknown. No kidding, yours sincerely, feeling thirty attempted to drink water in one household

at the neighbourhood, lo and behold, the

water smells. what about the rains? We are already at the twilight of April which by ordinary estimation, the heavens should have opened with bounteous rains. Alas, it has been some isolated cases of drizzling. The other day we were discussing with a friend on this precarious situation of water scarcity. What he offers was not hope but stark gloom. He asked me rhetorically. Don't you know that there is climate change? He said what used to be obtainable then, may not be feasible now.

With this scurry scenario of water scarcity, particularly in a densely populated city like Jos, the propensity of the outbreak of water borne diseases is high. The committant effect, sure would be monumental. Without having hospital records at one's disposal, one can say that, this water scarcity might have sent some innocent citizens to their early graves. May the good Lord help us all.

“It took the intervention of a passerby before the looming fight to finish was aborted. And why the refusal to sell the water to the patronize? The water vendor dutifully reveals that, they said water had been booked. You find it funny and ridiculous? No, that was visibly he was in business and if the water was not booked, he would have sold same and go back for another round of water supply.”

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BY KENNETH DARENG

Mothers Day is considered as a very auspicious moment to celebrate the daily role of mothers in shaping not only the home front but also the society at large. It is indeed an occasion that calls for reflection on who a mother is.

If one is to ask every individual to narrate the story of his or her upbringing, 8 out of 10 would ascribe their success in life to their mothers. The fact remains that a typical Nigerian mother represent many things to different folks. These mothers may be married yet are sole bread winners, some are teenage mothers, some are widows, some are barren, while some are called mothers simply because they are married despite all forms of neglect, bitterness and frustration.

Some are barely hanging on in

failed marriages just for the sake of their children while some are afraid of the way society will look at them if they quit the institution called marriage. Unfortunately, many of them are suffering in silence from the hands of some mindless husbands who see nothing good about their wives no matter the effort and no matter the sacrifice put in by their spouses.

A good mother may be described as one who is God fearing, honest, faithful, patient, loyal, loving and caring among other virtues. Must often she is the Chief cook of the house whereby she ensures that the family meals are well prepared, sometimes she sacrifices her own portion incase the food wouldn't be enough to go round, she does not sleep if the children go to bed on empty stomach.

She is the teacher of the family who makes sure the children do their school home work. She is also the chief law officer who enforces disciplinary measures in case there is any breach of the house rules. A mother also serves as the Director of finance and supplies of the family by making sure financial expenditure and income is well appropriated while she also in most cases is the chaplain of the family who ensures that prayers

are observed.

Don't forget she is the nursing mother of the home who makes sure no one in the family goes sick and above all, she plays the role of a mother to both the husband and the children while still stepping up her role in the other room just to keep body and soul together.

Looking closely at the bulk of our mothers in our present day Nigeria, one may not be wrong to say that our mothers in the villages and even in the urban centers are yet to find the desired respite particularly on the part of the illiterate ones whose day begins with toiling from morning to sunset just to make ends meet for their families. Nowadays women who are mothers are involved in menial jobs such as mason farming, stone crushing, taxi/keke driving house cleaning apart from those who are involved in petty trading in the market and so on.

Although mothers can be referred as the conscience of the family, here I am talking about mothers who will not abandoned their responsibilities and end up being mothers who are found hanging in brotels drinking, smoking and prostituting. And not mothers that would compromise moral standards to tolerate their children hanging out with bad company or those of them who chastise their wards for coming back home late at night or those mothers who will always call their children to order. Also, a good mother will not allow her children to become armed robbers, bandits, kidnappers and terrorists. Good mothers are not busy bodies who will destabilize peaceful homes and destroy relationships among relatives, friends and associates. What about mothers who roundly condemn abortions by their daughters because, such

negative aspects endangers the well-being of the family circle which a woman is expected to play a good motherly role for the moral rejuvenation of the family and indeed the society especially where the husbands are either absentee heads of household or are just sitting on the fence.

Today our mothers either dead or alive should be celebrated for their sacrifice, love and care. Some could not even live to see what the fruit of what their labour have become. But I owe them a debt of gratitude for raising us up in both good and bad times. Let those fond memories of our sweet mothers inspire us to greatness while we must in return take proper care of them as a matter of responsibility and good conscience. **SMS ONLY-kennethd1966@gmail.com_08098181805**

Tribute to Nigerian mothers

“A good mother may be described as one who is God fearing, honest, faithful, patient, loyal, loving and caring among other virtues. Must often she is the Chief cook of the house whereby she ensures that the family meals are well prepared, sometimes she sacrifices her own portion incase the food wouldn't be enough to go round, she does not sleep if the children go to bed on empty stomach.”

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By FRANCISCA ADIDI

SHENDAM Marriotte Hotel, a gigantic hotel located in Shendam Local Government was commissioned on the 24th of December 2022 by the Governor of Plateau State, Simon Bako Lalong.

Shendam Marriotte Hotel, is a home away from home according to the Plateau State Governor who commended the management for closing the gap in the hospitality sector in the Southern Zone as it begins operation.

The hotel is also known as Diamond in the South according to the MD, Efan Hospitality Group who thanked the Long Gamai of Shendam and the local government for their hospitality and friendliness. She said the community has demonstrated their acceptance and welcoming spirit for the hotel to be located and situated in Shendam.

The Governor of Plateau State also stated that Shendam people are known for their hospitality that is why the hotel will serve as an important marketing tool in both the state and local government. He said the hotel will boost the economic activities as it will also be beneficial to tourists.

Shendam Marriotte Hotel is surely Diamond in the South according to Alex Naantuum, Chairman Shendam Local Government Council for the hotel will not only create job opportunities for the local populace, it will boost the economic activities in the local government headquarters and its environs.

The Chairman thanked and appreciated the proprietor and management of the hotel for the beautiful structure in the South. Like a treasure found, the hotel is a Christmas gift presented and structured for the people of Southern Zone. He assured them of the support of the local government where most meetings and other activities will be seen happening especially lodging of guests and other

engagements. The facility was commissioned and later inspected by the Governor, chairman of Shendam, the Long Gamai and other dignitaries; with the management who took the lead.

The hotel has a big hall for events that has the capacity

the roads that will link the hotel so as to ease the congestion and bad roads. The Chairman thanked the Managing Director Efan Hospitality Group for their contribution to the development of the locality. He promised that as the ALGON Chairman in Plateau State, they will



Marriotte Hotel opens outlet in Shendam



The wonderful edifice



The Governor being welcomed of accomodating over 2000 people.



Governor Simon Bako Lalong commissioning the structure

The Chairman said with the shortage of hotels in Shendam, the facility will go a long way in reducing the challenges in the locality. The chairman said that it was a thing of joy to have such facility in the local government headquarters where it will promote the economic activities of the people of Shendam.

Hon. Naantuum assured the management that as a council, they will try to fix

always come down to Shendam for most of their activities in order to boost the economic activities in the local government. Naantuum also appealed to the governor to complete the Makeri Power Project that will witness a massive development which will attract more investments and will benefit the entire community as it will provide employment opportunities for the people of the Southern Zone of the state.



Governor Lalong and other guests inspecting the facility

IMAGES

PICTURES AT THE 2023 ARMED FORCES REMEMBRANCE DAY

The 2023 Armed Forces Remembrance Day and Emblem Appeal launch in Plateau State took place on Sunday at the Joseph Gomwalk Secretariat Cenotaph, Jos



Plateau State Governor, Rt. Hon. Simon Bako Lalong CON laying the wreath during the 2023 Armed Force Remembrance Day



Nigeria Bar Association Jos Branch Chairman, Barr. Izang Aware (left) with Barr. John Gobak mni at the ceremony



Members of the Nigeria Legion, Plateau State at the ceremony



Commander, NAF Station 551 Jos, Air Commodore Edward Gabkwet at the 2023 Armed Forces Remembrance Day celebration



Representative of the President, Plateau State Traditional Council, the Agwom Izere, HRH Rev. Dr. Isaac Azi Wakili advancing to lay the wreath



Plateau State Speaker, House of Assembly, Rt. Hon. Yakubu Sanda walking to lay the wreath



Nana Helen Sabo taking her turn to lay the wreath on behalf of wives of the fallen heroes



Reveille by the Nigerian Army and Air Force in memory of the fallen heroes

PHOTOS: DANLADI DUK

Odd World

'My kids don't wear shoes, don't judge me'

WHEN it comes to raising her two children, Alex Tucker is the first to admit her techniques are far from conventional. The 25-year-old and her boyfriend Paul have been criticised for many of their decisions about bringing up Berkley, two, and Freya, one.

The couple don't use prams or high chairs, and won't let the two children wear shoes. They've also decided not to teach them how to swim, even though they live by the water.

However, the couple claim their controversial choices fit in with their rural lives and urge people not to judge their lifestyle.

Alex's children don't go to day-care and she instead takes them to work with her. Sometimes the couple even sack off going to work to look after the little ones.

The rural mum refuses to teach her children to swim, despite living on the waterfront, and they both roam around their land barefoot.

Alex shared her rules online, and has since received plenty of criticism from other parents, with one commenting that social services should be called.

Despite the backlash, she's defended her position by claiming shoes distort feet shape and prams and high chairs are not essential to their way of living.

Defending her choice not to give them swimming lessons, she said they would encourage her water-fearful kids to get into dangerous water to swim.

Alex, who works in the fishing industry with her boyfriend Paul, and lives on the Hawkesbury river in New South Wales, said: "I'm not bothered by people who don't agree with my 'controversial' rules. Mothers are criticised no matter what they do, and especially online.

"I'm opening the conversation for everyone to start thinking outside the box before straight up criticising someone's parenting when they don't know how different someone's lifestyle can be. I'm not preaching 'my ways' - this isn't a 'how to' manual. This is what works for our family."

They spend a lot of time on the water - but neither of the children can swim

Mum goes on pricey tropical holiday alone to teach her kids 'vital lesson'

Passenger slammed for jumping queue at airport - but he thinks he's in the right

Mum blasted for letting young son play in the garden at 'unacceptable' time

People think 350-year-old painting is 'proof' time travel is real after spotting iPhone

The kids even roam barefoot across the beach, on pavements and even go shoeless when the family embark on 8km hikes.

Even though some parents may question

the choice, the mum insists going without shoes is better for her kids.

She said it "shocked her" that so many people saw it as a big issue, as she claimed it's "pretty normal" not to wear shoes in Australia.

Alex continued: "Even then, if you are from a coastal town like us, it's normal to not wear shoes at the shops, and working on boats, it's also common to not wear shoes.

"Shoes serve purpose, like if the ground is too hot or too cold, or if snakes and wildlife is a valid threat, or if something hurts to walk on."

She said when you don't wear shoes it can cause your feet to toughen, which enables you to learn how to walk on rough surfaces.

The mum said it's just a part of the family's "way of life."

Alex's boyfriend Paul owns a fishing business and Alex, who has experience working as a fisherman and commercial captain, often helps on the boat when he's in need of extra crew members.

The couple often take their kids along to work, with Paul having them by himself if Alex is needed to help on another boat.

If the weather conditions are too bad for the children to join Paul on the boat, and Alex is busy, the dad will miss his day of work entirely rather than send their kids to day-care.

Alex said: "We are a rural family working in primary production - I am a stay at home mother out of necessity, like most rural mothers.

"I'm needed at home for more than childcare and housework - we are the people at the frontline of feeding the nation.

"If it is not a desirable day for them to come to work, one parent stays home, that's rural life."

One of the main rules that has concerned other parents is said to be the decision to not teach the kids how to swim.

Some parents have deemed this as "dangerous", but Alex has said there is a strong difference between water safety and swimming.

Alex said: "Swimming lessons was a difficult one to decide on, but I came to the conclusion that a toddler probably couldn't swim out of the river on their own.

"In the river here, currents and submerged objects are a huge factor for drownings, and while they have a healthy fear of the water, I won't encourage them to enter it by doing swimming lessons.

"We play by the river a lot, and when a toy falls in, they freak out and come ask me to get it."

She also said she doesn't know if she would call her methods "rules", as the mum claims they are just doing what works best for them as a family.

Culled from The Mirror



Nigerians, there is need for 'church-shift'

ONE distinguished and quick-witted legal luminary I have continued to respect with all candor of persistence is none other than Prof. Dakas Clement Dakas, a former Attorney General and Commissioner of Justice, Plateau State and Senior Advocate of Nigeria, (SAN). Prof. Dakas, a former Dean, Faculty of Law at the prestigious University of Jos and also the fourth Professor of Law from the entire northern region of Nigeria has over the years unrelentingly become a pragmatic reservoir of knowledge. Intuitively, this scholar has continued to dazzle his contemporaries including others who care to listen to him about a more result-oriented shift in dynamism in the act of governance presently needed to save our nation from nose-diving into oblivion and total collapse.

Though some of his matter-of-fact recipe seems not logically achievable and crazily out of the box, it is becoming more evident that if prospective leaders of this nation do not take the bull by the horn and galvanize our collective thoughts devoid of any sort of sentiments; Nigeria would in no distance time find itself on a runway to total disintegration, chaos and anarchy. Let me however reemphasize for fear of perhaps misquoting Prof Dakas out of context that it is not in his character to proliferate any incisive notion that Nigeria can only achieve any such transformation through violent revolution. The erudite scholar however believes that Nigeria can attain greatness only based on a complete mind renewal by both the elites and the governed.

Just recently, I was privileged to be amongst quite a pocket few people who took him on how best we can intellectually remodel our thoughts and go against this traditional tide of doing business as usual and change our diminishing status. After a fruitful practicable enlightenment lecture on that fateful day, the scholar also suggested we read a book authored by Pastor Sunday Adelaja titled "Church Shift" which I reluctantly accepted. Unfortunately, my hands became full during the week and I could not search out for the book until a friend of mine eventually posted me a soft copy online.

The book, Church Shift is all about a struggle by a strong hearted Nigerian Pastor, Sunday Adelaja who found himself in faraway Ukraine but doggedly changed the ugly narratives of the country for the better. Before this great revival, the citizens of the country had psychological been hypnotized becoming mentally subservient to the caprices and intrigues of their leaders' political misrule. In a country which was proliferating unending tenets of socialist ideological philosophy and highly against civil disobedience; the citizens of the nation were victims of corruption, nepotism and other acts of personal aggrandizement.

The coming of the pastor who mobilized citizens of the country to stand their ground against the obvious subsequently affected a great change as it propelled about 125,000 members of the church to begin to see the act of governance from a different perspective. Rather than perceiving their political leaders as lords; the citizens began to take their fate in their own hands comprehending the apparent that they had the power to hold their leaders to account.

Consequently, before the ongoing Russian invasion, the nation was emerging to become one of the most focused nations in contemporary Europe. It was a nation

midwived through civil disobedience against unabated injustice, oppression, nepotism, corruption and administrative ingenuity to become a more promising nation of the decade.

As I continued reading this book page after page, the present tragic, unpalatable and disturbing traumatic status of Nigeria kept on preoccupying my mind. To be honest, Nigeria has lost its bearing and it's only by the grace of God that things have not fallen apart. At the moment, there is no Nigerian citizen in his or her right senses who can testify that he or she is not feeling a pinch of this unending humanly created hardship and or catastrophe.

Evidently, both the poor and the rich are not happy over most recent developments. Most of the citizens are not happy as the fabric of our nation's economy is in shambles. If for nothing else, the reoccurrence of recession on the polity has devastated many families and rendered many vulnerable citizens hopeless.

Our universities have been in total shutdown for several months now making our children vulnerable to many social vices. Many of our idle children have been wept way into unbelievable crimes causing more havoc and calamity. Our economic collapse has left us at the mercy of several unimaginable and unpalatable situations. The issue of insecurity overwhelming this nation has forced us not to sleep with our eyes closed for a second.

More perturbing is the fact that with all the abundant economic and human resource which this country is blessed with; Nigeria has regrettably found itself in this pitiful situation. We as a people have become a laughing stock amongst the comity of nations for no fault of the ordinary man. Many innocent citizens are languishing in abject poverty and or want as the gap between the rich and the poor has continued to widen beyond comprehension.

A great number of our children have been killed in humanly created conflicts and unexplainable circumstances. By now, I am more than convinced that many Nigerians are tired of being slaves in their motherland. Yet, in the midst of these calamities, it seems that we are still far from recuperating and or gaining our grounds.

Just as Pastor Sunday Adelaja puts it, it will only take a people who know that power is in their hands to fundamentally effect a change for the better. These kind of people must put their lives at risk to ensure that the needful is done.

Without mincing words, many of us weary of all these happenings must begin to talk to our conscience. We must come to the reality of the fact that the people of this country must be liberated from the shackles of deception and erroneous thoughts of becoming spellbound that this nation is only for the elitists, the wealthy and the mighty.

The truth is that we must take a stand as a people in making our leaders accept the reality of the fact that power belongs to the ordinary man on the street. It is only by doing so that can we create a more convenient atmosphere for our nation to thrive. Even though we have suffered a lot in the past few years; we can still turn things around for the better in the interest of our future generations if we are willing to do so. Basically, we can create another euphoria of a church shift in Nigeria if and when we are determined to do so.

View Point

Multi-sectoral approach to family planning in Nigeria

BY GODWIN MOSES

PLANNING is an act of projecting a course of action for the future. It's very critical to every human endeavour, more so to the family. Low standard of living, high level of unemployment, illiteracy, and technical backwardness are the bane of an underdeveloped economy and are partly caused by ineffective planning. Planning for the family is prerequisite for responsible parenthood. Every member of the family - Father, Mother and Children stand to benefit economically, educationally, mentally, emotionally and health wise from Family planning; thus, it's imperative for husband and wife to acquire basic knowledge in planning, timing and spacing of children they want.

Family planning methods are safe. It's not in any way a population control measure as widely speculated in public space; because it is safe and healthy, it does not prevent you from giving birth to children. It's an effective way of spacing out the children you desire to have which is important for the health of mother and child. Also, family planning prevent unwanted pregnancies and abortions, reduces the incidence of death in pregnancy, therefore, ameliorate the painful tasks of raising motherless children in our communities.

To understand and address the problems of maternal and child mortality, Nigeria must refocus on improving the services provided by primary health care facilities particularly by leveraging on family planning programmes. It's the responsibility of stakeholders who provide policy directions at all level of government to provide separate budget line for family planning. Ultimately, this will make National health services particularly family planning program and institutions stronger, more resilient, and able to deliver greater impacts.

The success of all policies and programmes directed towards Reproductive Health Care particularly safe motherhood is technically dependant on efficient and timely supply and equipping of the units with pre-requisite commodities for management and practices of different family planning methods. This could be done by making funds available to the participating health facilities (family planning units) at local level through a strategic financing arrangement and also oversight in ensuring timely effectiveness of the program. This would checkmate the issue of shortages of family planning commodities in State-owned primary health care facilities.

Training of trainers (TOT) is very key in workforce development and collaboration. Local, State and International development partners should sustain capacity building through training and retraining of family planning service providers as this will bring them up to speed on world best practices on family planning



techniques and procedures.

Both State and non-State actors including the media should consistently embark on aggressive education and Information Campaigns to heighten awareness and sensitized the general public on reproductive health care. Development

Having acquired basic knowledge on the subject of family planning, clients are now armed with the rightful information and equally motivated to counter community of practice relating to myths and misconceptions therefore, family service providers can recruit such clients or engage beneficiaries of any of the child birth spacing methods to go talk one on one to daughters, friends or better still invite such to family planning unit to assess first-hand information on the benefits of child spacing to their family with a view to changing the mind-set of the people.

There is need to establish a platform or forum where synergy between Local Government authorities and community leaders is fostered. Since the task is innermost, Social behavioural change committee (SBCC) should carefully select individuals preferably vocal and active youths in a given community to be designated as Family Planning (FP) Ambassadors to work together to basically engage stakeholders in

mosques, churches and volunteers in the community to educate and create awareness on the benefits of child spacing to the family.

The role of the Local authorities here is to provide the needful incentives including the political will and leadership required to drive this noble course; on the other hand, the role of the community leaders is that of consistent community mobilization for action basically to talk to people in their respective domains. Citizen engagement should be encouraged to ensure that the community through Family planning ambassadors has a voice in the management and oversights of facilities or family planning programs/project domiciled in the community. This is done by directly or indirectly involving the stakeholders in the community. The Family planning ambassadors are expected to educate the people on issues pertaining to reproductive health, safe motherhood and child birth spacing. Also, to encourage husbands to show leadership and take charge of the health and well-being of their wives and children including their sexuality, reproductive health and adequate provision of resources including plans for any emergency thereof.

Teachers should leverage on Pep talk season to drive and sustain discussion on safety,

health and family planning. This also presence a platform where children and teenagers learn age-appropriate messages on reproductive health and chaste lifestyle, and equally develop refusal skills to avoid peer pressure and risky sexual, social behaviours, including early warning signals and where to seek help. While time is of the essence, catching them young is key to getting it together. It's high time some Teacher assumed additional responsibility to fight the battle and win the war against community of practice, myths about family planning.

The use of Clerics to advance the course of child spacing and responsible parenthood. The moral bar of the society is at an all-time-low. In my humble opinion, engaging the clerics in the advancement of family planning will not in anyway negate or constitute barrier to their primary calling. Simply put, one of the prerequisite targets of the clerics during premarital counselling based on faith factual knowledge should be directed towards deliberate and a sustained awareness campaign to safe mother and child.

Girl child education - unless the girl child is educated, we are far away from winning the fight against maternal and infant mortality. Failure to educate a girl child potent great danger to the nation thus the assertion " When you educate a Boy child you have

educated an individual, but when you educate a Girl child you would have educated a nation ". A girl child is endowed with emotions, motherly instincts and mental capacity to reason, learn, respond to circumstances and react to physical stimulus from the environment just like her male sibling. They both have the right to life, education, liberty and aspire to grow to be professionals in their various chosen endeavours irrespective of gender, tribe, religion, place of birth, colour or race. A girl child is unique in her own way, she possesses some inherent ability to multiply whatsoever you gave to her and give it back to you. Any society that condors the lifestyle of creating or given more preference to the male child to the detriment of that of a girl child is headed towards the path of self-destruction. It's very important for parents to take their responsibilities with every seriousness it deserved and leverage on girl child education to secure the future of our children. We must all act fast now to protect the girl child by promoting girl child education. There're no doubts, the way to go is to educate them to be able to make an informed decisions concerning responsible parenthood and its benefits to the father, mother and child.

Godwin Moses is of the Ministry of Information and Communication



Lalong's new year speech: A review

As the year 2022 came to an end, Governor Simon Bako Lalong started the new year with a statewide broadcast.

The broadcast marks his last new year speech to Plateau citizens as he counts over 3 months to take a bow at the helm of affairs as the Executive Governor of the state.

"In the past 7 and half years, I have had the rare privilege and honour to serve you as governor of this beautiful blessed and cherished state which has the worldwide reputation as the Home of Peace, Hospitality and Tourism. These years have been eventful and challenging",

he said as he listed his administration's laudable policies and achievements.

Lalong expressed gladness that in all the things he was able to achieve, it was possible because of his efforts towards the restoration of peace and stability in the state.

He said compared to the past when investors and visitors were scared of coming into the state, his strategies for peace had worked out giving the state a better reputation.

The speech read: "While we look back at the challenges we have worked through, we certainly have many reasons to thank God for the progress we achieved in these years. We did not only ensure stability of the state in terms of peace, security, and harmony but substantially reversed the negative perception of our state as a place to be avoided".

"Today people are trooping into Plateau state to invest, reside, enjoy the holidays or hold national and international conferences while taking advantage of our unique weather, hospitality, and tourist attractions".

He emphasised that citizens should take note that Plateau can proudly boast of a robust state

if all the 53 ethnic groups and different religions choose tolerance, dialogue, unity, vigilance, and collaboration over hate, division, bigotry, and sentiments.

Due to the return of peace and stability to the state, the Governor in his 2023 new year speech was also proud that in 2022, the state played host to 3 international conferences

and workshops, well over 18 Local Conferences, Seminars and Workshops, as well as one international Golf Tournament.

"All these are indications that Plateau State has substantially regained its list glory".

"These efforts are not that of the government alone but an inclusive one, comprising the good citizens of Plateau with support from stakeholders", he stressed.

The 2023 speech did not hesitate in appreciating those who helped the state in regaining its lost glory including security agencies, traditional rulers, religious leaders, civil society organisations, community development associations, youth and women groups.

The Governor announced the cheering news that the United Nations had approved the establishment of a Peace University in Plateau State to serve as a hub for teaching and research in peace building and conflict management.

He also announced he had approved the process for the return of 32 mission schools earlier taken over by government to their original owners in the first phase of the programme which will commence in February.

Concerning the 2023 elections, which has heated the political space in the state and across the country, the governor promised to provide a level playing ground for all political parties and candidate's to freely canvass for votes by holding rallies, meetings, and other engagements without hindrance.

"This is because of my belief in democracy and the realisation that the interest of Plateau State and its people should always be put above individual, group, or party interests. While we struggle for power, we have to remember that power is transient and about service to the people. It is not about personal aggrandizement or parochial interests. At the end of every political contest, we shall remain brothers and sisters and citizens of this great state", he said urging Plateau citizens to ensure they collect their Permanent Voters Card (PVC's) and participate in the elections.



News

Removal of billboards, posters not to witch-hunt anyone

THE reasons for the removal of political billboards and posters of political parties across the Sokoto metropolis by SURDB has been clarified. The Special Adviser to Governor Aminu Waziri Tambuwal of Sokoto State on Urban and Regional Planning Board, Sidi Aliyu Lamido, while addressing newsmen in his office on Monday said the exercise was embarked upon to sanitize the society against

FROM ANENE AIKE, SOKOTO

indiscriminate pasting of posters in the state.

He said the exercise which was carried out alongside security agencies, representatives of some of the political parties in the state was never to witch-hunt anyone irrespective of their political parties' affiliations.

The SA explained that the exercise was as a result of a

meeting with representatives of all political parties in the state alongside traditional rulers on how to tackle irregular pasting of billboards and posters.

Lamido, however said the exercise which is part of the routine exercise of the board was not meant to target any political parties as every poster and roadside billboards without approval were removed accordingly.

We had already agreed unanimously with the leaders of political and traditional rulers that the pasting of posters and erecting of billboards is becoming rampant in the state. Posters have been pasted even in the mosque, market among many others he added.

"We agreed with them and that is why the operation was successful as we moved alongside political parties and security agencies," the SA affirmed.

He also stated that the objective was to control all the illegal posters and billboards especially within the state capital.

The SA also advised the general public especially those who intend to paste posters to



Tambuwal

From WILLIE ATTAH, Gombe

Mailantarki, best to Govern Gombe

A stalwart and former State Chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party, PDP in Gombe, Baba Shuaibu Sabulu, has described Ahmad Khamisu Mailantarki as the best candidate that can take the state to the next level.

He stated this when he led hundreds of his supporters in Billiri LGA into the New Nigeria Peoples Party NNPP from the PDP.

He said, Gombe State deserves a governor that is focused, visionary and has the common man at heart and only Mailantarki of the NNPP can offer that kind of leadership out of all the candidates that are seeking election in a few weeks from now.

According to him, "We see Mailantarki as a better alternative for Gombe State. He possesses the requisite character and capacity to rescue Gombe State from the misrule of the APC."

"He has always been saying the right things and has done the right things in the past", said Baba Sabulu, the once powerful party chairman when the PDP was in control of the state.

Earlier, the NNPP gubernatorial candidate, Ahmed Khamisu Mailantarki, who stormed Billiri along with other party executives and hundreds of supporters to receive the defectors that included Yila Dankuka, a former Deputy Chairman of Billiri LGA, Philip Bataliya and Mohammed Balas, assured them that they will be carried along in all activities of the party especially now that his campaigns will soon commence.

He urged them to garner more



Kwamkwoso

support and promote the party and its candidates in all nooks and crannies of the state, stressing that it is only through grassroots mobilization and voters sensitization that the NNPP can uproot and defeat the failed ruling APC in the state.

Presenting the membership cards to them, the Gombe State Chairman of the NNPP, Maikano Abdullahi, assured the defectors of equal opportunities in the party, stressing that the party will always uphold the tenets of justice, fairness and equity.

Among those that defected to the NNPP along with Baba Sabulu from the PDP in Billiri included current and former LGA and wards PDP officials, former councillors as well as women and youth groups.

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Sports

Can Arteta's men challenge for Premier League title?

Mikel Arteta's Arsenal have an eight-point lead at the top of the Premier League as we approach the midway part of the season; the Gunners were interested in Mykhailo Mudryk and Joao Felix but both joined Chelsea; if Arsenal don't sign anyone in January, do they have enough for the title?

THERE is plenty of time to go in this Premier League season, but Arsenal's North London derby win over Tottenham made their title hopes a little more real.

The Gunners' win at the home of their arch-rivals opened up an eight-point gap at the top of the Premier League - but it wasn't all good news for Arsenal on Sunday.

Long-term transfer target Mykhailo Mudryk completed his move to London rivals Chelsea, with the Blues also signing forward Joao Felix - who the Gunners also had an interest in.

Arsenal know that any chance of a Premier League title will be decided by matters off the pitch as well as on it, the Gunners know that all to well from last season.

Highlights from the Premier League match between Tottenham and Arsenal.

This time last year, the Gunners stayed quiet and opted not to bring in any player to boost their top-four credentials.

But Arsenal will only enter the market for the right player - so, if they do not bring in a player in this window once again, do they have enough to stride towards the title by themselves?

Many analysts have felt that Arsenal's squad depth would hinder their chances of winning the title.

Arsenal fans' worst fear appeared to have been realised when starting lone-striker Gabriel Jesus sustained a serious injury at the World Cup, but the Gunners' form has held up well in his absence with Eddie Nketiah stepping in to lead the line.

"The difference between Manchester City and Arsenal is that City can lose a few players and play exactly the same way and can afford to rotate," said Sky Sports pundit Micah Richards in October.

"If Arsenal lose an Oleksandr Zinchenko or a Thomas Partey, all of a sudden they become a different team."

But Arsenal have kept on winning and now have the biggest points buffer to second place of their season so far. The main reason for this consistency is a lack of injuries across multiple positions.

This season, Arteta has largely picked the same first-choice Arsenal line-up for most of the season - but there is the feeling that two key players do not have the adequate back-up behind them should they become absent.

The first is Thomas Partey - and there is a reason to plan around a potential absence for the Ghanaian midfielder.

The 29-year-old is currently on a run of ten consecutive Premier League starts - something Partey has never managed before in his Arsenal career. Before this run of matches, Partey had also only featured in 58 per cent of Arsenal's Premier League games since arriving from Atletico Madrid in October 2020.



Put it simply, the Ghanaian midfielder has a track history of being absent.

Arsenal's recent transfer activity also points towards a need to find additional support for Partey. A summer *Transfer Deadline Day* move for midfielder Douglas Luiz failed to materialise, while there is strong reported interest in a summer move for West Ham captain Declan Rice.

When Partey has been rested or missed games through injury, Arsenal have relied on Mohamed Elneny and Albert Sambi Lokonga to deputise.

Both players have stepped in for Partey's injuries already this season, but Arteta's team has more control when the Ghanaian starts, conceding nearly twice as many goals without him compared to with him - while their attack is also enhanced when he plays.

The other position is at right wing - with last season proving that too much was asked of Bukayo Saka.

The England winger was left without any real competition capable of challenging him for a starting spot, leaving him as the only Gunners player - and one of just four in the topflight last season - to feature in all 38 Premier League matches.

The goalscoring exploits that Saka has now - six goals and seven assists in his last 15 Arsenal league starts - faded away towards the end of an exhausting campaign last term, with zero open play goals and two assists in the final 10 league games of the season.

This season, Saka is being used heavily once again, having started ever single game for the Gunners so far this season. The only time he failed to last beyond

the 81st minute in a Premier League match this season was when he was withdrawn in the first half of the win over Nottingham Forest in October - with an injury.

The only back-up in reserve for right winger Saka are new signings Fabio Vieira and Marquinhos, alongside Reiss Nelson who has been injured since the World Cup break.

Even then, Vieira is most comfortable as a central player while teenage winger Marquinhos, who has featured in the Europa League, is considered too raw. The 19-year-old has picked up just one minute of Premier League action all season and has only one start for Arsenal since the middle of October.

And with Arsenal monitoring Raphinha's situation at Barcelona alongside holding an interest in Bayer Leverkusen's Moussa Diaby, this could be a position where the Gunners look at in the final two weeks of the window.

Arsenal's interest in a forward this winter has also been intensified by the injury to Jesus. The impact of Jesus at Arsenal following his £45m move from Manchester City has been clear to see both on and off the pitch.

Many in the Arsenal squad have spoken about how the Brazilian striker and Oleksandr Zinchenko have brought a "winning mentality" from City over the summer - while Jesus, as a centre forward, was the Gunners' player for the big moment with five goals and six assists in his opening 14 games.

But a knee injury at the World Cup disrupted his season and Arsenal have remained tight-lipped about when he could return.

Thankfully for the Gunners,

Eddie Nketiah has managed to fill Jesus' void from a goalscoring perspective.

In Arsenal's first two league games without Jesus, Nketiah found the net against West Ham and Brighton, while he also produced selfless displays to create for others against Newcastle and Tottenham despite failing to find the net himself.

Arsenal discussed a move for Felix and Mudryk to boost the forward line but both went to Chelsea. Yet, should Nketiah keep fit and firing until Jesus' return - do Arsenal actually need to invest in this area?

The only other position of doubt in the Arsenal squad is centre-back. William Saliba and Gabriel have carried the middle of Arsenal's backline throughout the season and back-to-back clean sheets against high-flying Newcastle and Tottenham show how well they are currently performing.

But should one of them start being absent due to injury or suspension, then only Rob Holding is an option from the substitutes' bench.

There is, however, the option to move Ben White from right-back into the middle, with Takehiro Tomiyasu and Cedric Soares among the options to deputise at full-back. While the latter could move away from the Emirates Stadium in January, Arsenal do hold an interest in Real Valladolid's teenage right-back Ivan Fresneda - who is also wanted by Newcastle.

While question marks exist over Arsenal's squad depth - the boost for the Gunners is they have a quieter winter schedule than their rivals.

They have only one midweek fixture - a title clash at home to

Manchester City - to contend with before the end of February, while their title rivals have either faced or need to deal with Carabao Cup action on top of their league schedule.

Arsenal are also boosted by a delayed return to European action that favours their next few weeks. The Gunners don't resume their Europa League action until March 9, while the rest of the so-called 'Big Six' are called back into their continental season three weeks earlier.

While Arsenal are on the lookout for attacking reinforcements, they are boosted by the return to fitness of Emile Smith Rowe, who can create more competition for places amongst the Gunners' front four in the coming weeks.

Meanwhile, as he revealed to Sky Sports during the World Cup break, left-back Zinchenko believes his calf problems are behind him to create a battle with Kieran Tierney for his position.

And then there's a potential return of striker Jesus to look forward to, with the Brazilian pictured kicking a ball in the Arsenal training ground gym on Monday.

Should the Brazilian return to action in the coming weeks, then Arsenal are back to full strength and that could impact how much business they do in the final two weeks of the January window.

There are 20 Premier League games to go, so a lot can still happen for the Gunners in their bid for the title.

With Manchester United to come this weekend, the transfer deadline next on the agenda and Manchester City visiting the Emirates in February, these next four weeks will be crucial.

Sports

Gauff on playing Raducanu at Australian Open

FACING a Grand Slam champion like Emma Raducanu so early in a major is not ideal, but like my dad always says: 'To be the best you have to beat the best'.

To help me follow in Emma's footsteps and win a Slam, I added a new activity into my pre-season training - boxing.

My fitness trainer wanted me to box to help improve balance and so I went down to a gym near where I live in Florida.

I'm not a fighter - even though I have trained in the past with Mike Tyson. If someone came up and punched me I would be out first punch!

The pre-season training was in a proper gym where there were professional fighters training and whenever they would come to watch I was talking really loud - like, 'yeah my tennis tournament' - so they knew I wasn't a fighter.

I didn't want them to think this girl is trash and is going to get whooped! I wanted them to know this is not what I do.

Some of them knew who I was - and I was wearing my tennis gear to make the point - but I definitely wanted to make sure they knew I wasn't cut out for this.

They were all very nice people but they were slightly intimidating at first and were watching me. I was like 'guys, I don't do this, I play tennis', I'm the furthest away from this sport that I could be.

The boxing instructor is a fighter and he said I improved in the three weeks I did with him.

When he told me I improved I was like 'yes finally' because I looked so bad at the start. So that made me really happy.

I also got to do it with my brother Codey so it was nice bonding with him. He thinks he's a fighter so I enjoyed trying to beat him up!

Adding in other sports makes the pre-season more enjoyable. I grew up playing multiple sports - basketball, gymnastics, track - so I wanted to go back to my roots and try different things.

As well as boxing, I did some swimming. For me, swimming is one of those things which gets me the most tired.

I can run forever and do a lot of things forever, but swimming I feel like I'm done after two laps.

So my fitness coach Stephane is trying to find extra ways to get me tired and do extra cardio because my heart rate doesn't stay high for long.

Hopefully I will be in the game for another 20 years and so you have to make it fun and change it up.

Pre-season is a chance to do that, there are ways to make it enjoyable and also work hard on something. That's what I think we found this pre-season.

It was really tough for me, but it was nice to step away from the court and the gym.

Some people might think seeing Emma win the US Open at such a young age may have made me jealous or envious. It didn't. It was inspiring more than anything else.

I can relate to bursting on to the scene and dealing with the pressure that follows, but I don't think that was anywhere near to the level of attention Emma received.

After beating Katerina Siniakova in my first-round match in Melbourne I went online and I found out I was playing Emma. She is having an incredible career so far and I think she is still finding her way on tour.

With her being my age, I talk to her pretty much at all the tournaments. I always try to chat



Coco Gauff won six doubles titles with her good friend Jessica Pegula last season - both are among the favourites to win the women's singles at Melbourne Park

and when she picked up the ankle injury in Auckland I reached out to see how she was doing.

I try to look out for people when they're joining the tour because I know how different a life it is. Emma has a great head on her shoulders and I think she is doing great.

We've not really had the chance to talk about anything outside of tennis, what common interests we might have, or anything like that.

Most of the time when I see her is at a tournament and we're both trying to go to practice, or coming from practice, or going to matches. It is difficult to really get into those conversations and I haven't really hung out with her off the court.

I definitely think it is important to have friends on tour because you're around these people every week. These are also your co-workers.

You don't want them to hate you and you don't want to hate them.

Why would anybody want to be around hateful people every week?

My biggest friends are Caty McNally, Jessica Pegula, Christopher Eubanks, Taylor Townsend - pretty much mostly Americans who I know and get along with very well.

We have a fun group and we all root for each other. That's what I look for the most, people who genuinely want to see you do well.

Of course, equally you can't be friends with everyone because there

are a lot of players. And it can be weird when you play one of your friends - I remember playing Jess in Dubai and it was a horrendous match.

Even though I talk to Emma a lot, I wouldn't say we are close friends.

But whoever you're playing, whether it is a friend, or a Grand Slam champion, you've just got to block out who is on the opposite side of the net. That's what I will have to do on Wednesday.

Why Arsenal are in control of the Premier League

ARSENAL have to be favourites to win the Premier League now. It is very clear they are going to take some shifting from the top of the table.

The only thing we don't know about Mikel Arteta's side yet is how they will cope with being frontrunners in the second half of the season. But it doesn't look like their inexperience of being in a title race is fazing them at the moment.

Their superb win over north London rivals Tottenham on Sunday was further proof of that.

In the first half we saw their attacking intent and creativity, pressing Spurs to keep them penned in their own half and then capitalising on their mistakes.

Arsenal had more defending to do in the second half but they were just as good without the ball and, when Tottenham did get through, Aaron Ramsdale put in a brilliant goalkeeping performance to keep them out.

I was really impressed with their whole team, from front to back, and it looks like they have got the required steel - plus the bit of bite and hunger - that they will need in the next few months.

To be eight points clear after 18 games is a terrific achievement by this Arsenal side - and it's fully deserved too.

Now they have to try to stay there, and

many of their players have already learned the hard way how quickly things can change. They fell away in the final weeks of last season, missing out on a top-four finish and a return to the Champions League when it was within their grasp.

But since the start of this campaign I've been saying this looks like a different Gunners team in terms of their mentality, and Arteta and his coaching team have another year's experience too.

Arteta has assembled a talented squad, with an excellent attitude and they look very comfortable with what he wants them to do.

As well as their great will to win, they are strong in every position and they have coped with every injury they have suffered, including Gabriel Jesus who was so important for them at the start of the season, but has not played since the World Cup. Eddie Nketiah has led the line so well, it has meant Jesus has not been missed.

Tactically, it looks like Arteta is ready for anything too. He certainly out-thought Spurs boss Antonio Conte with his gameplan on Sunday, especially in the first half when it seemed like Arsenal had an extra man in every area of the pitch.

Of course there are still some huge hurdles to get over: they still have to play Manchester City twice and, before that, they face a resurgent Manchester United side next weekend.

But every game is a big one when you are top and at the moment they are looking really strong whoever they play. They are clearly full of confidence and right now it feels like they are going to be hard to stop.

Can Man Utd be part of the title race?

The whole weekend went very well for Arsenal - it always helps when things go wrong for your nearest title rivals, like it did for City with their defeat in Saturday's Manchester derby.

The defending champions were unfortunate with United's equaliser, which I felt should have been called offside, and that goal completely changed the game.

I still don't see City giving up their title without a fight though, and they are not the only ones who could still challenge Arsenal from here.

I understand why people are talking about Manchester United again, because they are flying at the moment, on a great run of results, and Erik ten Hag has made amazing progress with his team in a short space of time.

At the moment you cannot rule United out, because they go to Emirates Stadium next Sunday. Win that one, and you'd have to say they are right in the hunt but, on the flip side, if Arsenal turn them over then their title hopes are well and truly over.

Like Manchester United, Newcastle United are only a point behind City, but having played a game more.

I would not count Newcastle as title contenders, though. In fact I still think it would be a miracle if they finish in the top four, despite the problems faced by some of the teams just below them.

Tottenham's defeat on Sunday was good news for Eddie Howe's side, because Spurs are in that chasing pack and they remain a threat. We saw how they ended last season to deny Arsenal a Champions

League place.

I also suspect Chelsea will improve after their poor spell in the past few weeks, as their players come back from injury, but Liverpool look miles off it at the moment.

At the moment Jurgen Klopp's side are terrible at the back, with no intensity when they press.

They look a shadow of the side that we are used to seeing at the top end of the table, and I don't see things getting better any time soon - it is going to be a long hard season for them.

Newcastle fans are having a very different time of things right now, of course, and I am enjoying every minute of it.

Howe is doing a brilliant job and he picked up another big result this weekend, with their late win over Fulham.

Right from the start, it felt a bit flat - from the players and even for the fans - which was understandable following the excitement of the midweek win over Leicester that put Newcastle into the Carabao Cup semi-finals.

Newcastle didn't play well on Sunday and needed a bit of luck with Aleksandar Mitrovic's missed penalty, but it was just about getting the three points and it didn't really matter how they got them.

Finishing in the Champions League places would be absolutely fantastic but it is the chance of silverware that means the most to me.

My dream for this season would be a trophy - I'd much prefer the Carabao Cup to the top four.

I'd love to see both happen, obviously, but give me a choice and I'd go for silverware all day long. It's far more important to me.

The last trophy Newcastle won was the Fairs Cup - the tournament that eventually turned into the Europa League - in 1969.

That was before I was born, so it has been a very long wait to see us win something. I hope it is over, soon.

| | PREMIER LEAGUE | P | GD | PTS |
|---|----------------|----|----|-----|
| 1 | Arsenal | 18 | 28 | 47 |
| 2 | Man City | 18 | 28 | 39 |
| 3 | Newcastle | 19 | 22 | 38 |
| 4 | Man Utd | 18 | 8 | 38 |
| 5 | Tottenham | 19 | 10 | 33 |
| 6 | Fulham | 20 | 3 | 31 |

Sports

Forest sign Palmeiras midfielder for £16m



Danilo made 141 appearances for Palmeiras

NOTTINGHAM Forest have signed Brazilian midfielder Danilo from Palmeiras for a fee of about £16m.

The 21-year-old joins the City Ground side, who are 13th in the Premier League, on a six-and-a-half-year deal.

Danilo won two Copa Libertadores and the 2022 Brazilian Serie A title with Palmeiras.

"I will show a lot of determination and a strong desire to win and will always look to do my best on the pitch to achieve positive results," said Danilo.

"I'm excited about getting started and meeting my new teammates."

He added: "I'm really happy to be fulfilling my

dream of playing in the Premier League and playing for Nottingham Forest.

"I learnt a bit about the history of the club and saw they had won two European Cups."

Danilo came through the ranks at Palmeiras and made 141 appearances for the club.

Elegbeleye reaffirms IMC's level playing field stance to Clubs

Chairman of the Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL) Interim Management Committee (IMC), Gbenga Elegbeleye, has sent a message of goodwill to the 20 participating clubs and wishing them success in the 2022/23 season.

"As the remaining games of MatchDay One holds this weekend after the successful flag-off last

Forest sporting director Filippo Giraldi said: "He is a fantastic talent that will be a great asset for the present and the future of Nottingham Forest."

Danilo is Forest's second signing of the January transfer window, following Palmeiras team-mate Gustavo Scarpa moving to the City Ground on a free transfer.

Sunday, I wish to congratulate all the clubs as they start the season.

"I wish the clubs success as a team and the players, a great outing individually and collectively," Elegbeleye said in his message.

He assured the clubs that the IMC will be neutral but very firm in enforcing the rules adding that, "there will be a level playing field for every club as the IMC will not

ENYIMBA, Abia Warriors, Rangers home matches kickoff at 3 p.m. 3SC cleared to play in Ibadan

The chairman of the Interim Management Committee (IMC) of the Nigeria Professional Football League (NPFL), Gbenga Elegbeleye, has said that the body is out to change the face of the league.

For the first time, each of the 20 clubs featuring in the NPFL got N10 million as take off grant, a move many football-loving Nigerians see as a step in the right direction.

Speaking with The Guardian in Benin City, Edo State during the unveiling of new set of jersey for both Bendel Insurance and Edo Queens, Elegbeleye said that the IMC would deplore all right mechanism to put the league in good shape.

"We are out to do things different from what we used to have in the past," he said. "I know that it is a great task to

We'll change face of NPFL, Elegbeleye assures

correct some of the things we have noticed in the league, but with the cooperation of Nigerians, we will achieve it."

Meanwhile, home matches involving the three NPFL clubs based in the Southeast will kick off at 3.00 p.m. on Sundays, the IMC has revealed.

In a statement, yesterday, IMC directed NPFL clubs to note the fixture adjustments and comply.

The IMC also announced the lifting of the ban on Shooting Stars Sports Club (3SC), playing with fans in attendance at the Lekan Salami Stadium, Ibadan.

3SC fans were banned from attending matches

last season following repeated violent incidents occasioning attacks on match officials and club players and officials at the stadium.

A memo circulated to clubs and signed by IMC's Head of Operations, Davidson Owumi, reads, "Please be informed that effective from the MatchDay 1 fixtures scheduled to hold on January 14 and 15, 2023, all weekend fixtures holding in the Southeastern part of the country will now kickoff at 3:00pm on Sundays.

"Consequently, the home matches of Abia Warriors FC, Enyimba and Rangers will hold as scheduled above.

"All clubs, officials and related stakeholders are hereby put on notice."

Bournemouth agree deal worth about £20m for Lorient winger

BOURNEMOUTH have agreed a deal for Lorient winger Dango Ouattara, with the fee believed to be about £20m.

The 20-year-old has scored six goals and provided six assists in 18 Ligue 1 appearances this season.

New Bournemouth owner Bill Foley is attempting to buy a stake

in Lorient, which has been an advantage in reaching agreement for Ouattara.

Foley has pledged to strengthen Gary O'Neil's squad in an attempt to guide them away from relegation trouble.

Bournemouth have taken

just three points from their past nine league games and sit a point above the relegation zone, but they have a worse goal difference than all three teams below them.

The Cherries have lost their past four Premier League games and six matches in a row in all competitions since O'Neil was made permanent manager on 27 November.

Ouattara, who has five goals from 11 international caps for Burkina Faso, is likely to become Bournemouth's first signing of the January transfer window.

It looks as if there are a number of incoming players at Vitality Stadium this week, with Dango Ouattara expected to be announced very soon. A number of other players have also been linked, including Arnaut Danjuma, which would be a great bit of business.

Arnaut knows the club, knows the staff and the majority of the players. If he is available, as it appears, it makes sense. Our attacking ability is there, although it's hit a bit of a slump of late, so these two signings would be a massive help.

What we do need is a wise head at the back. In the 2015-16 season, Eddie Howe struck gold convincing Sylvain Distin to join the club. Sylvain's experience was pivotal to helping the team reach the levels required in the Premier League. The confidence he oozed was there for all to see.

We are yet to be linked to a central defender, a position we are crying out for reinforcements, but once we are (and I feel we need two), experience is a must. The question is who.

Gary Cahill last season provided that experience to help us out of the Championship. It is all well and good getting a prospect in for the future but we need someone to step in now.

Alan Hansen once said "you can't win anything with kids" and, while Manchester United won the title that year featuring lots of young stars, they also had the wise, experienced players in the side too like Irwin, McClair, Parker.

Let's hope Gary has someone up his sleeve who can provide that knowledge and steel in a centre-back pairing.

...As Villa agree £18m striker deal

ASTON Villa have reached an agreement to sign Colombia striker Jhon Duran from Chicago Fire in an £18m deal.

Duran, 19, has scored eight goals and set up six more in 28 appearances for Chicago.

Villa will pay £14.75m for Duran, who has three caps for Colombia, and a potential £3.3m in add-ons.

The transfer is subject to Duran passing a medical, agreeing personal terms and obtaining the necessary work visa.

He will compete with Ollie Watkins and Danny Ings at Unai Emery's side, with the pair scoring four and seven goals respectively this season.

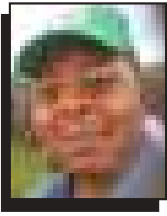
Villa are 11th in the Premier League.



Elegbeleye



Quest



writer

BALATA TAKAYA, PhD

FRAGMENT

"The Islamic Jihad succeeded very easily in the Hausa-Habe states because at least a syncretic form of Islam was being practiced there, especially in the palaces of their kings, for about two hundred years before the Dan Fodio revolution; making it plausible to justify the Jihad there as a struggle for religious reform."

BALATA TAKAYA, PhD

Gomwalk's visionary imperatives: Egalitarian nationhood template

FOR too long, the *autochthonous* peoples of the Middle Belt have lived under the illusion that it is well for them in independent Nigeria. On the other hand, their detractors who see them as mere second-class citizens make every effort at eroding whatever is left of their political rights and fortunes as well as demeaning their human dignity almost every step of the way in Nigeria's socio-political advancement.

This, assertion may sound large and alarmist. But the truth is that, unknown to most Nigerians, (the people of the Middle Belt Region in particular), all of Nigeria's non-Hausa/Fulani communities have been living under an ambush of a *silent code* of war which, even if undeclared but nevertheless, is still unfolding. It is too recent to forget that the country experienced civil disorders, like the 1980 *Maitatsine crisis* of Kano, followed by its several aftermath like the *Yan Awaki crisis* of Gombe, the *Bulumkutu Ward* debacles of Maiduguri, the *Rigasa riots* of Kaduna and the *Musa Makaniki-led Doubeli Jimeta uprisings* of Yola, and several others. These were soon to be followed by the crises spun off by Zamfara state's Governor Ahmed Yerima-initiated spate of *shari'a state declarations* when some "eaglet" state governors, shortly after the return to civil rule in 1999, took it upon themselves to brazenly violate the provisions of the Nigerian Federal Constitution by turning theirs into *Islamic states* irrespective of tine constitutional rights of non-Muslim citizens. Then came the **Boko Haram** orgies of killings, burnings and total despoliations of whole communities, making millions of citizens to flee into neighbouring countries as refugee and/or into Internally Displaced people's (IDP) camps, especially since the past five years to date (2017). This upheaval, notwithstanding the Biafra cessation bid, became the most daring challenge to Nigeria's sovereignty since Independence. Those happenings appear seemingly unrelated and not aimed at the same objective of subverting the Nigerian political system in favour of resuscitating and imposing an anachronistic set up. Or you think the events are not related?

Findings about the *Maitatsine* uprising of 1980, for instance, has produced a fairly plausible school of thought which suggests that it was more or less an "accidental



JD Gomwalk

miscarriage" of a more intricate and comprehensive design for total, nation-wide upheaval espoused to catalyse the resurgence of the Hausa-Fulani elite leadership by the legatees of Ahmadu Bello, the late *Sardauna of Sokoto*, whose dominance in Nigerian public affairs and governance seemed to have significantly waned after Sardauna's death

To my mind, the salient but silent motives behind starting these relentless internecine wars in the Middle Belt, though waged on the wings and machinery of Islamic religion, are part of the perpetual struggle for the control of the Region's political economy aimed at *dhimminization* of the region's populace, preparatory for the long intended onslaught on Nigeria as a whole. Let me hasten to add here that *dhimminization* is not synonymous to *proselytisation* which may be seen as a right of any religion to recruit followership by peaceful persuasions. By *dhimminization*, all citizens outside the Hausa-Fulani political culture become politically marginalised and cannot aspire to any public office (political, administrative or technical) for which a person for other cultural background is qualified. However, "subjects" of

non-Hausa/Fulani background may work as artisans; a necessary exception which practically consigns people outside the ruling class into the proverbial status of "hewers of wood end drawers of water". It is in line with this *Caliphate social stratification* philosophy that the emirs, in the early colonial days, urged the British to create *pagan schools* to teach only handicrafts to the children of the *talakawa* class, especially the children of the Middle Belt nationalities.

This is to say that what is unfolding is a continuous war unilaterally declared and being waged against the native

"This, assertion may sound large and alarmist. But the truth is that, unknown to most Nigerians (the people of the Middle Belt Region in particular), all of Nigeria's non-Hausa/Fulani communities have been living under an ambush of a silent code of war which, even if undeclared but nevertheless, is still unfolding. It is too recent to forget that the country experienced civil disorders, like the 1980 Maitatsine crisis of Kano, followed by its several aftermath like the Yan Awaki crisis of Gombe, the Bulumkutu Ward debacles of Maiduguri, the Rigasa riots of Kaduna and the Musa Makaniki-led Doubeli Jimeta uprisings of Yola, and several others. These were soon to be followed by the crises spun off by Zamfara state's Governor Ahmed Yerima-initiated spate of shari'a state declarations when some "eaglet" state governors, shortly after the return to civil rule in 1999, took it upon themselves to brazenly violate the provisions of the Nigerian Federal Constitution by turning theirs into Islamic states irrespective of tine constitutional rights of non-Muslim citizens."

inhabitants of the Middle Belt but the latter is not even aware something as serious is going on. In particular, the conspiracy to impose the *Dhimma* status on the ethnic nationalities of the Region since the Caliph dispensation of Dan Fodio's son, Muhammad Bello, is still not only active but also imperceptibly widening and deepening, to the disadvantage of both Muslim and non-Muslim natives of this area. There is not much that is religious about the *Dhimma Covenant* even by its original concept and/or invention in North Africa in the 8th Century AD. It is always essentially propelled by mere politics of greed and the desire for control of people considered "others" by Caliph powers. This Nigerian version of the strategy for the control of Middle Belt's political economy took its root from the so-called *Dhimma Covenant* imposed as the **Pact of Umar** (717- 720 AD), being a template of very degrading conditions to be imposed on non-Muslims under an Islamic State. Please see excerpts from At-Turtushi's book, *Siraj al-Muluk* (pp. 229-230), reproduced as an annex to this paper.

The Middle Belt Region - Without doubt, this was the model *code* of the perpetual status the Dan Fodio Caliphate borrowed for unilateral imposition on Middle Belt nationalities. But first, talking about the "Middle Belt", who really are they and where do they come from?

As described elsewhere, the Middle Belt is that territory, the Northern fringes of which may be delineated by an adjustable imaginary line drawn West-Eastwards from Zuru, in Kebbi State, to Gwoza, in Borno State,

and the Southern limits of which is demarcated by the Southern boundary of the defunct Northern Region of Nigeria. The Middle Belt, as described, is a region that is home for myriads of communal *autochthons*; i.e ethnic nationalities who, in spite of the very significant influx of other peoples constantly streaming into the territory from other regions are, to date, still strongly identifiable as **unique people groups** that are incontrovertibly *native* to their respective places of abode. Located within this fairly large and contiguous geographical expanse, they collectively constitute the Cultural Middle Belt people because, in spite of apparent linguistic variations among them, they all share basic cultural and socio-economic similarities. Above all, though migration is part and parcel of humanity, these are people groups who can no longer remember from where their ancestors came to their present locations, thus qualifying them as *natives* of their places. As a collective of correlated groups, the natives of the Middle Belt invariably recount related or common historical experiences of the vicissitudes of life on their respective peoples over time and space before, during and after British colonialism over Nigeria.

The Islamic Jihad succeeded very easily in the Hausa-Habe states because at least a syncretic form of Islam was being practiced there, especially in the palaces of their kings, for about two hundred years before the Dan Fodio revolution; making it plausible to justify the Jihad there as a struggle for religious reform. But not so in the Middle Belt where the *mujahidduns* (i.e. the jihad warriors) could not make any head way except among the Fulani settlers scattered in grazing encampments, usually a stone-throw away from native towns. The encampments, usually referred to as *nguros, wuros, sabon-gari, sabon gida, zango*, etc are, to date, usually started after obtaining permissions from their (native) host rulers. As such, Jihad in the Middle Belt areas were seen as a globalized form of the usual ferment among rival Fulani settlements in their hitherto well-known struggles for patriarchal supremacy among grazing settlements.