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Nigeria set to host regional digital economy conference -NCC

The Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) says Nigeria is set to host the regional digital economy conference in the country.

NCC's Director of Public Affairs, Dr Reuben Muoka made this known in a statement on Monday in Abuja.

Muoka said policy makers and stakeholders in the digital economy ecosystem in the West

African sub-region would converge in Abuja from Jan. 31 to Feb.1, for the Digital Economy Regional Conference.

He said that they would converge to discuss the future of digital economy and intensify regional public private partnerships for the region.

"The event is being hosted by the Ministry of Communications and Digital Economy on behalf of the Federal Government of Nigeria, in collaboration

with the World Bank.

"The Minister of Communications and Digital Economy, Prof. Isa Pantami will deliver the keynote address at the event.

"The Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Minister, Mohammed Bello will join Pantami to welcome Ministers and top government officials from the subregion," he said.

He said the theme of the conference is: "Positioning West Africa's Digital

Economy for the Future".

According to Muoka, the conference will provide a platform for countries in the region to discuss issues to strengthen the digital economies in West Africa and by extension, the continent.

Meanwhile, Pantami said the conference would create an avenue for peer review to accelerate digital transformation and increase collaboration to secure partnerships within

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Danbatta



Newly sworn-in Permanent Secretary posted to Ministry of Information and Communication, Dr. Boniface Gwotbit (middle) being congratulated by the Commissioner of Information and Communication, Hon. Dan Manjang (right) and the Director of Press and Public Affairs (DOPPA) to Governor Lalong, Dr. Makut Simon Macham (left) after the swearing-in of ten Permanent Secretaries yesterday at the Victoria Gowon Multi-Purpose Hall, new Government House Rayfield, Jos. Photo: DANLADI DUK

UNICEF pledges sustainable support for education in North-East

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has pledged to sustain its support for more children to have access to education in the North-East.

Ms Christian Munduate, the UNICEF Representative in Nigeria, stated this during her visit to the American University of Nigeria (AUN)'s feed and read programme for 100 out-of-school children in Yola on Monday.

She disclosed plans to increase the number for more children to access the services through AUN and other public schools in the region.

Munduate also called on the state governments to provide funding for the development of education at the grassroots and also expressed the need for private sectors to be committed for children to succeed in life.

She said children need to be educated if not they would become a challenge in the future.

She advised the beneficiaries to be

attending the class for them to be educated, useful for themselves, families and the community in the future.

"We have 50 girls and 50 boys in the programme and the idea is to expand in this accelerated programme to bring children to cater for their studies in a shorter period is very intense.

"And the good news of these children is that their capacity to learn is amazing.

"So from what I have seen they are really advancing and to them without this programme they will not have the opportunity to come to school to learn, read and write or even basic arithmetic," the UNICEF official said.

According to her, hopefully after the programme they will be able to enroll to formal education to continue learning and have opportunities to change in life when they grow up.

Munduate added that when they grow they would have access to more

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Lekki Seaport will generate thousand jobs to citizens -Sanwo-Olu

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Nigeria set to host regional digital economy conference -ncc

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the region. He said that it would also strengthen the innovation and entrepreneurial ecosystem while intensifying regional public-private partnerships for digital economy funding, research and development.

Pantami said: "It is expected that the gathering will also provide an opportunity to showcase the progress

made in the development of digital economy in the West African sub-region.

"Identify winning strategies, discuss challenges, and prepare for the future in addition to creating awareness of the region's needs in the areas of policies and framework for the digital economy.

"It will also attract private sponsors for digital transformation in the region". (NAN)



Danbatta

PVC collection: INEC cautions staff against sharp practices

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in Abia State has cautioned its staff members to shun sharp practices during the Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs) distribution.

The INEC's Head, Public Affairs Unit in Abia, Bamidele Oyetunji, issued the warning in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Aba on Monday.

Mr Oyetunji said the commission frowns at

receiving or demanding gratification from the public while performing their duties.

"Our staff members do not need to search for anything on the internet. All they need to do is to give people their voter cards.

"Anybody whose card is not found or those with challenges should be given a note to verify online by themselves," Mr Oyetunji said.

NAN reports that some

Continued from page 1

have access to more opportunities for employment, entrepreneurship and even farming.

Prof. Yusuf Attahiru, the AUN interim President, appreciated UNICEF for impacting positively on children in the state and country at large.

According to him, AUN is also committed on community services and community development which result to succeed recorded on the ongoing feed and read programme, among others.

He also urged for more partnership for the development of education, among other programmes in the institution. (NAN)

IPC trains media on elections coverage

The International Press Centre (IPC) has unveiled plan to train Nigerian media on 2023 general elections coverage.

The training which held on Tuesday would feature discussions on the findings of monitoring in October and November 2022 and presentation of revised Nigerian Media Code of Election Coverage.

UNICEF pledges sustainable support for education in North-East



Ms Christian Munduate, UNICEF Rep in Nigeria, visits American University of Nigeria (AUN)'s programme for out-of-school children in Yola

Mr Lanre Arogundade, the Executive Director IPC, said that the analysis of the media monitoring report of the 2023 elections was pivotal in determining the extent to which the elections can be said to be inclusive.

Arogundade said that IPC would present a performance scorecard by the monitored media based

on their promotion of inclusive issues in their coverage and reportage of the electoral processes.

He said that the convergence would attract stakeholders from the media, civil society, academia, regulatory bodies, and other relevant organisations would present the opportunity for the media monitoring report to be assessed.

Similarly, Arogundade said that the overall goal of the media component was to support the consolidation of democracy in Nigeria with the media helping to facilitate the key ingredient of credible elections through engagement and professionalism in coverage and reportage of the electoral processes.

"The media monitoring is one of the activities being implemented by IPC under an EU funded project.

"The project involves strengthening the media for fair, accurate, ethical, and inclusive coverage of the electoral processes and elections in Nigeria," he said.

Arogundade listed the newspapers monitored by IPC as follows: The Punch, The Guardian, Daily Sun, Vanguard, ThisDay, Nigerian Tribune, The Nation, Leadership, Daily Trust, and Daily Independent while the five online media include The Cable, the Premium Times, Eagle Online, RealNews and the Authority.

"Also monitored are the News Portal (website) and the twitter handles of Nigeria's election management body, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)", He said.

Prof Abigail Ogwezzy-Ndisika of the Department of Mass Communication, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Lagos, shall serve as the reviewer of the reports, while Mr. Iyobosa

Uwugiaren, General Secretary, NGE and Dr. Chido Onumah, Coordinator of AFRICMIL, (Vice President, North Central, ACSFN), shall be the lead discussants. (NAN).

Edo records one death, eight fresh Lassa fever

Edo State Government said on Monday that the state had recorded one more death and eight new cases of Lassa fever in the last 24 hours.

Commissioner for Health, Akoria Obehi, made the disclosure in a statement made available to reporters on Monday in Benin.

Ms Obehi, a professor, said the new cases were recorded in Etsako West, Esan North East, Esan West and Egor local government areas.

"Edo State has recorded eight new cases of Lassa fever, raising the total number of cases in the state to 96.

"We also confirmed a new death from the disease, raising the fatality figure to nine, with a case fatality rate of nine per cent.

"So far, four deaths have been recorded in Etsako West and two in Esan North East, while Etsako East, Oredo, and Esan West LGAs have confirmed one death each from the disease," she said.

Lamenting the community spread of the disease, the commissioner said that Etsako West LGA was the most affected by the disease in the state, with 37 confirmed cases and four deaths.

This, she said, was followed by Esan West LGA and Esan North East LGA, with 24 and 19 confirmed cases respectively.

According to Ms Obehi, 42 people, including 30 adults and 12 children, are currently on admission at Irrua Specialist Teaching Hospital, adding that they are responding to treatment.

Lekki Seaport will generate thousand jobs for our citizens -Sanwo-Olu

Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu of Lagos state has assured that the Lekki Deep Seaport will generate thousands of jobs for the citizens.

Sanwo-Olu gave this assurance while giving his address at the project commissioning on Monday.

He said, "The port will generate thousands of jobs to our citizens. We thank you Mr President for your support on this project.

"I'm indeed happy and excited about this project," the governor added.

Recall that President Muhammadu Buhari has arrived Lagos to officially commission the \$1.5 billion Lekki Deep Seaport, a project, which has been described as first in Nigeria.

Buhari arrived at the Murtala Muhammad Airport, Lagos on Monday at 3:33pm.

The president will equally

commission other projects built by the Lagos state governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu.

Some of the projects slated for commissioning are the 18.75km six-lane rigid-pavement Eleko Junction to Epe Expressway; the John Randle Centre for Yoruba Culture and History; and the MRS Lubricant Factory in Apapa

Buhari, on arrival with the Lagos State Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu, was conducted round the port's 1.5km long main.

The seaport's spanning over 600 meters, is enough for a vessel of up to 16,000 standard containers (TEU). The approach channel is 11 km long.

The Lekki Deep Seaport made history last year as it received the first-ever vessel (Zhen Hua 28) to berth at the port.

The port has three terminals: the container terminal, the liquid terminal, and the dry bulk terminal.

According to the promoters, the container terminal has an initial draft of 14 metres, with the potential for further dredging to 16.5 metres. The terminal is able to handle 2.5 million 20-foot standard containers per year.

The deep-sea port of Lekki is the first port in Nigeria with ship-to-shore cranes. It has three of these container gantry cranes; they belong to the "Super-post-Panamax" group - this means that they can reach and unload the rearmost row of containers even if the container ship is wider than the Panama Canal (49m or 160ft maximum boat beam).

The STS cranes have a fixed rail at the quayside. They can lift 65 tons in twin-

lift mode, 50 tons in single-lift mode or 85 tons under a hook.

The port's computerised system will allow container identification and clearance from the office, and human interaction will be minimal in the physical operations

When phase 2 is completed, the deep sea port will have three liquid berths. The liquid cargo terminal will handle vessels up to 45,000 DWT (dead weight tonnage) and can expand to reach a capacity of 160,000 DWT.

Liquids (like petrol or diesel) will be handled at a tank farm near the port. The docking area is equipped with loading arms. It is also connected by pipelines along the breakwater.

The bulk terminal with an available quay length of 300m can accommodate a Panamax class vessel (75,000 DWT).



Business & Economy



Breeding more donkeys in Nigeria

The Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD) has factored the breeding of more donkeys in the National Agricultural Technology and Innovation Policy (NATIP). The purpose is to prevent their extinction. NATIP is to guide the revitalisation of all aspects of agriculture in the country between 2022 and 2027. SALISU NA'INNA DAMBATT writes.

But what is donkey? It is "a domesticated hoofed mammal of the horse family with long ears and a braying call, used as a beast of burden; an ass."

A United Kingdom charity for donkeys said at its website, thedonkeysanctuary.co.uk that, "Donkeys were first domesticated around 6,000 years ago in North Africa and Egypt for meat and milk." It continued, "Around 2,000 years ago donkeys were among the draught animals used to carry silk from the Pacific Ocean to the Mediterranean along the Silk Road..."

The Donkey Sanctuary says, "For thousands of years donkeys have been the 'helping hooves' of humankind – they are the original beasts of burden. In many countries of the world donkeys are used as the preferred mode of transport. Donkeys are much more of an all-terrain animal than horses."

In Nigeria as in much of Africa and a clutch of European, Asian and Latin American countries, donkeys remain relevant and useful to mankind as beasts of burden, sources of meat, milk and skins.

Peasant in rural Northern Nigeria use donkeys for carrying and drawing water, transporting mud to build houses, ferrying manure to farms, delivering firewood to

homes, evacuating bundles and sacks of harvested crops to storage and taking wares to markets. Motorised transportation equipment have not ended the role of donkeys in transportation.

It is appropriate that the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development has recognised the value of donkeys in the NATIP document and is interested in the "promotion of donkey production through advocacy, research and input support to avert its extinction."

The Ministry said in 2020 that Nigeria has about 974,499 donkeys. But 2019 figures published by the Food and Agriculture Organisation indicates that Nigeria had 1.3

million donkeys. The FAOSTAT says, "Donkeys are most numerous in Ethiopia (8.7 million), Sudan (7.6 million), Pakistan (5.4 million), Chad (3.6 million), Mexico (3.2 million), China (2.6 million), Niger (1.9 million), Afghanistan (1.5 million), Iran (1.5 million) and Nigeria (1.3 million).

Mass breeding of donkeys was advocated by then governor of Zamfara State, Ahmed Yarima Sani who opposed the excessive purchase of donkeys from the state for slaughter elsewhere in the country. He banned the sales of donkeys, encouraged their usage for transportation and called for their domestic mass breeding.

One Isa Maishanu was quoted by a Nigerian newspaper saying

that his mother bought a donkey for him to make a living. He reportedly feared that donkeys may go into extinction unless their mass slaughter is reduced.

The Kaduna state Government banned the slaughter of donkeys in a village where its meat and skins were processed and transported to another state where the meat is consumed and the skin exported to China. The government warned that the transportation of donkeys into Kaduna State is a criminal offence and violators would be prosecuted.

Garba Datti Mohammed, member of the House of Representatives and Senator Yahaya Abdullahi presented a

Bill to the National Assembly in 2021 which declared donkeys as endangered species, sought regulation for their slaughter and the introduction of export certification for their skins.

Mr. Ifeanyi Dike, leader of the Donkey Dealers Association (DDA) agreed during a public hearing on the Bill that regulating donkey trade could generate jobs and enrich breeders, traders, owners of slaughter houses, logistics providers and exporters of donkey derivatives.

He said DDA has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the National Animal Production Research Institute (NAPRI) for the breeding of five million donkeys within 10 years to avert their extinction. So far no donkey has been bred at NAPRI, Zaria.

It has been established that donkeys are used in transportation in parts of Nigeria. Donkeys are also kept as commercial livestock; and for their milk, meat and skins. Their mass slaughter without breeding to replenish the stock will be disastrous. Therefore, the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development was right in making breeding more donkeys a policy issue.

Source: Economic Confidential

"The Ministry said in 2020 that Nigeria has about 974,499 donkeys. But 2019 figures published by the Food and Agriculture Organisation indicates that Nigeria had 1.3 million donkeys. The FAOSTAT says, "Donkeys are most numerous in Ethiopia (8.7 million), Sudan (7.6 million), Pakistan (5.4 million), Chad (3.6 million), Mexico (3.2 million), China (2.6 million), Niger (1.9 million), Afghanistan (1.5 million), Iran (1.5 million) and Nigeria (1.3 million). Mass breeding of donkeys was advocated by then governor of Zamfara State, Ahmed Yarima Sani who opposed the excessive purchase of donkeys from the state for slaughter elsewhere in the country. He banned the sales of donkeys, encouraged their usage for transportation and called for their domestic mass breeding".



Business & Economy

New naira notes scarcity: concerns trail CBN's deadline

NIGERIANS, particularly entrepreneurs, are worried about the failure of banks to roll out new naira notes, few days to the expiration of the deadline set by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN).

Investigation revealed that less than 40 per cent of the banks are currently rolling out the new naira notes through the Automated Teller Machines (ATM) and on the counter.

A visit to some of the commercial banks showed that several customers, particularly business entities, were lodging old naira notes on daily basis.

Surprisingly, some customers who went over the counter for bulk cash withdrawals were disappointed as they were paid with old naira notes.

It was the almost same experience with those who used the ATM machines, as several customers got disappointed, as the machines could not dispense new notes. As a result, they resorted to withdrawing just a token for emergencies.

A few residents in a chat with our correspondent said that they withdrew a few notes since the machines were not dispensing new notes, considering the deadline is fast approaching.

However, sources in some of the banks alleged that CBN did not make enough new notes available to commercial banks to ease the swapping process.

A banker in Lagos State said: "Currently, we don't have the new note in our branch. Last week, we were given just N1.5m new notes."

"The deadline is fast approaching, but we are not getting the expected quantity. We are suspecting that they will roll it out massively next week because there are no indications that the deadline will be extended."

Another banker in Ota, Ogun State, said: "We are getting the new notes but in small quantity. What we are getting is not enough to go around. I don't know what game the CBN is playing, but if truly the deadline is anything to go by, there should be a massive rollout of the money by now."

Meanwhile, the CBN has insisted that the January 31, 2023 deadline for the old notes is sacrosanct.

CBN Governor, Godwin Emefiele, during a sensitisation tour on the adoption of the newly redesigned naira in Ikeja, Lagos, threatened to sanction banks that failed to pick up the new notes.

He said that the new naira notes were in the apex bank's vaults awaiting pick up by the commercial banks.

Emefiele, represented at the event by the Director, Legal



Emefiele

Services Department, CBN, Kofo Salam-Alada, said: "We have been calling on the banks to approach the CBN across the country to pick up the new notes and we have even waived some of the conditionality for accessing currency notes to accommodate the banks."

"The banks were being given slots, but now the CBN is bending backward to accommodate the demands of the banks in order to service them so that they can service customers for easy access to the new naira notes."

He said that the apex bank was currently going around commercial banks to monitor banks and their Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) to ensure that they stopped

paying customers the new naira notes over the counter, but through the ATMs.

Emefiele reiterated that the January 31 deadline for the submission of the old naira notes was sacrosanct, urging customers to deposit their old notes and not to be caught unawares.

On his part, the President of the Coalition of Associations in Computer Village, Timmy David, implored the CBN to ensure that the new notes were accessible before the deadline.

He said: "All ATMs should be loaded with the new naira notes. As we are giving the old notes, we should be able to take back new notes. If the machines are not dispensing the new notes, then it will not circulate."

Lekki Port to grow Nigerian trade volume

The Lekki Port LFTZ enterprise Ltd (LPLEL) promoter of the Lekki Deep Sea Port, says the port will boost Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and facilitate trade volume.

The Managing Director of LPLEL, Du Ruogang, said this while addressing the media during the official inauguration of the Lekki Port by President Muhammadu Buhari on Monday.

He said the macro-economic benefit of the port is enormous.

Mr Ruogang described the port as a game-changer that would redefine maritime activities in Nigeria and the entire West African sub-region.

He highlighted other benefits to include; improvement of external trade competitiveness through improved port efficiency, cost-effective port operations and services, and improved turnaround time for cargo handling and clearance.

He also listed the benefits as reduction in delays in the supply of raw materials and equipment, reduction in costs of importation and charges, such as demurrage, among others.

"With Lekki Port, Nigeria will witness a growth in maritime

traffic and global trade and strengthen connectivity and capability to provide efficient and reliable services.

The Chief Executive Officer of Lekki Freeport Terminal, operated by CMA Terminals, a subsidiary of CMA CGM Group, Denrick Moos, said the facility would become a new generation container terminal, a game changing infrastructure in Nigeria and West Africa in addition to its state-of-the-art infrastructure.

"The Port is Nigeria's first deep sea port and is equipped with 13 quay cranes for a capacity of 2.5 million TEUs (Twenty-Foot Equivalent Units) on a 1.2 kilometre quay with a depth of 16 meters, it will operate vessels with a capacity of up to 15,000 TEUs and become one of the largest in West Africa."

"Through the new container terminal at Lekki Port, the CMA CGM Group will further develop its presence in Nigeria, the continent's largest economy and population, and the most important consumer market in West Africa and will consolidate its African global shipping and logistics network."

"Committed to supporting its customers' supply chains in

THE Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) has disclosed that it generated a record N10.1 trillion revenue in 2022 as the highest tax collection ever recorded in its history.

The Service revealed this in an "FIRS 2022 Performance Update," report signed by its Executive Chairman, Mr. Muhammad Nami, and released to the public recently, after his briefing with President Muhammadu Buhari.

"The FIRS, in the year 2022 collected a total of N10.1 trillion in both oil (N4.09 trillion) and non-oil (N5.96 trillion) revenues as against a target of N10.44 trillion," the report added.

"Companies Income Tax contributed N2.83 trillion; Value Added Tax N2.51 trillion; Electronic Money Transfer Levy N125.67 billion and Earmarked Taxes N353.69 billion."

"Non-oil taxes contributed 59% of the total collection in the year, while oil tax collection stood at 41% of total collection."

According to the FIRS, this is the first time the Service will cross the N10 trillion mark in tax revenue collection.

FIRS makes history, records N10.1 trillion revenue

"N146.27 billion which is the total value of certificates issued by the Service to private investors and NNPC for road infrastructure under the Road Infrastructure Development Refurbishment Investment Tax Credit Scheme created by Executive Order

No. 007 of 2019," the Service said in a statement Monday.

"The report also stated that the N10.1 trillion is exclusive of tax waived on account of various tax incentives granted under the respective laws, which amounted to N1,805,040,163,008.



Nami

In 2023: Nigeria will experience more flooding

The Federal Government has declared that Nigeria would experience another round of flood in many states this year, noting that early preparations had commenced to avoid some of the mistakes that were made in 2022.

It also revealed that 662 persons were killed by the devastating flood situation in 2022, adding that state governors would be informed early this year about disaster-prone areas.

The Director-General,

National Emergency Management Agency, Mustapha Ahmed, disclosed this in Abuja at the executive seminar for NEMA employees and senior members of staff selected from State Emergency Management Agencies and critical disaster management stakeholders.

Speaking to journalists on the side-lines of the event, he said, "This is January and by tomorrow (Tuesday), NiMet (Nigeria Meteorological Agency) is releasing their

- NEMA

seasonal climate prediction and after that I believe that in the next week or two, NIHSA (Nigeria Hydrological Services Agency) will release their own flood outlook.

"And immediately after that we will gather stakeholders to critically analyse the reports and interpret it and attach it with the vulnerable areas mapping, and send it out to states."

"We are starting early because we have seen one or two mistakes that were done last year. So we have to work together and collaborate with all the states. We can't work if NEMA is moving on one side, while the states are on the other side."

Asked whether NEMA was interfacing with the Nigeria Governors Forum on how to manage floods in states, Ahmed said replied in the affirmative and stressed that there would be floods this year.

He said, "When we finish with this (seminar), and NiMet releases its climate prediction, and NIHSA releases its own outlook, and we analyse them and then conduct the vulnerable areas mapping, we will then interact with the governors directly, all of them."

"We don't do that for just once, rather we identify the likely areas of disaster. It is going to flood again this year, there is no doubt about that. It is going to flood. How severe it will be is what we don't know for now, but it's actually going to flood again."

In his address during the event, he said the devastating 2022 flood disaster across the country was unprecedented in the history of Nigeria.



Business & Economy

How Nigeria's economy can grow in double digits,

I did explore the idea of Nigeria's economy growing in double digits when I ran for president in 2019. From get-go, the idea sounded egregious to establishment people, some of whom ventured that Nigeria should not think of more than a 4% to 6% growth rate. In other words, we must continue along the lines of mediocrity. My research – which I made open – to the effect that the developed nations of today grew in leaps and bounds as they made their ways up, did little to convince anyone. Not even the fact that matured economies – pre-covid were growing faster than us and are very likely to grow faster post-covid as everyone generally reorganizes to put that terrible past behind them. TOPE FASUA writes.

WHY should Nigeria be satisfied growing at 2% or 3%? Why should 4% GDP growth be a big deal for us? Why should 6% make us ecstatic and braggadocious? We need to remember where we are coming from. They say someone who does not know where he is going will be led in another direction by someone who takes him to another location. We must be able to determine our own destination. And setting a robust growth target is also a way of challenging ourselves to achieve more. I am however not just pulling figures from the skies by speaking of these numbers.

My hope is based on empirical projections from several sectors of the economy as we may see shortly. My ideas are not meant to be perfect though, and are therefore subject to critiques. Even the idea of measuring economic performance by GDP (Gross Domestic Product) growth is itself flawed. Simon Kuznets in the 1930s invented the idea of GDP and put a caveat on it based on its inadequacy. But in spite of its inadequacy – measurement issues in informal economies, skewness to a few or singular sectors, and non-measurement of inequality and other metrics of human capital development – the GDP as a general tool is useful for those who are true to themselves. As much as GDP measurements do not equate to economic development, we also know that growth must accompany any process of real development.

I base my optimism that Nigeria's economy should be able to grow by double digits in 2023 and beyond – an optimism that is shared by no less than Bola Tinubu, the APC's presidential flagbearer – on several factors and sectoral developments such as:

The Buhari Government has made some good investments which Nigeria should now reap, going forward. Developments like the Dangote Refinery, Lekki Ports, Second Niger Bridge, Calabar Ports redevelopment, and so on, are meant to add to economic activities and thus add to GDP growth in 2023 and beyond.

A reduction in the activities of terrorists and bandits and other marauders in the north of Nigeria should be able to get people back to the farms and allow the region breathe again. If the north, being the food basket of Nigeria and indeed West Africa and the region with the vastest arable land in Nigeria should find peace, this will create a good boost for the Nigerian GDP. I kind of believe that the worst is over for Nigeria and we should only grow from here.

If we view the economy through the neoliberal concept of boom and bust, the covid-era represents a bust for Nigeria and



Ahmed

the world as we entered another round of economic depression – which we pulled out of in record time. After the bust comes the boom. After a slump comes the growth. So, I say why not we grow at double digits? Base effect is what it is called.

The Buhari government seems to be getting a better handle of our petroleum sector as it winds up. The NNPC has been commercialized and is currently being streamlined. This means that there will be less waste and better accountability as some private sector standards are infused in that company. With our pipelines now being better secured using the help of local players (read Tompolo and company), and with the Kolmani Oil Field in the Bauchi/Gombe axis projected to add another 120,000 barrels per day alongside gas to the kitty, the petroleum sector in Nigeria is likely to witness a major leap in 2023 and beyond. A 7th December, 2022 report in the Punch has it that Nigeria's oil production has increased to 1.6m barrels already, up from 970,000 in September of the same year.

This is a 70% increase in productivity if we are to believe the words of Bala Wunti, the head of former NAPIMS, now NNPC Upstream Investment Company. A 70% growth in the oil sector means a lot for the entire economy as it links with many other industries from oil servicing, to real estate, to our foreign exchange. A 70% growth in that industry could translate itself to a modest 7% growth in GDP if well harnessed. If we add the fact that Nigeria is actually a gas country with a bit of oil, and our NLNG is doing great with

demand for gas on the increase worldwide, we could actually do better in the oil and gas sector.

The current cashless policy of the Central Bank of Nigeria will also contribute something significant. This is because it will enhance transparency. People will but eventually comply. With lesser ability to operate in cash and avoid accountability, the Federal, State and Local Governments, will certainly be able to track transactions more and obtain revenue from source, along the lines of its taxes, rents, rates, duties, fees, fines, levies, and what have you. Very hopefully too, corruption will be curbed howbeit marginally, freeing up funds for the development of the country and investment in public goods. President Buhari wants this to be his legacy and I hope he succeeds. The success of the cashless policy could lead to a doubling and tripling of government revenue, putting Nigeria under less pressure to borrow for recurrent expenditure.

Hopefully, we are talking about revenues raised from productive activities, and in a progressive manner, not from the poor and vulnerable. At present, the Federal Government has given a total tax holiday to companies with less than N25million in yearly turnover, in response to the covid-19 problem. This is commendable but may not continue forever. A review of this policy will also boost government revenue greatly. I will suggest a rollback of this policy. It's not being done in any other country I know around the world. In fact, UAE and Saudi Arabia, who never had any company taxes are now introducing some.

Nigeria has the lowest VAT in Africa (see figure). I believe low-income companies should be returned to 15% and maximum taxes pegged at 22% for large companies. Whereas

the textbook says tax cuts are a way of increasing GDP, for a country like ours tax enforcement is more important. The failure of VAIDS was something I predicted. We jumped the gun. Also asking companies with N25 million turnover and below to stop paying VAT or CIT is a very reckless idea. Before we start declaring these freebies we should understand that tax discipline and compliance is prime in a country like ours. The cashless policy is also in tandem with the now ubiquitous reliance on technology to drive every process – especially revenue collection, project management, budgeting and what have you. We may be looking at a time of economic renaissance indeed, if we could keep our heads.

Big ideas could also lead to a leap in GDP. The good thing is that nothing stops different sectors chipping in at their own paces. If Nigeria could have a consumer credit revolution around goods and services produced in Nigeria, and our banks could get more adventurous in advancing credit to Nigerians for mortgage, household appliances, other assets like cars, even education (student loans for universities), a lot will change in Nigeria and GDP will take flight. I know a Professor Richard Werner who believes that such consumer credits are central to the leap in development witness in Europe, Japan and the USA. This is because it leads to rapid money creation by banks, and by extension value creation. Such credits must however not be directed at importation.

Nigeria needs a big idea around the housing sector too, which could begin to totally transform the face of our cities from massive slums to something a bit more organized. In China and Morocco, among other places, the private sector got involved in the provision of mass housing. Nigeria has made the mistake of thinking of elite houses instead of the more profitable investment in mass housing. There has to be a way to work this out, and our banks must look at creating massive value by expanding their balance sheet in this regard. However, they must be ready to make modest profit. This idea alone will add 10% to Nigeria's GDP.

Another factor that can add to our GDP in 2023 and beyond are the import substitution policies of the present administration – including some of the initiatives of institutions like the CBN. I am decidedly on the side of a little protection for the economy, not the full opening up of the economy to the vagaries of a brutal global competition. To that extent, where I believe it should be tenured, I see sense in the non-support of 43 items for import, such as toothpicks, milk, fish, vegetables, rice, furniture and others. As things stand, some local industries have developed on the back of this protection.

This is what every developed country has done in their time. Alexander Hamilton, the first US Secretary of Finance, was adamant in protecting the US economy from dumping by the superpower of that time – Britain. Hamilton, who was killed senselessly in a duel by Aaron Burr, a sitting Vice

President in 1804, is considered one of the best personalities in public finance there ever was. Our misreading of economics – and the indoctrination and brainwashing of many – is one of our biggest problems in Nigeria. No matter what, what we call the non-oil sector (a term I hate to use because it continues to elevate crude oil as our mainstay), is likely to contribute even more to economic growth as we forge ahead. Initiatives like the CBN's RT200, which incentivizes exporters, have begun to lay emphasis on value-added export as well.

Nigeria may witness a renaissance in the manufacturing sector. I believe we have suffered enough and turned the corner. But we must stay on course. I however propose that those 43 items be put on very heavy tariff regimes so as to not give traducers of the concept any excuses that the CBN is sending importers of the products to the same black market. Further use of IT at our ports will increase collections by customs naturally.

The coming on board of Dangote and hopefully, Air Nigeria will help conserve foreign exchange. Second to sundry technology imports, the import of refined petroleum gulps most of Nigeria's scarce fx resources. Local production will mean that we do not have to import anymore. Ditto, having a national carrier will mean that the pains Nigerians bear with airlines presently will reduce and so also will the current gridlock arising from fx obligations to foreign airlines. Less pressure on our fx reserves will lead to accretion (increases), thus improving our national balance sheet and making Nigeria attractive to foreign investors again. This may however take longer than a year or two but the effects will be profound and salutary.

We must recall that our GDP had once hit \$510 billion before two recessions came and sent us reeling (2016 and 2020). By moving from the current \$440 billion, in two years we will be back to where we were in 2014 essentially. We should view this as a minimum and not an achievement. Whatever happens after two years of double-digit growth should then be seen as the real achievement.

With better accountability, focus, clear heads, cleaner statistics, and a little bit of luck, we should be targeting a trillion-dollar economy in about 6 to 7 years, given the geometric projection. We should defy the World Bank and IMF who keep projecting economic growth rates that barely cover our population growth rate of 2.6%, much less our inflation of 21.47% for us. What I see in their statements, year-in, year-out, is that they are telling us that we don't think, will not think, and will never reorganize ourselves out of the rathole we find ourselves today. We are under obligation to prove that we are not rats.

Source: Premium Times

Politics

APC Gubernatorial candidate pays condolence visit to Sango

THE gubernatorial candidate of the All Progressives Congress in Plateau State, Dr Nentawe Yilwatda Goshwe has paid a condolence visit to Hon Damishi Sango at his country home in Danwal, Ganawuri over the demise of his wife Mrs Esther Sango over the weekend.

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

Accompanied by the APC State Chairman, Hon. Rufus Bature and the State Publicity Secretary, Sylvanus Namang, Dr Nentawe Yilwatda described her death as an irreparable loss not only to the former Minister of Sports and former State Chairman of the PDP but to the entire state.

According to him, though she is gone, he believes she is resting with the Lord as she was a great woman of faith who lived and served Christ till her death.

He said she has gone to a place where death has no sting and where there is no more pain or suffering, and urged the bereaved husband to take heart as our hope is in Christ who knows everything.

"We stand with you in this moment of grief and urge you to remain strong and be consoled in the fact that we shall meet at Jesus' feet on the resurrection day," he stressed.

On his part, the APC Chairman, Hon. Rufus Bature described the deceased as a good woman and prayed God to grant the former Minister of Sports the fortitude to bear the loss.

Also in his condolence message, Chief Vonjen Lar, a longstanding friend of Hon. Sango and Chairman of Plateau State Teachers Service Commission, described Late Esther Sango as a wonderful woman who gave her husband all the necessary support in his political career.

He said our hope and consolation is only found in the word of God.

According to him, life is a test and God knows all that happens to us and we cannot question him.

Also on a condolence visit was the Chairman of Riyom Local Government, Hon. Mafeng Gwalson and his Council Members.

He revealed that they had come individually and they have now come as a council because Hon. Damishi Sango is not only a father to all of them but was the Chairman of Barkin Ladi out of which Riyom Local Government was created.

Gwalson said, the death of



Yilwatda

Mrs Esther Sango who was a mother to them, is a huge loss to the Local Government Area.

He said the Local Government would be part of the funeral arrangements which comes up on February 4, 2023.

In his response, Hon. D. T. Sango said he is greatly consoled by the visit and soothing messages and appreciated the gubernatorial candidate who led the team.

He described his wife as a wonderful woman whom he believes is resting with the Lord, adding that, in old age, the wife becomes the manager of her husband. According to him, his manager is gone so one begins to wonder where to start from but God knows what to do with us in situations like this as he would never depart from us.

He revealed that the funeral has been fixed for 4th February in order not to clash with the general elections of 25th February.

Gagdi inaugurates Campaign Council

From **EZEKIEL DONTINNA, Dengi**

DENGI town, the headquarters of Kanam Local Government Area, Plateau State came to a stand still Monday, when member representing Pankshin/Kanke/Kanam Constituency, Rt. Hon. Yusuf Adamu Gagdi, inaugurated 1200 members of his campaign Council headed by Hon. Philip Dasun, ahead of the forthcoming general elections.

Major roads and streets leading to the Dengi Mini Stadium, the venue of the occasion were jam-packed as supporters from Jos, Pankshin and Kanke trooped in in hundreds of thousands to show their allegiances to the member who is seeking for a second term on February 25, 2023.

Earlier, supporters of the party were seen grouping themselves wearing t-shirts with printed pictures of Hon. Gagdi, APC gubernatorial candidate, Dr. Nentawe Yilwatda Goshwe and other candidates at various junctions waiting for the arrival of the PKK candidate for them to form part of his convoy to the venue.

While inaugurating the Campaign Council, the convener of the occasion, Rt. Hon. Yusuf Adamu Gagdi, said, 2023 meant well for them and that, they were determined to deliver APC from top down saying, "this is to test our microphone ahead of the grand campaign flag off coming soon."

He charged the inaugurated campaign council to go to the nooks and crannies of the constituency and ensure that they defeat PDP and Labour Party (LP) using strategic campaign strategies as he promised to give the needed

support to deliver.

Responding on behalf of the newly inaugurated Campaign Council, the Director General, Hon. Philip Dasun, thanked the candidate for the confidence reposed in them and promised not to disappoint him, but would do everything possible to ensure victory at the end of the election.

However, the Plateau State APC Gubernatorial Candidate and State Coordinator of Tinubu/Shettima Campaign Organisation, Dr. Nentawe Yilwatda Goshwe, said it was home coming for him because Kanam and Kanke people are one and are known for their exceptional leadership qualities.

He appealed to the people of PKK to vote Tinubu, the APC Presidential candidate, himself, Hon. Gagdi and other APC candidates so that, there would be free flow of development to the people of Plateau State and Nigeria at large because they were prepared to give quality leadership to the good people of Nigeria.

Earlier, the Executive

Nigerian Army receives 100 Boko Haram terrorists
No fewer than 100 of the insurgents, including their family members surrendered to troops of the Operation Hadin Kai Theatre Command, in Banki and Konduga Local Government Areas of Borno State during the weekend. Boko Haram insurgents have continued to surrender in the terror-troubled North-East as the Nigerian military widens its offensive against terror in the region and around Lake Chad.

No fewer than 100 of the insurgents, including their family members surrendered

From **ABBAS GUNGURA, Bauchi**

DESPITE technical problem that disrupted the full glamour of the APC Presidential Campaign rally in Bauchi Monday, President Muhammadu Buhari, was satisfied with the turnout of the crowd at the event.

The APC Presidential campaign for Tinubu/Shettima which took place at Sir, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa Stadium Bauchi, saw President Muhammadu Buhari, for the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) presidential campaign that attracted over 800,000 supporters and fans of the party and the president including the love they have for the state Governorship candidate Amb. Sadiq Baba Abubakar and his Deputy.

Also in attendance at the campaign rally are APC National Chairman Sen. Abdullahi Adamu, Senate president Ahmed Lawan, Sen. Abubakar Kyari Deputy National Chairman North, Director General campaign organization Mr. Simon Lalong and Governor of Plateau State, Sen. Atiku Baguda Chairman APC Progressives Governor's forum and Governors of Gombe, Yobe, Jigawa and Borno States amongst others.

Minister of education Adamu Adamu, Minister of Humanitarian affairs Hajiya Sadiya Faruq, former governors of Bauchi state Mallam Isa Yuguda and Mohammed Abdullahi Abubakar, all graced and added colour to the campaign rally that featured the presidential candidate Tinubu physically dancing in the midst of the mammoth crowd that

Bauchi APC presidential campaign rally successful



Tinubu

gathered at the Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa Memorial stadium.

The DG Tinubu/Shettima Presidential campaign, Governor Simon Lalong while speaking at the occasion said they are in Bauchi to see and thank the good people of Bauchi state for their love for president Buhari and at the same time solicited for their votes for Bola Ahmed Tinubu and Shettima to take over from President Muhammadu Buhari to continue providing dividends of democracy to Nigerians.

He expressed optimism that from what they saw today in Bauchi where people came out in thousands chanting sai Tinubu Sai Marshal, Bauchi is for Buhari and Buhari is for Bauchi, the 2023

elections is a workover for APC. The Senate President Ahmed Lawan, commended president Muhammadu Buhari for saving the people of the north east from the hands of PDP maladministration for 16 years that deliberately created Boko Haram in the region to chieve their selfish retrogressive objectives.

"We from the north east again thank and appreciate our Father, leader and Mentor President Muhammadu Buhari for the opportunities given to us in terms of various appointments in his government since assumption of office in 2015. And recently the discovery of oil in Bauchi and Gombe States in the region which we were denied neglected and marginalized by PDP maladministration before 2015. We are proud of you, you have brought peace to us Mr. President and we must reciprocate by ensuring that the great Politician Bola Ahmed Tinubu, who you have chosen as your successor to consolade on your remarkable achievements becomes successful by grace of Almighty Allah", he said.

The Bauchi state APC Governorship candidate Amb. Air Marshal Sadiq Baba Abubakar, after expressing gratitude to Almighty Allah, for the safe arrival of President Muhammadu Buhari, the APC presidential candidate and his running mate including all members of the campaign team to Bauchi, appreciate the support and show of love and commitment demonstrated by mammoth crowd that gathered at the venue of the event to prove that Bauchi is 100 percent APC and for Baba Buhari.

Amb. Baba Sadiq Abubakar, while soliciting for mandate from the good people of Bauchi state to become the next Governor of the state in the 2023 general election, said, "if by the grace of Almighty Allah you vote for me as your Governor the narrative of our dear state will change, we will operate an open door policy where everyone has a say in the running of government to fulfill the dreams of the founding fathers of the state, where the state will rub shoulders in areas of education, economy, agriculture and health in already developed States like Lagos, Kano, Rivers and Kaduna. Adding that we will ensure that we tackle the issue of over one million out of school children in the state and encourage youths and women development to make them purposeful. While we will also make sure Bauchi state is free from all kinds of criminal activities insha Allah" he assured.



Gagdi

Chairman of Kanam Local Government Council, Hon. Dayyabu Garga, thanked the supporters for the massive turnout to demonstrate how strong the APC was there in Kanam saying, "this is an indication of the fact that, Kanam is APC and APC is Kanam, Kanam is Gagdi

and Nentawe".

There were goodwill messages from APC Campaign Elders Council with Nde John Gobak, Nde Joshua Waklek, Prof. Saleh Kanam, Hon. Abubakar Dashe and a host of others who came from far and near.

Abdullahi Ishaq (retd.) had recently claimed since the government started the collaborative non-kinetic approach to the Boko Haram insurgency in 2021, over 82,000 of the fighters and their families had surrendered.

He added that more than 3,500 had been reintegrated into their communities. According to him, more than 85 percent of the repentant Boko Haram fighters who have surrendered were forcefully enlisted by the combatant fighters.

The Senior Special Adviser to the Borno State Governor on Security Matters, Brig Gen

Politics

'APC will deliver on promise to Plateau'

By PALANG KASMI

WIFE of the Presidential Candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC) Senator Oluremi Tinubu has assured Plateau people that her husband and Presidential candidate of the Party will fulfill the desires of Plateau people, if elected into power.

Tinubu also promised to use her bulk of experience as a former First Lady of Lagos state to serve the interest of women, youths and vulnerable groups by uplifting them.

She made the promise in Jos at a Town Hall Meeting and Lecture organised by the APC Presidential Campaign Council (PCC), with representatives of ethnic nationalities and critical stakeholders held at Crispian Hotel in Jos, Plateau State.

Speaking to Representatives of over 400 ethnic nationalities within the northern region, religious and traditional Heads, political and business leaders and other stakeholders Senator Tinubu urged them to share their views and expectations of what they want the Presidential Candidate to deliver, if elected into office.

She reassured the groups of her husband's determination to bring everyone on the table irrespective of religious, ethnic or other differences, and lead the country without exclusion of any group.

She assured that her husband will act promptly on their concerns and expectations promising that Tinubu has plans for all segments of society including women and youths, and other vulnerable groups through empowerment programmes as clearly spelt out in his manifesto.

"We need your expertise. We need your knowledge to drive this country because you have technology at your fingertips" she said.

While assuring the stakeholders that their votes will not be taken for granted she spoke on the issue of Muslim-Muslim ticket, assuring that her husband has respect for the Christian religion that is why he supports her as Pastor in her home and church.

Governor Simon Lalong and Director General of the APC Presidential Council assured that people of Plateau State will give APC full support in the upcoming 2023 general elections.

Lalong said Asiwaju Bola Tinubu has carefully planned how to take care of the ethnic nationalities in his 'Renewed Hope' Agenda.

The APC gubernatorial candidate for Plateau State, Dr. Nentawe Yilwatda in his remarks said APC is united to present Asiwaju as a President that will guarantee fairness, equity and justice.

He called on people to follow the man who knows the road and also appreciated the Committee for the good in putting up the charter assuring that he will surely work with Asiwaju to implement it if elected as Governor of Plateau State.

Deputy Speaker House of Representatives Rt. Hon. Idris Wase said the achievements of



Tinubu

Asiwaju in Lagos is a proof that he will give all nationalities a sense of belonging.

He said in terms of religious tolerance, he has proven that he is with all by presenting a Pastor in the person of Osinbanjo to be Vice President, explaining that Tinubu was instrumental to his emergence as Deputy Speaker.

A Charter of the views and aspirations of the critical stakeholders was presented for onward transmission to the Presidential Candidate.

Representative of the Ethnic Nationalities, Prof. Yusufu Turaki who presented the Charter of demands earlier to Sen. Tinubu for onward delivery to her husband, under the aegis of the Conference of Autochthonous Ethnic Communities Development Association (CONECDA) said the Charter of demands was developed for the political class particularly those seeking the highest office in the land in order to highlight the challenges of the people of the ethnic nationalities who are often left behind in national governance.

Dr. Zuwaqhu Bonat, National

Coordinator of CONECDA said the general economic, social, and security situation of Nigeria has grossly impacted on the lives of the people of the middle belt where the ethnic nationalities exist.

Bonat said apart from insecurity, there is high unemployment, poverty, food insecurity and crises that are often violent.

Bauchi rally: Buhari, Tinubu leave without delivering speeches

President Muhammadu Buhari and Ahmed Bola Tinubu, the presidential candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC), could not make their speeches at the Bauchi rally ground on Monday.

Though there was a crowd eager to listen to them, the speakers and the microphones did not allow the campaigners to address the crowd at the Abubakar Tafawa Balewa Stadium.

According to observers, the microphones refused to work because of faulty connection.

In the absence of microphones and speakers to convey their speeches,

THE Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in Abia has cautioned its staff to shun sharp practices during the Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs) distribution.

The INEC's Head, Public Affairs Unit in Abia, Mr Bamidele Oyetunji issued the warning in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Aba.

Oyetunji said that the commission frowns at receiving or demanding gratification from the public while performing their duties.

"Our staff members do not need to search for anything on the internet. All they need to do is to give people their voter cards

"Anybody whose card is not found or those with challenges should be given a note to verify online by themselves," Oyetunji said.

NAN reports that some residents of Aba have accused some INEC officials of collecting N500 from prospective voters before issuing them their cards.

Mrs Ijeoma Bernard said she was asked to pay N500 as "verification fee" before she was given her card.

Also, Nwanyioma Enyinnaya said that the INEC officials refused to attend to her

PVC collection: INEC cautions staff

because she could not pay.

Mrs Iheanaetu Roseline expressed worries that her card could not be found after the stress she passed through to get registered.

NAN reports that at Osisioma

and Aba North Local

Government Areas, residents turned out en masse to collect their cards.

The Abia Government declared Monday and Tuesday public holiday to enable workers to collect their PVCs ahead of the general election.



Okoye

President Buhari unfurl the party flag to Tinubu before leaving the scene.

However, immediately President Buhari and Tinubu left the campaign ground, all the speakers began to work.

Speaking after the exit of the two political leaders of the APC, the national chairman and the former governor of Nassarawa State, Senator Abdullahi Adamu, urged members of the Bauchi APC to remain united and canvass support for Tinubu and Abubakar in the state.

Adamu insisted that the state is APC, urging members to remain committed and vote for APC for all the elective

positions.

On his part, Plateau State Governor and Director General of the APC presidential campaign committee, Bako Simon Lalong, appreciated the good people of Bauchi State for their massive turnout and the overall support they have given to the party.

Lalong, like Adamu, urged the people of the state to vote overwhelmingly for Tinubu/Shetima, and all APC candidates.

Speaking during the campaign rally, Bauchi State APC Gubernatorial Candidate Air Mashal Sadique Abubakar appreciated the timing of supporters turning out to

welcome President Buhari, Tinubu, and other APC leaders in the state.

Abubakar said, "Buhari has done much for the country since 2015; he tackled insecurity in the North East, provided employment, and empowered a number of youth and women.

"Let's continue to vote for APC and continue to enjoy peace, development, and improvement in education and health, among other sectors."

He also called for unity among the party loyalists in the state, saying, "We need to be united to remove the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in Bauchi State."

2023 presidency: Atiku's wife meets Lagos women

TITI Atiku, wife of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) presidential candidate Atiku Abubakar, says her husband would not renege on his promises of ensuring a better life for Nigerians if elected in the forthcoming election.

Titi, gave the assurance during the Lagos State Female town hall meeting recently night, saying that the former Vice President knows the way to fix the country, having been there before.

According to her, "For good 25 years, one party has been ruling this state, we have to fight for ourselves. We have been in bondage for too long, we have to fight for our children.

"Enough is enough. My husband, Atiku has a covenant with Nigerians. He promised his life to do so much for Nigeria because Nigeria has done so much for him. Because of this, he has five agenda.

"He is a unifier, he wants to unify Nigeria. Atiku wants

insecurity in Nigeria to stop and Atiku wants to restructure Nigeria.

"Atiku wants to educate parents and children and even people living with disabilities. All of these depends on you and me.

"If you vote for Atiku, he will fulfill his promises as he has said. Atiku wants to wipe our tears. He matches his words with authority.

"Atiku wants to rescue, restore, restructure, rebuild and bring back lost glory, to Nigeria," she said.

Titi noted that her husband, as a former vice president assembled all the economic team, like former Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Okonjo Iweala and others to reposition different sectors of the economy and would such experts again when elected.

"So, I am pleading with you, do not sell your birthrights and the generation yet unborn. Vote the PDP on February 25 and March 11.

"My husband, Atiku



Abubakar

Abubakar is a good product to sell. if not, I won't be bold to come here to sell him. Only Atiku can do it, don't be deceived.

"If you vote Atiku, you have voted for me your daughter and I will not forget you".

She further noted that she had done a lot on women trafficking and child Labour when Previously in office,

noting that if God granted her the opportunity she would give succour to Nigerian children.

She said that her husband had pledged to give women and youth 60 percent slot in his cabinet, while also revitalising the economy with \$10 billion.

Atiku's wife revealed, that if her husband is elected, she will bring back another project known as SHE- Security, Health and Education.

She stressed that if her husband won the February 25 election, the Lagos PDP governorship candidate, Abdul-Azeez Adediran would emerge victorious on March 11.

Educating women on how to vote, Titi urged the women to vote with their index finger to avoid void votes.

Also speaking, a former PDP Board of Trustees' member, Aduke Maina, said that the time had come for PDP to take over leadership in Lagos and in Nigeria, saying, they had suffered enough.

Assuring Titi of women support, Maina pointed out that women in Lagos are ready to beat men in the number of votes for Atiku and Jandor.

"We shall vote PDP in Lagos, the suffering and hardship are now unbearable and it is only Atiku Abubakar can provide leadership capable of taking Nigeria to the dream of its founding fathers," Maina said.

In her welcome address, the Lagos PDP deputy governor candidate, Funke Akindele, who expressed confidence in the electoral victory of Abubakar and Adediran in the polls, called on women to keep mobilising votes in all nooks and crannies of the state.

In his remark, the Lagos PDP governorship candidate, Abdul-Azeez Adediran (Jandor) expressed confidence that the main opposition party would unseat the ruling party at the central and state levels.

IMAGES

LALONG SWEARS-IN PERMANENT SECRETARIES IN THE STATE SERVICE

Plateau State Governor, Rt. Hon. Simon Bako Lalong (CON) yesterday swore-in ten Permanent Secretaries in the Plateau State Civil Service at the Victoria Gowon Multi-purpose Hall, new Government House, Rayfield, Jos



PPC General Manager, Dr. Boniface Gwotbit (left) receiving appointment letter from the Governor as Permanent Secretary



Chairperson, Disabilities Rights Commission, Kyennan Mizim (left) with Deputy Speaker, PLHA, Rt. Hon. Saleh Shehu Yipmong (right) Special Adviser to the Governor on Job Creation, Barr. Samuel Kwamkur and APC Governorship Candidate, Dr. Nentawe Yilwatda at the ceremony



From left are, Mrs. Keziah I. Dung, Yusuf Ayuba Gimba, Gongden Micah Sunday, Michael Lamu, Peter Wuyep, Papman Naankin Emmanuel and others taking the oath of office being administered by Governor Lalong



Engr. Benjamin Gotan (left) signing oath papers in the presence of Governor Lalong and others



Governor Simon Bako Lalong (CON) presenting appointment letter to Mr. Peter Wuyep as Permanent Secretary in the State Service



PLHA, Speaker Rt. Hon. Yakubu Yackson Sanda (left) flanked by Justice I. I. Kunda who stood in for the CJ, Justice Ibrahim Abdullahi of the Shariah Court and the representative of the President Customary Court of Appeal



Hon. Edward Sunkur Pankshin LGC Secretary (left) with the Secretary Government House Chaplain, Pastor Usaini Gotan and Executive Secretary, Christian Pilgrims Welfare Board, Jos, Rev. Fr. George Gorap



Mr. Michael Lamu (left) receiving the appointment letter after the swearing-in ceremony

PHOTOS: DANLADI DUK

Politics

Bello: Tackling security of lives, property in Kogi

Security simply has to do with condition of not being threatened either physically, psychologically, emotionally and financially while insecurity applies to situation where lives and property are not safe or being threatened, AMEDU JOSEPH writes.

CITIZENS in any given society have to be protected against being victims of insecurity hence the constitutional backing for a secured environment and establishment of an organisation or department providing security by enforcement of laws, rules and regulations as well as maintaining order to safeguard, protect and guarantee people's lives and property.

Kogi state, being the gateway to the North and Southern Nigeria has, often times, proven to be a fertile milieu for crimes of various descriptions to thrive. From cultism in some higher institutions in the state; the deadly Isanlu robbery case in which about ten policemen were killed; the Tawari attack by gunmen in which about 23 people were killed including the APC chairman of Tawari Ward, Ibrahim Simbabi and the Chief Imam of the village, Zakari Salihu to the incessant Okene-Lokoja kidnapping spree in which kidnappers and robbers reaped bazaars of ransom from travelers, the story has been a horrendous one.

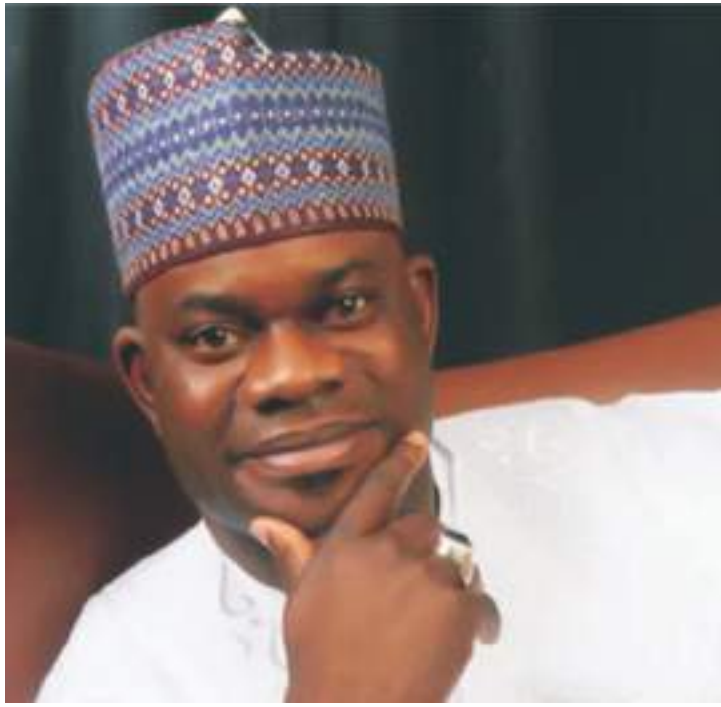
But, with a no-nonsense governor, since he came on board January, 2016, it was no longer business as usual for criminals. He once roared at criminals that he would smoke them out of their hiding places, and he has been launching unsparring onslaughts at them. Aside the cordial interactions between the governor and the security agencies in the state, Governor Bello had ordered the clearing of objects, verdure and thickets 40 meters on both sides of the highways. It was to ensure that the criminals have no hiding place.

At the onset of his administration Governor Bello provided over 200 utility vehicles for all security agencies in the state while equipping vigilante groups with over 500 motorcycles to work in tandem with forces to stem the tide of criminality in the hinterlands of the state in tune with his Operation Total Freedom security policies. The governor went a step further. Exploring his influence within the Nigerian military circle, the governor was behind the presence of the Nigerian Army Forward Operational Bases located across the state to secure lives and properties.

The Kogi Central, today, is more peaceful than hitherto as consequence of the foresightedness of His Excellency, Alhaji Yahaya Adoza Bello. The same goes for the East and West Senatorial Districts. The vigilante service operation, the whistle Blower policy and the domestication of the criminal justice code were the reasons for His Excellency's security success.

Never has it happened anywhere in the country that a governor joined security operatives to pull down houses in the state which intelligence reports indicated were kidnappers' hide-outs. Governor Bello did it at the inception of his administration. It was a signal pointer to criminals and their collaborators that a new powerful personage has emerged at the scene and that there would be no hiding place for them.

In his second tenure, he mapped out more intensive strategies of security to be implemented by Jerry Omodara, his Senior Special Adviser on security. It also meant



Bello

that security in all nooks and crannies of the state was paramount in the governance of the state. These unusual interventions by the Bello-led administration bear the verisimilitude of the Doctrine of Necessity.

It is quite reassuring and commendable to note that the Yahaya Bello-led administration has not treated security challenges facing the state with kids-glove while keeping faith with his words, he took decisive steps to arm the various

security outfits to the teeth with the provision of necessary tools, especially provision of 104 security patrol vehicles to various security and paramilitary agencies. These are the Army, the Navy, the Nigeria Police Force, the Nigeria Sealy the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, the Nigeria Custom, the Nigeria Immigration Service, the Nigeria Correctional Service, the Federal Road Safety Corps and the Vigilante Groups all of who were provided with security vehicles to enhance their

THE latest fuddle about the 2023 elections is if they will hold. Nobody should deceive you – elections are big business in which we have made massive investments, writes IKEDDY ISIGUZO.

Our enormous investments are enough reasons for the elections to hold. Governments have invested. Politicians do not mind the shame that most of them have brought to the country as they bump through dusty roads to campaign for more time on the staddle, or as the elixir to our challenges. Some of the messages wallow in the pronounced simplicity that borrow from their learned sophistication of nothingness. Vote me and all will be well, they bellow. They are angry that we dare question them.

Elections are big, seasonal businesses that those who depend on the value chains for sustenance would not allow to fail. They can borrow more to fund the elections.

A few issues, away from the tissues -How will the next President pay the huge debts that the out-going government has piled? The same question should bother us with our Governors.

Will Nigeria be better or worse? Can farmers return to their business without fear of attacks? Will we be safe even at home or on the roads?

Our hunger, dwelling on anger, feed our decisions. President Muhammed Buhari seems to have realised that he has done enough damage. He has shown his face only at few of his party's campaigns. Is that adequate atonement for the setbacks that Nigeria has suffered in his almost eight years of directionless policies? Where are we heading?

Candidates are still judged by what they say and who they are. Character is secondary to their actions. After campaigns that have run into months they resort to subterfuge to dodge the issues. Their callousness, insulting treatment of Nigerians are rated in

operational capabilities.

Another area the present administration has risen probatively to tackle security challenges is the Governor's endorsement of the whistle blowing policy. The kernel of the whistle blowing policy, like that of the Federal Government, is to identify and arrest criminals and those with the tendency to forment trouble. In the whistleblowing approach, security informants who disclose information that can lead to the arrest of anyone deemed to be a security risk to the state will be compensated.

To make the whistleblowing policy effective, the state government provided dedicated phone numbers through which confidential information can reach the government for action and the whistleblower is action of utmost protection. Perhaps, the most decisive move to tackle security challenges in the State is the onslaught against well-known kidnappers and criminals in the State with a success story. In some instances, the Governor, exercising his political sagaciousness would lead a team of security personnel for the demolition of houses well known for serving as a hideout for kidnappers.

The efforts of the State Government in crushing criminals registered dividend when the state vigilante group confronted kidnappers on Okene-Lokoja and Abuja highways killing four of them while others fled with bullet wounds. This is in addition to hundreds of

suspected kidnappers arrested by the police for prosecution.

Besides this, there was another significant breakthrough in the war against kidnappers, as three of such criminally-minded elements were gunned down, while two of their informants were arrested. The three kidnappers were killed in a gun battle on Lokoja-Okene high way by a combined team of hunters from Okene and Adavi local government area of the state. Items recovered from them included three sophisticated pump action, rifles, bullets, mask and charms. Those found guilty are serving various jail terms in correctional centres.

The Yahaya Bello-led administration has equally mapped out various strategies aimed at engaging and empowering youths in various youth empowerment programmes. The administration's major policy placed on Youth empowerment is manifested in the involvement of 239 youths, placed monthly on stipends from across the state for carrying out various public-oriented works. This is to discourage them from indulging in criminal activities and at the same time putting money in their pocket to fulfil their various financial and social commitments.

It was, therefore, not surprising when Governor Yahaya Adoza Bello garnered several awards, including that by the Inspector-General of Police, for his unflagging dedication to the security of the people of Kogi state.

Tissues, issues of 2023 elections

When Nigerians want issues, their common neglect by governments, and possible remedies to be discussed, they are thrown into debates about if the elections would hold. What is our government doing if it cannot organise elections? Where are the results of the attention that insecurity has received through high budgets and higher flaunted speeches as Nigerians are killed daily, in different parts of the country, kidnapped, violated, and denied stability in their lives?

As the Naira keeps losing value, the national interest is in the drab of the new notes. Sometimes the interests dangle to if the Governor of Central Bank of Nigeria would be arrested over something only the arresting authorities understand.

There is no time to confront the politicians with their failure. We are faced with advising government about what to do to improve security. Among the certainties that have been established is that something is bound to crush the Nigerian. If insecurity does not, economic burdens on several fronts could dump the Nigerian in perpetual dread of his present and future.

What is the future without any guarantees of the activities that could sustain life? Will eight years of near hell experiences be replaced with more horrors? Are Nigerians willing to make the changes that would count? There is too much to worry about that the issues of the elections are becoming more tissues.

Candidates are still judged by what they say and who they are. Character is secondary to their actions. After campaigns that have run into months they resort to subterfuge to dodge the issues. Their callousness, insulting treatment of Nigerians are rated in some quarters as political sagacity. They are also the ones suggesting that instead of an election an Interim Government should be better, a blunt proposal that would guarantee further retardation of Nigeria's political growth, and general development. Either way the politician benefits in some way.

Escalation of the security threats heighten fears among Nigerians about their safety and is capable of doing more damage to the elections. Less voters could turn up. Armed robbers, kidnappers and other criminals are taking advantage of the situations to prosper. Would anyone discuss the tardy distribution of PVCs with government's selective and ineffective management of security? Crimes are profiled according to the regions. One crime is called terrorism in one part. The same crime is banditry in another part. Arrests and prosecution of criminals follow the same patterns. Some are rehabilitated, others are gunned down before the nature of their crimes are known.

The main issue outside the economy is the different, unfair standards with which Nigeria runs. Ethnicity and religion are more important than our citizenship. Justice, injustice, rights, and wrongs of our citizenship flow from ethnicity and religion more than the law. There is abundance of excuses for treating the terrorists who have been waging war against Nigeria for more than 14 years as if they are national heroes. If they are captured, they are rehabilitated, and handed over to authorities in their states for integration into society.

No absurdity is found in the lives of the officers and other ranks of our

security agencies these terrorists killed. For a long time, the lives of civilians have not counted.

At campaigns, candidates appear more interested in not offending these criminals; their eyes are only on winning. They cannot put their feet down on what they would do in office.

The issues are clear – the economy, security, rights of Nigerians as citizen. The candidates should tell us more about these.

Security, until the next government, is the sole responsibility of President Buhari. Whoever he decides to farm out whichever roles to is also his responsibility. An immediate responsibility in this regard is that he ensures credible, transparent, and peaceful elections.

Concerns have risen about his consistent complaints that he is tired and wants to put Abuja behind him. He has not done much lately, not that he did a lot at any point in his two terms. He cannot afford to be disinterested in his final opportunity to be remembered for something, hopefully good.

In nine days, 31 January 2023, the old Naira notes would cease to be legal tender, according to the Central Bank of Nigeria. What is going on is not as important as the fact that enough of the new notes do not seem to be on circulation.

The countdown to the elections are now in days. Have you made your choice? What informed the choice? I assumed you are a registered voter and determined to vote. In that case, you must have collected your PVC, not minding the obstacles they place on your way.

News

Kogi to resume supply of potable water soon

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

FOLLOWING the lingering scarcity of water in Lokoja and its environs in the last four months, the Kogi State Commissioner for Water Resources, AbdulMunin Danga has given an assurance that government will restore regular supply of potable water soon.

The commissioner said that the current scarcity of potable water in the area would become history in weeks to come.

According to him, the state government is doing everything humanly possible and urgent to rectify the problem. He gave the assurance over the weekend while speaking with journalists in Lokoja, on the N10.5 billion water treatment plant, submerged by flood, October, last year.

Our correspondent recalls that the flood, described as the worst in over 32 years of the creation of Kogi state, struck Lokoja, the state capital and other 9 out of the 21 local government areas of the state, leaving in its trail loss of lives and destruction to many public and private facilities.

Our correspondent also recalls that virtually all public pumps went dry as a result of damage done to the water plant, subjecting the populace to hardship of seeking for water for domestic and commercial activities.

Danga said that the state government was very much eager to repair the water plant, adding that it had ordered for new equipment from the manufacturers for replacement.

He said, "I believe that in the next two weeks, the equipment will arrive and it will not take between four to five days to



Bello

install them and water will be restored to the metropolis." The commissioner expressed disbelief over the degree of damage done to the water plant by the flood, noting that most of the machines were damaged beyond repair in the process. According to him, the state government has no option than ensure their outright replacement, in view of their dire condition.

Danga said that as the state government awaits the arrival of the ordered equipment, it had repaired the Old Lokoja Water Works to enable some parts of Lokoja, such as Kabawa, Karaworo, Pata, Cantonment, Maigari Palace, among others

get water on a pilliative basis. Danga, who said that he held series of meetings with some leaders, groups and residents in Lokoja on the issue, appealed to them to exercise patient.

Our correspondent reports that the scarcity of potable water in Lokoja has again brought to the limelight, the concept of brother's keeper, sense of magnanimity and care for one another's plight, among residents of Lokoja.

While awaiting the return of drinkable water to Lokoja, many owners of borehole and well in the area have opened their gates to those who do not have such facilities, to fetch water without recourse to any attached condition.

BY EZEKIEL DONTINNA

PLASCOFED trains cooperative executives on leadership quality

THE development of every society depends on the quality of its leadership and its ability to understand the concept of strategic planning. It is certain that the challenge most societies grapple with today is not far from lack of sound leadership that can explore all positive avenues that would bring growth to the societies.

However, It is possible that the Plateau State Cooperative Federation the (PLASCOFED) saw that there exists a worrying deficit in the way leaders operate in their respective cooperate societies and thought it wise that there is need for the leadership of cooperative societies in the state to understand how to manage their various societies effectively.

The training which was in collaboration with GIZ International, PLASCOFED engaged all Management committees of Cooperative Society on two days Strategic Planning and Group Identity through situational leadership model that would have solid foundation to strengthen their respective organisations.

It was quite rich and educative because it gave the participants a chance to ask questions in order for them to understand the rudiments of managing their investments properly for them to yield progressive results for cooperative societies on the Plateau and that, they will be able to compete with Western Nigerian states who have risen to meet the international community. Presenting the first paper



Adebayo

titled: "Strategic Planning and Team Role", at the Group B3 PLASCOFED Leaders Retreat at NUJ Secretariat Jos, the state capital where there were 32 participants at the training workshop, the President of PLASU Cooperative Society, Daniel Dangwong Pam, said the objectives of the training was for leaders to understand the meaning vision, mission, goals and objectives as well as its usefulness.

He also listed some of objectives to include; for participants to understand the meaning of values and principles and its usefulness, understand strategic planning and what role values and principles play respectively. He was able to highlight the vision statement to set the direction for the organization. He described its future which then provides the purpose and what you want to become and to aspirationally promote growth internally and externally among other visions.

Pam, however, disclosed that a strong vision helps team to focus on what matters the most for their organisations and also stimulates innovation that would be a purpose-driven organisation that envisions success as a whole, because they know what success means for their organisations when they follow the rules and visions adequately.

He, therefore, highlighted the importance of working together in teams saying, "every employee is dependent on his fellow employees to work together and contribute efficiently to the organisation. No employee can work alone, but he or she has to take the help of his colleagues to accomplish the tasks efficiently.

"It has been observed that the outcome comes out to be far better when employees work in a team rather than individually as every individual can contribute in his best

possible way.

"Team and team work must be encouraged at workplace as it strengthens the bond among the employees and the targets can be met at a faster pace. Workload is shared and individuals feel motivated to perform better than their team members.

One of the facilitators from the University of Jos Cooperative Society, Emmanuel Ibi-Kuzhu, who presented a paper titled: "Group Identity and Group Life" disclosed that it was to make organisational development training that would improve the capacity of their organisations to better serve its members.

The facilitator who earlier engaged the participants in group exercise said, it was for the participants to understand the difference between groups and teams and introduce organisational leaders/members to theoretical aspects of how organisations (associations, groups, teams) work saying, "it shows organisations how they can work better by developing some elements of a strategic plan for the organisation.

He commended the participants for the impressive turn out for the training and for the show of commitment and full participation in the training processes as well as the exercises carried out to demonstrate how they need to build their respective organisations, urging them to step down all they had learned to their members.

Earlier, the PLASCOFED President, Mrs. Mershak Hannatu, appreciated GIZ International for their sacrifice to have earlier trained them which prompted their stepping it down to Management Committee of various Cooperative Societies in the state. She and prayed that the workshop would be used to develop cooperative societies on the Plateau.

CBN solicits monarch's support on new Naira sensitization

From ABBAS GUNGURA, Bauchi

Few weeks to the deadline for the redesigned N200, N500 and N1000 notes to go out of circulation, the Central Bank of Nigeria has solicited for support of Bauchi Emir, Alhaji Dr. Rilwanu Sulaiman Adamu to help in sensitizing his subjects to ensure that monies in their custody are taken to banks for deposit before it becomes too late.

The Director, Medical Service Department of the Apex bank, Dr. Abdullahi Jibrin who led other officials of the bank to the Emir's palace on a visit Saturday, said the aim of the initiative was to mop up too much money that is being kept outside the banks by some Nigerians.

"You know, from the basic rudiments of economics, once you have too much money in the hands of people, inflation goes up. So, we want to mop up, all money should be brought back into the bank and by so doing, inflation will go down", he said.

According to him, the CBN will take measures to ensure that henceforth, excess money is not allowed to go out.

He explained that the wisdom behind involving the fathers of the land who have access to the people at the

grassroot was to help fasten the awareness campaign effort of the CBN in reaching to the people.

Dr. Jibrin added that with the help of the traditional leaders who have subjects at different levels, ten days is more than enough for the campaign to reach to the grassroot.

"That is why we are pleading with them to partner with us so that we can reach down to the grassroot to enable us mop up the monies in their possession", he said.

The Director, Medical Service Department of the CBN hinted that the top management of the bank have given approval that people in the rural areas who have 10,000 and below can have it exchanged with the new Naira notes.

"Remember, what we are doing now is asking people to take their monies to their account. We are not exchanging, so, the only leeway given now is for ten thousand naira and below for the downtrodden masses, people having ten thousand or less, that's just the difference", he said.

While responding, the Emir of Bauchi, Alhaji Dr Rilwanu Sulaiman Adamu, commended the federal government and the Central

Bank of Nigeria for initiating possible for all the policies to various monetary policies be achieved for the overall interest of the masses.

The Emir assured CBN of his councils readiness to step down the message to their subjects at grassroots to help in reviving the economy of Nigeria in line with the international standards, redesign and it advantages to praying Allah to make it Nigerians.



Mohammed

News

Lalong swears in PPC GM, others as Permanent Secretaries

By
PALANG KASMI



Lalong

PLATEAU Governor has sworn in 10 new Permanent Secretaries, among them the General Manager (GM) of the Plateau Publishing Corporation, Hon. Boniface Gwotbit.

The Governor also announced an upward review of salaries of the over 2,500 street cleaners in the state payroll promising to employ more workers to keep the state clean.

The new Permanent Secretaries are to fill the vacancies created following the retirement and resignations of some Permanent Secretaries in the service of the state government.

The swearing in took place on Tuesday, January 24, 2023 at Government House, Rayfield Jos.

It was attended by the State Deputy Governor, Prof. Sonni Tyoden, Speaker Plateau State House of Assembly, Rt. Hon. Yakubu Sanda, representative of Plateau Chief Judge, heads of courts, APC Chairman, Rufus Bature, Secretary to Government of the State, Prof. Danladi Atu, Local Government Chairmen, political office holders, religious leaders, community leaders, tradition leaders,

family members and well-wishers.

After presenting their citation, the 10 new Permanent Secretaries took their oath of office at exactly 11:34 am.

Governor Lalong in his remarks said after passing the requisite exams, the Permanent Secretaries have been appointed to replace those who have retired in recent times.

He said they are coming on board at the twilight and time when his administration is gradually taking its stewardship and was exiting on May 29.

He tasked them to prove their worth and work hard to show their capacities, demonstrate that indeed they earned the promotion by working with the schedule of service, as is the general

standard and expectation.

He warned that indiscipline, disloyalty and abuse of office will not be tolerated and therefore urged them to concentrate on implementing government policies and projects by upholding the virtues of probity, accountability, honesty, fairness and justice in all their conduct.

"To boost the morale of our numerous street cleaners, who work tirelessly to keep our streets clean, I have approved an upward review of their monthly allowance".

This will no doubt improve the exotic life of the over 2,500 street cleaners".

Lalong further tasked politicians not to cajole them as sources to get campaign monies nor entice them to become ethnic and religious champions but allow them to serve the interest of the state.

The 10 newly sworn in Permanent Secretaries and their Local Government Areas are: Keziah Dung (Barkin Ladi), Yusuf Ayuba Gimba (Bassa), Gongden Micah Sunday (Mangu), Lamu Michael Dennis (Mangu), Peter Wuyep (Kanke), Bapman Naankin Emmanuel (Mikang), Boniface Gwotbit Bankshuet (Mikang), Gotan Benjamin James (Pankshin), Salamatu Ritmwa Parloug (Pankshin), and Wuyep Zitta (Langtang South).

Ortom commissions Benue CAN secretariat

From
TERESE TUHWA, Makurdi

BENUE State Governor Samuel Ortom Monday Jan 23, 2023 commissioned the Benue State secretariat of Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) undertaken by his administration with a charge on Christians in the state to unite to overcome multiple challenges confronting the state.

Governor Ortom who was speaking during the event said through the ceaseless prayers of the religious body, the two traditional institutions in the state; the Tor Tiv and Ochi Idoma stools were being manned by seasoned men of God who are leading their subjects according to God's will. He added that the religious body in the state was duty bound to intensify prayers in order to

overcome enemies of the state and commended the state CAN chairman Rev. Dr. Akpen Leva for being prudent in managing the resources during the project.

Governor Ortom explained that state CAN president, Dr. Leva had exhibited leadership capacity right from time before his emergence as state CAN chairman the way and manner he handled the church and pastor's residence projects at NKST church Iortyer and promised that he will spare nothing in supporting propagation of the gospel.

The governor who donated fifty million Naira for the construction of a thirty-room guest house within the CAN secretariat. He also donated an SUV vehicle to CAN National President. And urged people of the state to collect their Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs) to be able to vote credible

leaders in the forthcoming presidential and governorship elections.

In a remark, the CAN national president, Rev. Daniel Okoh commended Governor Samuel Ortom for deeming it fit to construct a befitting secretariat for the religious body in the state, describing the secretariat as the first of its kind in the state.

Rev. Okoh explained that with what the state CAN chairman has achieved within a record time with support from the state governor, he has every confidence in the leadership capacity of Rev. Akpen Leva especially the prudent manner he handled the resources at his disposal during the project.

Earlier in a welcome address, state CAN chairman, Rev. Dr. Akpen Leva commended Governor Samuel Ortom for funding the project and promised that the religious body in the state will continue to support his administration.

In a goodwill message, the Tor Tiv, His Royal Majesty, Professor James Ayatse said Governor Ortom has risen the bar in his support to religious body in the state and tasked the governor to detail whosoever that will succeed him to tow the same path.

The paramount ruler who admonished the political class in the state to base their campaigns on issues rather than abusive words, hate, rancour and character assassination declared that any attempt to rig the forthcoming general elections in the state will be frustrated.

Governor Samuel Ortom,



In support of this awareness

SOMETHING is about to happen in the country. A new Nigeria is about to happen. Youthful energy and drive are being galvanized and a silent revolution is surely about to take place. Just two Sundays ago, I went to some part of the Jos city to sympathize with a relation who had been involved in an accident. While returning home, it began to rain. As the heavens opened up, I had thought that those struggling to register for their PVC would scamper for shelter so they are not soaked by the rains. To my utter amazement however, no one left the queue nor made for shelter. All of those on the queue remained where they were determined to get registered.

As I was ruminating over the uncommon patriotic zeal, it became obvious that things were about to happen. Considering the age of those who withstood the elements to get registered, it was obvious that change had come. What for example, was responsible for the sudden change in attitude from a segment that had hitherto been nonchalant and uninterested about elections in our country?

Are our political fault lines beginning to close? Are these young and vibrant sector beginning to realise the need to get involved in the running of their country in view of the massive and unfortunate failure of leadership in our clime? Questions which answers are held in the bowels of time. The silent revolution was echoed by Edo State Governor, Godwin Obaseki when he lamented and cautioned that the political elites need to look again at themselves and the way they play politics. He clearly has seen the handwriting and is cautioning his peers on the need to change gear so that the elites would not be swept away by the political tsunami that is raging on and threatening

to explode.

But the signs are ominous even to the blind. So much is at stake for the politics of the country to be left to those who obviously have run out of ideas. Young and vibrant people need to take over the political space just like in other climes. They need to bring in fresh perspectives. They need to adopt technology in achieving their goals and targets which are the in thing now. You can not succeed in a fast moving economy when you are armed with 18th century tools. This is the era of the digital citizens and the digital aliens need to be retired.

It is obvious that nobody gives up power without a fight. But even in fighting, the political elites seem not to have the tools to prosecute the war. The pace at which change is happening is so breathtaking that they are not capable of keeping pace with. Truth be told my generation and those before me have failed those behind us. We have been so selfish that we are eating the tomorrow of our

“ But the signs are ominous even to the blind. So much is at stake for the politics of the country to be left to those who obviously have run out of ideas. Young and vibrant people need to take over the political space just like in other climes. They need to bring in fresh perspectives. They need to adopt technology in achieving their goals and targets which are the in thing now. You can not succeed in a fast moving economy when you are armed with 18th century tools. This is the era of the digital citizens and the digital aliens need to be retired. ”

children. We need to tread with caution and tact. Otherwise we risk being forced into retirement. It has started happening and unless we manage the transition well, we would be the losers.

What we lack, the young generation has garnered. They are skilled. They are world citizens. They are aware of what is happening elsewhere. They have technology at their beck and call. Not only that, they are ambitious and willing to try out new things. There is nothing we can do to hold them back but we can manage the transition if we want. We can deliberately put in place measures which would help open new vistas for them. We can make them a part of the efforts at resolving the problems that are threatening to eat up our society and which we have not been able to solve.

ASUU was on strike for a long period before reopening the universities. Government and stakeholders had to find ways of navigating around the problem. In spite of this, new private universities are daily coming on stream in obvious disregard for the children of the poor. These are the kinds of policies that are exposing the elites and are making them vulnerable, yet they seem so stoned headed that they do not see the ominous signs in the horizon.

We must work together to resolve, restore and grow our society together. The world is changing and our elites can not continue to push citizens to the wall like they are doing. What happened in Sri Lanka is a signpost for others to tow the path of caution. It is often said that if your neighbours house is on fire, you must take measures to contain the fire so that it does not consume your own property.



Ortom

News

Kogi APC campaign council refutes media report

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

THE Kogi State APC Campaign Council has refuted a story published on the front page of the Sunday Tribune insinuating that Governor Yahaya Bello has withdrawn support for the presidential candidate of the All Progressives Congress, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu, describing the report as absolute falsehood and a concoction borne out of malice.

In a statement issued by the Kogi State Commissioner for Information and the Director of Media and Publicity, Kogi State APC Campaign Council, Kingsley Femi Fanwo, the party flayed the report as one done in bad faith, saying the story was "spurious, malicious and a badly delivered hatchet job"

The Kogi State APC said the publication was mischievous and was out to create distrust, acrimony and chaos in the party by people who were desperately trying to disparage the unbending commitment of the Governor to the success of the APC in the Presidential election.

Fanwo, however, assured the public that Governor Yahaya Bello's unflinching commitment to the campaign was not in doubt among committed stakeholders of the APC at all levels.

He said, "GYB is constantly on the drawing board, galvanising Kogites and youths across Nigeria to massively support the man he calls the President-in-Waiting, Senator Bola Ahmed Tinubu."

"This will definitely not go down well with open and veiled detractors of our Presidential candidate, who would go to any length to paint a picture of crisis where there is absolutely none."

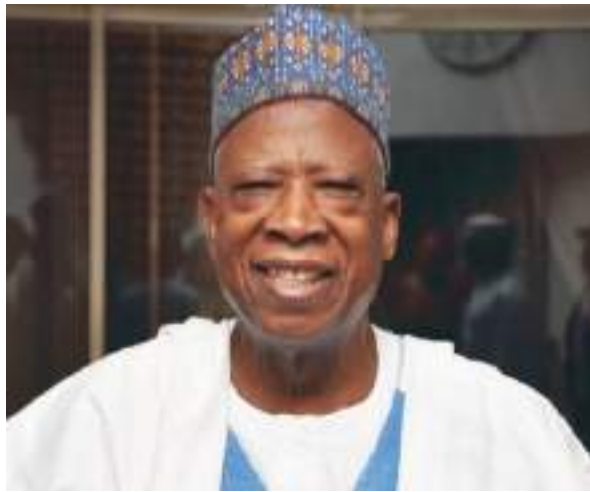
"Aside from winning and sustaining the support of the majority of Nigerian youths for Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu, Governor Yahaya Bello has effectively mobilised Kogites to deliver not less than 95% Kogi votes to the Presidential Candidate of our party. It is therefore not a surprise that those who want to share in the glory of the impending landslide victory without contributing to the efforts, are hiding behind 'the evils of journalistic anonymity' to cause disaffection," he noted.

Explaining that Yahaya Bello has always been the star boy of the party, having delivered on critical assignments in the state and at the national level, Fanwo recalled that the governor recently registered millions of youths, women and people living with disabilities into the APC.

According to him, Governor Bello is proud of the Presidential Candidate of his party and has no doubt whatsoever in the capacity of Tinubu to take Nigeria to the desired level.

"It is laughable, ludicrous and unthinkable to insinuate that the man working so hard to deliver massive votes for the Presidential Candidate of the party is the one naysayers would accuse of non-commitment."

"The TownHall Meeting to bring the Presidential Candidate of the Party face-to-face with the Nigerian youths at the nation's capital, remains



Adamu

one of the boldest highlights of the Campaign till date. The Governor also remains the only known contestant in the Presidential primaries to have donated his campaign secretariat to our candidate, which is being used by the youth directorate of the campaign till today," Fanwo recalled.

Assuring that Governor Bello will continue to work assiduously for the resounding success of Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu at the February polls to the consternation and disappointment of those who are desperately working to create a storm in a tea cup for selfish reasons, the campaign director said the Governor, who is the leader of the party in the State, the leader of the State Campaign Council and the National Youth Coordinator of the presidential campaign, "will remain undaunted by the spurious lies and remain

unwaveringly committed to the desire of Nigerians to have a Tinubu-Shettima presidency from May 29, 2023."

He however called on the media to avoid being tools in the hands of desperate politicians in their efforts to assassinate the characters of well meaning Nigerians.

"As a Campaign Council, we are miffed by the fact that a medium as reputable as the Nigerian Tribune could be dragged off the lines of responsible journalism by elements who are enemies of Kogi State and the APC in general. This is clearly against the ideology and principles of the founding fathers of such a platform."

"We again reiterate the commitment of the Governor to the landslide victory of the Tinubu -Shettima Presidential ticket and urge members of the public to ignore the concocted falsehood on the front page of SUNDAY TRIBUNE fanwo noted.

FGN/IFAD-VCDP train farmers on rice farming

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

THE FGN/IFAD-VCDP in its quest to enhance the livelihood and wellbeing of rural farmers, have commenced the training of VCDP farmers on best agronomic practices in the cultivation of rice during dry season in Kogi State.

Declaring the training exercise open in Lokoja, the State Programme Coordinator (SPC), Dr Stella Adejoh, stated that the training became necessary because of the devastating effects of perennial flood event, occasioned by Climate change across the globe.

Speaking further, the SPC emphasised on the need to embrace dry season rice farming because of the negative effects of flooding.

She pointed out that several farmers could not return to their farms as a result of colossal loss to their farmlands due to the massive flood across the state in 2022.

Dr Stella appreciated the IFAD/VCDP for organising such an important training to enhance the knowledge and build the capacity of the rice farmers in the state.

She admonished the trainees to take full advantage of the

programme to better their lots in dry season rice farming.

According to SPC, VCDP is a programme like no other, always thinking of the best way out for its farmers especially the rural farmers in the state.

"This training programme covers all the four VCDP rice producing LGAs of Ajaokuta, Ibaji, Lokoja and Kabba/Bunu respectively," she said.

Dr Stella opined that those involved in the training were beneficiaries of Rural Poor Stimulus Facility (RPSF) as well as those of Flood Recovery Strategic Inputs.

She commended the efforts of Kogi State Government for always giving necessary support to VCDP programmes and activities in the state to improve the wellbeing of farmers

Giving the overview of the training, an Agronomist/Consultant from BUMATHA Venture, Prof. Alhassan Usman, explained that the exercise was aimed at supporting the farmers to building their capacity on Climate Smart Farm Management, Post Harvest handling, Decision making, among others.

He also noted that the

THE Gombe State Branch of the Central Bank of Nigeria CBN, along with the United Bank for Africa UBA, has taken the new naira swap and awareness campaign to some rural markets in the State.

The branch Controller of CBN in Gombe State, Shehu Alhaji Goringo, who led the team comprising CBN and UBA staff to Kwadon market in Yamaltu-Deba LGA of Gombe State also cleared the air that there is enough newly redesigned naira notes to be distributed to Nigerians.

He stated at the market that only the sum of N10,000 is being swapped for the new naira notes per individual adding that those who have more will either cashed it in the bank or a bank account is being opened for them immediately.

He also explained that the CBN had directed all Banks to desist from giving out old notes of the newly redesigned denominations adding that, "all we are interested is for the mopping out of the old money and give out the new naira notes."

"We have the new naira notes available and we also directed the banks to come and collect. We work from Monday to Friday".

He warned that the deadline

CBN, UBA partner in new Naira awareness campaign

Willie Attah, Gombe

for the stoppage of the use of the old naira notes still stands at 31/01/2023, stressing that there are measures to ensure that banks don't take corners.

"We have introduced measures to check them very well and there are penalties for non compliance", he warned.

Meanwhile, some of the traders expressed their happiness over the move by the CBN to bring the money swap close to them in the rural

areas.

Rabiu Maimasara, told our reporter that he is now encouraged to receive the old notes in his trading since he is sure of the swap now that he has seen it.

He however called on the authorities to ensure the swap is a bit faster considering that they are businessmen.

On his part, Yahaya Mohammad commended the CBN for taking the campaign and swap to their doorsteps in the rural areas.



Emefiele

NPC flags-off specialized training for staff

By HOSEA NYAMLONG

FEDERAL Commissioner of the National Population Commission (NPC), Representing Plateau State Hon. Mrs. Cecilia Dapoet has urged 562 participants to give in their maximum cooperation.

Dapoet disclosed this while

declaring flag-off the training of Specialized Work Force open for the 2023 Population and Housing Census at Plateau State Polytechnic Barkin-Ladi, Jos Campus on Monday.

She added that what necessitated the training was a result of some gaps that the commission discovered from the previous exercise and the census trial that was conducted recently.

She stressed that the participants were selected based on merit to fill in the gaps that they would handle technical issues, mostly in the areas of Information Communications Technology (ICT), in other to have a successful 2023 census which is barely two months.

Dapoet who was represented by the State Director of the Commission, Mr. Pam Du Deme assured the participants that all materials and equipment for the training

are ready, including facilitators.

According to him "participants would be trained for three days and they are to justify the confidence reposed in them as they would be counted to the success story of the commission."

In separate remarks by Prof. Daniel Dabi and Mr. Niyi Alayaki, both State Training Coordinators admonished participants to take the training seriously, for it is a call to National service.

They added that the participants would be playing vital roles during the census exercise and urged them to be disciplined for the training is going to be tasking and their commitment is required.

Mrs. Luret Eunice Mulleng a participant who spoke with **THE NIGERIA STANDARD** said that she was happy to be selected for the training and promised to put in her best to justify the opportunity given to her to serve her country.



Dapoet

Foreign Commentary

Ukraine's Zelenskyy renews war on corruption amid scandals

President promises changes to government after reports of corruption at defence and infrastructure ministries.

UKRAINIAN President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has said he will make changes to the government and security services as part of a renewed crackdown on corruption, nearly a year since Russia invaded the country.

In his nightly video address on Monday, Zelenskyy did not name the officials who would be replaced but indicated the reshuffle was imminent.

"There are already personnel decisions — some today, some tomorrow — regarding officials of various levels in ministries and other central government structures, as well as in the regions and in the law enforcement system," the president said.

Zelenskyy was elected in a landslide in 2019 on promises to reform the government and tackle corruption, which plagued the country long before Moscow sent its troops across the border on February 24 last year.

Ukraine ranked 122 out of 180 countries in Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index in 2021.

Over the weekend, it emerged that the defence ministry had been buying food for soldiers at inflated prices, raising questions about government procurement processes.

On Sunday, anti corruption police said they had detained the deputy infrastructure minister on suspicion of receiving a \$400,000 kickback to facilitate the import of generators into wartime Ukraine last September. The deputy minister was also removed from his post.

Ukrainian media have reported that a number of cabinet ministers and senior officials could be sacked as Zelenskyy moves to streamline the government.

One of the president's top allies



Zelenskyy earlier said corrupt officials would be "actively" jailed. Zelenskyy also announced that government officials would be

banned from making personal trips abroad.

The move followed revelations that Deputy Prosecutor General

Oleksiy Symonenko had gone on holiday to Spain in December and January using a

Mercedes belonging to a Lviv businessman. Citing sources in law enforcement, online newspaper Ukrainska Pravda reported that Symonenko had resigned.

A committee of parliament agreed to toughen regulations on procurement and make some prices public during times of conflict.

Defence Minister Oleksii Reznikov, quoted by media, told the committee that the reports of corruption at the ministry were based on a "technical error" with no money changing hands.

The National Anti-Corruption Bureau said it was investigating the possible crime of appropriation of funds or abuse of power with regard to the procurement, which it said was valued at more than 13 billion Ukrainian hryvnias (\$352m).

Ukraine's economy shrank by a third last year, and the country is hugely dependent on Western financial aid. Donors, including the International Monetary Fund and the European Union, have repeatedly asked for more transparency and better governance.

SOURCE: AL JAZEERA, NEWS AGENCIES.



Russian attacks have left Ukrainians reliant on generators but at the weekend a deputy minister was accused of taking a kickback on generator imports

Foreign News

Starving Brazilians rescue from jungle

THE indigenous people who live in a reserve in Brazil's northern state of Roraima.

President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva has accused his predecessor, far-right Jair Bolsonaro, of committing genocide against the rainforest tribe.

The government declared a medical emergency after hundreds of Yanomami children died from malnutrition.

The deaths are linked to water pollution caused by mining and logging in the densely forested area, where food insecurity is rife.

President Lula visited Roraima, which borders Venezuela and Guyana, following reports of severe malnutrition among Yanomami children and said he was "shocked" by what he found.

An estimated 28,000 indigenous people live in the Yanomami reserve. They hunt, practise small-scale slash-and-burn agriculture and live in small, scattered, semi-permanent villages.

In his four years in power, Mr Bolsonaro often criticised the size of the indigenous reserves and promised to open some of them to agriculture and mining. His government weakened environmental protections, and critics said his rhetoric emboldened illegal activity in the region.

Today, some 20,000 illegal miners are estimated to operate inside the Yanomami reserve, which is rich in gold, diamonds and minerals. In 2021, miners in the area opened fire on the Yanomami using automatic weapons.

The new Lula government says more than 500 indigenous children have died in the past few years from drinking water contaminated with mercury, which is directly linked to illegal gold mining.

Lula was sworn in as president on 1 January after narrowly defeating Jair Bolsonaro, and Brazilian society is deeply polarised.

Sonia Guajajara, the Minister of Indigenous Peoples, said: "We must hold the previous government accountable for allowing this situation to get worse to the point where we find adults weighing like children, and children reduced to skin and bones."

The Interior Minister, Flavio Dino, also accused the previous government of abandoning the indigenous community and promised an investigation.

Besides airlifting some of the most seriously ill members of the tribe, Brazilian authorities announced that the health ministry would create a field hospital and send supplies and health professionals to the area.

Dr Andre Siqueira, a specialist in tropical medicine who is currently working in the Roraima region, told the BBC he had come across cases of severe malnutrition in entire indigenous families and said the situation was "catastrophic" and "disastrous".

He said the Yanomami were not the only tribes facing



President Lula said what he saw in Roraima state amounted to "genocide"

serious threats to their existence, and he had witnessed "similar situations of lack of assistance and care" in other indigenous territories.

Israel probes pepper-sprayed, Kahla's shooting

THE Israeli army's military police unit says it is investigating after a Palestinian driver was shot dead at a temporary checkpoint in the occupied West Bank over a week ago.

The military initially described Ahmad Kahla, who was 45, as a terrorist who had tried to carry out an attack.

However, Israeli media said a leaked preliminary report found the father of four was killed unnecessarily.

A video showed a scuffle with soldiers before MrKahla was fatally shot.

Witnesses said a line of traffic had formed as Israeli forces subjected them to lengthy vehicle checks to enter or leave the village of Silwad, north of Ramallah.

QusaiKahla recounted how his father pulled over when he saw that a driver on the other side of the road had a flat tyre and got out to help him.

About 10 minutes later, he said, when he rejoined the queue, angry Palestinian drivers honked their horns thinking he was pushing in. Then a soldier came towards them and threw a sound bomb at the car's front windscreen.

"My father opened the window and started arguing with the soldier. He asked him: 'Why did you hit the car?' As one soldier went to my father's side, another came to me," Qusai said.

"He had pepper spray and he sprayed it on us. Then he opened the door and took me out of the car. They took me away and I could hear fighting and a gunshot. I couldn't see anything. Then after 10 minutes, I heard an ambulance."

Israel's public broadcaster, Kan, quoted an initial military inquiry as saying that a tussle ensued as a soldier tried to drag MrKahla from his vehicle.

He apparently tried to pull at a gun which had been used to hit him and was then shot.

On 15 January, the Israeli military first said that a Palestinian man had approached soldiers with a knife near Silwad.

It later updated its version of events to say that soldiers had ordered a man to stop in his vehicle and used tear gas when he refused. It said that there had then been a confrontation, and that he had tried to snatch a weapon from a soldier before he was shot.

Kan said that the Israeli brigade commander overseeing the initial investigation had concluded MrKahla was not planning an attack. It quoted the commander as saying: "The incident was not supposed to end with a man dead."

Asked for a response, the Israeli military said that a military police investigation had been opened into what happened and that its

"This is something that urgently needs to be addressed, because our humanity depends on it", DrSiqueira said.

findings would be transferred to the Military Advocate General's office.

It is unusual for military prosecutors to press charges



The Palestinian Authority condemned what happened to Ahmad Kahla as a "heinous crime of execution"

Raila refuses to recognise Ruto's presidency

Kenya's opposition leader, RailaOdinga, has said his political coalition does not recognise William Ruto as the President of Kenya and declared the new Kenyan government as "illegitimate".

MrRuto beat him in last August's poll, but MrOdinga - who appeared at Nairobi's Kamukunji Stadium along with his running mate Martha Karua, and other allies - repeated claims that the results were manipulated.



Ruto

South Africa has defended its decision to hold a joint military exercise with Russia and China next month.

Foreign Minister NalediPandor condemned the "double-standard" which says some countries can perform such exercises but others are not.

"All countries conduct military exercises with friends worldwide," DrPandor added.

The comments came at a press conference with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov in Pretoria.

The event attracted a small group of protesters outside the venue, waving Ukrainian flags.

DrPandor went on to slam the suggestion that South Africa cannot conduct the military exercises it wants to as an "abuse of international

practice".Last week South Africa's military announced it would hold joint naval drills with Russia and China off its coast next month.

But there has been some criticism that the exercise is not appropriate, given that it coincides with the first anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Not much information has been given about the exercises, but the state-owned Tass news agency reports that a Russian warship armed with hypersonic cruise weapons will take part.

The Ministry of Defence has also defended the planned drills, saying that South Africa has in the past hosted similar exercises with France, the US and countries from the Western Nato military alliance.

The drills will run for 10 days from 17 February to 27 February in the port city of Durban, and Richards Bay.

The aim is to share operational skills and knowledge, the South African National Defence Force said.

Despite pressure from Western countries to condemn the Russian invasion, South Africa has remained neutral - to the disappointment of Ukraine.

Speaking at the conference, MrLavrov said he appreciated the "well balanced" and "considerate" approach of South Africa to the Ukraine war, which South Africa's DrPandor said must be resolved diplomatically and through negotiation.

Officials in South Africa have repeatedly said they do not condone the invasion but will not be forced into choosing sides and are continuing to engage with both countries in a business-as-usual manner.

Critics of South Africa's stance have accused the country of playing coy.

South Africa's leaders have a connection to Russian dating back to the fight against white-minority rule, or apartheid, when some members of the country's liberation movement received military training in Russia.

In recent years that relationship has grown into business ties through the Brics bloc of emerging economies - Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

Mr Lavrov was also in Africa in July 2022, when he visited Egypt, Ethiopia, Uganda and Congo-Brazzaville, and South Africa is not alone in refusing to take sides in the war in Ukraine.

Many African nations - including Nigeria and Kenya, the economic powerhouses of West and East Africa respectively - voted in favour of a UN general assembly resolution in March last year, condemning Russian "aggression" and demanding its withdrawal from Ukraine.

However, nearly half of all abstentions - 17 - were from Africa, including South Africa.

Pandor defends joint Russia-China military exercise



Both parties described the other as a friend, with NalediPandor describing their talks as "wonderful"

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Feature

Scarcity in the midst of plenty

We have seen that those in authority have tried their best but whether they deserve to be commended or not remains a duty for Nigerians to perform. At the dawn of the New Year 2023, Nigeria has in its bowl double-digit inflation, humongous debt, insecurity, 133 million poor people with multidimensional poverty, coupled with slow Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth. What is the situation going to be like keeping in mind geopolitical activities, looming global recession and resurgence of COVID-19? MA JOHNSON writes.

AS powerful individuals are lambasting themselves on who Nigerians should vote for, we are back to square one. Most Nigerians celebrated the last yuletide season in a low key partly because there was scarcity of fuel in most parts of Nigeria as it was the case in 2017. We have heard about repair of refineries in the past eight years but we kept importing fuel. Unfortunately, fuel is still scarce as we write despite abundance of crude oil.

What does Nigerians want from those in leadership positions? Nigerians want their leaders to lead. Pure and simple. Our leaders should be very concerned about taking the people they lead out of poverty not by words of mouth but by impactful actions – right policies and creation of enabling environment. It's not too much of a demand if those in authority make efforts to save their people, provide leadership for them, and ensure that they are always safe.

Everything rests squarely on our leaders. To think otherwise, in my view, is to think amiss. Leadership encompasses the totality of the human capacity that is displayed or that can be put into driving a process at various levels in the society for the purpose of providing necessary convincing guidance to their followers. Good followers in large number are important in a society as they ultimately end up being good leaders.

The notion of leadership combines the theory of power and critical decision making to facilitate positive change. What this writer has observed for several decades is that leaders come and go, but problems remain. Leaders are to solve problems. But most leaders sweep problems they created and those they inherited under the carpet while Nigeria remains the same – a less developed country.

When the economy of the nation is relegated to the background because of politics, the citizens are likely to be more miserable than they were in previous years

The year 2022 marks the beginning of election campaigns in which governance has almost been kept in abeyance for politics. When the economy of the nation is relegated to the background because of politics, the citizens are likely to be more miserable than they were in previous years. At the heart of all policy decisions in the new year should be how citizens' welfare and the Nigerian economy would be improved.

Latest data released by the NBS shows that Nigeria is shouldering 133 million people with multidimensional poverty in its haversack. This is a serious issue that should give policy makers serious headaches and sleepless nights. But what do we observe? Baskets of promises by politicians who are marketing themselves and de-marketing their opponents in opposition political parties.

The economic misfortune of most Nigerians are numerous that a cycle of poverty has already been established. The cycle of poverty is



that 'set of factors or events by which poverty, once started, is likely to continue unless there is an intervention.' The cycle of poverty can be referred to as 'development trap' when it is applied to countries (Wikipedia).

Some of the factors that generate poverty are: lack of education, disease, apathy, famine, dishonesty and overpopulation. These in turn contribute to secondary factors namely, lack of markets, poor infrastructure, poor leadership, bad governance, under-employment, lack of skills, and lack of capital amongst others.

Since 1999, events in many states that have contributed to 'development trap' in Nigeria are

frequent electricity supply interruptions and recurrent fuel scarcity. Frequent electricity supply interruptions and recurrent fuel scarcity are products of poor articulation and implementation of policies, thus most Nigerians are caught in a complex web of 'development trap.'

The number of the poor is increasing yearly. Some Nigerians who were indigent in 1999 because they could barely spend US\$2/day have either expired or have improved. There are some Nigerians who are living with the same amount in the year 2023.

When will the nation stop having frequent electricity supply interruptions and when will the

recurrent fuel scarcity cease to be the order of the day in Nigeria? It will take years to fix these problems even when those in authority are consistently consistent with the right attitude and economic policies.

Due to 'development trap' of several years, most states in Nigeria have been oscillating from one crisis to the other. Indeed, the country is in a state of tireless crisis. These crises assume political, social, economic, environmental, developmental and even humanitarian dimensions.

Some political analysts have observed that most states in Nigeria ended 2022 with more misery and underdevelopment than they started with. Regrettably, Nigeria is currently going through a situation

where young men and women are on desperate journeys outside the shores of the country.

As a result of the fragile economy, an overwhelming majority of Nigerians remain severely impoverished. Hunger, ill-health and lack of access to safe drinking water, limited access to education, exclusion, extremism and violence remained very prominent marks of most parts of the country.

By this pitiable profile, Nigeria remains perhaps, one of the countries in the African Continent where all critical gauges of development show unacceptable decline and where all the socio-economic and political ills that were very conspicuous in the 1990s still continue till today.

The parlous state of affairs have been blamed by some political experts squarely on leadership in the country characterized by fraud on a major scale, the plundering of natural resources, the privatization of state institutions and the development of an economy of plunder. Accordingly, these observers reasoned that the country and indeed, institutions of government are "special purpose vehicles for organized fraudulent activities."

This writer believes that those currently in authority have seen that the nation is already maneuvering with difficulties in stormy waters. The challenge of leadership in Nigeria therefore demands that concerted efforts should be made in achieving a true and lasting democracy through a credible pattern of political succession devoid of bitterness and rancour.

As the nation is in another election season, this writer calls for particular attention to be paid to economic matters to avoid going back into recession. It is suggested advisedly though, that issues associated with elections and political recruitments must be based on sound patriotic values that accommodate honesty, integrity, public service, justice and equity.

To this effect, it is mandatory that relevant government agencies particularly the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and the Nigeria Police Force, ensure the credibility of the electoral process and strict commitment to constitutional morality. These are germane in order to avert the recurrent challenges associated with political leadership in Nigeria. Nigerians look forward to having a good day tomorrow.

As we prepare for the next elections next month, it is not too much for us to sacrifice our today for our children so that they can have a better tomorrow. If future generations are to remember our nation, those in authority ought to ensure that it is with more gratitude than sorrow. Therefore efforts must be made to leave our children a glimpse of the world as it was created, not just as it looked when we got through it. Thank you

Happy New Year to all Nigerians, and indeed my respected readers.

EVIE'S WORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Living

How to identify pure honey and fake honey

A lot of times, what you call pure honey is mixed with high amount of water or glucose solutions. This process is called adulteration of honey and it takes away from the health benefits that you receive from honey. So, how can you tell pure honey from fake honey?

Three Ways To Identify Pure Honey And Fake Honey

Crystallisation of the Honey
Overtime, all honey will crystallize into something looking like granulated sugar. Take a look at the bottle and see what the honey inside of it looks like. If it is crystallized in the store, this is probably pure honey. If it is liquid, you could keep it for some days to see if it solidifies. Putting it in the refrigerator will speed up that process. If your honey never turns into crystals, then sorry, it is likely that you do not have pure honey on your hands but fake honey.

Read the Product Label
To Identify Pure Honey And Fake Honey 8

Before you purchase any products not just honey in the market, you should always learn to read labels. Manufacturers who are kind enough would list the actual content/ingredients of their product.

Make sure that the ingredient list of the honey does not contain high-fructose corn syrup or glucose. These are two substances that are usually added to honey that keep it from solidifying. Companies also add this to the honey so that they get more honey out of their batch.

Test For Honey
Simple Steps To Identify Pure Honey And Fake Honey 9

There are other ways to test and identify pure honey from fake honey:

Water Test For Honey



Mix a tablespoon of honey with water. If the honey dissolves easily, it is not pure, as pure honey should remain intact when dipped into water.

Vinegar Test
Mix some honey with water, then add four or five drops of vinegar. If the liquid turns foamy, that is not pure honey. It may have been adulterated with a substance called gypsum added to it.

Gravity
Put some honey onto a spoon and hold it up. If the honey falls quickly, then this is not pure

honey, probably water has been added to it. Good quality, pure honey, will stay on the spoon or fall slowly.

Match Test
Dip a match into the honey and try to light it up. Pure honey will light up and burn due to the sugar content. Other low-quality honey that usually contains water will not light up as the water in the honey will prevent it from lighting and burning.

Bread Test
Dip a piece of stale bread in honey. Leave the bread inside the honey for ten minutes and



then pull it out. If the bread is still hard, then you have pure honey. If the bread will be soggy, then the honey has been adulterated with water.

Iodine Test
You can also use iodine to tell pure honey from fake honey. Just mix honey, water and a few drops of iodine. If the mixture turns blue, then the honey has been adulterated with flour or starch in it.

Next time you go to the grocery store to buy some Gotea Herbal Tea and honey, do a quick check for the products that has the honey crystals before you buy and go home for further testing to ensure that you have unadulterated pure honey and enjoy all the health benefits that comes with it.

Do you know that pure honey can be tampered with by manufacturer's to better meet the market demand and increase their income, rather than to



meet your health goal? Let us know your thoughts in our comment section.



EVER'S WORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Living

Letting go even when it hurts

I forgive you.

Few words in the English language are more powerful, and yet the idea of forgiving someone who has let us down, hurt us, or betrayed us, can sometimes feel almost impossible.

We might even pay lip service to the words, even as all those emotions and feelings of resentment and bitterness are still there, bubbling just below the surface. Our mouth says we're over it, but our heart tells a different story.

The reality is that emotions are powerful; they drive us and shape who we are. We make important life decisions based on our feelings—love, fear, joy, hurt, anger—they all play a role in our core identity. Emotions rule our lives.

Take, for example, when a friend lets us down. Most of us have been left in tears at one point or another from a friend who said something careless or didn't come through like we thought they would. The devastation and emotion we feel is on par with my eight-year-old's crushing disappointment at having their best friend choose someone else. And while as adults, we might not pout and storm around the house or pick on our sister, we still feel all the hurt, sadness, resentment and bitterness. Those same emotions are valid and they occur whether we're two, 42 or 82.

But when we experience negative emotions—especially anger and resentment—for too long or when we can't get ourselves back to the joyful end of the spectrum, that's when things start to go awry. These very human emotions get in the way of our happiness. And that is why it is so important to teach yourself how to forgive, even when you don't really want to.

The Positive Effects of Forgiveness

The scary truth is that years of little resentments and frustrations can build up and start to have an effect on our health and happiness. They can destroy our relationships with our spouse, friends and loved ones. While forgiveness for the sake of others is certainly noble, the reality is that we need to learn to forgive to protect our own well-being. Even those not-so-little resentments—sometimes those



big things can destroy us if we can't let them go.

Forgiveness can have some surprising positive side effects on our health, including lower blood pressure and a boosted immune system. When we forgive, we not only feel emotionally better, but physically better as well. On the flipside, people who experience sleep issues, frequent illness and other stress-related disorders may be seeing these issues creep up due to unresolved resentments and anger.

When we forgive, we feel lighter. We feel less frustration. Sometimes the other person might not even know we forgave them—or they might not even know we were harboring those negative feelings in the first place! It's said that forgiveness is like unlocking a door to set someone else free, only to realize you were the prisoner all along. By letting go of the things we're

holding on to, we're actually allowing ourselves to move forward freely and positively.

How to Forgive (Even When You Don't Want to)

There are many challenges to forgiveness, the least of which is the whole "forget" part. You might not be able to truly pretend something didn't happen, nor is it even advisable or key to forgiving. We can't actually wipe our memory clean and ever completely forget what happened or why we were upset, but we can stop choosing to replay the scenario over and over.

Write it Out

One way to forgive someone who has wronged you is to write down your feelings. Get out all those toxic feelings, hurts and resentments weighing you down. Now, don't go writing everything down then mailing off an "anger letter" (which can be cathartic, but rarely makes things better).

Instead, write down your feelings and thoughts just to get them out. End the letter with how you intend to let go of the feelings and why you're forgiving the person, then note you'll be praying for them daily. And then—and this part is important—actually make a commitment to include them in your daily prayers for the next month.

You might just be amazed at how praying for someone daily changes your perspective. I know that every time I have

used this technique, the results have been incredibly powerful.

Get Some Distance

Another key to forgiving someone is to distance yourself from the situation for a while. This is different than giving someone the cold shoulder or the silent treatment. Instead, it's about giving yourself time to regroup rather than snapping and doing or saying something you'll later regret.

Go for a walk and wait a few hours before angrily sending off an email or picking up the phone. Instead, take a few minutes to clear your head. Do some deep breathing and try to talk yourself through a little perspective. Will this matter in six months? A year? Five years? If the action of the other person was simply annoying, hopefully a few minutes of reassessment will give you a chance to realize it's not worth getting angry about.

This doesn't mean you should be a pushover and just pretend everything's fine when it's not. It simply means that time heals all wounds and occasionally the sting of certain actions can wear off quickly—before we react and make it worse.

Focus on the Positive

If you're still having a difficult time with forgiveness, try focusing on the positive aspects of the person you want to forgive. A friend of mine recently shared this little exercise with me. Every time she was feeling annoyed or angry with her spouse, she would reference a

little post-it note in her wallet where she'd written positive words she associated with him: hardworking, kind, funny, and so on. Whenever she felt annoyed, she'd look at the note and remind herself of all of the things she really loved about him, making it much easier to overlook some of the negatives.

Ask for Forgiveness

If you're still struggling with forgiveness toward someone, consider expressing it and asking them to help you. While it sounds a little crazy, the reality is that sometimes honesty really is the best policy.

Express your feelings by saying, "I've been feeling really upset because of what happened. I've been harboring these negative emotions toward you and I wanted to work it out. I want to ask your forgiveness and help so we can resolve this and make amends."

When you show a sincere desire to move past the emotions and resolve the negativity with the other person, chances are they will also feel the same way. Sometimes you might find out they have something serious going on and actually need your help and friendship.

Give yourself the gift of being able to let go of the things weighing you down and polluting your life, including resentment and bitterness. We're all just humans trying to do our best and everyone is fighting a hard battle. Once we realize we're on a level playing field, we can move toward resolution.

Editorial

2023: Address real issues, stop chasing shadows

THE 2023 general elections are around the corner hence, excitement and anxiety have enveloped the polity. Campaigns for political positions have since kick with and canding dates particularly those jolting to take over from the incumbent President Muhammadu Buhari traversing the states of the federation soliciting for votes come February this year. The bug of the political frenzy has equally caught up with supporters of the various political parties.

THE general election is certainly Nigeria's moment of taken monumental decisions as to who governs them. The importance of this cannot be over emphasized. Nigerians should endeavor to get it right. It is in this template that it would be recalled that on 29th, September, 2022, an eminent groups of statesmen under the ages of the National Peace Committee, brought together all the presidential candidates to sign a peace accord which represents an agreed Code of Conduct for the conduct of the 2023 elections.

We observe, sadly, that despite this noble move by the eminent statesmen towards the conduct of a peaceful, free and fair elections, typical of the Leopard, Nigerian politicians don't seem to change. It has been accusation and counter-accusation amongst and between them with unsavory utterances belittling their status as leaders. So shameful that they've thrown decorum to the dogs even as the Peace Accord stands.

Instead of campaign of issues, the leading presidential candidates have embarked on acidic attacks on their persons. The issues amongst then have centered on corruption, certificate forgery or lack of it, drugs peddling political misdemeanor etcetera. Though these are issues that borders on the moral rectitude or uprightness of the presidential candidates, the Nigeria myriad problems have since gone haywire, beyond these vitriolic.

As we enter the elections come February the presidential candidates should come out clean and tell Nigerians and indeed the entire world and the blueprint they have for bringing Nigeria out of its present precarious situation to the path of sustainable development and progress worthy of the giant of Africa. Insecurity, hunger and abject poverty, unemployment and underemployment, bad economy as epitomize in the hyper inflationary trend have clearly retarded Nigeria's progress.

We strongly hold the opinion that the presidential candidates should concentrate on these issues rather than the diversionary tactics they are presently employing. The shadow changing would not solve Nigeria's problems rather they should proffer practical and workable solutions to the problems.

SKILLS is said to be the capacity to do something well, technique ability it is usually acquired or learned.

While grade can be defined as the performance of an individual or a group or an examination or test.

I therefore admonish undergraduates in tertiary institutions to be experts or professionals in their various area of specialization, most especially students of mass communication.

Mass Communicationn is indeed a broad course which has lot of branches, firms and organizations are after undergraduates who are more specialized in their field of study which includes journalism, broadcasting reporting and so on. So they can improve on the' growth of their organization.

However, grades are of top priority for students in tertiary institutions which can make their parents proud. But the truth must be told, nowadays

people fend to buy certificates due to unemployment in the nation, and can't perform effectively in their offices.

Meanwhile they do not have certain qualities of either a broadcaster, reporter or a journalist, and do not have the ethics of a professional media practitioner.

Undergraduates should have a though on how they impact to the growth and development of their various organizations or place of

Enhancing skills amongst undergraduates

industrial training. Lecturers are advised to put more efforts in lecturing students on how to improve their writing reading and listening skills as they dream to be great media professionals or practitioners.

Lastly, critical thinking and problems should be well admonished by lecturers, whereby everyone experiences problems in their



daily life. Some may be small which can be solved in an easier way but some may be in a complicated stage.

From a student life, we should make our minds critically and for solving problems, which helps to make our challenges in a positive way in our future job.

Either in a job or in organisation exposure should

begiven an is experiencing though situations with the task with our co-workers, and in working place are the main challenges in our routine life. Facing the tasks in a manner is a skill.

By Jonathan Rabo Jaimo Plateau State Polytechnic, Jos Mass Communication Department.

Depression and ways of tackling such ills

DEPRESSION is said to be the period of unhappiness or low morale which last's longer than several weeks and may includes ideation of self-inflicted injury or suicide.

However symptoms of depression include persistent sadness rempty mood loss of appetite or eating too much (insomnia), irritability restussness, anxiety and so on.

Some of the major contributing factors include, abuse, physical Abuse, sexual abuse, death or loss, substance misugse, relationship breakdown divorce etc. depression is indeed a mental illness and if not provided precautionary measures has psychological implications such as grieddf, trauma stress and so on.

Victims of depression or those suffering from depression are further advised to talki to a psychologist for psychotherapy medications a loved one a religious leader for counseling on the issue at hand. For it is proverbially said "A problem shared is half solvled."

Meanwhile losing a job or a source of livelihood can be so distressful especially whenone has a family to cater for considering the economic instability. Nevertheless one has to move on for better days, for many victims of such circumstance have done more havoc to their mental health due

to excessive thinking, so also many have become pronounced.

In the case of death of a loved one which also triggers depression or a major contributing factor to depression one is expected to listen to music, "For music is food for the soul."

Research has proven that music can go a long way to boost your mood and improve symptoms of depression. It can also help you strength your reception of positive emotions.

In addition one is expected have fun recreational activities such as swimming playing games etc. in addition depression can push you to give in to your fatigue. Food that are good for helping depression include eggs, oily fishbeef, liver and so on.

Talk therapy programs should be organized most especially governmental and non orgaznisations to help people with depression identify the negative thoughts and behaviours that result in depression and replace them with more positive strategies for building copying skills and psychological resilience.

Lastly a national study found out that the livelihood of having depression is higher in people withlow levels of vitamin and also research has proven that people whohad

symptoms of depression particularly those with seasonal effective disorder are tended to get better when the amount of

vitamin of in their bodies went up as you would not expect it.

By Jonathan Rabo Dammo Department of Mass Communication Plateau State Polytechnic, Jos.

The effects of examination malpractice

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 at different levels have cause a lot of problems to some people due their various engagement in various corrupt and staff practices tagged; examination malpractice" This is indeed a problem that require 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 for.

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

Some of the cause of examination malpractice include, poor preparation for examination, poor and conductive environment and bad parental and peers influence.

The implication of examination malpractice is that the student will loose the 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 individuals. This trend affects not only the individuals involved but a complete draw back the society.

The adverse effect is the fact that the nations will have to depend of the 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 standard so an not to some the students sitting for examination.

Secondly, examinations must also understand that they are only testing the ability of the students and not just setting a trap for perhaps that may be a receipt for a better time ahead and a training point in our education system.

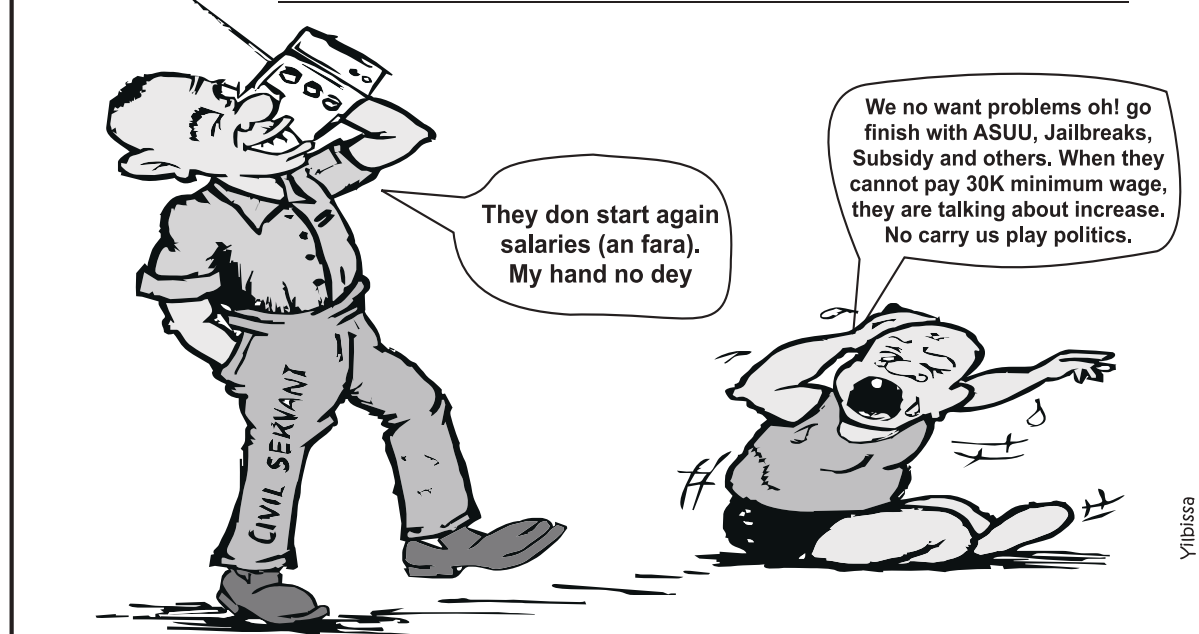
In my view attaching so much attention or importance to paper qualification may be the likely reason why there is the era pass examination at all cost.

It is time for government to also look at one's personal skills aptitude above certificate and there 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.

Standard Cartoon

FED. GOVT. PLAN TO INCREASE SALARY



Yibissa

Opinion

Understanding the principles of life

By HENRY UKAZU

LIFE is governed by laws and principles. If one misses the principles and laws, it might be difficult for them to succeed.

Life has many dynamics and navigating through life can be very challenging.

In the course of this article, I will share some insights on how one can overcome the challenges of life. This article will focus on human relationships because that's one of the best ways to live through life.

Whether in marriage, business, academia, politics, leadership, or entertainment, there are principles, ethics, codes of conduct, laws and rules governing them. When you miss any of them, there's bound to be consequences. In marriage, for instance, when there's constant infidelity, domestic violence and lack of communication, there's a huge tendency for the marriage to break down.

In business, when you don't have the right systems and structures, it will be difficult to scale up. The same applies to leadership, politics, and professional establishments; when you go against the rules or code of conduct, you are bound to pay the price. The inherent message here is that life is governed by laws and

principles, nothing exists on its own. There's always a corresponding reaction from every action.

It is very sad, however, to know that many people just live their life carelessly with hope that life and things will align for them. This is a wrong notion and understanding of life. These shallow minds fail to understand that you can't build something on nothing, nor can you give what you don't have. It's quite unfortunate to know that some people even live their life based on luck, failing to understand that luck only meets prepared minds.

It should be noted that there's nothing in life that doesn't have a pattern. Everything in life is governed by a process. Nothing exists on its own, just as no human being exists on their own. We all need one another to thrive. Again, look at the human body, no human organ exists on its own, they all depend on each other to function well.

For one to succeed as an individual, you must learn the art of human relationship. It's a skill you must learn whether you like it or not. Human relationship is a currency which can attract goodwill if properly harnessed. It should be noted that in this kingdom called life, who hates you

does not matter but who likes you really matters. Who likes you can create a million dollar opportunity for you that can change the course of your life.

The question you should be asking yourself is how do I attract these people into my life? Your greatest prayer is for these men and women to find favour in you. When they do, they can break protocol for you. Do you know that men can redefine the possibilities of your life? This will only work when you know how to tap into the right principles of life.

You may be wondering what these principles are? While there are a million and one principles, your major concern is to identify the right principle that will work for you. To attract great people into your life, you must study their work, know the causes they support, the kind of principles they adopt, the books they read, the mistakes they made, their vision to life and their attitudes to life. These will give you an insight into their personality. When you do so, you have answered 50 percent of the questions.

Do you know that there are people you can't cast away even if you don't like them. Your ability to decipher the right form of wisdom to relate closely with them can be

the game changer of your life. When you meet this set of people, your greatest prayer should be "Lord grant me favour to pass through their gate. This set of people may not fit into your ideal man/woman, but the truth is that you need them to get to your destination, and this takes humility to come through. Note that you will be making a big mistake when you talk too much instead of listening more.

These set of people might be the gatekeepers, custodians or even the influencers that can change the trajectory of your life. You will be foolish to disregard them and say, you'll pray your way out. When these people despise you, it will take divine intervention for you to overcome their rejection. No matter how bad they are, they have favours, graces and opportunities coming to them by virtue of their position or gift which you must tap into to succeed.

These sets of people may be planned by God to do a particular job or fulfil a particular role. They may not even look at it or qualify for the position, but again, that's how life and nature programmed it. A typical example is the former president of the United States of America Donald Trump, who many people were surprised at how he was able to beat Hillary Clinton to become the US president. President Trump simply applied the right principles which in this case can be the language the people the people wanted to hear. Moral: God can place certain people in different positions to fulfill certain purposes for his glory or for someone. Be smart.

In our contemporary society, we have seen people who pray and do little or no work. My humble advice to them is don't pray blind prayers or read to get good grades and forget the value of human

relationships and mentorship, which place you ahead of your contemporaries, who were getting good grades.

In life, sometimes, you must roll your sleeves and ask how it's been done technically, professionally, spiritually, socially, and academically. If it entails speaking the 'street language', please do. That goes to show how smart you can be when you think out of the box. After all, if you want to get something from a child, you'll have to bend down, true or false?

Another way to understand the right approach to prayer can be seen when people pray. There are right ways of praying and there are wrong ways of praying. According to the Holy Book, it was recorded that a certain man was praying to God and he said, he was a good man who doesn't commit sin like his tax collector colleague. At the end of the day, his prayer was not answered, God answered the prayer of the other man who asked forgiveness and admitted he was a sinner. The inherent message here is that of understanding. One of the men prayed right and the other had a proud outlook.

In conclusion, as you approach life, be mindful of how you relate with human beings through your thoughts, words, and action. Your ability to apply the right principles, laws, codes, rules and more importantly, attitudes will determine how far you will go in life.

Ukazu writes from New York. He's a Human Capacity & mindset coach. He's also a public speaker, youth advocate and creative writer. He works with the New York City Department of Correction as the Legal Coordinator. He's the author of the acclaimed book Design Your Destiny – Actualizing Your Birthright To Success.

"It is very sad, however, to know that many people just live their life carelessly with hope that life and things will align for them. This is a wrong notion and understanding of life. These shallow minds fail to understand that you can't build something on nothing, nor can you give what you don't have. It's quite unfortunate to know that some people even live their life based on luck, failing to understand that luck only meets prepared minds. It should be noted that there's nothing in life that doesn't have a pattern."

The VIPs, the police and the gunmen

By DAMILARE ADELEYE & SAMUEL OLOMU

ANY one with current Nigeria's tread at his or her disposal would have the glimpse of brutal attacks on police orderlies attached to some high-profile personalities in the country. Many of these attacks have resulted in the unfortunate death of many patriotic and fearless security officers who were unjustly killed in their line of duty.

The menace which has led some security details to their early graves in defence and safety of their civilian principals against gunmen, kidnappers, assailants, bandits and hired assassins, has become a more or less disastrous incident that has kept the sacred lives of our security personnel in danger.

In an investigative report by Daily Trust, over 43 security operatives in different and separate attacks have lost their lives in the last 25 months. Specifically, no fewer than 27 police operatives ultimately paid the supreme price in 2022 alone.

Similarly, while 13 security details died during separate attacks in the year 2021, four had been gruesomely murdered in the last two weeks this year specifically during the assassination onslaught unleashed on the former Imo State Governor, Ikedi Ohakim, at Ehime Mbano Local Government Area of the State. Luckily, the ex-governor narrowly escaped death during the attack along with his driver and his two children

It would also be recalled that suspected gunmen opened fire on the convoy of Apostle Suleman, the President of Omega Fire Ministries Worldwide, in the Auchi area of Edo State. At least, six persons including three policemen serving as escorts were murdered while the cleric who was said to be the target of the attack escaped with his bulletproof vehicle. Without going too far in history, on September 11, 2022, two police details in the convoy of Senator Ifeanyi Ubah were not spared from death when some suspected gunmen accosted them in Nnewi, Anambra State.

According to a report, the lawmaker representing Anambra South senatorial district escaped through his bulletproof SUV. These flashbacks were few out of numerous attacks where our gallant police operatives suffered heavy casualties, while the big men escaped the scene.

Evidently, the 2020 Police Force Act, in section four, specifies that operatives of the Force shall protect the lives and property of all persons in Nigeria. This means that it is the duty and statutory responsibility of the police to provide security to every member of Nigerian society both the less privileged and the VIPs in the county. However, it calls for urgent concern when the police are now the victims of attacks leading to their impromptu death.

Obviously, many of these slain officers were not criminals nor guilty of any legally established crimes. Even most times, they

were not the major targets of some of these attacks. They were mainly killed because they were providing escorts to these big men and women in the country.

While the menace remains condemnable and unacceptable, it will be of goodwill if urgent and radical measures are being taken to curb future occurrence of this tragic trend. To begin with, the Police Service Commission should proactively review the deployment of police officers to the VIPs in the country. Men of the Force should be attached to the high-profile individuals who have taken an oath and signed a written agreement to provide adequate protective measures for their orderlies.

Perhaps, if they can keep themselves safe in their bulletproof vehicle, it would not be bad if their security operatives are also well equipped with sophisticated weapons, bulletproof helmets, bulletproof vests, among others. In addition, it is obvious that

the number of police personnel in the country is statistically low and inadequate. Going forward, politicians and other well-meaning individuals should be allowed to engage private security providing firms whose personnel would be well trained and be accountable for by their serving principals any time.

To end, reports have it that some families of some of the slain officers have been abandoned and yet to get any compensation either from the Police Force or from the individuals they died for. This is indeed worrisome, unpalatable and saddening. Going forward, the Police Commission should ensure that an undertaking is signed mandating a prompt compensation from the big men in case of any eventuality of attack or untimely death of their escort officers. Mark you, Police are also human, they deserve to be protected!

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Feature

Stakeholders call for strengthening security in rail stations

Some stakeholders have called for improved security infrastructure on the trains, rail stations and its corridors to boost the people's confidence in utilising the rail system around the country. LUCY OGALUE writes.

The stakeholders, who spoke with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in separate interviews, also urged the Federal Government to prioritise safety of lives and property of Nigerians at all times.

While commending the government for reviving the rail system in some parts of the country, they also urged on expansion of the system in other parts to ease movement of people and cargoes via the rail network.

A train passenger in Abuja, Mrs Amina Isah said she had been using the train on the Abuja- Kaduna route since commencement of services and it had been of tremendous help to her.

Isah said her family lived in Kaduna, while she worked in Abuja as an administrator in a private company.

"It used to be easy and cheaper and safer for me to travel from Kaduna and to Abuja via the trains before the issue of insecurity on the trains surfaced.

"Since the attack of passengers along the Abuja-Kaduna route, I have stopped travelling every week rather i go ones every month. And this is affecting my marriage and my home.

"The rail system is supposed to be one of the safest means of travelling and if citizens are scared to use this means for fear of being kidnapped, then there is a problem," she said.

Another passenger, Mr Johnson Adams said he stopped using the train after the incident that occurred at the Edo train station.

Adams however reiterated that the Federal Government and all relevant authorities should seriously look at ways of securing train passengers in the country for the betterment of the country's economy.

"After they kidnapped passengers along the Abuja-Kaduna route, and the promise by the government of an enhanced security system, I



resumed using the trains.

"But since the recent attack and kidnapping of passengers at the train station Edo, I stopped using the trains and don't intend to resume the services until I'm sure it is safe to do so.

"Aside the benefit of using the trains by passengers, the government also benefits from its functioning as it generates revenue for it.

"I am sure there are several passengers who like me have stopped using the trains and you know what that means, less revenue to government pockets.

"I honestly pray something is done soonest concerning this issue of insecurity in the country as a whole as it is affecting the citizens and their businesses," he said.

Mr Alex Uche, a trader, also decried drop in his income due to the reduced number of travellers along the Abuja-Kaduna route.

"I live in Abuja but have a shop at the Rigasa Station where i sell food and drinks and for months now I barely make enough money to remain in business.

"Since the train attack, I think many people have either stopped travelling or rather travel by road because the number of people that stop by to eat at the station has drastically reduced."

Mr Adams Audu, a Public Servant said the incident at the Edo train station, after much promises by the Federal Government to secure train stations around the country "calls for concern".

"After what happened at the Abuja-Kaduna train route, I am aware that the Federal Government promised to ensure security measures at all the stations.

"I was surprised to hear of another attack on passengers in Edo. Even though the attack was not on the train.

"Honestly, this is very sad because it will discourage people from using the trains. Even I don't think I will allow any of my relatives go near any station until something is done."

Mr Godspower Akuranya, a passenger, commended efforts of the Federal Government and security personnel in the country in ensuring speedy release of the passengers kidnapped in Edo.

Akuranya however urged that rather than curative measures, government should make efforts to ensure a reoccurrence was avoided.

"I am happy and commend the government on what they are doing but I think a lot still needs to be done.

"The government ought to go beyond what it is doing at the moment to put an end to kidnapping of passengers and citizens, not just on train routes but around the country.

"This issue of kidnapping and insecurity is gradually turning into a norm and it is not good for the nation.

"As time goes by, it will not only take a toll on citizens but will prevent foreigners too from coming into the country for fear of being kidnapped for ransom.

"So all relevant authorities need to collaborate to put an end to this menace."

The Minister of Transportation, Mr Mu'azu Sambo, had after the release of the last 23 hostages of the Abuja-Kaduna train attack

assured that measures were in place to prevent reoccurrence of the incident.

Sambo said, "the Abuja Kaduna mishap was indeed a very sad one. And by the grace of God, we shall not witness anything like that again.

"Not only because we have committed that to prayer but we have also deliberately taken steps.

"Like you said, yes, indeed, lessons have been learned. And these lessons will be put in place to prevent it from happening again."

Also, the spokesperson of the Nigerian Railway Corporation, Malam Mahmud Yakubu, after the release of the kidnapped victims in Edo also condemned the act, while urging Nigerians to be vigilant.

"All hands must be on deck to ensure the security of life and property of all Nigerians.

"The NRC Management enjoins all communities residing along the railway corridors to be security conscious by reporting any suspicious movement that is likely to cause breach of peace within their locality, to the nearest security agency or their community vigilante for quick intervention.

"Reporting to security agencies will help in keeping our society safe and protecting the Federal Government's critical infrastructure constructed in their communities for their socio-economic benefits," Yakubu said. (NAN)

I am happy and commend the government on what they are doing but I think a lot still needs to be done. The government ought to go beyond what it is doing at the moment to put an end to kidnapping of passengers and citizens, not just on train routes but around the country. This issue of kidnapping and insecurity is gradually turning into a norm and it is not good for the nation. All hands must be on deck to ensure the security of life and property of all Nigerians. The NRC Management enjoins all communities residing along the railway corridors to be security conscious by reporting any suspicious movement that is likely to cause breach of peace within their locality, to the nearest security agency or their community vigilante for quick intervention.

News

Diphtheria: Nigeria records 123 infections, 38 deaths

NIGERIA has so far recorded a total of 123 Diphtheria infections and 38 deaths across four states of the federation as of 22 January.

According to the latest data by the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), Kano State recorded the highest with 100 confirmed infections and 32 deaths, followed by Yobe with 17 infections and three deaths.

The NCDC Director General, IfedayoAdetifa, who was represented by the Director of Special Duties, PriscillaIbekwe, made the disclosure Monday at the ministerial briefing organised by the Federal Ministry of Health in Abuja.

MsIbekwe noted that Lagos State also reported five cases with three deaths while Osun recorded a single infection with no fatality.

The director noted that NCDC is supporting states by providing antitoxins for the treatment of confirmed cases and that with the support of partners, it had organised a workshop for laboratory scientists in states to increase diagnostic capacity for the disease.

She added that diphtheria is a vaccine-preventable disease, urging Nigerians to ensure that their children are fully vaccinated against the disease with the prescribed three doses of the pentavalent vaccine.

According to NCDC, diphtheria is a serious bacterial infection caused by the bacterium called *Corynebacterium* species that affects the nose, throat and



sometimes, the skin of an individual.

The symptoms of diphtheria include fever, runny nose, sore throat, cough, red eyes (conjunctivitis) and neck swelling. In severe cases, NCDC said that a thick grey or white patch appears on the tonsils and, or at the back of the throat associated with difficulty in breathing.

The Guardian also reported that MsIbekwe said the NCDC is now monitoring the situation of an unknown deadly flu in China and increasing genomic sequence sampling.

Also speaking, the Minister of

Health, Osagie Ehanire, said the World Health Organisation (WHO) had not made any pronouncement on such an outbreak, adding that the nation's port health and other agencies were carrying out due diligence on arrivals in the country.

Nnamdi Kanu's brother reacts to IPOB suspension

KINGSLEY Kanu, the younger brother of the leader of the outlawed Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), Nnamdi Kanu, has dismissed his alleged suspension by the leadership of the group.

Mr Kingsley said on Monday that he remains a bona fide member of

the organisation.

Collins Chinedu, said to be the national coordinator of IPOB for Germany, signed the suspension order.

A statement on Sunday night announcing Mr Kingsley's suspension accused him of

insubordination to IPOB leadership, forming a parallel leadership in Germany and flouting the group's code of conduct.

Mr Kingsley was accused of "imposing and parading an expelled IPOB member, MrOgbenna Abraham as the new National Coordinator for Germany with the sole intent to cause division within the existing structure in Germany".

Mr Kingsley in a reaction through his social media handles said Mr Chinedu who signed the suspension order lacks the power to sack him as he (Chinedu) had since been removed as the national coordinator of the group for Germany by the IPOB leader, Mr Kanu.

"I am born for a day like this, Kanunta Kanu is very much around," he said.

Posting a screenshot of a tweet by Mr Kanu's lawyers, Alloy Ejimakor, Mr Kingsley, popularly known as Kanunta, said his brother, Mr Kanu had issued a directive to the leadership of IPOB last year from detention through his lawyers to remove Mr Chinedu and replace him with Ogbenna Abraham.

"With increased transaction charge in old naira notes, many customers would not patronise us, the situation is worrisome," she said

A trader, Musa Akuyam said he refused transaction the old currency to avoid counting losses.

"I rejected old naira notes because I couldn't deposit the ones I have due to queues in the banks," he said.

Reacting, Dr Abdulkadir Jibrin, Director Medical Services of the CBN, has warned against rejecting the old naira notes before the Jan. 31 deadline.

He said the apex bank had scaled up community sensitisation to create awareness on the redesigned naira notes.

He advised residents of the state to channel their complaints to the Consumer Protection Department (CPD) of the bank.

"We have channels, we have sensitise and educate severally and we will continue to do that," he said. (NAN)

Depress on kill four teachers after sack



Adeleke

depression of nullifying the appointment as class teachers," he said.

"We have resigned our work engagements with previous employers of labour. Hence, we have no other places to go other than this offer. We pray our hopes will not be dashed as we rely heavily on this job.

We do not want to be subjects of ridicule and mockery to our previous employers any longer and colleagues who were not part of the recruitment process or those who ridicule us as jobless graduates," he

pleaded.

"Your Excellency sir, save our soul and have mercy on us. We are your children and siblings. There are great numbers of dependents on us. Nullifying or terminating our appointments at such a time like this is like being thrown into the sea of hopelessness.

"Your Excellency Sir, we can feel your concern or reservation on certain actions taken by the past administration. However, it will be a great honor if our plights and appeals are given favorable considerations."

Lagos, Kaduna top as JAMB registers in one week

ABOUT one week after the commencement of registration for the 2023 Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME), the Joint Admissions and Matriculations Board (JAMB) has registered a total 92,490 candidates.

JAMB, which disclosed this in its weekly bulletin released on Monday, said the registration, which began on 14 January is expected to continue until 14

February. Over a million candidates are expected to take part in the annual computer-based test used to rank admission seekers into Nigerian universities.

According to the breakdown provided by JAMB, Lagos topped the list with 10,974 candidates; Kaduna State with 9,443 candidates, while the Federal Capital Territory (FCT)

is credited with 9,157.

The examination body also disclosed that a total of 25,162 of the candidates registered for the board's mock UTME usually conducted before the actual tests.

This year, JAMB introduced a N1,000 fee to be paid at the point of registration for candidates who indicate interest in taking part in the mock UTME. JAMB said it

POS operators reject old naira notes in Bauchi

LESS than seven days to the deadline of the redesigned naira by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), some Point-of-Sale (POS) operators in Bauchi have increased charge for transaction in the old bank notes.

A check by the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Bauchi on Tuesday showed that POS increased deposit charge by about

50 percent. The operators are now charging between N150 and N200 for N5,000 and N10,000 deposits as against N100, respectively.

While others simply refused transaction in the old naira notes few days to the Jan. 31 deadline.

A POS operator, Mrs Grace Simon said she rejected the old naira because it was difficult for

her to deposit it in the banks due long queues of customers.

"There are multitude of customers in the banks, you have to spend several hours on the queue to deposit the old naira notes.

"Honestly; I don't have the strength, and that is why some of us increased charges for old naira notes.

"The charge for transaction in the new bank notes still remain the same," she said.

Another POS agent, Aliyu Babayo said they rejected the old naira notes in view of the new cash withdrawal policy.

"You can only withdraw limited amount of money on the counter which is not enough to meet daily transaction.

"And the queues in the banks to deposit the old notes are long and hectic, this explains the increase in the transaction charge," he said.

Another sale agent, Dorcas Silas said the redesigning of the naira negatively affected their operations, forcing some of them



Mohammed



Kanu

Feature

Emefiele, CBN and our future

At some point yesterday, January 24, the Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, Godwin Emefiele is bound to be back in the news as the CBN's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) concludes its 289th meeting and offers its position on the future direction of the country's macro-economic environment. Would the CBN adopt a further hawkish position and tighten rates or adopt an accommodative, wait-and-see position, this being the MPC meeting before Nigeria's general elections? What are Nigeria's takeaways and lessons from the global economic ecosystem as indicated by signals from the Bretton Woods Institutions, the Eurozone and the recently concluded global economic forum in Davos? What would be the message from the MPC with regard to inflation, Naira re-design, money supply and the foreign exchange regime? Writes REUBEN ABATI.

WHATEVER the CBN Governor says today, would be a signal of the country's immediate economic direction and also of his effective return to work after the drama in-between his trip to the United States in December 2022 as part of President Buhari's delegation to the US-Africa Leaders' Summit, his sudden disappearance from the radar, due to his taking his annual leave in addition to a medical leave, and his eventual return to the country on January 13, 2023. The drama in-between that we refer to has been well reported, namely the story that the Department of State Services (DSS) wanted to arrest the CBN Governor on allegations that he is a financier of terrorism and economic crimes of national security implications. The DSS went to court to seek the leave of court to arrest the CBN Governor upon his return to the country. There have been court cases in this regard from which a lot has been revealed about our country and the conflict of its institutions and what appears to be the complete lack of co-ordination and synergy among state institutions.

Early December 2022, the Chief Judge of the Federal High Court, Justice J. T. Tsoho had declined an application by the DSS to arrest and detain the CBN Governor. Justice Tsoho declined the *ex parte* application by the DSS, citing the absence of any concrete evidence to substantiate its claims. The matter subsequently came up again in this case, in the court of Justice Maryam Hassan of the Federal Capital Territory's High Court where the Incorporated Trustees of Forum for Accountability and Good Leadership sought an order of court to enforce Emefiele's fundamental human rights. Justice Hassan again declined the DSS application, in a ruling delivered on December 29. Justice Hassan has been rightly praised for handling the matter expeditiously, but His Lordship made even more far-reaching declarations that should be underlined. One, the two courts agreed that the DSS does not need the leave of court to arrest the CBN Governor whose office does not fall under the purview of Section 308 of the 1999 Constitution which grants immunity from prosecution, while in office, only to the President, the Vice President, Governors and their Deputies making a total of 74 persons that are entitled to such privilege. Two, both courts stressed the point that the CBN Governor cannot be arrested on the basis of mere suspicion or allegations without concrete evidence. Justice Hassan had used the word "an important person" or something like that, but what the court was drawing attention to is the tendency of the security agencies to arrest just about anyone on a whim and a caprice, without any prior evidence or investigation, or the establishment of a *prima facie* case. If Emefiele had not been the CBN Governor, he could have been picked up like "a common criminal" and subjected to a harrowing experience only for the same state to discover that that there is no case to submit to court. This case highlighted again that we run a justice system that applies different rules according to status, ethnicity and class – in outright violation of the rule of law as prescribed by the country's basic law, the 1999 Constitution.

Justice Maryam Hassan made the additional point that if the DSS wants to arrest the CBN Governor, it should



Emefiele

have sought the clearance of the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to start with, or put the accused person on notice given the strategic position that he occupies and the implications for national security, financial stability and the flow of foreign investments. Obviously, it would appear that the DSS did not inform the President and if they did, nobody has told us. What everyone has seen is that when the CBN governor returned from his long stay overseas, and he met the President during a visit by the Arab Bank for Economic Development boss, he was warmly welcomed by the President. This has been interpreted by those expecting the President's intervention, body language or voice, to mean that the President has no problem with Emefiele. The CBN Governor is an appointee of the President of Nigeria, even if the CBN Act of 2007, Sections 1, 8, 11 thereof grant the CBN autonomy, and requires in Section 11, the concurrence of two-thirds of the Senate in matters relating to the appointment or removal of the CBN Governor.

The position of a Central Bank as a political agency and its neutrality is a much-discussed subject in the study of Central Banks worldwide. What needs to be pointed out here is that indeed, the point about the international dimension of the move against Nigeria's CBN Governor, highlighted by the court of Justice Hassan, has been proven, now that the international media is beginning to focus heavily on the subject especially Bloomberg. The principal role of a Central Bank with regard to financial stability is signalling. A Central Bank as an institution sends out signals about the health and direction of a country's economy. When the wrong signals are sent, the entire economy could be affected. Where else in the world does the Department of State Services openly discredits a serving Central Bank Governor? By making Emefiele a target, the Department of State Services may have inadvertently created more problems than it seeks to solve. It has issued denials here and there but so much damage has been done. The matter could have been handled differently and better in the over-arching interest of the country and its financial system. It is a shame that it all got so messy with the sordid matter descending to the street level, with reports of

sponsored protests and demonstrations in favour of the CBN Governor on the streets of Abuja, his residence being occupied by the police and no one claiming responsibility for the occupation. The Department of State Services (DSS) has more far-reaching responsibilities than the Nigeria Police Force (NPF). It must resist the temptation to behave like everyday law enforcement officers. Doing so will be a disservice to the scores of intelligent and well-trained men and women among its ranks.

The DSS should be reminded that there has been a precedent in this regard. In 2014, Sanusi Lamido Sanusi, CBN Governor as he then was, faced a similar situation when the DSS seized his international passport upon his arrival from Niger where he had gone to attend a meeting of governors of the Central Banks in West Africa. He was suspended from office while he was away in Niger. He was equally accused of terrorism financing, and misconduct. Lamido was further accused of having violated the Financial Regulations Council Act. The fiery Lamido who believed he was a victim of a witch-hunt for trying to expose malfeasances within the system went straight to court to defend himself. The court not only ruled in his favour, the court awarded him damages to the tune of N50 million and asked the Federal Government to apologize to him. At the time, the DSS threatened to go on appeal and it did. I have no immediate facts as to whether or not Sanusi Lamido Sanusi eventually got the N50 million that the court awarded in his favour. Years later, it is the turn of Godwin Emefiele. Why is the DSS always linking CBN Governors to terrorism? The opacity of the allegation indeed confounds not just the courts but also the fair-minded and reasonable man on the street. Why would Nigeria back-to-back, advertise the managers of its monetary policy as rogue elements, knowing that this could sabotage the country's economic fortunes and bring the country into international disrepute?

But what I find curious, and let me discharge this quickly is that more than any other CBN Governor before him, Godwin Emefiele has been a far more hands-on regulator and administrator. His remit is monetary policy but under his watch

the CBN has been at the centre of everything, completely over-stretched beyond its traditional mandate. I don't consider this to be a good thing. But in the face of the total abdication of responsibility by other departments of state, Emefiele's CBN stepped early into the void, and did whatever was possible to prioritize Nigeria's economic interest, and the people's well-being. When the people who had been employed to manage Nigeria's fiscal policy could not deliver, and chose instead to demonstrate gross and insufferable incompetence, Emefiele stepped in with policies hitherto reserved for the fiscal space. The Federal Ministry of Agriculture has been unimpressive since 2015, it doesn't even have a reliable Farmers' Register. Emefiele's CBN stepped in with the Anchor Borrowers' Programme and began to talk about value chain addition in the agriculture sector. COVID happened. The CBN again under Emefiele's watch stepped in and mobilized the private sector to provide necessary support. Although we are still waiting for a proper audit of all the contracts that were awarded to wives and girlfriends under that scheme, nobody can deny the leadership that Emefiele and the CBN provided. This same CBN introduced anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing regulations.

However, in its new-found role of helping the government to meet its needs and goals, Emefiele was ever so willing to support the Buhari government with ways and means, shoring up a debt of over N22 trillion in careless violation of the Fiscal Responsibility Act. Without Ways and Means, however the country would have been completely bankrupt – a clear sign of the cluelessness of the people Nigeria voted for in 2015. The only problem is that the CBN has no right to break the law in trying to help the situation. Let me add this: given his vantage position, Emefiele has so far created winners and losers in the Nigerian system. As the custodian of the country's foreign exchange, his management of that regime is probably at the root of his travails. Those who lost out in Nigeria's rent-sharing system are not expected to sing his praise. But what is more worrisome is how the Nigerian state keeps reducing the fortunes of an entire country to the level of an individual, rather than focus on institutions. Emefiele has suddenly become the subject rather than the CBN as an institution, or the larger subject of state failure.

I am not saying that Emefiele is above the law or beyond it. Far from it. I am saying that hounding Emefiele ignores the deeper issues. When will the CBN be fit for purpose? Emefiele has not gone to court directly, like Sanusi Lamido before him, to defend his integrity, but he may well find himself doing so at some point. But the question needs to be asked: can the DSS inquire into the monetary policy of the CBN as it now purports to do? Defining monetary policy is not part of the core function of the DSS. To do so brazenly would amount to an overreach, in the absence of incriminating evidence. The standard procedure would have been for the government of the day to order a forensic audit of the CBN or compel it to release its full audited financials as required by law. The

enabling law provides for that. And incidentally, the CBN has not published its own audited reports as required by law. To separate myths from realities, the best that the state can do is to insist and follow up on due process. Where are the CBN's audited reports? But to reduce the Central Bank of Nigeria to a spectacle of games within games, between the security and the political establishment is tough to watch. The bigger question that Nigeria needs to resolve is this: Do we want an independent CBN or not? How do we protect the independence and neutrality of the Central Bank of Nigeria, and shield it from partisan disruption, even of its leadership?

The argument that the CBN Governor is in the eye of the storm because he redesigned some denominations of the naira notes is silly if it is true. In that regard, the CBN has not done anything illegal. It is perfectly within its purview to seek to control money supply, redesign the national currency and check counterfeiting. It may be argued that more time should be given to allow the new notes to circulate as has been done in the United Kingdom in a similar situation, but this cannot be a reason for the current hullabaloo! Emefiele argued that the currency redesign was in part a bulwark against inflation. He may have been proven right, given that the exchange rate has been relatively stable for a while, even if the December effect may have had something to do with that as well. Some commentators have asked him to resign. I think that would even complicate the situation further. Resignation is not an option at this time. The law requires him to follow due process and give a three months' notice. During the pendency of that notice, a Deputy Governor is required to act. The uncertainty that could result from all of that at this time of transition in Nigerian politics, cannot bode well for the Nigerian economy. Emefiele has two more years in office. If it suits the next government that will assume office in May 2023, to remove him, then let it be up to that new government to follow due process and act as it deems best in the overall interest of Nigeria. In the meantime, he can be investigated if there are concrete grounds for doing so.

Having said all these, the point must be made that this particular CBN Governor – Godwin Emefiele – is embattled because he made the mistake of showing interest in partisan politics. His pain is significantly self-inflicted. The CBN Act is patterned after the enabling Act of the Bank of England. At the height of political provocations, Governors of the Bank of England stay completely above the fray and avoid partisan politics. Emefiele crossed the line. He allowed himself to be deceived by those who told him he could become President. When the same spell-binders abandoned him, he was left alone to carry the can. This is the cause of the kind of embarrassment he currently receives and the CBN being brought down to the level of the street. Even outright imbeciles now offer opinions about CBN policies these days and it is frustrating to see. Future CBN Governors would have to learn from his travails. His best bet is to prepare for the worst after the elections.



By CELESTINE ATTSAR

Nigeria fighting corruption with weak institutions

under the mantra of fighting security and corruption in order to change the fortunes of its citizens, as the government before could not do it as expected. That has not been achieved from all indications of the happenings in Nigeria.

IT is true that fighting corruption especially in a developing society like Nigeria is a very heavy task that must involve everybody, that is, if it is to succeed. Dr. Ngozi Ikonjo-Iweala former minister in Nigeria and present Director General of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in her book; "Fighting Corruption is dangerous" narrated how the government she was serving then was engulfed in corruption by those holding influential positions in the then government of former President Jonathan and how she tried to see that it was minimize but that nearly caused her dare consequences and life of her mother.

As it is, Nigeria is considered to be one of the most corrupt nations in the World. As at the last rating of Transparency International(TI), the country though very rich in both human and natural resources, its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is very low.

The present administration came

responsibilities of fighting about 190 inmates corruption have descended on him for themselves become part allegedly prosecuting of the problem as some them despite collecting were found to be bribes while in office. From supporting those doing it. this report, it is very clear The case of Abba Kyari a suspended Deputy officer and his men Commissioner of Police infringed on the rights of who headed the banned Nigerians who wanted to SAR's was exposed by a retaliate when they found themselves in the same situation in Kuje prison. fraudster Ramon Abbas It was another shocking popularly known as; Hushpuppi who after his story when the Economic arrest by Interpol in Dubai and Financial Crime Commission EFCC and extradited to United States informed the FBI arrested another top that Kyari aided and government official who is abated his business of the custodian of the internet crime. When the finances of the country news broke out, many Nigerians found it difficult to believe but as time went by more revelations from Mr. Ahmed Idris in connection with the FBI and its letter to the Nigerian government amounting to over 80 billion Naira. requesting the extradition of the Super Cop despite The EFCC verified Kyari's denial of all the intelligence showed that the allegations convinced all. the AGF raked off the

Though the previous governments did establish some Institutions that were empowered to collaborate with other Institutions to fight the menace, it has also not done well in the eyes of Nigerians as those accused of corruption based on the positions they held are still moving freely and still participating in political activities and even contesting political offices.

Whistle blowing was introduced as a way of involving all Nigerians in the fight against corruption. Very few people came out to report suspicious transaction or hidden money, especially which involved reward to the whistle blower. Though that approach yielded little fruits, but it was a good approach in fighting this monster that is gradually eating deep into our system and when not handled with urgency, it will one day consume the whole country.

Recent developments about corruption in Nigeria revealed that the custodians of agencies saddled with the

invitations to respond to charges in connection with illegal activities. The alleged stolen funds were said to be laundered through real estate investment in Kano, Abuja, Dubai and other countries. Perhaps, Hushpuppi, Idris as in other cases did not want to die alone or go to jail alone, that was why some few weeks after his arrest and detention he started cooperating with the EFCC which led to the arrest of the former governor of Zamfara state Abdulaziz Yari in connection with over 20 billion naira fraud.

The arrest of the suspended AGF followed his failure to honour

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of the suspended AGF has shown. While Nigeria and Nigerians appreciate the suspension of the AGF and the internet fraudster Hushpuppi for exposing the network of those involved in embezzling the resources of the country, the agencies that are saddled with the responsibility of fighting these menace should not relent in their efforts to reduce it to the barest minimum by also ensuring diligence in order to come up with concrete facts that can be used in prosecuting offenders.

It is very important for the political class to know that the survival of our democracy depends on how the country is govern by them. It is very important also that the public should use the window of whistle blowing opportunity that the government is encouraging to expose those acquiring properties that are beyond their means without any explanation. The fight against corruption is not a one man fight but a fight that each and every one of us must have a hand in killing this monster that is eating every fabric of our society in terms of development and integrity as a nation.



By Yvonne Ishola

Security operatives: Is hairstyle an offence?

universities have been forced out of school due to ASUU strike which has lasted 6 months and it is still going. In this predicament and being bombarded left right and centre by security challenge, the last thing these youth need is to be picked at by our security operatives. It is like running to a friend when in trouble only for the friend to do more harm to one than what one was running from.

The issue of marlian came and has recruited most of our youth. Some of them blindly joined the band wagon. Keeping dreads is one of their identities.

From the inception of marlian till today, our young boys have been suffering harassment in the hands of security operatives till date. Stories abound where an innocent young man would be stopped by security men as he goes about his legitimate business.

Last Sunday I was a witness as my young boy was picked out of the commercial vehicle we were travelling in from Abuja. We had just passed Tarara. The security man asked the driver to move pass the check point and wait.

I jumped out of the car immediately the car parked

and picking my identity card, I hurried to where the security operative was seriously interrogating my son as if he was a criminal. He was armed and also carried along a hefty stick which looked menacing. My heart bled as I rushed waving my ID card.

The security man warned me sternly to stay put or get arrested. Confused, I stopped in my tracks.

One of them was approaching from the other side of the check point, so I told him that I was a journalist and I was just doing my job being curious about what was happening and I needed answers.

By that time, the security operative had brought out a scissors and was threatening to cut my sons hair. I looked perplexed wondering what was wrong with my sons hair. It was not dreads, just a hairstyle with the all the sides very low and the front to the middle part full of hair. Is that offensive?

The other security operative reported what I said when he arrived there. Shortly afterwards, my son joined us. It was only then that every passenger entered the car. Most of the ladies had their phones ready to video tape

what ever the security operatives planned doing. I took my seat with the solemn promise to write and expose the victimisation that takes place on Nigeria's roads in the middle of nowhere.

With the number of things we have to contend with on the roads- kidnappers, bandits, hostile communities (if a crisis took place that the driver was ignorant of), armed robbers, reckless drivers, are we to add this to our list?

As to be expected, passengers started sharing their experiences. A lady said this issue of harassment of young boys and men almost cost them their lives on a journey she embarked on from Abuja.

The security operatives wasted their time barbering 2 young male passengers hair, not minding the fact that they had a long journey ahead of them. The driver of their car was in so much hurry to cover the dreadful dusk that they almost ran into a stationary trailer. That would have been disastrous.

Another passenger said when the security operatives were about to barber his hair, he paid his way through. He said he was lucky he had

some cash on him or he would have been disgraced before his girlfriend.

It is not an action that takes place only on our highways, far from prying eyes. This is a common occurrence according to my colleagues experience. In her own case, her son was driving them around Jos Town when security operatives made them to park. Her son was asked to disembark and the security operatives barber his dreads unevenly.

This brings to mind Ripji Bala's case who was arrested along with some youth in Hwolshe. Their sin was the fact that they were wearing dread locks. Unfortunately, Ripji Bala lost his life due to a misunderstanding. He was shot dead by the guard on duty who thought they were trying to escape not knowing that they were released.

What has EndSARS achieved if our youth are still harassed by gun wielding security operatives? We are told that the police is your friend. Please live up to that. The soldiers are our defenders. Please help us to feel secure around you.

Secondly chiefs, investigate these allegations and bring perpetrators to book. Except if hairstyle is an offence, I see

it as a distraction that is pushing our youth to the wall.

Commuters, this is an area of technological advancement. If any passenger is being victimized, video tape and forward immediately. This way, it would put fear in the perpetrators, serve as evidence and deterrent to evil minded ones.

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By JIDAUNA DARING

WITH the increase different forms of violence against female folk gender based violence has now become a global problem which occurs at homes, communities, work places and schools among other settings around the world.

In this situation, women therefore need to advance gender equality to ensure the protection of women and girls from any violence against their rights in any conflict.

Some of the violence behaviors being perpetrated against the women and girls include rape, assault, wife battering, sexual harassment among other forms of sexual aggression. It is glaring that such is no doubt a violation of the fundamental human rights of the victims, particularly women and girls.

Since female folk formed part of the society, there is the need for government at all levels and organizations to continue working towards achieving zero tolerance in the unabated violence against women and girls.

According to the gender in Nigeria report, made available in 2014, Nigerian women are obviously at the disadvantaged compared to the male folk particularly when it comes to education, sharing of land and assets among others.

Nigerian women and girls should not be treated as second class citizens, considering their immense contributions to national development of the country.

However, the establishment of Women's Rights Advancement and Protection Alternative (WRAPA) by the wife of the then Head of State, Hon. Justice Fati Abubakar in 1999 was no doubt a well conceived idea.

The establishment of the organization was not the object of a misplacement of priority since it seeks to advance and protect the rights of women as provided by national laws and policies, regional and international treaties and agreements through an integrated approach that entrenches respect for the human dignity of the women as well as their inclusion in decisions that affect their lives and development any community.

Interestingly, the vision of WRAPA is women's full enjoyment of human dignity, enhanced access to justice, and redress for violation of women's rights while the organization's mission is actualizing the legal rights of women, in private and public through mobilization, sensitization and the provision of legal support services.

It may interest you to know that the objective of WRAPA is to design implement and monitor effective policies and programmes that will foster the advancement of women, to promote and protect all human rights of women, to support women in difficult circumstances including victims of gender violence, to promote reform of discriminatory laws and policies against women and to also ensure women's access to and improve their participation in power structures in decision making bodies.

WRAPA however, revealed that despite several interventions by state and non-state actors to prevent, eliminate, or reduce the prevalence of sexual and gender-based violence and push for the effective implementation of the model laws in plateau state, these efforts have been hampered by a lack of awareness of the model laws, a lack of coordination among key players, and inadequate understanding of the contents of the model laws, among other factors.

It was in view of this that, Women's Rights Advancement and Protection Alternative [WRAPA] has been commended for championing the course of ensuring full implementation of Violence against Person's Prohibition (VAPP) laws in Plateau State.

The commendation was showered by participants at a one day town hall engagement campaigning for the

prevention and accountability for Violence against Women and Girls and the effective implementation of the model laws in Plateau State, held at Bassa Local Government Council (LGC) Secretariat and DaGwom Gyel's Palace in Jos South Local Government Area (LGA) of Plateau State, last year.

THE NIGERIAN STANDARD reports that the engagement meeting was organized by WRAPA, Supported by African Women's Development Fund (AWDF), under legal and social empowerment programme on

implementation of innovative strategies or action plans committed to by the leaders of faith and culture for the effective implementation of the model laws in Plateau State among others.

Earlier in her welcome remarks, Coordinator, WRAPA Plateau State, Mrs. Jummai Madaki appreciated the participants for honouring the invitation and said that the project seeks to achieve full implementation of VAPP act and passage of gender and equal opportunities Bill in the



WRAPA: Advocating implementation of model laws in Plateau



Group photograph of participant at Jos South



Traditional rulers at the meeting



Madaki, WRAPA state co-ordinator

Women's Rights in plateau state.

The participants also advocated the need for full implementation of VAPP laws by government, adding that, if implemented would go a long way in addressing violence against women and girls.

In her remarks, Secretary General WRAPA, Saudatu Mahdi told the participants that the objective of the meeting was to facilitate community-led town-hall engagement demanding the prevention of, and accountability for VAWG and effective implementation of the model laws in the state.

Mahdi disclosed that other objectives were to establish the number of women and girls who have access to support services such as legal aid, medical assistance, financial assistance, shelter and other assistance, as well as to demand

end violence against women and girls around the world.

Madaki pointed out that the expected outcome are community stakeholders enlightened on the model laws and the punitive measures that have been activated to deter existing or potential perpetrators among others.

Also X-raying status of the model laws in Plateau State offences covered and penalties. Director Civil Liberties Organization (CLO), Comrade. Steve Aluko-Daniel said that the law is of great interest because it covers everybody's offence committed on women and girls in the state.

Aluko-Daniel added that the model laws if implemented would not spare anyone, stressing that the law equally spells out life imprisonment for perpetrators or offenders with different charges or fines.

He called on parents to caution their children against being used as thugs by some selfish politicians who do not mean well for the future of such

children.

At Dagwom Gyel's palace in Jos South LGA of plateau state, Aluko-Daniel while also taking the participants through in his presentation emphasized the need for the traditional rulers and faith based organizations to be kept abreast on the existing law.

He called on CSOs and the media to continue creating more awareness to the people on the relevance of VPP law so as to enable the people to be properly informed so that they can get justice when their rights are being infringed upon based on the provision contained in the law.

The traditional rulers of Bassa and Jos-South LGAs expressed happiness and said that what WRAPA has done to the traditional institutions of the two LGAs was a huge one.

Our correspondent reports that about 50 participants each from two LGAs were in attendance during the meeting, they were also drawn from different organizations.



Participants at Bassa

IMAGES

LALONG SWEARS-IN PERMANENT SECRETARIES IN THE STATE SERVICE

Plateau State Governor, Rt. Hon. Simon Bako Lalong (CON) yesterday swore-in ten Permanent Secretaries in the Plateau State Civil Service at the Victoria Gowon Multi-purpose Hall, new Government House, Rayfield, Jos



Governor Lalong (CON) presenting appointment letter to Keziah Dung after taking the oath as Permanent Secretary



Plateau State Deputy Governor, Prof. Sonni Gwanle Tyoden (right) with other Government officials at the swearing-in ceremony



Cross section of newly sworn-in Permanent Secretaries listening attentively to the Governor's speech



Plateau State Governor, Rt. Hon. Simon Bako Lalong (CON) delivering his speech at the swearing in of ten Permanent Secretaries



Governor Simon Bako Lalong (CON) congratulating Micah Gongden as Permanent Secretary



Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) Chairman, Rev. Fr. Polycarp Lubo (right) with invited dignitaries at the ceremony



Salamatu Ritmwa Parloug (left) receiving appointment letter from Governor Simon Bako Lalong (CON) as Permanent Secretary



Newly sworn-in Permanent Secretary, posted to State Ministry of Information, Dr. Boniface Gwotbit (middle) his wife, staff of PPC and well-wishers in a photograph

PHOTOS: DANLADI DUK

Odd World

Child actor in Titanic still getting paid 25 years later

REECE Thompson, best known for his role as the 'Irish little boy' in the legendary film Titanic, has revealed he's still making money off of his role 25 years on.

The actor was just five years old when he landed the part of the young third-class passenger who tragically dies alongside his mother and sister after the iceberg hits in the 1997 movie.

In the scene, he, his mother and his sister were among many other passengers waiting for the third-class main gate to be open, reports Belfast Live.

But the family never made it to the lifeboat and were later seen in their cabin where the three of them died together.

While his part was small, it was poignant, as it reflected that of so many third-class Titanic passengers who died during the tragedy.

Today, Reece, aged 30, is the digital marketing director at Brian Head Resort, a skiing and snowboarding facility in Utah.

Reece still gets royalty checks for his part in the film

Although he said he doesn't remember much about his time filming the part as a child, he is reminded of it every year when he receives royalty cheques.

Reece's career started out as a child model, signing with a talent agent after winning a contest.

That agent gave his mother the choice

between two roles for Reece - starring in a petrol station ad or a chance to play a part in Titanic.

Although the advert was the safer option, his mum decided to put him forward for the role in the Titanic - and good thing she did as it went on to become the second highest-grossing movie of all time.

"It turned out to be one of the highest-grossing films in history, so it's pretty bizarre in retrospect," Thompson told Business Insider.

"My mom was like: 'Let's just do it. It'll be cool. Even if the movie sucks, we'll see it.' Obviously, it ended up exploding, so that wasn't a bad decision on her part, that's for sure."

While in the immediate years after the film came out his role was very much still on his mind, these days the cheques he receives are a surprise.

He said: "It's weird because it's not present in my mind anymore," he said. "It's not like, 'Oh, when am I going to get a new 'Titanic' check?' When it happens, it's like, 'Oh, cool, an extra \$100.'"

"There have been a couple of times where it's been like: 'Oh, wow, that's a \$250 check. This movie's 12 years old. That's pretty bizarre,'" he said. "But hopefully, they keep playing it a lot because that means more money for me."

Source: The Mirror



Ritual killings, a huge problem in our hands

The past few weeks have been very excruciating for the citizens of Plateau State following the discovery of the gruesome murder of about four lovely teenagers by Yahoo-boys in Jos the Plateau State capital. It all started after a 300 level student of University of Jos, Jennifer Anthony fell prey in the net of her cruel boyfriend who deceptively took her out on a date but only ended up killing and dumping her body in a hotel room. Jennifer who met her boyfriend online was taken to a hotel for a recreational activity along Zaria road where he attacked and killed her after which he allegedly removed all her vital body parts for ritual purposes.

Interestingly enough, but for the instinct the deceased had before she was hacked to death where she took the picture of her attacker and pasted it on facebook; no one would have identified her killer. Jennifer's decomposing body was later discovered after two days in a hotel-room only after her friends had gone searching for her. Few days after this horrifying and devastating experience, another young promising lady, Plangnaan was allegedly found dead in another location in Jos with some vital parts of her body also missing. Plangnaan until her demise was a resident of Chewl-Nyap Congo Russha area, a slum in Jos North Local Government Area known for its naughty adventure in the past.

Investigations however, revealed that the mutilated body of the deceased was found dumped near the Plateau Radio Television Corporation, (PRTVC) in Rayfield in Jos South Local Government Area of the state. It was also discovered that the deceased was killed during the Christmas period even in the beehive of activities enveloping the state during any such festivity.

Thus far, about four girls were reported to have been killed by their predators since the most recent ugly incidences began to rear its ugly heads on the Plateau. The other 2 victims unconfirmed reports disclosed were found dead with their body parts missing along the Air-force based area of Jos metropolis.

In the aftermath of these four killings, a red alert was issued warning the entire citizenry resident on the Plateau that ritualists have invaded the state and have now established markets for selling human parts. Though these markets are not openly displayed, many have noted with great concern that the crave for human parts is proliferating in such markets across the country.

Long before now, the increasing cases of cult related activities have also been a serious cause for concern and worry for the people of the Jos metropolis. Whether in Gada Biyu, Utan, Tina Junction amongst other places, the emergence of such activities can never be a good omen for the state.

Last year, these cultists hijacked a specific area along Gada Biyu in Jos metropolis warning that should any law abiding citizen have the courage to come out during their commemoration ceremony of the establishment of their group, they should have themselves to blame.

It eventually took the intervention of security agencies to overcome this security challenge restoring confidence on the peopling at much a later date. To help mitigate this worsening security challenge then, some Divisional Police Officers in this state had to take the bull by the horn before dust was allowed to settle in their respective communities. Yet, the horrific and nasty experiences of this traumatic event still lingers on the minds of many residents.

Without mincing words, one of the major problems bedeviling our mega cities across the nooks and crannies of this country has been these unbearable activities of yahoo boys. They have continued to cause great mayhem with impunity in our various communities. Whether in the southern or northern part of this country, many innocent young girls have been maimed, killed and or brutalized even as their parents are in most cases left in unbearable. The proliferation of this new ugly trend in events is thus overwhelming our communities and or societies.

As it is; even our institutions of higher learning have not been exempted from such a nuisance considering the emerging statistics of unprovoked attacks on particularly vulnerable female students in schools and hostels. Certainly, not once or twice, reports of gruesome murder and incapacitation of some of these unlucky students have been systematically recorded in some school hostels without any concert measures taken to prevent any future reoccurrence. This lackadaisical approach to dealing with this bad situation has brewed chaos and instability in our respective societies and or communities.

Even as it is, our societies and city centers are becoming more vulnerable because of the fact that many things have gone wrong. Most of us have lost our moral values and are standing far aloft from our societal anticipations. The issue of providing effective and efficient parental roles in our respective homes is presently gone with the wind. That is the more reason why many of our youths have found themselves where they are today.

But again, be that as it may, all will agree with yours sincerely that we are presently having huge problems in our hands. A situation whereby our youths have turned their backs against their brothers and sisters.

Consequently, we have migrated into a nation where human lives no longer matter, and human life taking with impunity is considered but in definitive terms heroic.

Today, if many are unconcerned about the increasing cult related activities in our respective society, thinking perhaps we are yet as a society to cross the red lines, then something is indeed wrong somewhere. Yet in the middle of these killings and body parts removal in Jos, the Plateau State capital, me think that it's high time adequate measures are taken to prevent any future reoccurrence.

If the truth must be told, we cannot afford to be witnessing such a dramatic calamity without taking any fruitful steps to mitigate it. Though many precious lives have been lost leaving their relations in agony, we must take concrete steps towards addressing this issue before we allow it ellipse our society.

However, for those who have lost their dear ones, though it is certain that no life lost can be returned, all authorities concern must ensure that justice is gotten for all the deceased. To help prevent further occurrence, we must begin to enlighten our youths particularly the vulnerable ones on the dangers associated with human life taking and its devastating consequences on humanity. Above all, we must take drastic measures against cult related activities before it consumes us all.

Interview

'Clerics have become uncivil and fanatics'

Zariyi Yusuf is the Chief Executive Officer of KtNana Consulting and spokesperson/member of the Public Affairs Team of the Big Tent Obi-Datti Campaign Council. In his interview with Bulus Gambo and Fwenji Go'ar, Yusuf digest the problematic disposition of Nigeria, where our leaders went wrong and citizens' hope for a better tomorrow. Excerpts:-

Since 1999 Nigeria has experienced sustainable democracy. What are your thoughts about the journey so far?

Indeed, our democracy since 1999 has been sustainable. Unfortunately, this sustainability has not translated to obvious dividends expected of a country with as vast potentials as Nigeria.

Although the journey had a beautiful start, we fell into a decline, better still, a reverse mode, especially in the past eight years. Bedevilling this democracy and hindering its dividends are nepotism, insecurity, and of recent past fanaticism. These have deeply entrenched lack of trust and a mutual suspicion between different ethnicities and religions, the variety of which would have been a beauty looking at the how long we've sustained this democracy.

Are there humanly created hurdles which you think has prevented us from consolidating on the dividends of democracy in the country?

Most certainly, I would say every hurdle is a human factor, as far as Nigeria's failure to consolidate on the dividends of democracy is concern. Corruption has become the order of the day; inflated contracts, failure to deliver on contracts, abuse of public resources and the list goes on. We are our own problems in Nigeria.

The insecurity in the country has almost totally halted activities in agrarian societies, especially across the northern region of the country which is a slap on a nation that once almost singlehandedly championed peacekeeping in the West African Region.

The insensitivity of the government which is very obvious in some policies that has created an extremely harsh economic atmosphere for citizens has disconnected the people from the government they voted in and made life a living hell.

Even as a very religious or spiritual country, I would not tempt God by wanting to claim these hurdles are from elsewhere other than human.



Yusuf

It has become obvious that this country, at the moment is polarized along ethnic and religious lines. What would have necessitated this negative development?

Frankly, Nigeria has always had its lines of religious and ethnic sentiments right from before independence. However, these lines have grown to become gulfs in the past recent years. The nepotism and ethno-religious bigotry that has characterized this present administration has never been experienced since the amalgamation of Nigeria in 1914. It's almost convenient to say, 'the minimum requirement of heading any sensitive position in Buhari's regime is being a Northern Muslim'.

Clerics have become more uncivil and fanatic in their sermons, politicians have employed ethnic and religious sentiments as campaign tools.

Lack of equity, justice and fairness against the demographics preferably referred to as 'minorities' widens the poles. There is a serious deficit in creating or even working to create a national value around which all Nigerians

will rally regardless ethnicity or religion.

How can we reroot our thoughts towards igniting our founding fathers passion for socio-economic and political integration and nation building?

With the founding fathers, I would say some of them were nationalists while some others were regionalists and I won't mention any names. So, both categories had their socio-economic and political agenda, but one category would sacrifice national interest to pursue regional goals and the other would pursue national interests even at the harm of regional interests. I must state, however, that their intent, in either cases, was sincere and determined, which are the qualities to make a good starting point – sincerity and determination.

As it is, to realize any socio-economic and political integration of the Nigerian state, the state of federation must be re-negotiated to accommodate all interests in justice, fairness and equity. This could be pursued in a most civil and democratic way without disrupting the polity. I would advise a full implementation of

the National Confab under President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan.

What are your thoughts about the permutations in anticipation of the 2023 elections?

First, let me share my own permutations, because there a whole lot of them. There are permutations about who wins there are permutations about whether or not the elections would hold, considering the level of preparedness of the electoral umpire, INEC, i.e. whether it would be postponed, and there are security concerns especially with the evacuation of some foreign diplomats sometime last year.

The state of the nation is such that neither those currently running affairs nor the key political players in the forthcoming elections are so certain about any outcome. Yes, it is that unpredictable as far as some realities are concerned. But, it is, on the other hand, very predictable, that is, gauging the optimism and hope the majority of Nigerians have in the forthcoming elections there has been a great increase in voter registration, even though a lot of PVC are yet to be collected. I will say, unapologetically, that the spirit of Obidience takes away the mind of the average Nigerian from the dark reality we face to a bright future of hope.

Leading in the contest for the first office of the land are the desperate ones and the people's servant. On the one hand is dark and uncertain times ahead. On the other hand is a future of the rebirth of a new Nigeria and hope.

How can Nigerians get it right this time around?

We must vote our conscience. We must be bold to demand nothing less than a free and fair election. We must probe deeply the character of any contestant presenting themselves for any elective office and be bold and determined to vote out the bad and vote in the good.

At this moment, getting it right means voting into Aso Rock a visionary, unifier and a restorer who will set us on an entirely new path of growth, progress and national integration.

The soul of Nigeria is at stake. We either get it right this time around or we have no country anymore to proudly call home.

We are made to understand that you presently run an NGO. What is the organisation all about?

Hmmmm, I wouldn't know if to call it an NGO. The organization is into language translation, editing, field research/survey, raising humanitarian aid to communities affected by terrorist attacks and giving a voice to them, especially in setting the right narrative straight out.

Most NGOs today are facing various challenges, including funding, trust earning, and transparent application of resources for the betterment of our society. Why is so?

A lot of organizations, even the big ones, are just conduits to self-enrichment. There is also the global image of Nigeria which trickles down to organizations and even businesses transacting outside our shores. People have presented results for work they did not do or assigned huge sums to projects that costed less than a tenth of what they claim. Sincerity precedes accountability, which is a major concern. One rotten beans...

I am of the opinion that the beginning and end of an NGO is the community and nothing else. The exquisite and expensive status of many NGOs do not commensurate the work they do in communities let alone bring about any betterment.

Can you tell us some of your achievements through your NGO which are worthy of emulation?

In my little way, I try to counter false narratives that tend to silence victims of terrorist attacks, especially in the Middle-Belt region of Nigeria.

Recently, there was an unprovoked attack in Kagoro, Kaduna state, in December, 2022, where 40 souls perished. Other than raising support for the affected community, I understood also that in solving a crisis, it must be sincerely diagnosed and labelled for what it truly is. You cannot refer to a terrorist or attack as a communal clash or hide expansionism under the guise of climate change necessitated migration. Following the right channel in addressing these issues is what love to see others even excel even better in doing.

What do you hope for Nigeria?

I hope for Nigeria peace, unity and unprecedented advancement in economy, science and technology, education and health. I hope for a new path where we no longer dwell of sentiments of religion, ethnicity or region. I hope for Nigeria a day when our passport take the place of honour in the international community; where I am not treated with extra caution because I am a Nigerian, but respected as a true Nigerian.

Your final words.

I will re-echo something I said earlier:

The soul of Nigeria is at stake, we either get it right this time around or we have no country to proudly call home. Get your PVCs, set your mind and vote the duo with the physical and intellectual stamina to captain our nation to the shores of peace, unity and progress.

Thank you.

We must vote our conscience. We must be bold to demand nothing less than a free and fair election. We must probe deeply the character of any contestant presenting themselves for any elective office and be bold and determined to vote out the bad and vote in the good. At this moment, getting it right means voting into Aso Rock a visionary, unifier and a restorer who will set us on an entirely new path of growth, progress and national integration. The soul of Nigeria is at stake. We either get it right this time around or we have no country anymore to proudly call home.



Nostalgia as Lalong attends alma-mater's 5th convention, awards

ON 20th January 2023, Governor Simon Bako Lalong was among classmates that visited their former school, Government Secondary School Shendam to be a part of its 5th National Convention and Awards Presentation.

It was a nostalgic gathering of former students and staff even as the present students were excited to have the state Governor in their midst as a member of their alma-mater, the Shendam Old Students Association (SOSA).

The joy of visiting his alma-mater, located in Shendam, his Local Government Area was rekindled as students of the school, clad in their uniforms accorded one of their own a rousing welcome with various displays and performances.

Governor Lalong recalled his experiences during his days as a student and was proud of how the humble institution had produced human resources and experts in various fields within and outside the country. He went to his former hostel and traced his room, bed and favourite corner, and this move made the students to giggle around him with amazement.

He dropped the cheering news that Plateau government had designated the school as center for technical training on agricultural mechanism.

The Governor, a member of 'Set 82', recounted fond memories of his days in school, and attributed his success in life to the educational and moral values instilled in him by the institution.

While encouraging the Old Students to always give back to their alma mater, Governor Lalong pledged his continuous support to the educational development of the school.

He also paid special tributes to Late paramount ruler of Shendam, Miskoom Mutum ShaldasDongkwap I who was the pioneer brain behind setting up the school.

Guest Speaker and Executive Secretary, Agricultural Research Council of Nigeria, Professor Garba Sharubutu of the 1st set of 1978 expressed how happy he feels to be back to his roots. He added that he is proud that the school had produced eminent personalities including the governor.

Sharubutu who read from the Bible in John 8:32 and Sura 7 of the Koran said all the verses preach on the need for people to see themselves first as humans and to give to humanity. He stressed the importance of Old Students contributing and impacting to the development of their alma mata.

To buttress the fact that he is a senior to the governor, he addressed Lalong as "This boy" and jokingly told the gathering that he has the power to make him kneel down, as his senior.

Plateau Commissioner for Secondary Education, Elizabeth Wapmuk, and outgoing National President of SOSA Emmanuel Dashe and Principal of GSS Shendam, SuzanaDadam were all excited and full of appreciation to Governor Lalong for his immense contribution to the school, describing him as an icon of educational transformation.

The nostalgic outing climaxed with the presentation of an award to Governor Lalong for his transformational qualities, as well as twelve others who distinguished themselves in various aspects of life.

On his part, the Governor left an unforgettable mark in the school as he presented keys of two eighteen seater buses to his school on behalf of his set 82.

He was also impressed by the role a corps member, Clement Ominyang from Cross Rivers State who studied Electrical Engineering played while serving in the school. Ominyang did not only train the students to be entrepreneurs but distinguished himself by teaching the students to gain catering skills.

The Governor announced an offer of an automatic employment to Ominyang, promising to provide solar panels to the institution through the collaboration and expertise of the corps member.

After the encounter with his alma-mater, Lalong was host to two remarkable visits to the Plateau seat of power.

First was the visit by Senator Oluremi Tinubu, wife of the All Progressives Congress Presidential candidate in Nigeria's 2023 general elections.

She visited Plateau Sunday, January 22, 2023 where she held a town hall meeting with stakeholders especially ethnic minorities and religious groups under the aegis of the Conference of Autochthonous Ethnic Communities Development Association (CONECDA) to woo their votes, and assure them of her husband's good plans for all Nigerians irrespective of affiliations, if given the mandate in the general elections.

Governor Lalong, as Director General of the Tinubu/Shettima Presidential Campaign Council was chief host and the meeting attracted party stakeholders.

The meeting which had representatives of over 400 ethnic nationalities within the northern region including religious, traditional, business and political leaders climaxed with the presentation of a charter of demands presented to her by the representative of the groups, Prof. Yusufu Turaki for onward delivery to her husband, the APC Presidential Candidate, Asiwaju Bola Tinubu.

The second visit was by the Papal Nuncio to Nigeria, Most Rev. Antonio Phillipazi at Presidential Wing, Government House Little Rayfield, Jos.

Governor Lalong was happy to host Phillipazi who was in the state to commission a new building in St. Augustine Major Seminary Jos, alongside his team, Bishops of the Catholic Diocese of Jos, Bauchi, Jalingo, Pankshin, Shendam, Maiduguri and Yola, including the Bishop of the newly created Wukari Diocese. The Bishops were later treated to a dinner where the exchange of pleasantries continued.



News

Court orders DSS to charge Mamu to court

JUSTICE Edward Andow, sitting at Kaduna State High Court 12 has ordered the Directorate of State Services (DSS) to "immediately" charge Tukur Mamu to court for alleged offences bothering on ransom negotiation on behalf of terrorists.

He gave the order during the court session on Monday in Kaduna, over his arrest and continued detention by DSS without trial.

Tukur Mamu, the Media Consultant to the popular Islamic cleric, Dr Ahmed Gumi, in Kaduna, was arrested in Cairo, Egyptian capital on September 6, 2022, regarding his alleged roles in ransom negotiation on behalf of terrorists in Nigeria.

Mamu, the alleged main negotiator of Kaduna-Abuja train abductee's release was arrested while on his way to Saudi Arabia for lesser hajj, and detained in Cairo Airport before he was later moved to Nigeria.

Fielding questions from newsmen shortly after court session on Monday, the lead Counsel to the plaintiff, Muhammad Sani Katu (SAN), said he was satisfied with the court order, and expressed the belief that the DSS will obey the order. Barrister Katu explained that "When the matter came up

From JOHN FWAH Kaduna

today (Monday), we served the DSS and the Attorney General. We started the processes, and the Judge gave the order, directing them to charge him to court immediately for any offence, if any, they may have discovered."

"That is our target. The word used by the Judge is immediately, immediately differs from soon", he said.

The counsel also said "Don't be surprised if by tomorrow or next or within the week, he is being charged to court if there is any offence, but let me come in here by telling you that one must commend the DSS for the manner that they have been handling this matter.

"We have gone to see our client severally, he has some health challenges, but they have been taking care of that. "They have taken him to hospital. They made so much payment towards his health. But our position is not about his health, just about not holding him there.

"The law is very clear, the essence of his arrest is the belief that he had committed an offence, and how do you know that he had committed an offence is to commence an investigation.

"And once you finish the investigation and you did not find

him wanting, you release him. And if you find him wanting, the law says don't keep him in detention, charge him to court, that is just the fundamentals.

"As far as we are concerned, the order to keep him for 60 days elapsed in October last year. They have the right to renew, but as it stands now, we are not aware as to whether they have renewed or not.

"They're seeking detention, they can go on their own, but the second time there is the need to have the permission of the Attorney General. They can do that without us on notice.

"But the fact remains that in an attempt to protect the system we are operating, once you obtain an order against somebody, you notify him. If you have contact with the persons, you notify them, or at least the general public because this is a matter that certain persons are being concerned.

He also noted that "If you recall, there was an arrest of our client, Tukur Mamu in Cairo on his way to Saudi Arabia with some members of his family. He was moved to Abuja and since then he remains under detention. "We got to know that there is an order by the DSS to detain him for 60 days. At the expiration of the 60 days we thought the next thing they should do is to charge him to court for any offence. "As it stands now he has not been charged. And the best we can do

Lalong restates commitment to partner faith-based organisations

Lalong restates commitment to partner with faith-based organisations

Gov. Simon Lalong of Plateau has restated his commitment to partner with faith-based organisations to improve education in the state.

The governor told the Papal Nuncio to Nigeria, Arch Bishop, Anthonio Phillipazi, who visited him that the commitment led to his administration handing over of all missionary schools to their original owners.

He acknowledged the critical role the Catholic Church played in Nigeria's education sector and stressed

that it helped in building solid foundation, integrity and honesty in the sector.

Lalong told his visitor that his administration's determination on peace-building also led to the creation of the Annual Day of Forgiveness in the state.

He explained that day is marked with continuous prayers and advocacy for reconciliation, forgiveness, tolerance and fighting crime in the state.

Responding, the Papal Nuncio thanked the governor for the honour bestowed on him and his team, saying he was in Plateau to inaugurate a new building at St. Augustine Major Seminary, Jos. (NAN)



Lalong

Sports



Doma United

Onigbinde wants VAR in NPFL after contentious ruling

DOMA United FC coach, Akinade Onigbinde, on Sunday called for the introduction of the Video Assistant Referee in the Nigeria Premier Football League.

Newsnow said that, he stated this in an interview with journalists after his team beat visiting Dakkada FC 1-0 at the Pantami Stadium, Gombe State.

Onigbinde, who lamented a possible goal that was not given by the referee, noted that VAR would have made the difference.

"That was a goal, it's time to call for VAR into our football. We were supposed to make

use of the advantage because the ball passed through the line; I saw the ball, it was a goal."

Speaking on unruly fans, the coach said, "On the issue of supporters club, we are going to talk to the management to talk to them and lecture them ahead of the next match."

Commenting on the win Onigbinde added, "This is waking up to prepare against our next match away against Wikki Tourists. It's a morale booster; we have three points at home, four in total so we move up. Our aim is to finish second or third on the table."

On his part, coach of Dakkada FC Danladi Umar,

lamented the hostility at the venue.

He said, "My boys did well, it just didn't go our way. However, we saw the little lapses and we will correct them and move on. The fans were very hostile."

Forward Ugoche Emmanuel, who made his debut in the NPFL scored the goal that gave his team all three points in the 59th minute.

"This is my debut in the NPFL, we looked for the goal and it came," Emmanuel said. "I feel very happy, my dream come through to play for the Nigeria Premier League. I wish to play on the continent, my mates are playing on the continent and they don't have two heads."

NPFL: Ogunbote Reiterates 3SC modest

SHOOTING Stars head Coach, Gbenga Ogunbote has stressed that the club has to simply do better than they currently do in terms of results.

Newsnow said that, 3SC are unbeaten, yet winless in the opening weeks of the new NPFL season. They have recorded consecutive draws in their first two games of the season, with the latest coming against Kwara United.

"We need to sit up because we are in an abridged league and we do not need any more mistakes," Ogunbote told Brila FM.

Gbenga Ogunbote reiterated his target for the season with the Oluyole Warriors and maintained that he wants to finish the season in an appreciable position.

"It was not a mind game, I just like to set realistic target, we have to look at the previous position of the club.

"The target that is being expressed to the public is not always the same worked internally, and it goes with the saying that if you aim beyond the sky when you fall, you fall among the stars, and that has always been a guide,"

the 3SC Coach said.

He also spoke about his style of football; something that is not always the case with many managers in the country.

Ogunbote noted that it is

important to entertain the fans who pay to watch.

"We need to satisfy the fans of the game, so if you want to do that you want to think of playing beautifully

SUPER Eagles head coach Jose Peseiro has revealed that he is not against inviting young, talented players of Nigerian descent to play for the three-time African champions.

Newsnow said that, Peseiro has already handed Anglo-Nigerian full-back Bright Osayi-Samuel his Super Eagles debut in the international friendly with Portugal on the eve of the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar.

Many more abound including Chelsea duo of Carney Chukwuemeka and Noni Madueke, Crystal Palace pair of Eberechi Eze and Michael Olise, Fulham centre-back Tosin Adarabioyo, and Arsenal striker Folarin Balogun, who is presently excelling on loan at Stade de Reims.

Peseiro admits it would be difficult forming a good Super Eagles team from so many talented players with Nigerian blood running in their veins.

But with a target of winning the next Africa Cup of Nations, the Portuguese tactician

Peseiro names two things he wants to see before inviting Chukwuemeka, Eze

confesses he will only consider working with those with elite quality and an unquestionable desire to play for Nigeria.

"There are many, many players at the moment that can play for Nigeria," Peseiro told the Mirror. "With that, it's not easy, our work.

"You receive some information or when you watch many players on TV or live, you can discover more players, more players, more players."

"I was in some matches when I was in England to see some players, then at the same time we discover, 'well that player can play for us, also', normally young players.

"There are many good players with quality, capacity and good training. For us, if we want to win the next AFCON, I am happy because I have many players with quality to create a good national team.

"But it's not easy to choose

the right players. We try to see them in the match, after that I try to call them for our practice and our friendly games because we want to create a small group with quality for developing in training and practice to implement our ideas to win the next AFCON.

"But there are a lot of players, and they need to show the maximum demand and motivation to play for Nigeria. Quality, of course, but demand and motivation to play for us."

William Troost-Ekong, Leon Balogun, Ola Aina, Tyrone Ebuehi, Maduka Okoye, Josh Maja, and Victor Moses are some of the players who chose to play for Nigeria when they were eligible to represent other countries.

Former Chelsea winger Victor Moses was a key member of the Super Eagles squad that lifted Nigeria's most recent Afcon Cup in 2013



Nigeria boast so many talented youngsters with dual nationalities in Europe and a couple of them could end up playing for the Super Eagles

Nketiah's late winner was a beautiful moment - Arteta

ARSENAL manager Mikel Arteta said it was a "beautiful moment" when Eddie Nketiah grabbed a dramatic late winner against

Manchester United.

The game looked like it was heading for a 2-2 draw after Lisandro Martinez equalised for Erik ten Hag's side.

But Nketiah - who also scored in the first half - netted in the 90th minute to keep the Gunners five points clear at the top of the Premier League.

"I really enjoyed it," Arteta told BBC Sport.

With the pressure on Arsenal following Manchester City's 3-0 victory over Wolverhampton Wanderers earlier on Sunday, Nketiah's winning goal from close range was met by rapturous scenes inside the Emirates Stadium.

Arteta added: "It was a beautiful moment at the end and we get going with our people behind us. It was beautiful."

They had to wait for confirmation they had secured all three points, however, following a video assistant referee check to determine whether Nketiah was onside.

Arteta admitted even he was not sure whether the crucial goal would be given.

"[The officials] were looking at something we hadn't seen and we very relieved," said the Spanish boss. "We got to celebrate twice."

Marcus Rashford gave the visitors the lead on 17 minutes with a sensational strike before Nketiah drew the home side level shortly after.

Bukayo Saka then put Arsenal ahead early in the second half, and while it seemed the points would be shared following Martinez's headed goal, Arteta felt confident his team had the mentality to succeed.

"They do surprise me with how they react," he said. "We encourage them to play free-flowing football and there is energy in the team and good things happen."

"To do it repeatedly against big teams, the way we played today, gives me a lot of positivity for the future.

"It is so tight now in the league, there are such small margins. Winning, losing or drawing, you have to be conscious of that.

"If we can capitalise on the energy, it will be positive."

As well as a five-point lead, Arsenal have a game in hand over Pep Guardiola's City, and have reached 50 points after playing 19 matches of the season - their best start to a top-flight campaign.

The two sides will do battle in the FA Cup next, when they meet in the fourth round on Friday.

Manchester United came to north London on the back of a 1-1 draw with Crystal Palace, a result that denied them their 10th successive victory.

Rashford's opener - his ninth goal in all competitions since the World Cup - was the dream start Ten Hag would have hoped for, but the United boss was disappointed with his team's lack of concentration.

"All the goals we conceded today are mistakes - it can't happen," the Dutchman told Sky Sports.

"Even last week, we were so hard to beat in such situations. Today we were not. All three goals, we could have avoided."

Ten Hag was without influential midfielder Casemiro for the game with Arsenal, as the Brazilian served a one-match suspension for picking up a fifth yellow card in midweek.

While he conceded that the Gunners are "good on the ball", Ten Hag said his side are a "good defending team" and should have done better against the league leaders.

"There were not a lot of open chances," he added. "We made mistakes which we cannot make. This game was decided by small details but also the decision making."

"That is hard to accept and we have to learn from it. I want to win. It is not good enough. We want to be the number one, but not if we make mistakes. That is clear and what I told them."

United are in fourth place, level on 39 points with third-placed Newcastle, and face Nottingham Forest away in the first leg of the Carabao Cup on Wednesday.



Ogunbote

Sports

Haaland adds hat-trick feat to growing list of records

By PHIL DAWKES

ERLING Haaland has more Premier League hat-tricks than Cristiano Ronaldo. He has the same number as Mohamed Salah. He is a third of the way towards Sergio Aguero's record tally of 12.

Haaland has been in England's top flight for half a season. That's 19 league games in total.

On Sunday, in Manchester City's comfortable 3-0 win over Wolves, the Norwegian struck his fourth treble, completing it in just 12 minutes either side of half-time.

It took his tally of goals for the campaign to a stunning 31 in all competitions - 25 of them in the Premier League.

Some records have already been broken, others beckon. In the aftermath of his latest goalscoring feat, BBC Sport celebrates the phenomenon that is Erling Braut Haaland.

As already stated, Haaland's quartet of hat-tricks have come from just 19 Premier League games.

To show just how ludicrously quick that is, the next fastest person to reach the same number of Premier League trebles is Ruud van Nistelrooy, who scored his fourth in his 65th Manchester United league game. Here is how the City striker stacks up against the three others to make the list of fastest to four...

Aguero, who was Haaland's predecessor up front for City, scored 12 Premier League hat-tricks during his time in England. No player has managed more. Of the players currently active in England, Tottenham's Harry



Haaland

Kane has the most with eight.

But the Argentine, who is City's all-time leading goalscorer with 184, played 275 Premier League games for the club.

Alan Shearer, who has netted more Premier League goals than anyone with 260, scored 11 trebles. He is the only man to have scored more than Haaland in a single season, with five - that being the 1995-96 campaign in which he scored 31 times.

For City, he is already eighth on their list of all-time hat-trick scorers in all competitions - a list led by Aguero with 16.

Haaland's tally of goals in all competitions this season has already matched Shearer's 1995-96 league total.

Shearer won the Golden Boot that year, with his 31 the joint-fourth highest number of goals ever scored in a Premier League season, three fewer than the 34 the striker netted for Blackburn in 1994-95 and Andy Cole scored for Newcastle the season before.

Haaland is on 25 already - a total would have been enough to earn him the Golden Boot in more than half of the 30 campaigns since the English top flight was

renamed in 1992.

It is already enough goals to have made him the division's top scorer in any of the past four seasons.

Kane, three times a Golden Boot winner, is the closest man to Haaland in the scoring charts for this season - 10 goals behind.

Haaland's efforts on Sunday also toppled another City record, his 18 home league goals being the most scored by one of the club's players at Etihad Stadium in a single season, beating Sergio Aguero's total of 16 in 2011-12.

He needs one more goal to match Aguero's record of 26 for the most scored by a City player in a Premier League season but still has a bit of work to beat the 38 netted by Tommy Johnson in the old First Division in 1928-29.

If he matches his output from the first half of the campaign in the second, that will give him a nice neat 50 for the campaign.

Haaland currently has more league goals on his own this season than nine of the teams in the Premier League. He is one away from matching Leeds' tally of 26 to make it a clean half.

Chelsea, who have splashed out hundreds of millions on the forwards in their squad, have three fewer goals than Haaland, who cost City £51.2m when he joined from Borussia Dortmund last June.

The Norwegian has netted more than double the amount of goals managed by Sunday's opponents Wolves, who have just 12 to their name.

If you want to broaden this out, he presently has more goals this season than 51 teams across Europe's big five leagues - the Premier League, Bundesliga, Ligue 1, La Liga and Serie A.

It was once again an exercise in ruthless minimalism, his three goals coming from just 16 touches in the game.

After last weekend's 2-1

Premier League defeat at Manchester United, City boss Pep Guardiola spoke of his need to find a way to get Haaland more involved in games for his club, but woe betide the rest of the division if he ups his goals-per-touch tally alongside his contact with the ball.

Sunday's first goal was a header from a familiar source, with Kevin de Bruyne providing his fifth assist for the forward - the most by one player for another in the competition this season.

He then drove home a penalty after Ilkay Gundogan had been fouled by Wolves captain Ruben Neves, before sweeping home his third after visiting goalkeeper Jose Sa's pass out of his six-yard box went straight to Riyad Mahrez.

Speaking as summariser on BBC Radio 5 Live, former England defender Stephen Warnock was understandably effusive.

"That movement, that power, the clinical nature, the anticipation of where the ball will fall to him, that is so difficult to defend against," he said. "You can get so attached to a player that it frees up space for others. When you put your attention back on the ball, you've lost him."

"He's so good at not being felt; you try to feel him and understand where he is. Look at the first goal, the movement is just brilliant."

"He's going to get better and better and that's a scary thing for world football."

City boss Guardiola is getting used to talking about his striker, but had this to say after Sunday's win: "The numbers are incredible. He lives 24 hours for his profession, job, passion, love."

"He's not stressed much when it's going well or going bad. He is stable. He feels the defeats. It's really good."



Haaland has now scored 18 league goals this season at the Etihad - the most by a City player in home games in a single season

Sports

Man Utd balk at €100m Osimhen's asking price



Osimhen

MANCHESTER United have moved away from trying to sign Victor Osimhen with Napoli holding firm over a price they deem too expensive.

With their search for a striker one of football's worst kept secrets right now, Florian Plettenburg of Sky Sports Germany reports that Osimhen is no longer at the top of United's centre forward shortlist as the board deem Napoli's asking price to be too expensive.

United have been plugging the gap in their attack with short-term striker solutions ever since they sold Romelu Lukaku to Inter in 2019, but with Erik ten Hag now in the hot seat and propelling the team forward, a long-term option is being considered. Plettenburg states Nigerian forward Osimhen was top of the list, but Napoli's demands of more than €100m mean they will now focus their attention on cheaper solutions.

Ten Hag's squad is incredibly light in attack following the mid-season departure of Cristiano Ronaldo after tensions boiled over an unauthorised, tell-all interview. Anthony Martial enjoyed a brief resurgence but cannot stay fit, and new loan signing Wout Weghorst is seen as a stop-gap ahead of the summer transfer window.

United have been linked with the likes of Dusan Vlahovic and Benjamin Sesko as well as Harry Kane, although the Tottenham forward is now reportedly open to extending his stay in north London.

The Red Devils are unlikely to make any more forward signings in the current January transfer window and instead must focus on an incredibly tight fixture schedule, with a League Cup semi-final against Nottingham Forest up next and the final firmly in reach.

Meanwhile, Pep Guardiola has bitten back at what he considers to be "bullsh*t" criticism of Manchester City, but admits his side are a "happy flowers team".

Goal said that, the demanding Catalan coach was far from impressed by the performance of his side or the attitude of those in the stands despite seeing City recover from trailing 2-0 at half-time against Tottenham to claim a 4-2 victory in their latest Premier League outing. After the contest Guardiola was quizzed again on why the Citizens are supposedly falling short of the standards they have set over recent years, with more questions being asked of their ability to stake a claim for an elusive Champions League crown, and an angry response was delivered by a

tactician who has won 11 trophies during his reign at the Etihad Stadium.

Guardiola said: "People say we haven't had success because we haven't won the Champions League - bullsh*t! We won a lot. Two back-to-back [Premier Leagues] in this country, and the way we played, the consistency, against this Liverpool. What a success."

Guardiola added when pressed on why he was suddenly being so animated about events on and off the field, with City fans making little noise against Spurs before booing the home side from the field at half-time: "I want a reaction - not just from players, staff, the whole organisation. We are a happy flowers team, I don't want this. I want to beat Arsenal. I cannot deny how happy we are [to win]. But we are far away from the team that we were. There are many things that we are far away, far away. We play because 'my manager told me to do this and this' - but there is nothing from the stomach, the guts. We were lucky, and if we don't change, sooner or later we

are going to drop points. No passion, fire, desire to win from minute one."

Victory over Spurs has seen City close to within five points of Premier League leaders Arsenal, albeit having played a game more than the Gunners, and they will be back in action on Sunday when welcoming Wolves to the Etihad.

THE general secretary of the Saudi Football Federation has reacted to talk of Lionel Messi being reunited with Cristiano Ronaldo in the Middle East.

Goal said that, the Portuguese superstar Ronaldo has already taken on a new challenge in 2023, with the most lucrative contract in world football being signed by the five-time Ballon d'Or winner at Al-Nassr. There has been speculation to suggest that his deal could be topped by a £246 million (\$305m) approach for Messi from Al-Hilal - with the Argentine World Cup winner yet to sign a new contract at Paris Saint-Germain that will keep him away from free agency this summer - but Ibrahim Alkassim claims to be unaware of such an offer being readied for the owner of seven Golden Balls.

The Saudi football chief has told *Marca*: "At the moment we do not know anything about a possible Lionel Messi arrival. Although I do not hide that, as Saudi Federation, we would like to have him one day in the domestic league. The idea of the Federation is always to improve our football, and of course we

Saudi chief reacts to £246m Messi transfer deal

would like to see Cristiano and Messi in the same league again, but the truth is that we don't know anything now."

Messi is still expected to agree fresh terms with PSG at some stage, with the 35-year-old South American set to remain in France for at least one more year.

Messi may decide to try

something new in 2024, with there plenty of speculation to suggest that the all-time great is wanted in the Middle East and the United States - with David Beckham co-owned MLS outfit Inter Miami another side to have been heavily linked with a bid to bring the global icon on board.



Messi

World athletics proposes new transgender eligibility rules

WORLD Athletics has proposed continuing to allow transgender women to compete in female international track and field events.

BBC SPORT maintained that, in a statement it said its "preferred option" was to tighten the sport's eligibility rules, but still use testosterone limits as the basis for inclusion.

A policy document suggesting the amendments has been sent to World Athletics' member federations as part of a consultation process before a vote in March.

It comes despite other sports banning transgender women from participating in elite female

competition amid concerns they have an unfair advantage.

World Athletics has faced some criticism over its stance, but said it was "the best way to gather constructive feedback" and insisted a final decision had not yet been made.

In June 2022 World Athletics president Lord Coe welcomed the move by Fina - swimming's world governing body, to stop trans athletes from competing in women's elite races if they had gone through any part of the process of male puberty, insisting "fairness is non-negotiable".

Fina's decision followed a report

by a taskforce of leading figures from the world of medicine, law and sport that said that going through male puberty meant trans women retained a "relative performance advantage over biological females", even after medication to reduce testosterone.

Fina also aimed to establish an 'open' category at competitions, for swimmers whose gender identity is different than their birth sex.

At the time, Coe hinted his sport could follow suit: "We have always believed that biology trumps gender and we will continue to review our regulations in line with this."

They would have to reduce their amount of blood testosterone from the current maximum of five nanomoles per litre to below 2.5, and stay below this permitted threshold for two years rather than just one, as is the case now.

In their policy document, World Athletics concludes that "this preferred option would allow significant (but not full) reduction of anaerobic, aerobic performances, and body composition changes, while still providing a path for eligibility of trans women [and DSD athletes]...to compete in the female category"

The proposal would also see such rule changes apply to DSD athletes in every track and field

discipline, rather than just events ranging from 400m to a mile.

Studies have shown that male puberty results in increased muscle mass, bone density, changes to the shape of the skeleton, and the haemoglobin levels, all of which are significant contributors to performance.

Some sports scientists maintain that lowering the testosterone level has some effect on those systems but is not complete, and performance advantages over females can be retained.

In a statement, World Athletics said: "We will follow the science and the decade and more of the research we have in this area in order to protect the female category, maintain fairness in our competitions, and remain as inclusive as possible."

"In reviewing a number of new and existing studies and observations from the field, we have put forward a preferred option for consultation with our member federations."

"Once we have this feedback at the end of January, we will consult in a targeted way, more widely."

"Putting forward a preferred option is the best way to gather constructive feedback, but this does not mean this is the option that will be presented to Council or indeed adopted."

Bale to play PGA Tour event after retirement from football

GARETH Bale has announced that he will be taking part in a PGA Tour event at Pebble Beach a matter of weeks after retiring from professional football.

The 33-year-old, who represented Wales at the World Cup finals in Qatar and helped LAFC to MLS Cup glory in 2022, revealed on January 9 that he would be hanging up his boots. Bale walked away

as a club legend at Tottenham from his two spells in north London and as a five-time Champions League winner courtesy of an eventful nine-year stint with Real Madrid.

Across his career, Bale never hid his penchant for playing golf and it has now been confirmed that he will be taking part in the AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am event alongside the likes of US Open winner Matt

Fitzpatrick and 156 amateurs that will include several celebrities. Bale has said on Instagram: "Delighted to announce I will be playing in the AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am at the start of next month! Let's go."

Bill Murray, Jason Bateman and Macklemore will be among the other amateurs on show at an event in California that carries a hefty prize fund of \$9 million (£7m).

Bale will be hoping to catch the eye after trading football clubs for golf ones, with the former full-back and winger - who earned 111 caps for Wales - previously saying of a pastime that he can now focus more attention on: "Football is my No.1 sport. I'm paid to do it and I always give my best. Golf is a hobby like anyone else would have a hobby. There is nothing wrong with having a round. People make a lot of it, but a lot of footballers play and it's one thing I really enjoy."



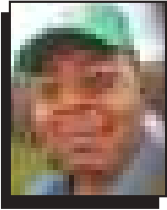
Bale



Athletes competing during a Championship



Quest



writer

BALA TAKAYA, PhD

FRAGMENT

"It is a locust culture in that leaders are at liberty to freely lay their hands on public resources, whether or not in the treasury, for the satisfaction of personal private desires, fancies and vanities, including unrestrained largesse to favorites. In short, public funds are not for development but for massaging the princely egos of public officers."

BALA TAKAYA, PhD

Gomwalk's visionary imperatives: Egalitarian nationhood template

Continued from last week

I NTERESTINGLY, where the Jihad invaders attempted to war against native Middlebeltans at all, it was usually undertaken as a struggle, invariably initiated through a divide-and-rule strategy, principally aimed only at possessing the land of their hosts rather than to proselytize the "non-believers".

In the light of the foregoing and the current happenings in the land, it was high time, in my humble view, that all descendants of the autochthonous Middlebelt, irrespective of their current religious persuasions, became aware to realities concerning them, see things as they are and speak out on them and about them without unduly striving to sound "politically right". For to do otherwise is to live in denial as political or religious wool is pulled over their eyes to accept other people's explanation of events and misfortunes affecting their history, status and destinies based on usually demeaning and ethnocentric in-exactitudes. For instance, it is no gainsaying to assert here that, to all intents and purposes, J.D. Gomwalk died because he dared. I guess it is in this vein that our respected elder statesman and leader, Wantaregh Dr. Paul Unongo said, among other things, that 1976 was then offered, by the opinion moulders, as a convenient handle to exact "revenge"... Revenge not for complicity in the coup per se "but for daring to tell the 'oppressors' where they got off (track)@.

{Bracket and connectors, mine). I cannot agree more. In the same breath, permit me to commend the foresight and sacrifices of the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR), Plateau State Chapter, for initiating this Forum. They have done marvellously. The current organizers of the annual event, the Plateau Trust Group, also deserve immeasurable commendations for taking up the gauntlet to make it a sustainable annual event in which the fond memories and achievements of this legend, Joseph Dechi Gomwalk, should be refreshed, highlighted and inculcated in the minds of younger generations. I believe it is God, who loves truth and Justice, that inspired both of these initiatives and it is yielding the expected results as young men and women, students and



JD Gomwalk

other intellectuals who should know, have now been emboldened to share their experiences and opinions about J.D. Gomwalk's indelible footprints as Governor of the defunct Benue-Plateau State and his very invaluable contributions to national development. But for now, and more importantly still, how should the Middlebelt of today build on the noble legacies of Joseph Dechi Gomwalk? The challenge I wish to throw before the organizers, the Plateau Trust Group, here is that they should still endeavour to raise the bar by mobilizing the commitment of the catchment governments and the wonderful cohorts and work-team of J.D. Gomwalk, who may still be available on this side of eternity, to sponsor the establishment of either a J. D. Gomwalk Foundation or a J.D. Gomwalk Institute for Middlebelt Studies under one of the home-based universities; Unijos or PSD Bokkos, to provide a more convenient environment and encouragements for scholars to deepen research into all facets of leadership and development needs of the Middlebelt Region. This will, at the same time, more permanently cement these noble annual continue to be governed under an unproductive and retrogressive locust culture?

Strong and angry words, Perhaps.

But it is well obvious that if, since independence, Nigeria has failed to develop while poorer countries that once looked up to her leadership in the modernization race, like Indonesia and Malaysia, have long overtaken her, it is because of the basic defects in the emirate administrative template still in use here. In a nutshell, this template derives from the culture of monarchical dictatorship, hence the concept of (commander), where the ruler and, by extension, the public officers down the line under him, are not seen as providers of services but as non-accountable proprietors of the revenue proceeds that come into the public treasury. A public officer thus sees himself in the "monarch of all I survey" garb fortified by impunity in handling public resources. It is a locust culture in that leaders are at liberty to freely lay their hands on public resources, whether or not in the treasury, for the satisfaction of personal private desires, fancies and vanities, including unrestrained largesse to favorites. In short, public funds are not for development but for massaging the princely

egos of public officers. As such applying morality concepts such as corruption, mismanagement or maladministration in reference to behaviors of leaders in public offices of an amirate system is invariably seen as fitna (i.e. vexatious attitudes towards leaders); a habit considered unethical and disrespectful.

A public officer like J.D Gomwalk whose childhood upbringing is that of strict moral discipline, accountability, transparent integrity, etc and whose philosophy of public office incumbency is that of a call to serve mankind, and sees public office as a sacred public trust, cannot but feel out of place, uneasy and deeply concerned when asked to lead in such an administrative environment. What, therefore, was his response to the challenge of administering the defunct Benue-Plateau vis-a-vis the demands of the Amirate template on ground being operated by his fellow governors in the ICSA club of Northern Nigerian states? To answer this query, we recall just a few of his bold, visionary goal-oriented and innovative programmes and moves as follows:

He created his own template and yardsticks of assessment of good governance and public accountability to be applicable in the assessment of performance of both political office holders and career public servants of the state, beginning with himself

He severed Benue-Plateau State from the apron-strings of the North by substantially quitting the ICSA club whose other member states continued to see governance from the prisms of elite-serving emirate leadership culture

He virtually boycotted all subordinate ICSA institutions like the Northern States Marketing Board, the RK-TV Kaduna, the Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, the Kaduna Polytechnic, etc by establishing parallel replicas with specific mission focus for his own state because he could not see any value returns to Benue-Plateau State from the huge amounts of moneys contributed to ICSA from his state's annual budgets

He embarked on decisive reforms, reorganization and retooling of public service structures and the orientation

servant mentalities to make them more people-oriented rather than elitist

He reformed the chieftaincy institutions by making them to more fully complement the efforts of government as integral agencies of modern governance and brought traditional rulers closer to their indigenous peoples as well as ensuring the reorientation of their mentalities towards being more responsive to the needs and feelings of their respective communities.

Granting of Small Scale Industries investment loan facilities, Direct establishment of manufacturing industries in various sectors, like agriculture, food processing, hydro power, cement (BCC) industry, etc wherever the state manifested potentials, in order to speed up industrialization and commercialization in the State - all with the objective of ensuring rapidly catching up economically with the rest of the country due to the hitherto complete neglect of the state by the NNDC

Acquiring of share portfolios in reputable foreign and local businesses in proxy (for future transfer of same to state indigenes in line with the then national economic indigenization policy when foreign concerns were required to shed substantial shares of their companies to Nigerians)

He introduced welfare services to raise the standard of living for both workers and ordinary citizens in the state by pioneering, in Nigeria, the establishment and stocking of cooperative consumer shops for essential commodities at most affordable and/or subsidized prices.

He embarked on strategic higher education and manpower development programs to raise the quantum mass of indigenous expertise required to develop the state by pioneering the establishment of a state-owned university (via the request to establish the Jos campus of the University of Ibadan), the Benue-Plateau State Polytechnic, the College of Education and building state-of-the-art (modern standard) teachers colleges in each of the twelve divisions of the state as well as agricultural and health training colleges.

Continue next week