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e-mail:nigeriastandarddailynewspaper@yahoo.com

Nigeria decides: What next?



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Millions of eligible voters went to the polls on Saturday, February 25, to elect Nigeria's next president and their representatives for the Green and Red Chambers of the National Assembly. Attention now shifts to the declaration of the President-elect by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

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Outcome of 2023 Presidential election calls for peace

IN every election circle, the success and peaceful mood that greets such exercise depends largely on its efficient planning and conduct which involves counting, collation and declaration by The Independent Electoral Commission INEC.

THE conclusion of the 2023 Presidential election over the weekend marks a significant milestone in the nation's election culture and the match towards accepting democratic values and principles which is the hallmark of any progressive society.

HOWEVER, the outcome of any keenly contested election such as this, if not well managed is capable of disrupting the peaceful disposition in an already charged political atmosphere arising from the fact that every Presidential election comes with enormous challenges based on the high hope of winning on the part of the candidates and their teeming supporters across the country.

WHAT is paramount at this period is for the presidential candidates to eschew bitterness and unnecessary comments that could ignite any breakdown of law and order in the country. The major gladiators must first and foremost understand the fact that they are statesmen who must exhibit strong character and condor in the aftermath of the election with reference to the peace accord signed prior to the election.

ACCORDINGLY, it should be noted that in any contest there must be a winner and a loser, therefore, both the candidates and their sympathizers must realize that power comes from God and wills it to whosoever he wishes. Therefore, it is incumbent on all of them to apply restraint in fending those criminal minded followers from causing mayhem particularly upon the declaration of result by the election Umpire.

WORTHY of note is the fact that even the winner must be magnanimous in victory by demonstrating the spirit of brotherliness and by extending a hand of friendship to the other contestants to close ranks with the hope of building bridges of partnership and collaboration in ushering a new dawn for Nigeria.

ON the other hand, it is time for all stakeholders such as security agencies, traditional and religious leaders, civil society organisations, the media and other peace-loving citizens to put all hands-on deck to ensure that peace is sustained across all the nooks and crannies of the country which would culminate to a peaceful and smooth handing over power on May 29, 2023 under a new leadership of the country.

FURTHER more, the peaceful outcome, the declaration and acceptance of the process will be a litmus test for the success or otherwise for the forthcoming Governorship and States Houses of Assembly polls in some states of the Federation slated for March this year. This no doubt will shape the political spectrum with a view to and completing the democratic journey being yearned for the socio-economic growth and development of the people.

ABOVE all, it is our view that all the Presidential candidates that participated in the election must respect the sanctity of the ballot as representing the ultimate voices of over 93 million eligible Nigerian registered voters. This means, those not satisfied with the outcome should seek redress in any lawful court of competent jurisdiction.

NEWS

Tinubu, Atiku, Obi, Kwankwaso, others battle for presidency

Nigerians went to the poll yesterday to elect a new president and 468 federal lawmakers. It is the first phase of the 2023 general election with the governorship and state assembly poll holding in two weeks.

This year's general election is the seventh since the restoration of democracy in the country. The previous elections were held in 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2019.

The 18 registered parties are fielded candidates in yesterday's election, the most keen in Nigeria's contemporary political history.

The presidential candidates and their parties are Christopher Imumolen (Accord), Hamza Al-Mustapha (AA), Omoyele Sowore (AAC), Dumebi Kachikwu (ADC), Yabani Sani (ADP), Bola Tinubu (APC), Peter Umeadi (APGA), Princess Ojei (APM) and Charles Nnadi (APP).

Others are Sunday Adenuga (BP), Peter Obi (LP), Rabi'u Kwankwaso (NNPP), Felix Osakwe (NRM), Atiku Abubakar (PDP), Kola Abiola (PRP), Adebayo Adewole (SDP), Ado Ibrahim Abdulmalik (YPP) and Dan Nwanyanwu (ZLP).

Despite the array of the presidential hopefuls, analysts and watchers of Nigeria's democracy

have, however, dubbed the election a four-horse race between Messrs Tinubu, Atiku, Obi and Kwankwaso.

Regardless, whoever emerges the winner of yesterday's contest will be sworn in on 29 May for a four-year term to succeed President Muhammadu Buhari whose second term in office lapses on that day.

On the other hand, over 4,000 candidates are standing for elections into the two chambers of the National Assembly. While about 1,100 are gunning for 108 out of the 109 seats in the Senate, a total of 3,057 candidates are contesting for the 360 seats in the House of Representatives. Election will not hold in Enugu East Senatorial District until 11 March because of Wednesday's murder of the candidate of the Labour Party, Oyibo Chukwu.

The lawmakers that was elected yesterday will be inaugurated in June as members of the 10th session of the bi-camera federal legislature.

According to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), 93.5 million Nigerians registered to vote in the general election but a little over 87 million, who picked their Permanent Voters Cards (PVC), actually participated in the poll. The voters, spread across the 36 states of the federation, 774 local government areas and 8,809 wards, exercised their franchise in 176,846 polling units.

A total of 1.5 million people served as agents for the 18 political parties in the election.

In the main, INEC, which recently held a mock accreditation, said the elections held amid apprehension caused by the naira crisis and security challenges. Its Chairman, Mahmood Yakubu, assured that it was a free and fair process because its allegiance is to the country.

Apart from deploying thousands of ad hoc staff, with the NYSC contributing about 200,000 for the election, the electoral management body also deployed new technologies, namely BVAS and IReV, which it believes are rigging-proof and ensure the transparency and credibility of the polls.

The security agencies and the military, on their part, said they are ready to secure the polls. To ensure a peaceful process, they deployed close to a million personnel in all the states and FCT with the police alone accounting for over 310,973.

Some other security outfits deploying their personnel are NSCDC (102,000), FRSC (21,783), Nigeria Correctional Service (11,336), NDLEA (9,447), EFCC (350) and Nigeria Immigration Service (21,640).

Nigeria and future of governance

ALL eyes are on Nigeria as the electorate went to the polls. The die is cast. Four major political parties – the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC), Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Labour Party (LP), and New Nigerian Peoples Party (NNPP) – are slugging it out to occupy the Aso Rock Villa in Abuja.

The candidates of the four parties – Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, Mr. Peter Obi and Senator Rabi'u Kwankwaso – are the main contenders.

Tinubu, a former governor of Lagos State, is contesting for the first time, like Obi, a former governor of Anambra State, who has traversed the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) and the PDP before finally pitching his tent with the LP.

Unlike Obi and the other major contenders, Asiwaju Tinubu has never left the progressives' front since he joined politics. From the Action for Democracy (AD), the platform that brought him to office in 1999, he has been expanding the same progressives' front with every alliance he led. His efforts with those of other frontline progressives birthed the Action Congress (AC) and enlarged into the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) until the erection of today's APC, which has extensive political structures across the country and beyond.

Atiku has contested four times. In the Third Republic, he was an aspirant. In 2007, he ran on the platform of defunct ACN. Later, he retraced his steps to the PDP. Much later, he joined APC and later returned to PDP.

Kwankwaso has tried his luck once at the APC primary. He had, at various times been a member of defunct Social Democratic Party (SDP) in the aborted Third Republic; later, he joined the PDP before joining the NNPP, his current platform.

Fourteen other candidates are running on various platforms of mushroom parties that could be said to be warming the register of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). They will lose their deposits and crash long before the more formidable "Big Four", two-party state. The strength of the parties and the patterns of alliances have shown that only two parties or coalition of parties usually competes for the presidency.

It is not clear if the LP will become the third force with the youthful

bravado of "Obidients" on the social media, especially.

Yesterday's poll was crucial in the march of democracy. It is the seventh presidential poll since 1999. Campaigns have been hectic, tasking, time-consuming, energy-sapping and financially involving. The electioneering has been too elastic, beginning from preparations for primaries to the end of campaigns. Candidates have laid their blueprints before Nigerians, scrambling for endorsement. They even went abroad to campaign, although there is no room for Diaspora voting. The candidates are now on the weighing scale. Nigerians have given their verdict yesterday.

The parties and their candidates largely conducted campaigns that were devoid of violence. The culture of verbal attacks was sustained. But, character assassination was not rampant, except on the social media because it is not regulated. Some candidates conducted issue-based campaigns. Some are on the ballot for relevance.

The fear of postponement fizzled out during the week as INEC began the distribution of sensitive materials. The National Security Adviser (NSA), General Mohammed Babagana Monguno, also doused tension by assuring that the polls will hold.

Nigeria remains a funny country where schools have to suspend academic activities, markets have to close and movements have to be restricted because of elections. The practice has not shown Africa's most populous nation as demonstrating sufficient political maturity.

The last few weeks have been remarkable due to the hardship caused by fuel scarcity and naira crunch. When fuel scarcity gave way, Nigerians still lacked access to the cash to buy petrol. The impact of the pain and anguish may be felt during the elections.

There are many things to watch out for. More than the previous elections, more Nigerians registered to vote this year. Yet, many also did not collect their permanent voter's cards (PVCs). More youths registered than before. But only a few clearly know why they will vote. It is not unexpected that many youths will vote through peer pressure or companionship; others will cast their ballots for sentiment, religious, and ethnic reasons.

Voting wisely is important. It implies voting in anticipation of solutions to unresolved problems – economy, insecurity, power supply, and unemployment.

Will zoning play a role in the presidential poll? The outcome will tell. In the race are two Northerners and two Southerners: one from the Northwest, another from the Northeast; one from the Southwest, and another from the Southeast.

President Muhammadu Buhari, while supporting his party and its presidential candidate has, nonetheless, assured the nation of his commitment to credible and transparent polls. This is in keeping with his profile as a man of integrity.

Threats to peaceful electioneering appeared to have manifested in the Southeast. The killings up to two days ago by unknown gunmen were worrisome.

This year's presidential election was a departure from the previous ones. There was no retired soldier on the ballot although it appears retired officers are trying to regroup to exert some influence. The reality is that their influence is declining and fading. Yesterday, global attention was focusing on Nigeria. Over 200 monitors and observers had arrived to witness the exercise. They included groups sent by the African Union (AU), ECOWAS and the Commonwealth.

Electronic voting was still a tall order, despite the use of BVAS and electronic transmission of results.

Much is expected of the electoral agency, led by Prof. Mahmood Yakubu. He is not lacking in experience. But there are more hurdles for him and the commission to contend with. If the previous elections, which he conducted with progressive improvement, could be used as a yardstick, the world might expect a good outing with some human and technical errors. But, like in the previous polls, this year's might throw up some complaints but not fundamental issues that might warrant a big damage to the outcome.

An election is a joint responsibility involving all stakeholders. But the onus is on INEC, the pilot of the elections, to live up to expectations.

Having recruited and trained its employees and ad hoc workers, the electoral umpire should still be up and doing. It should report for the electoral duty promptly.

Late arrival of personnel and materials may provide anxiety and tension. Also, INEC workers are expected to be neutral. The BVAS should not be faulty. They should not aid and abet electoral crimes.



With
**Katdapba
Y. Gobum
On Sunday**



gobum_katt@yahoo.co.uk 07037977744 (sms)

"Such politicians come and go, without taking the needs of the constituents into consideration. They are treated with levity, to the extent that, there is no genuine commitment to the people they seek or even represent."

THE Nigerian electorate went on the march again yesterday. It is the general elections that have brought apprehension as never before. Even the 2019 cannot be compared with what we had yesterday, particularly given the preparations that went into place since the parties elected their various flag bearers about eight months ago. Prove this assertion wrong, it has never happened before in the political development of the country.

The battle may have been won and lost. Each of the contenders has reasons to be optimistic of victory after traversing the length and breadth of their various constituencies depending on who is being mentioned. After the hectic time out to those, one would have expected one thing they sold to them: The message of peace, now and ever after in our communities.

Nigerians have never been divided in several fronts before than they are now. There are several reasons, which are not new to the Nigerian people; and indeed the world, such have been the bane of our development.

The fact that we have remained a nation does not mean that we are united as a people. We have everything needed as a country to be great, but, more importantly to compete in different areas of human endeavour with other countries. We are indeed where we are on account of the fact that leadership in Nigeria has not given us the required measure of direction.

Growing up, the youth are indeed not inspired to make any meaningful contributions; they know that the older ones have taught them acts that are less patriotic, but waywardly in their contributions for nationhood. The younger persons whose ideas are brewing in their heads have been less encouraged to take up the mantle of leadership for tomorrow.

The young are not given space to compete with the older politicians. This does not happen in saner climes, where young men and women are considered and given leadership positions. It is understandable, but more if they are taken as serious; given that there are numerous young men and women who have made their marks in various areas of human endeavour.

Only those of you who were on the field that would say if there was apathy on account of the dearth of cash as a result of the new cash swap policy. It is no longer news that Nigerians have gone through hell walking around banks to get funds for their business and or domestic use.

The banks, as reported have hoarded the new naira notes, thereby making it hard for the availability of it. They have since denied the veracity of the



Mahmood

development. It is not sure if the intervention of the presidency through a national broadcast last week changed anything. If it did, by now, a change would have been felt generally.

Sadly, however, there are still long queues in the banks and at POS centers even as it is evident that there is no cash at those. In fact, frustrated Nigerians who are not able to access money in the banks or at the POS have vented their anger on the facilities by setting fire on them, thereby further increasing the palpable tension in the states. A number of banks have refused to open their doors to customers for fear of being attacked, thereby compounding the situation before the election.

Those who were not able to travel home to their constituency to vote may have done so on account of the fact that most could not access funds to travel. Some transporters have not helped matters; they do not have bank facilities to transfer funds to them. That is the crux of the matter, as the need for Nigerians to embrace the cashless policy, if anything; must be encouraged, that is if the right modalities needed for it to succeed are put in place.

We are a far cry for its success, given that Nigerians in most communities are not knowledgeable about the policy. The Nigerian communities may be hemorrhaging not as a result of the paucity of the new naira notes but for the fact that the education needed for them to accept the reality of the times has not sang deep to make any meaning. For now, there is no education concerning the development; therefore, there is mutual suspicion behind the rationale and acceptability of what government intends to achieve

with it.

Perhaps for more of what is happening, it is history in the making. But politically speaking, there have been realignments of forces and parties' configuration which have themselves seen Nigerians making a mince meat of such in various ways, which shook the foundations of the country's political calculations; not recorded before.

As at Friday last week, some political parties were still opening their doors for new entrants. They were being accepted in droves having been unsatisfied with how they were treated in their former homes. That is the nature of the Nigerian politician; they remain largely unpredictable; they move each time they feel their interests are being threatened. Rather than remain to fight, by making claims of not being taken care of and leave for another party, even if that new party does not offer anything tangible to them..

Note that we have had such arrangements in the past, which, in today's Nigeria should not rear its face. The electoral devices have been perfected, but not understood by all, as there are sections of the federation that are still suspicious of what we used yesterday at the polling units.

If many were disenfranchised by the use of machine, it is not because some have planned to rig. There would no room for the old game of rigging; while it may not be perfect, it is because a lot has gone into making sure that leaders are chosen through the right channel.

Today, Nigeria has myriads of problems that are in need of solution. Every Nigerian wants his kind of government as our experiences differ in a number of ways. But majority are in agreement that time has come for the situation to change.

Whoever wins the presidency

may not have the magic wand to solve Nigeria's problems. The manner the problems may be attacked could determined the future of the country. Nigerians are in agreement that not much has been done; rather, the country has gone through a lot, with little to be comforted with. All they wish for is the needed change to give the country a future commensurate with its status.

All Nigerians are aware of that insecurity is the major problem plaguing us. There is no part of the country which has not had one security challenge or the other. The measure of what has been given to the country speaks volume of endurance Nigerians have gone through. Scores of people have been killed, kidnapped from their homes and even on the streets tell of the banditry that has overtaken the country.

A lot may be said to have been done by government, yet it has not solved it. There are states that no day passes without people being killed by bandits and or kidnapped and various ransoms demanded. The business status it has taken is worrisome and disturbing even as we know that many security men and women have become victims of the senseless development.

What about the economy? It has been affected in various ways that we need a leader that understand what we have gone through in the last decade or even more to take Nigeria to the Promised Land. There are a number of things that will work for us rightly if there is firmness in the manner they are handled, for instance, if the cost of governance by politicians is reduced to the barest minimum.

Over the years, women have not been included, male politicians have tended to take advantage of the situation and relegated to the background. There is no dispute; women have played greater roles than have been thought of by Nigerians. It is a fact, there are women in every aspect of human endeavour left to compete with men; and to be fair to them their marks are consistent with what is obtainable in other civilized climes; where they are not underestimated.

Gagdi and the shape of things to come

The Rt Hon Yusuf Adamu Gagdi, member representing Pankshin/Kanke/Kanam federal constituency has so much to offer his people. Those who see it otherwise do so at their peril.

But any election is a test of the acceptance of the candidate. Those who know are quick to agree that the man in question

comes easily as an accepted candidate in the federal constituency.

The others may have their say, but without any iota of doubt, he has proven that he did not go to the National Assembly, Abuja to warm the benches.

Right from day one in 2019, he left no one in doubt of the mission he wanted to achieve for the people of Pankshin/Kanke/Kanam federal constituency.

Suave as ever, but more decisive in the affairs of his people, he never left anyone in doubt of what they need; if he was to represent them well.

In the history of the constituency, no representative has made the needed impact as he has. Visiting constituents constantly shows that they are valued. When one doesn't, it as an indication that they do not matter to them; but only during elections that they become relevant. They are witnesses to such treatment by different politicians in the past.

Such politicians come and go, without considering the constituents. They are treated with levity, to the extent that, there is no genuine commitment to the people they seek to represent. They think that the people are not supposed to be listened to; if only they are given pittance, the purpose is served.

Visiting his constituents constantly shows that they are valued. When they done, it as an indication that they do not matter to them; but only during elections that they become relevant and needed. They are witnesses to such treatment by different politicians in the years of our political experience.

Such politicians come and go, without taking the needs of the constituents into consideration. They are treated with levity, to the extent that, there is no genuine commitment to the people they seek or even represent.

Consider this: Rt Hon Yusuf Adamu Gagdi, has, since 2019 been in a different class. He has shown that he makes things happen as the people mean a lot to him on the journey.

Apart from six bills which have been assented to by Mr. President, there are still some that are yet to receive Presidential consideration. He is a history maker, no doubt. It is in this consideration that we can see him returning to the Green Chambers. Not all may love him; indeed life is full of contraries, however, if the constituents of Pankshin/Kanke/Kanam want a representative that would listen to them and attend to their problems day and night, they need not look far: Rt Hon Yusuf Adamu Gagdi is the answer.

I make this claim, knowing that I have several reasons to make it.



When money bought money

THE first day I felt the pinch of naira scarcity was the day I used all the money on me to buy sugar cane. I didn't come with car and all my colleagues with car that live along my axis had left. I casually strolled to the POS man across the road to withdraw. To my greatest surprise, he told me he had no cash. Confused, I rushed back to office to see which of my colleagues I could borrow cash from while I transferred. It was around 6pm that I could leave office. That was 3 weeks ago.

Since then, I have heard Woes of people who went to hospital and could not access any service in spite of their condition because of lack of cash. A lady said she had to visit a small chemist in her neighbourhood when her son fell ill. For one, she had no cash and he was the only one who agreed that she should transfer his money.

One can not begin to imagine the loss of lives this Naira swap and scarcity of the notes have caused. Last week, I went to get some food ingredients at Building Materials Market. The first thing I noticed was how sparsely populated it was. There were very few buyers around. Even the few buyers were unable to buy items due to lack of cash. And the traders on the other hand either didn't have accounts or do not trust on line banking. They bluntly refused transfers. People had no option than to patronise the few traders that were open to transfer. Those people had a wonderful day at the other traders' detriment.

However, it was observed that since on-line banking has become the mode of payment now, the network of most banks is very poor. It is now the norm to purchase an item and try several times before one is able to pay. In some instances, one's account is debited twice. Unfortunately, one would have to enter the congested banks to complain before one's money is refunded.

We are in an era where bankers are Kings. You need a favour, so you tread carefully. Only those

that start their day early can queue up and get at most N20, 000.

A colleague said she went early to ensure she was one of the first people to be attended to. But that was not to be. She met almost about hundred people on the queue. Just when it was her turn, those before her started lamenting that there was no cash. It took the intervention of the security operatives to calm everyone down. They were sternly warned to conduct themselves well or face the full wrath of the law.

Describing the frustration her family has been going through since the naira swap, a lady said they have had to be buying fuel even though almost 3 times its pump price, to enable them drop and pick children from school. She said it that is better than queuing up endlessly and spending their day in the bank.

We were complaining about scarcity of fuel then high cost of fuel. But at least we had the money to buy it. The problem now is one could have money in the bank but still be hungry or even dying because of scarcity of naira notes.

It is so frustrating. Youth who could not bear the heat burnt down banks in some parts of Nigeria. Some few days ago, I watched some Corps members as they tried to withdraw money to travel to their state. They came dressed in their complete regalia. One came along with his travelling box. But that didn't make the guards open the gate for them. I spent about one hour waiting for my sister at the bank's gate. Until I left they were still begging to be allowed in.

Why did government insist on Naira swap in elections year? That is the bone of contention. Timing! And the deadline was too short. President Buhari may be doing it for the best of Nigerians but we have suffered untold hardships.

Some people say that the scarcity has some bright sides which include drastic reduction in kidnapping. It has forced so many people to imbibe savings culture.

That apart, we want our dear Naira in circulation. Enough is enough!

NEWS

By YVONNE ISHOLA

Voting hitch-free, slow in St George's polling unit

THE unprecedented turnout of voters at the St George's Polling Unit Du Ward. As early as 7:00 am voters had already queued up according to the number on their cards and gender.

The excitement of the voters was not doused even when the INEC officials arrived a little late and the original queues were scattered. It was explained that each queue has to go with alphabets of one's surname.

Actual voting began in earnest by a few minutes to 10:00 am. It was commendable that the elderly, pregnant women, people with disabilities and women bearing babies were exempted from queuing up. They were taken straight for verification and casting of votes. This encouraged more people in this category to come out and cast their votes.

However, it was observed that some voters refused to join the queue but formed their own. They refused to heed the voice of security operatives even when they were warned. Because of their attitude, the women queue for 07 A-J remained static which frustrated a lot of the voters.

An altercation almost took place when a young girl Miss Bidemi Ishola came forward and complained about their plight due to the activities of

those jumping queue. An elderly woman took her up and warned her to shut up which annoyed her. It took the intervention of security operatives to calm the situation.

According to voters in that Polling Unit, INEC officials posted to St George's Polling Unit Du Ward, should borrow a leaf from Gold and Base Polling Unit whose voting was very orderly. According to Lucy Chindaba who cast her vote there, what they did

was that on arrival, they wrote their names and were given numbers. So there was no way one could just go forward to cause confusion because everyone only came forward when one's number was called.

The voters on their part should conduct themselves peacefully for a hitch-free election. Queue up and wait for your turn because you are not better than others.



Okoye

Massive voter turnout in Jos

By JIDAUNA DARING & HOSEA NYAMLONG

THE Presidential and National Assembly Elections in Jos North and Jos South Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Plateau State, witnessed an unprecedented large turnout of voters, who came out with their Permanent Voters Cards (PVC) to exercise their franchise.

Our correspondents who went round Jos and Bukuru Metropolis report that voters were at the Polling Units as early as 7:30am before the INEC's official time of 8am.

Some of the voters who spoke with **SUNDAY STANDARD** expressed serious concern with the late arrival of sensitive materials to some of the polling units.

According to the voters, the late arrival of the INEC officials with the materials would disenfranchise some citizens from voting candidates of their choice.

Our Correspondents also report that there was high enthusiasm among the electorate, while some of the voters expressed hope and said that all they want from INEC is to ensure that their votes count, saying that a winner should be duly announced as a

winner when announcing the outcome of the election.

The electorate equally expressed optimism with the improvement in the electoral Act, particularly with the introduction of the BVAS, saying that the use of the BVAS would no doubt go a long way in addressing the manipulation of election results which used to be tempered with by some politicians.

It was gathered that the creation of some new polling units by INEC to decongest some Polling Units that have large number of people had confused some of the voters who's names were not found at their former polling units and made voting very difficult for them, and has therefore caused low turnout of voters in such new places.

Speaking with **SUNDAY STANDARD**, Commissioner for Sports and Youths Development Plateau State, Hon. Daniel Dung Dalyop at the Gafang Gyel 'A' polling unit said that the turnout was not quite impressive, looking at the scenario before the election, citizens were showing much enthusiasm to participate in the election processes, but unfortunately there was a lukewarmness by some citizens

particularly in some polling units in his ward.

It was also observed within the axis of GSS Kabong, RCM Primary School Kabong, Polo area, Tina Junction, Angwan Rukuba, Gondola, Fudawa, Ukadun, Odu, Angwan Rogo, Congo Russia, Bauchi road, Nassarawa Gwong Filin Ball and Gadan Bako, were the polling units that received election materials behind INEC official stipulated time for the commencement of accreditation of voters as well as voting.

However, as at the time that our correspondents went through Gangare axis, INEC materials were on ground as early as 8:30am for voting to commence, but witnessed a low turnout of voters in some of the polling units beyond the said time that INEC officials arrived for the exercise.

Other places visited with high turnout of voters where voting was in progress, included: Tudun Wada, Hwoishe, RCM Primary School Zarmaganda, Building Materials, Sabon Barki, Sot-Gyel, Bukuru town, Mai Adiko and Abattoir, among others.

SUNDAY POLITICS

Reports of Presidential, NASS elections in Plateau

The long awaited 2023 presidential elections is here and Nigerians have trooped to their various polling units to vote candidates of their choice for the president, senate and House of Representatives. SUNDAY STANDARD reporters went round the various Local Governments of Plateau State to monitor and observe the exercise and sent in the following reports.

FROM the Polling unit at St Michael Primary School Gold and Base, **Lucy Chindaba** who visited the polling unit reports that as early as 7am, voters started trooping in to the polling unit and were about to organize themselves by giving numbers to people as they arrive as a result of which the exercise went on smoothly once the INEC officials arrived.

The INEC presiding officer informed voters of what they are expected to do before they are given ballot papers to vote. He also showed the BVAS machine to the electorate who were queueing and waiting to vote. That the machine has been set to zero, meaning no votes recorded.

Voting commenced at about 8:50am and voters were being accredited and they vote immediately after.

Jeremiah James who was the first to vote in the polling unit said he came to the venue a few minutes to 7am from Mees Palace which is a bit of a distance from his polling unit. According to him, he came that early because his neighbors were going out so he joined them and dropped at the polling unit. He said he felt the need to vote as a youth because according to him they have suffered a lot and things need to change.

Francisca Adidi who was at the Long Gamai Palace in Shendam, reported that voting did not start early due to lack of election materials. It was observed that voters came out and queued up but up till about noon.

Israel Lar who was at Haske Quarters reported that in his North Local Government Area, voting started a little late, with residents seen in groups discussing while waiting for officials and materials to be brought. At Furakka also in Jos North, voters were seen queueing up to vote candidates of their choice.

Matthew Bawul who was in Quaan Pan reports that in most parts of Quaan Pan LGA visited by our correspondent, materials for the election arrived on time, but the accreditation of voters did not commence until about 10 am. As the election proceeded, voters conducted themselves well by queuing up peacefully to cast their vote without any hitches. While casting his vote at the Kwoor Polling Unit, the former Chief of Staff to the Plateau State Governor and the House of Representatives candidate for Shendam, Mikang and Quaan Pan Constituency, Chief John Dafaan, expressed optimism that he will emerge the winner of the House of Representatives election.

From Shendam, **Celestine Attsar** reports that the Presidential and National



Governor Laing casting his vote



Chief John Dafaan about to cast his vote

Assembly elections in Shendam were conducted in a peaceful atmosphere as no recorded case of crisis. As early as 7 am voters were seen at various polling units waiting for electoral officials to come so that they can cast their votes. Our correspondent observed that in some polling units, electoral materials arrived very late. It was also observed that the process of accreditation was very slow in some polling units.

In the neighboring Mikang Local Government Area, the election was conducted in a peaceful

situation but there was late arrival of electoral officials and materials in some polling units.

In a telephone interview, Member Representing Shendam Constituency in the Plateau State House of Assembly Hon. **Livinus Kwapfuan**, commended the electorate for their peaceful conduct during the election process and appreciated them for coming out en-masse to cast their ballots.

On the voter turnout, **SUNDAY STANDARD** observed that there was an increase in the number of people who came out to exercise their franchise.

Fwenji Goar reports that the presidential and National Assembly elections in the Du B Ward (Old Government House) were conducted peacefully, with no incident of malpractice recorded.

People had gathered as early as 7.00am and were seen around the polling units.

According to him, the INEC officials did not make it to the venue till some minutes after 10.00 am, and the accreditation process was not fast enough. It took over an hour for about 50 people to be completed.

The voter turnout was

unprecedented, as the area looked more like a rally. There were more than 1100 voters at the 018 polling station, and over 1200 at the 006 polling station as at the time of writing this report.

However, voters at the 018 polling station were getting agitated because the ink for thumb printing ran out. It took the intervention of some well spirited voters who volunteered and brought a bottle of ink before the voting continued.

Our correspondent, **Peter Title**, who monitored the election in some parts of Northern and Central zones of Plateau State reports that the turn-out for the Presidential and the National Assembly elections was massive just as voters as early as 6:30am had besieged their voting centres to join the queue even before the arrival of INEC officials. And also that the voters were orderly and in high spirit ready to exercise their franchise.

At LGEA Primary school at Fanloh, at about 9am, **SUNDAY STANDARD** observed that accreditation of voters was going on smoothly while security operatives were on ground to curtail any break down of law and order.

It was the same scenario at the Barkin Ladi Central Primary School where voters were seen going through accreditation with INEC personnel doing their job religiously.

The monitoring which also took our man to some parts of Mangu Local Government Area reports that at Mangu Ward I, they had started voting and it was going on smoothly without any hiccup.

At Dawo, **SUNDAY STANDARD** reports that, the elderly and the young were seen casting their votes while the security operatives were seen keeping watch.

It was the same story at Daika Primary School where voters were seen casting their votes with all the working tools of INEC working perfectly.

At Angwan Sarki one and two, Angwan Galadima and Jwak all in Panyam District, the voting was going on as expected.

An elder named Francis Fwangbish who was in high spirit showered accolades on INEC for a well organised exercise saying next election would be stress free if INEC maintains the present standard.

According to him, he didn't waste time during accreditation and the voting and praised INEC staff for a job well done.

As at the time of filing in this report, voting was still on going and the general view is that the process has gone on so well so far so good without much hitches and the turn-out of voters compared to previous elections is really impressive.

SUNDAY INTERVIEW

Nigerians vote in a consequential election

After all the polls and surveys by pundits and prognosticators, Nigerians are set to troop to their polling units for the real poll. They will be electing a new leader to replace President Muhammadu Buhari, NOSA IGBINADOLOR writes.

THE question that voters should be asking themselves as they vote, according to a former vice president for the World Bank's Africa Division, Oby Ezekwesili, is: "If you set up an enterprise and needed someone to run it successfully, who among the top three presidential candidates would you recruit as CEO? Your answer to this question should actually guide your PVC on Saturday."

It would be the first time since 2003 that Buhari's name would not be on the ballot. It is also most likely to be the last foray into electoral politics for two of the three leading candidates, Bola Tinubu, 72 and Atiku Abubakar, 76.

The election is set to not only test the strength of the main opposition Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and the newly invigorated Labour Party (LP), it will be a referendum on the popularity and the right to continue to rule of the ruling party, the All Progressives Congress (APC).

For many Nigerians, this election is one that will determine the fortunes of the nation and the way forward for its battered masses. For others, Saturday's outcome will inform their emigration decisions.

Uyi, a management consultant in Abuja says he is waiting for the results of the election to determine if he would have to leave the country or stay behind. "If the candidate I am supporting does not win, my wife and I have decided that we would speed up our Canadian immigration process and leave with our son.

The country is extremely difficult to live in as it is and our hope; and I tell you, this is the hope of many of my friends and colleagues: if Peter Obi wins, we will sit back and see what changes he brings to the economy and society. If he doesn't win, we will leave as we do not see any hope for the future here."

It is not just emigration decisions; for many others, the outcome of Saturday's poll will determine their business and investment decisions.

"I do not want to leave the country," Yohanna, a real estate developer in Abuja, moaned. "Business has been terrible over the past seven years. I have sites that I need to develop but financing and demand have been the problem. So, since last August, I put off any further investments until Buhari leaves. I would be willing to give any of the three main candidates a chance to prove themselves, maybe one year to see how pro-business, especially to small business, they would be. If they are no different from the current guy, I would sell off, pack up and leave too. Many of my friends have left."



Yakubu

Buhari's eight years in office has been tough for many Nigerians. His time in power has seen food prices rise precipitously, disproportionately impacting the poor in a country that is home to the highest population of the world's poorest citizens.

In 2022, an estimated population of 133 million people in Nigeria lived in extreme poverty, representing 63 percent of the nation's population.

"Everyone has a hard time regardless of who they are in Nigeria, but for young people — in all the ways that are important to them — the current administration has fallen short. The numbers of record unemployment, food insecurity and poverty among young people speak for themselves," Leena Koni Hoffmann, associate fellow of the Africa Programme at Chatham House, told the Financial Times.

Steve Hanke, professor of applied economics and founder/co-director of the Institute for Applied Economics, Global Health, and the Study of Business Enterprise at the John Hopkins University, said in July 2021: "Nigeria ranks a terrible 161 out of 162 in security and safety, a report recently released by Caton Institute reveals... On the border of the Nigerian state of Kaduna, bandits have shot down a Nigeria Air Force jet. Also, under the leadership of Buhari, bandits act with impunity."

Buhari's legacy, as Chris Olaoluwa Ogunmodede put it in a World Politics Review analysis, is "a diminished Nigeria and a failed state".

It is against this disconcerting background of insecurity and economic meltdown that Nigerians will be picking a replacement for the failed Nigerian leader.

Nigerians may not have the power to bring down the inflationary cost of foods, but they do have the power to elect a leader that can introduce sustainable economic measures to topple inflation.

The options are many: 17 men and one woman. Yet only one will be chosen. Diverse opinion polls have consistently put three of the 18 candidates ahead.

While the ruling party's candidate, Tinubu, is seeking to consolidate his party's hold on power, Buhari's performance would be an encumbrance for him.

Tinubu is running against the awful record of the current president. Opposition parties and many Nigerians are holding him up against the appalling outcomes of Buhari's management of the nation's economy, politics, society and security.

He has at varying times sought to link his electoral fortunes to the record of the President, while, at other times, distanced himself from that record.

In most opinion polls that have surfaced, Tinubu has lagged in third place. To win this election, he must successfully convince voters seeking to punish the ruling party that he is in every way different from the current president, who is widely loathed across the country.

For the candidate of the opposition PDP, Atiku, this would be the sixth and perhaps last time he would be seeking the office of President of Nigeria. He had unsuccessfully contested five times in 1993, 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2019.

In 1993, backed by the late powerful political power-broker, Shehu Musa Yar'adua, he contested the Social Democratic Party presidential primaries but

lost to Moshood Abiola and Babagana Kingibe.

After a vicious power struggle between 2003 and 2006 with the then President, Olusegun Obasanjo, Atiku, who was Obasanjo's deputy, was ousted from the then ruling PDP.

He was rehabilitated by Tinubu, who gave him the presidential ticket of the Action Congress in the 2007 presidential election, where he came third behind former President Umaru Yar'Adua of the PDP and Muhammadu Buhari of the ANPP.

He again contested the presidential primaries of the PDP during the 2011 presidential election, but lost out to President Goodluck Jonathan.

In 2014, he joined the All Progressives Congress ahead of the 2015 presidential election and contested the presidential primaries, losing to Buhari. In 2017, he returned to the PDP and was the party's presidential candidate during the 2019 presidential election, again losing to incumbent President Buhari.

To win this time, Atiku is uncharacteristically positioning himself as the northern hegemon, defending northern hegemonic interests. He believes this is his sure route to power.

In October 2022, Atiku stridently positioned himself as the candidate of the North in the elections when he told an Arewa townhall policy dialogue in Kaduna that northerners do not need an Igbo or Yoruba as president but "someone from the North".

"I know the whole of this country," he had said, "I have built bridges across this country. I think what the average northerner needs is somebody who is from the North, and who also understands the other parts of Nigeria and who has been able

to build bridges across the rest of the country. This is what the northerner needs. He (northerner) doesn't need a Yoruba candidate, or an Igbo candidate. This is what the northerner needs."

The PDP candidate has oscillated between second and first positions in sound polls and surveys.

Labour Party candidate Peter Obi's entry into the presidential race has amplified the engagement of young voters. He is seen as different from the other two major candidates who are regarded as part of the old guard and seen as out dated by many of the country's young voters.

Backed by Nigeria's major trade union, the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), Obi has created a movement of mostly young zealots and disrupted the traditional two candidate presidential contest.

He has stressed economic growth, manufacturing and accountability in his campaign themes that have excited a growing number of voters.

Recent polls have consistently put him in the lead. Yet, his victory is in no way guaranteed. London-based consulting firm, Sofala Partners, speaking of his candidacy, said: "Given the historical nature of his candidacy, and potential implications for Nigerian politics going forward, what we found is that while the path to victory may not be easy, there does seem to be a very real groundswell of support amongst youth that stretches far beyond a narrow slice of the urban elite.

"Our view is that while victory for Obi may be an uphill battle, his rapid ascendance — and the way it has been accomplished — will have implications well beyond the outcome of this election. Leveraging many of the networks and strategies that grew up around the #EndSARS movement, Obi's candidacy is demonstrating the potential impact and pathway to harnessing the support of young people, who are pushing against the status quo.

Even if Obi loses, a strong showing will signal a significant departure from how national politics have operated in Nigeria the last 23 years. It will demonstrate the rise of a consolidated and powerful youth bloc as a political factor, a rejection of the status quo, the weakening of the traditional party duopoly, and a viable pathway to national office that does not rely on insider politicking and local party infrastructure."

This is a consequential election and the outcomes would be telling for the nation and its abused citizens.

Politics

Presidential election's last minute alignments

in a matter of a few hours, Nigerians from all works of life will be going to the polls to cast their votes towards electing the leaders that will be in charge of governance in the country in the next dispensation. The window for campaigns and other political activities for the Presidential and National Assembly elections which has been opened in the last five months has formally closed by 12.00 midnight of Thursday 23rd February. RAYMOND OISE-OGHAEDE writes.

POLITICAL parties and their candidates have used that window to showcase themselves to the electorate with the aim of convincing them that they are the best candidate to be elected to power or returned to office as the case may be. Many took advantage of the period by moving from one location to the other to engage individuals and groups and articulating their manifesto and programs in order to establish more support bases for their aspirations; while, some others did not do so much in this regard. By and large, it will be safe to say that the citizenry were served with tastes of the good, the bad and the ugly menu of politicking by these politicians of different shades.

While some of them always dished out messages of hope for a better tomorrow to their listeners; some others never had any good thing to tell their supporters apart from calumny against their political opponents. In some other rallies, the talks are centered on equity, justice and fairness by people who do not really know the true meaning of these principles and what they represent in governance. In other instances, the focal points of their campaigns were purely based on sentimentalized ethno-religious balderdash. There were also reported cases of violent attacks and killings of rival political supporters at campaign venues and different locations in the country.

As if the above were not enough, the hullabaloo also extended to various platforms on social media where the supporters of the different parties freely exchanged derogatory and bigoted remarks that were capable of threatening social peace. It became so bad that some of these people do not even blink an eye before attacking and insulting anyone perceived not to be supporting their preferred candidate(s). Therefore, it is not surprising that they never capitalized on some of the constructive and objective criticisms that were meant to help them in re-strategizing and boosting the chances of their respective principal(s) for now or the near future.

As the campaigns are formally over, the next important thing to focus on is the elections proper which will be held on Saturday 25th February. There have been series of online polls which a lot of people are now relying on as the most likely outcomes of the elections; but, as an experienced analyst, the only advice I can give to such people in this circumstance is to start having it at the back of their minds that those results, which could best be described as social media results cannot stand in the face of the real results that will start coming on air immediately after the elections.



Anyone who banks on the "Social Media Results" as sacrosanct will only be doing so at his own peril. The politicians themselves know quite well that this is going to be a unique election; because, it will largely be dependent on the physical participation of the electorate. This is not going to be that sort of election where people will sit in the corners of their homes to write results and find ways of making them to count. It is not going to be that sort of elections where party agents will collude with electoral umpires to allocate fictitious figures for their candidates. It is not going to be that sort of elections where some people employ all types of nefarious activities to disenfranchise legitimate electorate. It is not going to be that sort of elections where votes are freely and openly bought; and, it is not going to be that sort of elections where ballot boxes would be snatched to manipulate and distort the true picture of the process.

As a result of the uniqueness and cruciality of this election, some candidates and their parties have done objective self appraisals of their preparedness to facing the contest headlong or aligning with other candidate(s) and party(ies) to forming formidable alliance(s). It is based on this political calculations that some of them have started collapsing their structures and endorsing preferred candidates across other parties. So, the last few hours, witnessed more of cross carpeting; collapsing of structures; and, endorsements across board. However, we will be hoping that these movements should not eventually take an unpleasant trend. In as much as

this phenomenon is normal in politics, my only fear has always been that such should not take us back to the old era of politics of north-south dichotomy and religious prejudice. I have extensively analyzed this fear in my articles titled "the delicate ethno-religious road to 2023" (published in September, 2022); and, "the pdp crisis and the people's interest" (published in October, 2022).

From the look of things, the unfolding trends are gradually tilting towards giving credence to my very cogent position; and, this will become clearer in the next few hours and by the pattern of distribution of votes for the presidential candidates on Saturday 25th. As I have said earlier, these movements are normal and would not have deteriorated to the extent of posing concerns, if not for the inappropriate approaches that some of our politicians and leaders adopted lately to handling some very crucial and intricate political issues. All the same, there would not have been any problem considering the fact that no law debar anyone from moving from one political party to another in this circumstance or

collapsing one's structures to supporting another preferred candidate(s); but, it becomes a big problem when such are hinged on factors that are more likely to tear us apart than uniting us.

Flowing from the above, all that is expected of us as patriotic citizens and participants in the exercise, is to play our respective roles diligently and decorously towards ensuring that we achieve a better and greater feat than what was achieved on June 12th, 1999 and the Osun State gubernatorial election of 16th July, 2022. We should all comport ourselves and follow the rules and regulations guiding the processes before, during and after the elections. We should not for any reason engage in acts that are capable of jeopardizing the free, fair, peaceful and credible conduct of the elections. Also importantly, we should not allow ourselves to be carried away by the outcomes of the online and opinion polls about the elections; because, they are not in any way the constitutional basis for measuring and determining the results.

The true and genuine results will be determined by the collation of our real valid votes at the end of the exercise. Therefore, it is not

cast in stone or sacrosanct that a particular candidate must be the winner. The earlier we accept the fact that it is the majority of the voters that will determine who eventually wins, the better it will be for all of us.

In view of the aforementioned, we should all be willing and prepared to accepting whoever is declared the winner regardless of his ethno-religious and political affiliation. There should not be any form of protest or chaos as a result of the outcome of the elections. We should remember that there is still a government in place that is fully prepared to maintaining law and order as well as upholding national unity and territorial integrity of the country. The whole world has been following the happenings in the country with keen interest; and, they will be willing and ready to supporting the government to curtailing and crushing any unreasonable and unnecessary agitations or insurrections as a result of the outcome of the polls. Therefore, I am appealing to everyone to join hands together with the government and INEC for a free, fair, peaceful and credible exercise.

"Also importantly, we should not allow ourselves to be carried away by the outcomes of the online and opinion polls about the elections; because, they are not in any way the constitutional basis for measuring and determining the results. The true and genuine results will be determined by the collation of our real valid votes at the end of the exercise. Therefore, it is not cast in stone or sacrosanct that a particular candidate must be the winner".

SUNDAY PEOPLE

2023 GENERAL ELECTIONS, PRESIDENTIAL AND NASS

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) yesterday conducted the 2023 General Elections for the Presidential and National Assembly candidates all over the federation



Commissioner of Police in charge of election, Mamman Dauda (right) monitoring the exercise in some local governments of Plateau State



Cross section of eligible voters waiting patiently for the INEC materials and officials at 9.58am at the Arin Izang Polling Unit of Jos North LGA



Plateau State Governor, Rt. Hon. Simon Bako Lalong (arrowed) queuing to cast his ballot at Nyak Ajikamai Polling Unit, Shendam LGA



At about 10.15am those voters are expecting the arrival of INEC Officials at the Naraguta B. polling unit, one of the largest wards of Jos North LGA



Elderly person were not left out of the exercise as seen by the Ngo at a polling unit in Sot Gyel, Jos South LGA



Cross section of electorates checking their names at one of the Polling Units



Commissioner of Youth and Sports, Hon. Daniel Dung Dalyop (left) answering questions from newsmen at his Gafang Polling Unit, Gyel A ward of Jos South LGA after casting his ballot



Accredited voters casting their ballot at the one the visited by newsmen

PHOTOS: DANLADI DUK

IN Alan Ehrenhalt's writing on the topic 'In search of the ideal legislature', the writer notes that it is not too difficult defining the qualities of an outstanding legislator. To him, a true legislator is someone who understands the heartbeat of his constituents basically because he or she listens, and by so doing understands their problems, while proffering solutions to them in the little way he or she can. There is no doubt that of the three tiers of government, that is the legislature, judiciary and executive, the legislature practically reflects what democracy truly stands for. The legislature is said to be the essential ingredient for measuring the dividends of democracy because it is the closest to the people. By dividends, it simply means the basic necessities of life such as water, education, healthcare and so on, making sure that they get to the people especially those at the grassroot.

As a true representative, he or she is expected to fight for government's attention in favour of their respective constituencies in the area of infrastructural development, provision of healthcare, education, poverty reduction through creating life enhancement programmes aimed at uplifting the living standards of the people etc. Achieving this feat may not be as easy as it seems. It entails going all out, including making a whole lot of sacrifices with the intention of touching lives and providing succour to the people who chose them as their representatives.

We all know that in Nigeria today, people seek political offices for different reasons. Some do so for their personal and selfish interest while others do so with the intent to serve. However, serving the people and delivering the dividends of democracy is a matter of choice and also a matter of one's conscience. For Hon. Daniel Nanbo Listick who is the member representing Langtang North Central constituency in the Plateau State House of Assembly, his desire to serve stems from his good heart. As a first timer, his tenacity and resolve coupled with the political will exhibited in the last two years calls for admiration.

The lawmaker who many describe as having a heart of gold did it again recently, when all road led to his constituency of Langtang North Central as the creme de la creme of the society converged to witness the second phase of the unveiling and commissioning of his 2021 intervention projects. It will interest you to know that the first phase took place last year (2020). Langtang North constituency is made up of nine wards out of the fourteen wards in Langtang North local government area.

To set the ball rolling and in line with Section 14 (2b) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria with alterations 2011, which states that "the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government", the lawmaker in the quest to further ensure the safety of lives and property took the right step by constructing a Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps Outpost in Pil-Gani, under Pil ward of Gani district. The completed building described as first of its kind in the community because nothing like that has ever been done by any government, individual or organisation and was commissioned by Amb. Nanpon D. Shenl, a former Permanent Secretary with the Ministry of Defence.

It is a known fact that the importance of healthcare in any community cannot be overemphasized. This is why in a bid to contribute to Section 17(3d) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic

of Nigeria with alterations 2011 stating that "there are adequate medical and health facilities for all persons", the lawmaker single handedly built a primary healthcare clinic in Reak, under Reak ward in Bwarat district which was commissioned by Prince Alfred Dapal, the Manager Upstream Business Agip Oil, Abuja. Listick also renovated another primary healthcare clinic in Shi Lur, under Pische-Yashi ward of Gani district that will all ensure that the people enjoyed quality and accessible healthcare services. With education said to be the bedrock of any progressive society, the need to place it on higher pedestal became a burden for the Hon. Member. Little wonder Section 18(1) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria with alterations 2011



Listick: Impacting his constituency



makes it clear that "Government shall direct its policy towards ensuring that there are equal and adequate educational opportunities at all levels". To add value to this section, a two classroom and office block at LEA primary school Wangwang, initiated and constructed by Listick was commissioned. Also commissioned at LEA primary school Pagwam-Kwanpe is another two classroom and office block.

In order to boost the quality of education in his constituency, particularly in the area of science technology and cultural education which he believes will unarguably help meet future challenges in the competitive labour market, the legislator made a donation of some science equipment to support Government Secondary School Kumkwam, under Jat ward of Bwarat district. He also commissioned a handpump borehole at International College of Education Langtang. This singular gesture is to ensure that students were provided with clean and potable water. Interestingly, the borehole dug at the school premises also provides water for residents of the community.

Hon. Nanbo Listick's accomplishment for his constituents will not be complete without mentioning his interest in economic

empowerment. While Section 16(2a) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria with alterations 2011 talks about "the promotion of a planned and balanced economic development", Listick has undertaken numerous initiatives towards empowering selected members of his constituency in the area of small businesses and dry farming. He equally provided and distributed to them items that would help in starting these businesses and they include deep freezers, water pumping machines, welding machines, generator sets, sewing machines etc.

It is equally imperative to state here that in his magnanimity, he has been involved in the payment of school fees of ten orphans in primary schools, twenty five in secondary schools and thirty students in various tertiary institutions. These pupils and students cut across Langtang North Central constituency. The lawmaker is said to have also sponsored three students on international scholarships to enable them obtain a first degree in different fields of endeavour. Note that he has been of immense support to NYSC members deployed to Langtang North local government area in executing some of their community development projects.

SUNDAY MAGAZINE



Mahmood



Obi

Nigeria decides, what next?

More than 93 million eligible voters were expected to cast their ballots on Saturday, February 25, to elect Nigeria's next president and choose their representatives in the Green and Red chambers of the National Assembly. The final declaration of the President-elect by the Independent National Electoral Commission [INEC], is perhaps keeping both the candidates and their followers at the edge of their seats. KENNETH DARENG, writes.

THE stakes must have been high, the battle keenly fought while tension is in the air as to what will follow suit in a mood that is charged and as expected is unpredictable.

One thing with elections in Nigeria is that it's not over until it is over, as the management of every general election results are mostly received with mixed reactions and in some cases, some political supporters may not take the result kindly if it does not favour their candidate. And this particular one appears to be not different.. But what is different is the fact that the incumbent, President Muhammadu Buhari is not going to contest this time around owing to the fact that he is completing his constitutional 8 years in office as President and Commander-in-Chief.

However, the declaration of the results as some political

commentators have predicted, may likely generate protests across the country in the event a particular favoured candidate does not emerge victorious. According to some political experts, "In the next 14 or 15 days anything can happen to give any of the popular candidates an edge over the others. We have seen what happened in the last two, or three weeks, of course, with the naira designation and of course with the fuel crisis, which have been changing the narratives and the way people are predicting the elections.

Frontrunner candidates seeking to succeed President Muhammadu Buhari have traded accusations at each other over the attempt to rig the 2023 general elections by the leading political parties.

"For those who are enlightened, we are seeing a new trend of people mixing political parties

and mixing ideologies," the Professor from the Kano College of Arts and Science explained.

"Going for this candidate at this level and going for another candidate at the other levels. So possibly, we are going to have interesting results that is going to have a mixture of people occupying different positions from different political parties."

Interestingly, the ruling All Progressives Congress[APC], is seeking to win reelection, while the other dominant opposition parties like the People's Democratic Party [PDP] which eyes a comeback, and the that of the Labour party which is posing a major threat to all the political parties as a force to be reckoned with.

According to another analyst who preferred to remain anonymous, told **SUNDAY STANDARD** that, "I think this election is special compared to

the last two elections, in the sense that for the first time we are having more than two strong candidates,"

In addition to the Naira scarcity, fuel crises, security and economy are key issues in the country of more than 200 million citizens that is resonating with the majority of the voting population particularly the youth who are within the ages of 18 and 25 and are desirous of a new Nigeria with a set of good leaders that can lift the country out of its present socio-economic predicament.

As Nigerians voted over the weekend in the presidential and parliamentary elections, many political observers have noted that this is the most keenly contested elections in the country's history since the return to democratic rule in 1999.

Of the 18 candidates vying to succeed President Muhammadu Buhari, three stand a chance:

former Lagos State Governor Bola Tinubu, 70, the ruling party candidate; former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, 76, the main opposition candidate; Peter Obi, 61, a challenger popular among young voters.

The 2023 general elections has more than 93 million people who are registered to vote.

With about 176,600 polling stations across the country, including in camps for people displaced by conflict between Islamist insurgents and federal troops in the northeast.

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) had assured Nigerians that, it has taken measures to ensure this election will be free and fair - a major concern in a nation with a long history of electoral fraud and violence.

One of the new innovations used during the Saturday's polls was that the voters must present their voting cards and be identified by a Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) that uses fingerprints and facial recognition. This is aimed at reducing the risk of fraudsters voting several times.

The results from individual polling stations were be pasted outside for citizens to view, and sent through BVAS to an INEC portal. The results were then displayed on the portal in real time and accessible by the public, INEC says.

It is hoped this will reduce the risk of the figures being manipulated along the way.

According to INEC, citizens wishing to witness the sorting and counting of ballot papers at polling stations should do so from a distance of 300 metres. In the past, one of the forms of vote-rigging seen in Nigeria was the



Tinubu



Atiku

Continued on page 31

NEWS

Lalong presents staff of office to Rekna of Bashar

BY PALANG KASMI

Plateau State Governor Simon Bako Lalong has tasked the new Rekna of Bashar to carry his subjects along.

He has also tasked the traditional institution to sustain its role of maintaining peace and harmony within their domains particularly with the 2023 general elections around the corner.

The Governor spoke while presenting a Second Class Staff of office to the 16th Rekna of Bashar in Wase Local Government, His Royal Highness Alhaji Abdullahi Idris Isa.

The Governor said the traditional institution has continued to play the role of a stabilising force at all times especially during crucial national engagements such as the elections about to commence.

He said the traditional institution must not only continue to work with all segments of society for the success of the elections, but should also make the citizens know that they have a role to play in the democratic development of the country.

While congratulating His Royal Highness for ascending the throne of his fore fathers, he also appreciated the King Makers who did all that is required according to the customs and traditions of the Bashar Chiefdom to expeditiously select a successor to occupy the stool.

He said "While you discharge your duty diligently,



Lalong

I admonish you to be more proactive, carry your people along irrespective of creed, religion or any affiliation. Avoid tendencies that will make you a sectional leader thereby jeopardizing the sanctity of the revered stool which you are occupying in trust for your people".

Lalong also urged him to carry everyone along and work with the Government to promote peace, development and harmony, advising him not get involved in politics but sensitise his people to participate in the political process and perform their civic duties.

Long Gamai of Gamailand HRH Miskoom Martin Shaldas III who spoke on behalf of Gbong Gwom Jos Da Jacob

Gyang Buba used the opportunity to once again thank the Governor for paying special attention to the traditional institution since assuming office, describing him as a leader with passion for peace, security and harmony.

Emir of Wase Alhaji Muhammadu Samba Abubakar said since coming on board, Governor Lalong has paid greater attention to reviving and strengthening the traditional institution so that it can contribute meaningfully to the development of the State.

Deputy Speaker House of Representatives Idris Wase who is the brother of the new Rekna of Bashar thanked Governor Lalong for his sense

of fairness, justice and equity which he said has been demonstrated in his noninterference for selection of the Rekna and other traditional rulers across the State.

He recalled that Governor Lalong has so far created 285 new Districts, 36 Chiefdoms as well as restored 3 Chiefdoms scrapped by the previous administration.

Chairman, Wase Local Government as well as the Chairman, Bashar Development Association Zakari Muhammed Dalhatu said the presentation of staff of office to the new Rekna of Bashar again signifies the importance that Governor Lalong places on the yearning and aspirations of the people.

The Governor thereafter commissioned some projects executed by the Deputy Speaker House of Representatives Rt Hon. Idris Wase. They include roads, schools, police divisional headquarters, electrification and bridges. They also inspected other ongoing projects still under construction.

Before returning to Jos, the Governor stopped over in Langtang to meet with APC stakeholders as part of the mobilisation for Saturday's elections where he is vying for the seat of Senator representing Plateau South Senatorial District.

He was at the Palace of the Ponzhi Tarok where he was received by the Ponzhi Zhini, Acting Chairman Tarok Traditional Council and his members.

Governor Lalong thanked the people of Langtang particularly the traditional council for standing by him since his days as Speaker of the Plateau State House of Assembly to his election as Governor.

Welcoming him to the Palace, Acting Chairman Tarok Traditional Council Ponzhi Zhini said the council has deep appreciation and respect for Governor Lalong who has emancipated the Tarok nation by approving many graded chiefs and ensuring that progress and development comes to the land.

He prayed for him and wished him well saying because he is a child of grace who has used his position for uplifting others, there is light at the end of the tunnel for him.

At a stakeholders meeting later, the Governor once again thanked the people for supporting him and said he will continue to represent their interests when elected to the Senate where he has vast experience in legislation and representation.

He said because Langtang is dear to him, he has decided to round off his Campaign in the area and assure them that voting for him, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu, Dr. Nentawe Yilwatda, and other candidates of the APC is great investment that will yield many dividends.



NNPC has 1.8bn litres of petrol in stock

THE Nigerian National Petroleum Company Ltd (NNPCL) says it has 1.805 billion litres of petrol in stock.

According to statement by its spokesman, Malam Garbadeen Muhammad in Abuja on Monday the volume of petrol in stock would last for 30 days.

He explained that 805.35 million litres of the product were in depots nationwide, while one billion liters were still inside vessels.

He added that in his efforts to ensure steady supply, NNPC Ltd. placed a robust plan for the supply of petrol from mid-February to March 2023.

"An additional petrol supply of 884 million litres is also expected by February 28.

"For March 2023, a total of 2.3 billion litres of petrol is expected, while about 2.5 billion litres, equivalent to 42 days sufficiency, would be the closing stock for the month," Muhammad said.

ITF disburses N24bn as allowances

Director-General of the Industrial Training Fund (ITF), Joseph Ari, on Monday said the Fund has disbursed more than N24 billion as students' and supervisors' training allowances from 2016 to date.

He made this known in Jos when the Correspondents' Chapel of Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Plateau Council, gave him an Award of Excellence in Leadership and Human Capital Development.

The DG said that given the fund's integral role in the training of students of Engineering, Technology, and other allied disciplines in tertiary institutions, the ITF had accorded priority attention to the management of the scheme.

Ari assured the public of the Fund's commitment to the prompt payment of students' and supervisors' allowances, "as soon as money is received from the Federal Government".

He further said that the ITF had automated its business processes in a bid to facilitate business processes within the ITF and with its stakeholders.

Gunmen kill DPO in Anambra attack

Gunmen in the early hours of Monday attacked the Isiowulu Police station, Awada, in Idemili North Local Government Area of Anambra State, killing the Divisional Police Officer (DPO) and two others.

Anambra State Police Command, while confirming the attack, blamed the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) for the killing of the DPO and other officers at Awada Police Station on Monday.

According to a statement issued by the command spokesman DSP Ikenga Tochukwu, gunmen suspected to be IPOB/ESN members attacked Awada Police Station in Idemili North LGA of Anambra State, using Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and automatic firearms.

He said the police operatives attached to Anambra State Command engaged the assailants jointly with troops from 302 Artillery Regiment of the Nigeria Army, in a gun duel, and three members of the outlawed group were "fatally wounded" while three Kalashnikov rifles and one Automatic Pump Action gun were recovered.

INEC to conduct elections in super camps over insecurity

Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) is to conduct this year's general elections in super camps, following persisting insecurity in liberated four councils of Borno State.

The affected councils are Guzamala, Abadam, Marte, and Kukawa in the northern part of the state.

Speaking on INEC's preparedness, in Maiduguri, the Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC), Mohammed Ibrahim, noted: "All sensitive and non-sensitive materials have been received and are in the custody of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN).

Naira redesign: Only old N200 notes were re-issued, CBN

Central Bank of Nigeria, CBN, insisted on only the old N200 notes was to be re-issued as directed by President Muhammadu Buhari.

The clarification came against the backdrop of reports that President Muhammadu Buhari had issued an order directing the

CBN to also re-issue the N500 and N1,000 notes. The apex bank also refuted reports that it directed Deposit Money Banks,

DMBs, to receive the old N500 and N1,000 notes from their customers.

The clarifications came as Kaduna State governor, Nasir el-Rufai, said President Muhammadu Buhari made a mistake concerning the naira redesign policy which phased out the old N500 and N1,000 notes.

In a statement jointly signed by the Deputy-Governor, Mr. Edward Adamu, and Mr. Osita Nwanisobi, the apex bank said it is sticking to the directive of the President to reissue only the old N200 notes.

18 parties, presidential candidates sign peace accord

Saturday's presidential and National Assembly elections in Nigeria, President Muhammadu Buhari; former Head of State, General Yakubu Gowon; Chairman of the National Peace Committee and former Head of State, General Abdulsalami Abubakar, and former president Goodluck Jonathan, have asked all candidates contesting at all levels to respect the choice of voters and accept the result of the election as would be announced by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) at the end of the exercise.

Buhari and others spoke just as all the presidential candidates of the 18 political parties contesting the presidential election, signed the last lap of the peace accord brokered by the National Peace Accord in Abuja. Unlike the earlier stages of the peace accord, the edition saw the signing of the accord by all the presidential candidates in person who were in attendance.

Compiled by HOSEA NYAMLONG

Gov. Lalong commissions Wase's Constituency projects

Plateau State Governor Simon Bako Lalong has on Thursday commissioned some Major projects executed by the Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, Rt. Hon. Ahmed Idris Wase.

The projects were spread across Bashar, Kadarko and Wase communities in Wase Federal constituency.

Among the 160 projects inaugurated which are facilitated by the Deputy Speaker are the Police Secondary school consisting of 400 capacity male and female hostels, 9.5 Kilometres and Bashar/ Gudi and Thirty Kilometer Bashar/ Yola Wakat

roads, the ultra modern Divisional Police Headquarters Bashar, electrification of Bashar grid through a 33 KVA line for distribution to Nine Communities in Wase.

There was also ongoing projects including the National Open University Study Centre, construction of various ecological fund erosion projects in Bashar, Lamba, Kadarko and Wase (Phase 1 completed), construction of 4km Galadima Bypass road Bashar, among others, and the Wase Rock Resort Center among others.

The Governor during the tour of projects commended the Deputy Speaker for

facilitating the numerous projects and having the development of his people at heart.

Lalong said he has performed credibly in meeting the yearnings of the people in terms of dividends of democracy.

The Deputy Speaker was glad that he has been able to touch the lives of his constituents through attracting many Federal Projects to the Constituency.

He expressed a strong desire to provide dividends of democracy to his constituents through infrastructure and human capital development.

under the watchful of police and other security personnel, to smoothen the exercise.

In Okene, the traditional political headquarters of the central senatorial district of the state, voting process went on peacefully. Idah and Kabba in East and West Senatorial districts of the state, similar atmosphere prevailed.

Investigation by our Correspondent indicates that the redesigned policy which prompted the cash crunch worked as many voters who spoke with our Correspondent disclosed that no politician was able to give them money to buy their votes.

Reports from other part of the state showed that voting commenced as scheduled.



Bello

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

Thousands of eligible voters in the three Senatorial districts of Kogi State on Saturday, trooped to their polling units to elect the Presidential and National Assembly Members of their choice in a seamless atmosphere.

Our Correspondent who went round Lokoja, the state capital, reports that voters were seen queue to cast their votes while INEC adhoc staff and other staff sighted performing their statutory responsibility to make the exercise hitch-free.

Accreditation in many of the polling booth started about 8 a.m and 8 30 a.m with all the electoral materials on hands,

SUNDAY FEATURE

Unveiling the new sheriff at NIGCOMSAT

In the twilight of 2022, the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, President Muhammadu Buhari, GCFR through the Hon. Minister of Communications and Digital Economy, Professor Isa Ibrahim Ali (Pantami) announced the replacement of Dr. Abimbola Alale, the erstwhile Managing Director, Chief Executive Officer of the Nigerian Communications Satellite (NIGCOMSAT) Ltd whose two terms of four years each came to an end and the announcement of Engr. Tukur Mohammed Lawal in her place. Stephen Kwande writes.

INDUSTRY players received this announcement with the expectation that from where the outgone Managing Director stopped, the new helmsman would provide the push required to take the organization to heights not attained by its predecessors.

The appointment of Engr. Tukur Mohammed Lawal to superintend this important organization makes him its third Chief Executive Officer in its seventeen years of existence. On the day of his arrival at NIGCOMSAT LTD, it was a breath of fresh air for a work environment that eagerly awaited a new dawn in its management of affairs. And what was more, there was a sense in which Engr. Lawal exuded the energy needed to reinvigorate a seemingly tired work force; someone with seemingly unstoppable vision and mission.

Though some sections of the media have already expressed skepticism simply because he is not from the ICT industry, his posture and zeal is already proving them wrong. This position seems to question the choice of the Hon. Minister who recommended the appointment and whose competence and achievements under the Muhammadu Buhari's presidency remain unassailable.

Undoubtedly, I am of the strong belief that any doubts arising from the appointment does not take into consideration the appointee's matchless credentials which the Hon. Minister of Communications and Digital Economy, Professor Isa Ibrahim Ali (Pantami) reckoned with in his choice.

Even without perusing the crowded Curriculum Vitae of Engr. Tukur Muhammadu Lawal, any discerning mind would believe that NIGCOMSAT is not going to be business as usual. From the onset, the day Engr. Lawal stepped on the Ground Control Station, he demonstrated uncommon work attitude which has already endeared staff to him and, day by day, staff continue to adjust to the dawn of a new era.

In the first week of his assumption of office, he started on a familiarization tour of different operating units and departments of the organization with a view to acquainting himself with the state of affairs of the organization as well as issues to be addressed. As a safety expert, he has enforced the use of helmet as critical to the operations of the company especially amongst the engineers.

He started the second week by engaging different strata of the company. He received briefings from Executive Directors to departmental heads to further appraise himself with the operations of the organization.

Within this short period, he has also come out with a policy thrust that is expected to instill the right work ethic at NIGCOMSAT LTD. This is promoted via the following phrases which reflect the organization's new thinking: 'On time is late', 'See something, do something', 'customer is king',



Lawal

'HSE are our core values', 'A clean workplace is SAFE', 'Corporate objectives override self-interest', 'I pledge to be our good ambassador', 'I pledge to confidentiality', 'I commit to Loyalty and Integrity'. These are the nine pillars that are expected to support his policy direction.

But who is Tukur Mohammed Lawal? Engr. Tukur Mohammed Lawal started his early life in the quiet, agrarian town of Funtua in Funtua Local Government Area of Katsina state. He attended the famous Bisije Primary School, Funtua from 1973-1979 and obtained his Primary School Leaving Certificate. From there, he proceeded to Government Secondary School, also in Funtua, from 1979-1984 and obtained his General Certificate of Education (GCE). His quest to acquire more education took him to the College of Advanced Studies, Zaria after which he got admitted to the prestigious Ahmadu Bello University where he obtained his Bachelor's degree in Chemical Engineering.

His continuous quest for more education also saw him at the

Abubakar Tafawa University, Bauchi where he bagged a Post Graduate Diploma in Management with Upper Credit. He has over time acquired additional educational qualifications including but not limited to Master's Degree in Business Administration (Management), Certificate in Personal Effectiveness at the Famous Lagos Business School (LBS), Certificate in High Impact Leadership (LBS), Professional Diploma in Education, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, and is currently pursuing a doctorate degree in Environmental Management at the University of Port Harcourt.

Engr. Tukur started work as a voluntary primary school class teacher at his alma mater in Funtua. Shortly thereafter, he was called up for the National Youth Service Corps programme and was posted to teach at Methodist Comprehensive College, Sagamu, Ogun State. After his national service, he gained full employment and was posted to Minna as Industrial Officer II under the Federal Ministry of

Industry, IDC, in Minna, Niger State, (1992)

From the Ministry of Industry, Engr. Lawal moved to AshakaCem Plc in 1992 as a process Engineer. He became the Environmental Coordinator of AshaCem Plc from 1992-1999 when he was elevated as Environment Manager from 2003-2005. Again, from 2003 to 2006, he was the Management Representative, ISO 900: 2000 Project. While retaining his position as Manager, he was moved to Health and Safety from 2005-2012. From 2012-2013, he was Manager, Training and Learning of the Human Resource Department. The dexterity and capacity he demonstrated in his job, saw him climb the ladder and became the Country Health and Safety Manager in-charge of Nigeria and Benin Republic.

He also had a stint in the department of communications and public affairs and Sustainable Development of Lafarge Africa Plc as Regional Manager (AshakaCem North).

Engr. Tukur Mohammed Lawal is a member of many professional bodies. These include but not limited to Fellow, Nigerian Society of Chemical Engineers; Fellow, Professional Leadership Practitioners Institute, Chartered Environmentalist, Society for Environmental Toxicology and Pollution Mitigation 1900667; Member, Chartered Institute of Personnel Management of Nigeria, 3/1300766; Member, Institute of Safety Professionals of Nigeria; Member, National Industrial Safety Council of Nigeria; Member, Nigerian Institution of Safety Engineers; Member International Commission on Occupational Health; Member, American Society of Safety Engineers; Member, Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, UK 4417; Member, Nigerian Institute of Training and Development; Member, Council for the Regulation of Engineering in Nigeria (COREN) 2001; Corporate Member, Nigeria Society of Engineers (NSE); Associate Member, Nigerian Institute of

Management; Corporate Member, Nigerian Environmental Society; Associate Environmental Auditor, Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, United Kingdom; Unit Coordinator (2012-2019) Special Marshal, Federal Road Safety Commission; Member, Board of Trustees, Green Watch and Environmental Awareness; and, Trained Auditor of Quality Management System with the Standard Organisation of Nigeria (SON).

Armed with the above qualifications and experience, little wonder awards could not elude him. accordingly, he has been recognized with the following awards: Merit award from the President, Nigerian Society of Chemical Engineers (2021); amongst the Best Safety Professionals by SAFETY AWARDS, Lagos 2015; Gombe, Award for Service to Humanity by the North-East Federal Road Safety Corps; Letter of Congratulations (Commendation) on functional achievement from AshakaCem Plc, 2011; Individual performance Award received at Lafarge SA, CEO, Mr. Bruno Lafont, in November 2006 at AshakaCem, Nigeria; Letter of commendation for leading AshakaCem's QMS to ISO 9001:2000 Certification; Letter of Commendation and payment of EX-Gratia from AshakaCem, 2007; Appointed and Turbaned by HRH Emir of Funakaye as **DURBIN Funakaye**, making him a member of the Emirate Council in 2008.

A prolific writer, Engr. Tukur M. Lawal has authored many books among which are: *The Ethics in Health and Safety Management (2009)*; *A history of MASKA DISTRICT (2008)*. *Environmental Protection as a Religious Duty (2006)*. He also wrote a book titled: *Funakaye Emirate of Gombe State (2011)*; and *Appearance and Body Care of a Muslim (2000)*.

Against this background, Engr. Tukur M. Lawal is easily highly recommended for his latest assignment at NIGCOMSAT LTD. It is time industry players extended hands of cooperation, friendship and work with this hard working gentleman to move the country in the right direction in the Space and ICT industry. Nigeria has a large market to be shared among the key players. We have seen the deployment of foreign satellite operators on the Nigerian space and many more to come. Therefore, it is time stakeholders pursue and harness the potentials to be customized on NigComSat 2 meant for Nigerian market to come to real. Broadband penetration should be our focus especially with an already clear road map. Creating the conditions for a greater Nigeria is a task that we must all join hands to achieve.

Kwande is a Senior Manager at the Corporate Affairs Dept. NIGCOMSAT LTD.

"Even without perusing the crowded Curriculum Vitae of Engr. Tukur Muhammadu Lawal, any discerning mind would believe that NIGCOMSAT is not going to be business as usual. From the onset, the day Engr. Lawal stepped on the Ground Control Station, he demonstrated uncommon work attitude which has already endeared staff to him and, day by day, staff continue to adjust to the dawn of a new era."

SUNDAY FEATURE

Who will serve Nigeria for free?

Nigeria's next elections draw ever so near and may be over by the time you read this – at least the presidential part of it. I have since pitched my tent with a group led by someone who has the total package that could make a profound difference in our country, writes Topé Fasua

THIS includes the respect among the private sector, experience in running complex systems and coordinating the efforts and ideas of very smart people, and the unique identification of hard workers and ideas people who can cause a change in our dear country. Recent problems with Buhari's cash policy revealed that Lagos singularly drives whatever growth we record in Nigeria. And this is a wakeup call to other states and zones.

Granted that Lagos was a federal capital, and has the advantage of the ports, still a visionless set of leaders could have made a pig's meal of the place rather than the moderate hope we see today. Look at Abuja. Built from the scratch, maintained fairly well under military administrations, but gone to the dogs under civilians. Why should we be getting the best ideas about governance from Lagos rather than Abuja that is a clean, prepared, but now pretty messed-up template? It's down to the quality of leadership – or lack of it.

In my humble opinion, leading Nigeria going forward is not just a question for saving money, even though saving money and expending right is a critical factor and the subject of this writeup.

One of the candidates, Mr. Peter Obi, has created a niche around the need to be frugal and that is good and should be taken on board if he does not win the elections. As a strategy, it is however not adequate to run a country. There must be a big vision, and the ability to drive that vision.

One may even have the argument between having a leader who is very frugal but has no overarching vision for greatness, for business, for the emancipation of his people, for economic growth, for a repositioning of his people's image in the comity of nations, on one hand, and a wheeler-dealer leader who has a vision for all of the above and the sheer grit, experience and craziness. Many people will opt for the latter. Only people with limited vision, and an even more limited understanding of the issues on ground will prefer the former.

Many of Peter Obi's supporters are like that, including others who are supporting him for emotional reasons. I have been doing great research into the history and evolution of American democracy – the one we copied – and I realized that some of the greatest leaders they've had have not been puritan. One of the most corrupt people ever in political history – Boss William Tweed – is also credited with the gravitas which exploded what is New York City today – especially Manhattan. All the skyscrapers that transformed the landscapes of Chicago, Los Angeles and New York, were not put together by slackers and penny-pinchers. And all that infrastructure are a thing of pride to every American today.

But I want to push today that if Obi does not win, and my preference – Tinubu – wins, or if Atiku wins, we need people who are ready to serve Nigeria for free. It cannot certainly be business as usual. We need this even if its for two years. It will sound very annoying especially to our



dyed-in-the-wool politicians, especially those who have spent great amounts of money to get into office. It's bad enough that in this season and with current reforms, even the president has made the prospects of his own party ever more difficult.

So, who am I to tell anyone to work for free? I must however say that I was ready to serve for free had I by any long stretch of the imagination become president in 2019. I was also ready to work for free if I had been appointed into government in 2015 or whenever. I believe Nigerians must now roll up their sleeves and sacrifice if they get into government, given that there is a need to atone and set the right examples.

Funny enough, Obi has not promised anything like this; it is only assumed that his frugality will also translate to sacrifice. But Adebayo of the SDP has, on more than one occasion. I understand that it is an incredibly difficult thing to promise and practice. Still, that is the epoch we find ourselves. I recall that in 2015, this was one of the triggers which made me suspect that the Buhari government had derailed. The whole country had invested a lot of emotions in his presidency.

But upon appointing ministers, many of them started asking for all sorts of benefits. I recall when they started agitating for houses. Ibe Kachikwu complained that he lived in his own house (I wondered if he would want to stay in my own), Aregbesola or was it Lai Mohammed, said he lived in a rented house or was squatting in someone's house. From then, I saw that they missed a great vision and Buhari himself was busy grappling with whether to keep to his words of open asset declaration, like Umaru Musa

Yar'Adua, or to go the way of the others like Jonathan and Obasanjo. The rest is history.

How feasible can this no salary service be? For how long? How do appointees and electees survive given that they are meant to give up previous appointments or businesses to come and serve in government? What kind of basic provisions could be made for them, that will ensure that they feel the pinch without going hungry – they and their families? How can this be done so that the citizens will understand that these new servants are going the extra mile, and so they also cooperate in many ways?

If Nigeria will attain the next levels in development, and driving revenues, working a larger national budget, inspiring citizens to far bigger greatness, this I believe is a necessity. Certainly, we cannot expect anything good out of a continuation of the rather wasteful status quo. The holy books asked 'shall we continue in sin and expect the grace to abound?' We cannot preach to the people of Nigeria to chip in a little more and straighten their ways so that we all live in a sane society like the 'abroad' that Nigerians are today emptying into, without such a sacrificial move.

How do we build infrastructure that makes everybody's lives easier with our commonwealth if we don't free up enough money? How do we get our people to pay more taxes, and be ready to redeem fines, and fees that are due as a result of their engagements with government and society at large, if they don't see that those in government have belled the cat?

The other day, news came out that Mr Obi's Next Cash and Carry Limited had been deregistered in the United Kingdom. This happens after a company fails to submit its company house annual returns for

two consecutive years. Of course, the explanation by the Obi campaign tried to gaslight an issue we should all learn from. I have an idea that – like the UK – Nigeria integrates its Corporate Affairs Commission, Federal Inland Revenue and its banks. Like the UK, nobody should be able to run a company account in a given year, except they show their verifiable company house return (from CAC). Whereas the company house is primarily concerned with knowing about the general state of affairs of a company – it's directors, address, shareholding etc. – it should also demand to see tax compliance. Updating Company House records should be compulsory for every company. So also should be tax compliance for active companies.

If we adopt the UK style, tax revenues should bump up considerably. There are many companies doing good turnovers in Nigeria but paying no taxes. Banks should not be entertaining such companies under normal circumstances. A corporate account that hasn't updated its company house returns in a given year should be flagged by the bank's system. For now, compliance with Company House returns is less than 5% in Nigeria, according to CAC stats.

If Nigeria is to adopt such paradigm shift, we need acceptability by the people, and those who run government must be credible. That is asking for a lot. Yet, this is mere fulfilment of obligations to one's country. We don't have to keep looking in all the wrong places for the prosperity of Nigeria. My elderly friend, Prof N. N. Susungi (a Camerounian presidential candidate) told me years back that in terms of its economics, Nigeria is like a large grapefruit

with little juice in it. Most of the money that should go into infrastructure and collective development goes into private hands, religious houses, and different gangs like motor-park gangs registered as unions. The state has consistently lost grounds as a result of ineptitude, laziness, fraudulent collaboration with these same entities, and general lack of credibility. At the top of factors that erode credibility from public servants – elected or selected – is the usual greed; the desire for shiny little expensive toys that the state must pay for, and the desire to acquire as much money as quickly as possible because public office is seen as God's blessings to loot, not the strict avenue for sacrifice that it truly is.

So, who is ready to serve Nigeria for free? And how long can you sustain it? Are you ready to live in your own house, not put the government under pressure, and to drive your car while doing public service? Do you have a reserve to stave you over? Are you ready to do this for the accolades only, sans the money? Coupled with the ongoing cashless policy (as much as it is almost bungled), such an initiative may help in focusing us on a great infrastructure leap, lessening the pains of a debt overhang, and unleashing considerable resources for the social services that will lead to a true repositioning of Nigeria. This may be a very critical investment that we have to make in Nigeria.

Topé Fasua, an economist, author, blogger, entrepreneur, and recent presidential candidate of the Abundant Nigeria Renewal Party (ANRP), can be reached through topsyfash@yahoo.com.

YOU can find many types of jobs available online, some of which do not require any previous experience. If you're looking to get started in a field but don't have any experience yet, performing one of these jobs can be a great place to start. Even better, there are online, no experience jobs that it's even possible to find an online job that requires no experience but still offers a good salary. In this guide, we cover some top online, no experience jobs that also pay a good salary.

Data entry specialist

National average salary: \$31,911 per year
 Primary duties: A data entry specialist compiles information and inputs it into an electronic database. They must be able to quickly and accurately record information from multiple sources, including existing spreadsheets, paper documents or customer orders. Data entry specialists may also review current databases, checking to ensure information is up to date and accurate.

What does a data entry clerk do?

A data entry clerk is an administrative professional who handles routine clerical tasks relating to entering or updating data in a computer system. A data entry clerk's main responsibility is to ensure that the organization's database is accurate and up-to-date. Data entry clerks may also assist accounts receivable with duties like processing invoices for payout and reviewing and processing order returns. Some additional responsibilities may include: Collecting data and inputting information into databases, Reviewing records for accuracy, Updating databases with new or revised information as necessary, Performing regular backups of information to ensure data preservation, Retrieving records and electronic files from the database, Sorting and organizing paper records or notes after data entry and preparing digital materials or files for printing

Flexibility: Many data entry clerks work in fast-paced environments that require them to be flexible and efficient while maintaining accuracy. Duties may require the professional to pause work on data entry to retrieve a file or report.

Computer literacy: Data entry is a core task for these clerks, so they must quickly and accurately type to maintain efficiency. Additionally, data entry clerks work with various computer systems and online databases, requiring a basic knowledge of computers and the ability to quickly learn new systems.

Communication: These clerks often have to communicate with individuals within the organization, such as management or operations personnel. If the clerk is client-facing, they may have to communicate with customers to gather and update database information.

Health and wellness coach

National average salary: \$35,368 per year. Primary duties: A health and wellness coach helps clients pursue a healthier lifestyle. This typically includes creating a positive diet and exercise plan as they work towards a health goal. Health and wellness coaches also regularly check-in with their clients to ensure they are making progress and to make adjustments as necessary.

Transcriber

National average salary: \$36,302 per year. Primary duties: A transcriber listens to audio and video recordings and creates a written document of the audio. Typical audio and video files include doctor's notes, speeches and meetings. Transcribers must quickly type and accurately record the contents of the audio recording. Sometimes, the transcriber also adds in missing information for additional context, such as things seen in video but not heard.

4. Research assistant : National average salary: \$37,718 per year. Primary duties: A research assistant helps gather information, review sources and collect data. Research assistants also help prepare documents for presentation or submission. Depending on their specific project, research assistants may also prepare interview questions, respond to emails, provide updates through a website and generate progress reports.

What is a research assistant?

A research assistant is a person who helps experts find information through experiments or other research. They can work in a variety of fields to help advance

knowledge and spread new ideas. Below are a few common fields of study for research assistants:

What does a research assistant do?

The day-to-day duties of a research assistant can vary depending on their field, but there are a few common tasks that many research assistants complete. Here are some duties of a research assistant: Conducting experiments

Research assistants can assist experts in performing experiments to prove hypotheses. Experts can also direct research assistants to conduct experiments independently. A research assistant can design experiments to ensure accurate results and collecting data.

A research assistant can assist with an



Digital economy and job creation II



experiment or study by collecting data for experts. This data can allow scientists and other experts to draw conclusions about their field of study. Reports can feature the data that research assistants gather, as this data can help make advancements in science or knowledge.

Analyzing data

Research assistants may also analyze the data they collect from an academic study or experiment. Research assistants can use data visualization tools to record, compare and present data to others. Studies and reports can also feature data analysis by research assistants.

Proofreading research reports and other documentation After an expert conducts an experiment or a study and writes a report, a research assistant can fact-check and proofread the study to ensure its quality before the expert sends the study to be published. This quality assurance is an important aspect of research because it can ensure that calculations are correct and reduce misunderstandings of scientific data.

Maintaining research equipment

A research assistant can help maintain research equipment that experts use during research. This can include equipment used to conduct experiments and equipment used for research, like a microfiche reader. Proper maintenance of research equipment can help ensure accuracy in experiments.

Organizing studies

A research assistant can organize and recruit participants for research studies. They can also design surveys to ensure accurate data collection.

Reviewing facts: Research assistants can find and review academic literature to confirm facts for the experts they work with. This type of research can ensure the accuracy of studies, experiments and published reports.

Writing grant applications: Research assistants may help write grant applications for research funding. These applications can determine the budget for a research project.

Common skills for research assistants

Here are some skills that you can gain to be

interest.

Live chat agent

National average salary: \$43,428 per year
 Primary duties: A live chat agent interacts with customers through an online text chat system. They provide customer support by answering questions or resolving their issues. Some companies train live chat agents in sales and encourage them to upsell customers when the opportunity arises.

Travel consultant

National average salary: \$47,553 per year
 Primary duties: A travel consultant helps clients find and plan their travel arrangements. They must research different travel destination options, including transportation, lodging and activities. Travel consultants work closely with a client to help them envision how they want their trip to go. They then provide recommendations and make travel arrangements for the client. Travel consultants also handle any issues that may arise during the process, such as canceled flights or hotel closings.

Translator

National average salary: \$47,393 per year
 Primary duties: A translator rephrases audio, video and text from one language into another. Sources can include speeches, documents, television programs, books and more. They ensure the translation accurately captures the intent and original meaning of the source.

Customer service representative

National average salary: \$47,375 per year
 Primary duties: A customer service representative answers customer questions and provides solutions to problems. They are very familiar with the products their company produces and can fulfill tasks such as taking orders and processing return requests. Customer service representatives typically interact with customers over the phone, via email or through a web-based interface.

Content writer

National average salary: \$49,782 per year
 Primary duties: A content writer produces written documents for their clients. They create materials such as blog posts, articles, press releases, website copy, email copy and books. Content writers must produce a polished final product that fits the needs their clients.

Tutor

National average salary: \$54,527 per year
 Primary duties: A tutor works with students, helping them with specific school subjects. A tutor may draw up lesson plans, produce practice material for their students or help students study assigned work from school. They also help students prepare for examinations and presentations.

ESL teacher

National average salary: \$54,927 per year
 Primary duties: An English as a second language (ESL) teacher works with students who wish to learn English. They devise lesson plans based on the student's native language and provide feedback on how to improve their English skills. ESL teachers work with children and adults who wish to speak English more fluently.

Proofreader

National average salary: \$55,069 per year
 Primary duties: A proofreader reviews written text, looking for grammatical and spelling errors. Companies and individuals hire proofreaders to analyze emails, documents, presentations and more to ensure their copy is free of any errors.

a more competitive research assistant candidate: Computer skills: Most research assistants use computers to enter data and conduct research.

Math skills: Strong skills in math are helpful with statistical analysis and other data-driven tasks.

Reading comprehension: Being able to read academic articles and draw conclusions from reading scientific studies can help you when you're conducting research.

Critical thinking skills: Survey design requires critical thinking skills to form clear questions without biased language.

Analytical skills: You can use analytical skills to draw conclusions from your research.

Organizational skills: Staying organized can help research assistants maintain equipment and conduct accurate experiments.

Average salary of a research assistant: According to Indeed Salaries, the average base salary of a research assistant was recorded here at \$37,407 per year, although salary averages are frequently updated. A research assistant's pay can vary depending on their experience level, location and field of study. Colleges and universities are the institutions that are most likely to offer research assistant jobs. However, some hospitals, laboratories and legal offices also hire research assistants to help conduct research.

The five highest paying states for research assistants include California, Washington, Vermont, Massachusetts and West Virginia. The highest paying cities for research assistants are Chicago, New York, Philadelphia and Los Angeles.

Telemarketer:

National average salary: \$40,655 per year
 Primary duties: A telemarketer calls people from a given directory for marketing and sales purposes. It is the telemarketer's responsibility to either generate leads and pass them along to the sales department or to sell the products themselves. Telemarketers typically use a provided script to make sales or gauge a contact's level of

In the last installment we stated that the first reason for the coming of Jesus was to save and the we left off where we began to introduce the second benefit which is that Christ removed you from the authority of darkness; Satan has no right to afflict you. As you believe these things, they are activated in your life. Philemon 1:6 says, **"That the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus"**. There is no more spiritual death for any man that is in Christ Jesus.

Today I want you to know that in this life, Satan has no right to cut short your life. I am not saying that anybody that is born again will live forever, but God will fulfill your days. He can preserve your life, and He will preserve your life until you are good and ready to go; until you have finished your assignment on this earth, then you will sleep in God when you are full of age and of good days. You will live life on this earth full of the blessings of the Lord and when you are ready to go to be with the Lord, you will not go on the devil's terms but on your own terms.

This means that sickness does not have to take you out. Accidents do not have to take you out. Satan's vices do not have to check you out of this earth. The anointing will preserve you if you learn to yield to it, and will keep you in a state of wholeness. The anointing will help you to discover and fulfill your life's assignments and you will not leave this earth until when you are good and done. This is good news to all believers in Christ Jesus!

That is God's plan for your life, dear ones, that as you are connected to this anointing and learn to walk with Jesus, He will instruct you, teach you, educate you, preserve you, protect you, provide for you all the days of your life. He will help you fight every battle of your life and you will win. He will move you into the fullness of your destiny, and safely guide you into glory.

Proverbs 12:28 says, **"In the way of righteousness is life; and in the pathway thereof there is no death"**. When you become born again, you become the righteousness of God in Christ according to 2 Corinthians 5:21. God looks at you and credits all of Jesus' righteousness to your account, because you have accepted Jesus and the work of redemption which He has done

for you. Jesus stands as your righteousness. And in that place there is no death.

This anointing is there to preserve your life literally and spiritually; to cut you off from eternal damnation, spiritual death, and to cut you off from premature death and any other manifestation of death such as sickness in your body, poverty, and lack. All of these are manifestations of spiritual

"Treasures and wickedness profit nothing; but righteousness delivereth from death". Then Proverbs 12:28, says, **"In the way of righteousness is life; and in the pathway thereof there is no death,"** meaning it is a pathway of life. And I say to you, in the name of Jesus, there is no death in your path. Your eternal future is bright and your future in this world is bright because of



In the way of righteousness is life



"
This anointing is there to preserve your life literally and spiritually; to cut you off from eternal damnation, spiritual death, and to cut you off from premature death and any other manifestation of death such as sickness in your body, poverty, and lack. All of these are manifestations of spiritual death. The spirit of death has no right of dominion over your life. The blood sacrifice of Jesus has tamed the spirit of death. The Bible says, in the way of righteousness is life and in the pathway thereof, there is no death (Prov. 12:28). You will live out your days and fulfill your years. You will live out your life and then go to be with Jesus when your earthly work is done, free from sickness and disease.
"

death.

The spirit of death has no right of dominion over your life. The blood sacrifice of Jesus has tamed the spirit of death. The Bible says, in the way of righteousness is life and in the pathway thereof, there is no death (Prov. 12:28). You will live out your days and fulfill your years. You will live out your life and then go to be with Jesus when your earthly work is done, free from sickness and disease.

You will sleep in Jesus, after having fulfilled God's great plan for your life. You will also pass this legacy of the anointing to your family; to your lineage and to your generations. This is God's plan for you and understanding how to walk with this anointing will guarantee that.

Proverbs 10:2 says,

that anointing. That anointing will preserve you. He will protect you; He will guide you; He will lead you; He will protect you.

We see another companion scripture in Proverbs 11:4, which says, **"Riches profits not in the day of wrath: but righteousness delivereth from death."** When the Bible repeats certain things, it means that God wants us to take note of it very seriously. This part of knowing Jesus as your Lord and Saviour, and sharing, and partaking in the anointing He carries will preserve you in this life, and deliver you from eternal death, and from Satan cutting your life short on this earth, and manifesting anything that the spirit of death has to offer. You can live your life free from the mark and terror of spiritual death. That's the anointing that

Jesus carries. He redeems our life from destruction.

Open your mouth and boldly declare that, **"The Lord Jesus Christ redeems my life from destruction. I have no fear"**.

Now, the third benefit of the anointing that Jesus carries is that it delivers mankind from the curses of life. Galatians 3:13 says, **"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree,"** verse 14 adds, **"That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."**

We have to understand that the scripture teaches us that when Adam sinned in the Garden of Eden, he brought a curse upon all mankind. God told Adam in Gen.2:17, **"...in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."** Now, Adam, did not physically die, but the death the Bible was talking about is that his nature was corrupted. Sin, which is spiritual death, came into him. And sin carries a curse.

The word "curse" means "to be empowered to fail", "to be energized to fail", just like the word "blessing" means "to be

empowered to prosper, succeed and do well in life, to make progress in life". Now, Jesus and the anointing He carries is the blessing- the blessing of righteousness, the blessing of eternal life. He carries that anointing to prosper men; to cause you to excel and succeed in life.

The curse which comes with sin is the empowerment to fail. But blessed be God, the Bible shows that Christ in His office as the Anointed One delivers us from the curse - the curse that came with man's sin. Christ, the anointed One and His anointing **has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us. For it is written, cursed (empowered to fail) is everyone that hangeth on a tree** (Gal. 3:13). So Jesus fulfilled this scripture, on our behalf. He was put on a physical tree, which is, the cross. Remember that the cross was made out of wood. it came from a tree.

The word "curse" means "to be empowered to fail", "to be energized to fail", just like the word "blessing" means "to be empowered to prosper, succeed and do well in life, to make progress in life".

☞ Now, Jesus and the anointing He carries is the blessing- the blessing of righteousness, the blessing of eternal life. He carries that anointing to prosper men; to cause you to excel and succeed in life.

INTERNATIONAL

Will Russia's struggle help or hurt Taiwan

In the lead-up to Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, Beijing and Moscow doubled down on their close relationship. While Chinese President Xi Jinping and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin have a long history of working together, they publicly cemented their ties with a "no-limits" partnership just weeks before the war began.

THE timing of the meeting and the subsequent invasion, after the Beijing Winter Olympics had concluded, led many observers to wonder whether Xi knew the war was coming. They also wondered, as Russian troops rolled into Ukraine, whether Taiwan was next.

Superficially at least, Ukraine and Taiwan appear to have much in common. Both are democracies whose territories have historically been claimed by much larger and better-armed neighbours. Beijing has long pledged to "reunify" with Taiwan by force or by peace by 2049, the year the Chinese Communist Party has set for the "great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation", 100 years after their victory in the country's Civil War.

Tensions across the Taiwan Strait rose further last August as Nancy Pelosi, then the United States House of Representatives speaker, became the highest-ranking US official to visit Taipei in 25 years. China responded with a [series of war exercises](#) around Taiwan and ramped up its rhetoric. In 2022, Beijing sent a record 1,737 flights into Taiwan's Air Defence Identification Zone, which includes the airspace around Taiwan and the coast of China, according to data compiled by Gerald C Brown and Ben Lewis, independent defence analysts who track such incursions. This was more than the combined numbers for the previous four years.

Now, on the eve of the anniversary of the invasion of Ukraine, Russia's struggles to make advances in the war have once again given rise to questions about what lessons China may have learned from its close ally. Will China conclude that it might be better to attack Taiwan before it is better prepared to defend itself? Or has Putin's war shown the perils of rushing into such a conflict?

Predicting China's behaviour is a challenge because its decision-making is opaque to much of the outside world. Instead, China watchers often look at past actions and subtle changes, such as in the wording of official statements. From these, analysts interviewed by Al Jazeera reached a similar conclusion: While there is reason to worry in the long term, China is unlikely to attack Taiwan soon.

Unsurprisingly, the question of when and if China plans to invade Taiwan is firmly on the radar of the US intelligence community. CIA Director William Burns recently said although Xi was likely "unsettled" by Russia's failures in Ukraine, he had still told China's military to be ready to invade Taiwan by 2027.

"We know as a matter of intelligence that he's instructed the People's Liberation Army to be ready by 2027 to conduct a successful invasion," Burns was quoted as saying at a recent Georgetown University event. "Now, that does not mean that he's decided to conduct an invasion in 2027, or any other year, but it's a reminder of the seriousness of his focus and his ambition."

Yet there are key differences between Xi and Putin that are likely to steer the Chinese leader away from pursuing an early attack on Taiwan, experts suggested.

"One of the assessments is that Putin acted very impulsively because



Putin



Ing-wen

of his imperial ambitions, and he has his own worldview," Tai Ming Cheung, director of the UC Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation at the University of California, San Diego.

"Xi, I think, he's much more pragmatic. He's very cautious. I don't think he's hot-headed enough and he's not a risk taker, and an invasion against Taiwan is one of the biggest acts that he would do. It's a very high-wire act and the chances of success are not clear."

If a full-scale invasion did not go by plan, Cheung said, China could face "very, very severe" consequences, and Xi might not be willing to take such a gamble right now.

China would also struggle to weather economic implications, like a blockade or further sanctions in addition to ones that the West has already imposed, at a time when its economy has slowed, said Ivy Kwek, a China fellow at the International Crisis Group, a Brussels-based think tank that analyses global conflict risk. Its international reputation would also be severely damaged, she said.

Bonnie Glaser, managing director of German Marshall Fund's Indo-Pacific programme, told Al Jazeera that at the moment, "common sense" would suggest that Beijing is wary of following in Russia's footsteps, even as it continues with what she described as "grey zone tactics" intent on lowering Taiwanese morale. These include misinformation campaigns and cyber-warfare, as well as diplomatic and economic pressure aimed at isolating Taiwan's government.

Though Ukraine and Taiwan might appear to have plenty in common, analysts caution against drawing direct parallels between the Eurasian and East Asian hotspots.

Where Russia and Ukraine share a land border, Taiwan lies 180km (112 miles) across the Taiwan Strait from China, requiring an invasion force by sea supported by air power. Landing in Taiwan is notoriously difficult due

to its mountainous geography and limited number of beaches suitable for such an operation.

Despite a number of tense moments over the past year, Beijing has yet to rule out "peaceful reunification" as an alternative option to war. Also important is to consider what has not been said. During the recent 20th Congress in October, when the Communist Party typically sets the agenda for the next five years, Xi notably did not change his messaging on Taiwan, nor did he signal "urgency to achieve reunification", Glaser said. There is also "no clear evidence of intent", she said.

Last week, Beijing also welcomed visitors from Taiwan's opposition party, the more China-friendly Kuomintang, further underlining that it has not ruled out alternatives to war.

Much of the tension in the Taiwan Strait over the past year might not be a sign of military preparations. It could be more a "result of a deterioration of the US-China relationship – particularly after Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan last year – than a direct consequence of the war on Ukraine," Kwek told Al Jazeera. She predicted that if new US House Speaker Kevin McCarthy visits Taiwan later this year, as has been indicated by Washington, it will further increase tensions.

Greater US attention, however, may also act as a short-term deterrent against Chinese use of force, she said. Since the Ukraine war began, the US has worked to shore up security partnerships with regional allies like Australia, Japan and the Philippines, and has fast-tracked a bill to authorise up to \$10bn in defence assistance to Taiwan.

Meanwhile, China has been quickly learning lessons about conventional wars in the 21st century, even as it engages in a major military modernisation campaign.

It had initially set itself the goal of rivaling the US in military power by

2035. The timeline was updated in October 2020 to the year 2027, but that likely reflects concerns about the US more than lessons from any other geopolitical conflict, said University of California's Cheung.

Putin's war has, if anything, posed serious questions for Beijing's leadership.

The US wars in the Middle East since the 1990s, especially the Gulf War and the 2003 invasion of Iraq, "have been very short, very intensive, very high-tech wars", Cheung said. The current war between Russia and Ukraine has been very different.

"So we get these two very contrasting wars, one is quick and decisive and the other is drawn out, attritional, and is grinding to a stalemate," he said. That has implications for China in terms of what war it is "going to be preparing to fight".

The war in Ukraine might also have re-emphasised to Beijing the need for modern, cutting-edge tools. China has likely seen the importance of weapons systems such as hypersonic missiles, Yurii Poita, head of the Asia-Pacific section at Ukraine's Center for Army, Conversion and Disarmament Studies.

Russia debuted its arsenal of hypersonic missiles in Ukraine, using them to destroy underground arsenals at the start of the war and to attack the port city of Odesa. China is expected to continue to invest in further developing the technology, Poita said. Moving five and even six times the speed of sound, these missiles are nearly impossible to intercept and can evade early warning systems.

Another key lesson that Xi has likely drawn is that blackmail is "very effective against the West", said Poita. In February 2022, Putin raised the alert on Russia's nuclear forces and then in September 2022 told the world he was not "bluffing" about Russia's nuclear capabilities. Threats like these have kept

Western troops from entering the conflict or imposing a no-fly zone around Russia.

Alongside its own nuclear arsenal and stockpile of missiles, China has a clout far beyond Russia as the "world's factory" and second-largest economy, which means it can engage in both nuclear and economic blackmail.

But Taiwan has also been taking notes and has seen how the Ukrainian military has used relatively inexpensive weapons in asymmetric warfare, Poita told Al Jazeera, including small and portable Stinger surface-to-air missiles, Javelin anti-tank missiles, and harpoon anti-ship missiles.

Its government has seen how basic technology – FM radio equipment to commercial satellites – can play a key role in keeping citizens informed while also gaining global support, Crystal Chen-yi Tu, a postdoctoral fellow at Taiwan's Institute for National Defence and Security Research.

Elon Musk's Starlink satellites have provided Ukraine and its military with ongoing internet access through the war. FM stations have played an important role in maintaining civilian morale by providing news, music and entertainment, especially to those stuck in air raid shelters.

Media and NGO reports have also played a decisive role in the Ukraine war. The most stunning example may be news of Russian war crimes in Bucha in the early days of the invasion, after which the number of countries providing military support jumped from three to 35, according to the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

While Taiwan has yet to create a territorial defence force like Ukraine – which China could view as a provocation – its President Tsai Ing-wen raised mandatory national service in January for male citizens from four months to one year. The move follows nearly eight years of efforts to strengthen the military, which was neglected for much of the 2000s due to its associations with Taiwan's previous martial law era.

However, bolstering its national unity to work together and resist surrender could prove to be among Taiwan's greatest strengths in the event of an attack, Mathieu Duchâtel, director of the Asia programme at France's Institut Montaigne, told Al Jazeera.

Much of this involves solidifying Taiwanese identity as independent of China, a trend that has steadily grown over the past 30 years, according to regular polling. Ukraine has shown that pride in an independent identity is a powerful tool.

Duchâtel referred to what he described as Russia's "misperception" about Ukraine and democratic societies more broadly – that they are weaker, and that their citizens prioritise consumption-driven lifestyles over all else.

"I think there is a similar Chinese feeling vis-a-vis Taiwan – you hear sometimes, 'We just have to cut their access to the internet, and they would surrender,'" he said. "But I think China has to reconsider because the Ukraine war reveals the actual resilience of democratic societies."

Source: Al Jazeera

INTERNATIONAL

Sankara's widow boycotts reburial

THE reburial of the charismatic leader has taken place 35 years after his killing

Burkina Faso's most famous revolutionary Thomas Sankara has been reburied in the capital by the military junta - despite his widow and children boycotting the funeral.

Sankara was laid to rest at the spot where he was assassinated in 1987.

His immediate family wanted the reburial at a site that would "appease hearts", not at the "crime scene".

The dispute is seen as unfortunate, as the funeral was aimed at honouring a man revered as a national hero.

Sankara was regarded as a pan-Africanist with a modest lifestyle who spoke out against neo-colonialism.

His new grave is in front of an imposing statue of him at the Thomas Sankara Memorial Park in the capital, Ouagadougou.

Some of his relatives attended the funeral, but his widow, Maria, and children were absent.

In an earlier statement issued on behalf of the family, they said Sankara should have been laid to rest at a public garden or at the cemetery from where his body was exhumed in 2015 as part of investigations into his assassination.

"We believed and continue to believe that it is fundamental that a space be found that allows us to gather and appease hearts, and not divide us and increase resentment," the statement said.

The military government said



Sankara

the site was chosen in the "national interest", and because of "security imperatives".

Sankara was Burkina Faso's president when he was shot dead, along with 12 others, by a hit squad.

The assassination opened the way for his friend, Blaise Compaoré, to seize power in a coup.

The 12 killed with him were also reburied in coffins draped in the national flag at a ceremony attended by the junta's prime minister and other officials and dignitaries.

"We thank the authorities who took part in writing an important page of our history," Reuters news agency quoted Sankara's uncle Mousbila as saying.

Compaoré was overthrown in a popular uprising in 2014, and was later sentenced in absentia to life in prison for complicity in Sankara's assassination.

He is exiled in Ivory Coast, and denies involvement in the murder.

Burkina Faso has been in political turmoil since his overthrow, and the security situation has worsened as militant Islamists wage a brutal insurgency.

It has led to the military seizing power once again, but it has continued with efforts to honour Sankara.

Many people are, however, disappointed that the junta and his family failed to reach agreement on his reburial.

They feel that 35 years after their hero's killing, he should be left in peace.

RESCUERS have found the bodies of all four people on board a small plane which crashed into an active Philippine volcano last week.

Authorities on Thursday confirmed the deaths of the two Filipino pilots and two Australian passengers.

Search teams had scoured the slopes of the Mayon volcano since Sunday, when the aircraft wreckage was spotted about 300m (985ft) from the crater.

Teams now faced the challenge of safely retrieving the bodies, officials said.

Local Filipino authorities say they will investigate the cause of the plane's crash.

The Cessna 340 aircraft went missing on Saturday shortly after departing for Manila from a local airport several kilometres from Mayon, one of the Philippines' most active volcanoes that last erupted in 2018.

There's a danger of steam explosions and rock slides from the crater as Mayon remains under the second lowest in a five-tier warning system, according to state volcanologists' daily monitoring on Thursday.

Heavy rain can also wash down debris from Mayon's slopes, according to the bulletin. The volcano that's known for its perfect cone shape has been slightly inflated since 2020, scientists said.

The Australian government confirmed the deaths of its two citizens on Thursday. Simon

Bodies found in Philippines plane wreck

Chipperfield and Karthi Santhanam had worked as consultants for Filipino power company Energy Corp.

The company also identified the pilots - Rufino James Crisostomo Jr. and Joel Martin.

Australia's foreign minister extended her condolences to the families of the crash victims.

"The families of those who we have lost will be grieving and I express not only our sympathy and condolences, but to say to them, our hearts go out to them in this time of great grief," Penny Wong said.

It was the second time in as many months that a Cessna plane went missing in the Philippines. The first fell off the radar on 24 January and had not been found.

Cessnas are commonly used in the archipelago nation for inter-island hops and pilot training.



Marcos Jr.

Power outages, travel disruption continue across US

A massive winter storm that has brought blizzards and subfreezing temperatures to much of the US continues to cause disruption.

The number of customers without electricity has grown to over 800,000 across five states on day two of the storm -

680,000 in Michigan alone.

More than 700 US flights have been cancelled so far on Thursday, according to FlightAware data.

Meanwhile, other parts of the US brace for record high temperatures.

Temperatures in Washington DC are expected to reach 80F (26C) on Thursday, a February-high not seen since 1874.

On Wednesday, McAllen, Texas, recorded a sweltering 95F. And in Lexington, Kentucky, and Nashville, Tennessee, high temperatures shattered records stretching back more than a century.

Other parts of the US, however, are battling extreme winter weather.

In the northern states, blizzards have forced schools, businesses and even state legislatures to close.

Minnesota's governor Tim Walz called in the National Guard to assist with motorists stranded on the wintry roads.

The storm led to the death of a volunteer fire fighter in

Michigan, the New York Times reported. The cause of death was not mentioned but local news outlets said that it was because of a downed powerline.

In southern California, known to be warm and sunny year-round, a winter storm warning was issued for millions who were told to brace for unusually cold temperatures, blistery winds and snow.

High winds were also an issue in parts of the US, uprooting a massive redwood tree which then "speared" into the living room of a home in California's Bay Area, local media reported. Fire officials there said a one-year-old baby was in critical condition.

The Bay Area fire department said they had been flooded with calls of downed trees, trees blocking homes, and power lines clogging roads caused by the wind.

In Canada, ice pellets and freezing rain were forecast overnight after parts of southern Ontario were blanketed in snow during the evening rush hour on

Wednesday.

Gaza-Israel exchange deadly fire

THE Israeli military has carried out air strikes in the Gaza Strip after Palestinian militants in the territory fired rockets at southern Israel.

Six rockets were launched from Gaza at dawn, five of which were intercepted, the military said. Shortly afterwards, Israeli warplanes hit what it identified as two Hamas militant sites.

No-one is reported to have been hurt.

The exchange follows an Israeli raid in Nablus in the occupied West Bank on Wednesday which killed 11 Palestinians.

Both Hamas, which controls Gaza, and another militant group, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, had issued threats of retaliation.

UN Middle East envoy Tor Wennesland, who is attempting to de-escalate the situation, travelled to Gaza on Thursday to meet Hamas leaders, according to Reuters news agency.

"I am deeply disturbed by the continuing cycle of violence and appalled by the loss of civilian lives," he said before the reported trip. "I urge all sides to refrain from

steps that could further enflame an already volatile situation."

Israeli warplanes struck two sites in central and northern Gaza two hours after the rocket launches.

No militant group has so far said it was behind Thursday's rocket launches, which caused sirens to sound in southern Israeli cities and towns near Gaza, including Ashkelon and Sderot.

There were small explosions in the sky as most were intercepted by Israel's Iron Dome defence system, according to the Israeli military. One rocket fell in an open area.

The military said two hours later that its fighter jets struck a weapons manufacturing site and a military compound belonging to Hamas in central and northern Gaza in response.

Video footage posted online reportedly showed explosions in the al-Bureij and al-Shati refugee camps.

On Wednesday morning, Israeli forces entered the

busy old city of Nablus, in the northern West Bank, for what they said was an operation to arrest three wanted Palestinian militants. However, they were quickly caught up in a gun battle with armed fighters.

Israeli troops eventually fired shoulder-launched missiles at a house in which the three militants were holed up, having said that they would not surrender. The Israeli military said the men were involved in the killing of an Israeli soldier last year and were planning imminent attacks.

Several civilians were also among those killed in the raid, including three elderly men.

A video also showed young men, apparently unarmed, running away as gunshots are heard before one falls to the ground. The Israeli military said it was reviewing the footage.

Local hospitals have been struggling to treat dozens of people who were injured, many with bullet wounds.

One doctor told the BBC's Tom Bateman that this was one of the worst events of this kind that he had seen in recent years.

A 15-year-old boy with a wound to the leg said he had been standing near militants when he was hit by Israeli gunfire.

A senior Palestinian official called it a "massacre", while Hamas said its patience was "running out" and Palestinian Islamic Jihad said it had a "duty" to respond.

Israel has intensified its search-and-arrest raids in the West Bank over the past year, saying it is trying to stem the spate of deadly Palestinian attacks targeting Israelis.

So far this year, more than 60 Palestinians - militants and civilians - have been killed, while 10 Israelis and a Ukrainian have been killed in the same period.

The US, which has been trying to ease spiralling tensions, said on Wednesday that it was "extremely concerned by the levels of violence".



Bidan



Nigerian musicians to look out for



New young and talented artistes made their debuts in the Nigerian music industry in 2022, making the year an impressive one. For some, it was a take-off year, while others saw it as a year to consolidate their gains. These new crops of talents are leveraging on the use of streaming services and social media. Artistes like Ayola, Logos Olori, Yemzzy, Raebel, Shine TTW and others have found their feet in the industry, 2023 might just be a year of no limit for them and some other rising stars. As we began a new year, here is a list of Nigerian artistes to look out for in 2023 in all genres in no particular order.



Ayola

Masters degree at the University of Windsor before moving to Montreal, Quebec. He began writing the songs on Scum in early 2019.

Ayola released his first major project, 'Scum EP', which he described as an Afrosoul sanctuary of emotional wisdom and a frank approach to modern relationship drama. It was released on all major streaming platforms on 20th November 2020. He followed it up with a debut album "Conversation Till Dawn" in late 2021 and had a good run throughout 2022. Ayola has surely earned his reputation as an independent musician to look out for in 2023.

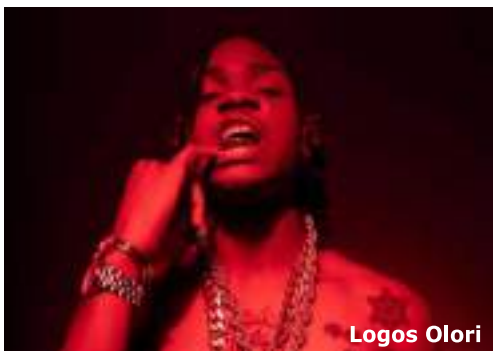
Ayola continues to explore the intersection of beloved genres as a dynamic Nigerian Indie-Pop star in his authentic Naija voice and effortlessly melodic style. The Canada-based singer, whose real name is Abdullah Abubakre is also a prolific songwriter, African Folk, and Afro-Pop act with out-of-box imagination and storytelling proficiency which is impressively enjoyed in his music.

Born in Osun State and raised in Kwara State, Nigeria, Ayola grew up singing at home and listening to the nostalgic Afro-juju songs of King Sunny Ade on road trips with his father.

After getting a taste of the music business while studying in the UK and turning down a record deal to focus on his education, Ayola moved to Windsor in 2016 for his second

VERY few artistes on this list have the penmanship of Logos Olori, even fewer have the uncanny ability to create hit records with seemingly little to no effort. Logos Olori looks prime for a record-breaking 2023, never mind that his last single 'Lale', produced by the biggest producer of 2022 — Magicsticks, was put out in late July 2022.

With his constantly iced out and bedazzled neck/wrist, co-signs from Olamide, Davido, and a slew of others, and his unique take on the Afrobeats sound— Logos is by far our favourite newcomer.



Logos Olori



Yemzzy

AFTER bursting into the music scene less than a few years ago with first single "Only One" in 2020, Yemzzy has cemented his place as one of the talent to watch out for in the year 2023.

In the last two years, the Afropop act has releases different projects to proof he's the new kid in the bloc. His EP, 'Son Of Moses' was Yemzzy's first major project since the beginning of his musical career. He also has a couple of singles and covers to his catalogue.

The EP came after Yemzzy dropped a single titled 'Tire' dedicated to many Nigerian youths who were protesting the current state of Nigeria during the #EndSARS saga.

The song touches on issues like 'Police Brutality', harassing and killings of innocent and peaceful protesters who are demanding for a better Nigeria, corruption' and other topics affecting Nigerians.

The song was a sequel to his previously released "Remember", "Blessings" and "Only One" which are still enjoying massive

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Nigerian celebrities who quietly ended their marriages

Some Nigerian celebrities have kept gist of their separation and divorce away from the public Here are some of your favourite celebrity marriages that ended quietly.



Nigerian music star Dr Sid and Simi got married in 2014 in one of the most talked-about celebrity weddings. They welcomed their first daughter and a second one a few years later.

Trouble in their marriage was first reported in 2017 but the couple stayed away from any public drama. In January 2020, Simi took to her Instagram page where she announced that their marriage was over.

Sid has remained silent about his divorce to date.



Osas Ighodaro, Gbenro Ajibade

Ighodaro and Ajibade met onset of a TV show and got married afterwards to fans and industry delight.

The couple's wedding ceremony was so huge, that it was televised on live TV.

In February 2019, fans and followers of Osas and Gbenro woke up to a rather strange post from the latter. He had in his post called out Osas over her parenting style. It was clear that they were separated at that time.

A few months later, Osas took down Gbenro's name from her Instagram handle. After several months in the United States of America, Gbenro marked his return to Nigeria with an interview on Rubbin Minds in December where he confirmed that they are divorced.



Etinosa Idemudia, Ighrosa

Etinosa Idemudia's marriage to Benin-based lawyer, Ighrosa is the most shortest-lived on this list. The former couple tied the knot in September 2020 and welcomed their first daughter on Christmas Day, the same year.

The movie star had planned to keep the news of her marriage crash away from the prying eyes of the public but the press had other plans. In May 2021, she called out a blogger for breaking the news about her marriage collapse.



Continued on page 26

THEY'S WORLD

With *Henrietta Gonzuk*

Relationship

Steps to manage difficult marriage

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

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

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

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

You may want to start with these few questions;

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

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

FOCUS ON GETTING BETTER

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

CLOSE THE GAPS

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

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

HAVE A SUPPORT SYSTEM

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

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

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

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

SPEAK TO A PROFESSIONAL COUNSELLOR

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



EVERYBODY'S WORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Health

Healthy fruits women should often eat

WOMEN are blessed with a dynamic personality. They are busy in their jobs, managing household, maintaining relationships, and still manage to look gorgeous. They have their tough days too - dealing with mood swings, cramps, energy drains and headaches can be daunting. Moreover, as women age, the nutrition rules change - they get stricter. Some vitamins (like B12, C and D) and minerals (especially iron and calcium) become even more important with time.

This all may seem little overwhelming, but there is one simple way to ease things a little: healthy diet. Higher intakes of vitamin C and linoleic acid and lower intakes of fats and carbohydrates are associated with better skin-ageing appearance. The study also stated that promoting healthy dietary behaviours may have additional health benefits in women. Therefore, to match the nutritional needs, it becomes important to maintain healthy eating habits, which may help prevent bone and muscle loss, fend off ailments like diabetes, breast cancer, and heart-related problems, plus preserve eyesight and protect skin.

Cherries

Cherries are known to combat several health problems that are common in middle age like gout and arthritis. Plus, they are a rich source of antioxidant anthocyanin that boosts energy. Eat a dozen cherries or drink a glass of unsweetened juice three or four times a week. Better still; eat fresh cherries with yogurt to ensure absorption of the beneficial vitamins.

Tomatoes

Tomatoes are an excellent source of the antioxidant lycopene. They are known to protect women against the formation and spread of cancer cells, moreover, preventing



and sugar-laden foods. In the long run, this aids in weight loss."

Avocadoe a 13 to 22 percent lower risk of coronary disease than those who didn't bite into the fruit.

Avocados are not only pleasing to taste buds; they can be a woman's best friend too. This delicious-tasting fruit is packed with healthy monounsaturated fats that can help lower LDL cholesterol (the bad fat that clogs arteries) and soothe a growling tummy.

So ladies, what are you waiting for? Start filling your stock with these fruits to enjoy all these benefits. **Source: Medicalnews.com.**

heart-related disease. According to a study published in the Journal of Nutrition, women consuming greater amounts of lycopene are more likely to look younger. Additionally, higher lycopene

intake is also associated with a healthier dietary pattern. There . To make the most of lycopene antioxidant, consume cooked tomatoes, as it is the most convenient way to benefit from lycopene..

Papaya

Papaya is packed with various health benefiting properties. It is a rich source of vitamin A, C, folate and different phytochemicals. It contains papain, a compound that can cure indigestion and other glycaemic index tract sicknesses. Compared to its other counterparts, papaya has a higher amount of beta-carotene. Sweet-tasting papaya is the perfect solution to problems like diabetes, heart diseases, bloating, etc. This delectable tropical fruit can be used ripe, unripe or dried.

Guava

Guava provides 228.3 grams of vitamin C in just 100 grams of serving as per the United States have proven that guava helps improve blood sugar levels and reduces insulin resistance. The high levels of potassium and soluble fibre contribute to the betterment of heart health. It is also known to reduce the intensity of the pain during menstrual cramps. To improve mental health, eye sight, complexion and metabolism, the consumption of this little fruit can do wonders.

Apples

Apples are rich in pectin fibre, which is known to help lower the body's absorption of excess dietary fats. This helps you feeling full for longer.

Bangalore-based nutritionist Dr. Anju Sood says, "Fibre takes the longest to digest, which helps you keep satiated and prevents you from bingeing on other fattening





Reality Bites

with Palang Kasmi
peekembo@yahoo.com
08036417305, 08095322786

Persons With Disabilities demand inclusion

Persons With Disabilities (PWD's) from different clusters in Plateau have listed some challenges that may disenfranchise them from the 2023 general elections.

They are however hopeful that the challenges will be addressed by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to make their participation in the Presidential and National Assembly Elections billed for Saturday, 25th February 2023 better.

Chairman, Nigeria Association for the Blind, Plateau State, Mr Joshua Yenle, who hails from Kerang district in Mangu LGA Plateau state belongs to the PWD cluster with visual impairment. He vents challenges in some areas concerning the elections, which they are facing.

"With the general elections at the corner, those of us with visual impairments have challenges with INEC, there are no electoral materials or documents in braille such as the electoral act 2022, and other related ones for us".

"There is no adequate sensitisation and engagements. It is only a few days to the elections that the electoral body in Plateau state invited some of us to go to their office in Jos to be showed the braille ballot guide, urging us to step down the information to our members across the state, expecting us to execute the task with our money".

"The electoral umpire is aware of the current hardship the Naira redesign/money policy has caused Nigerians, with cash crunch. And

the federal government is aware that majority of our members are living in abject poverty, even in their office there is no person with visual impairment on their pay roll, INEC are aware of the fact that Plateau state is not a small state, but they want us to do that in less than a week to the elections".

Yenle, who is a Producer and Presenter in the programmes department of Radio Nigeria, Highland fm Jos, and the Plateau Radio Television Corporation disclosed that he is not fully aware of the structures put in place by INEC to ensure their participation in the election.

"We haven't seen any practical efforts apart from lip service, only few political parties have structures that are captured in their respective constitution. Even at that, the leadership roles we are given is only limited to disability matters".

"No any political party has made its platform favourable to allow persons with visual impairments to seek any elective office as there is no record of any visual impaired person who was even for once a flagbearer of any political party, at whatever level in Plateau state. No party constitution and other relevant documents are put in braille so that the Visually Impaired clusters can access information".

Yenle pointed out that another worrisome issue is that it is even difficult to tell the accurate statistics of persons with visual impairment in Plateau state for a number of factors.

"Firstly, there is no government or

non-governmental agency that had carried out successful data collection of our members. Secondly, we still have parents and families who still hide and prevent their love ones with Visual Impairments from coming out. Meanwhile he believes, there are thousands of persons with visual impairments in Plateau state.

To address these numerous problems, Yenle tasked the relevant agencies or institutions to learn or prioritize investing in the needs of PWD's.

"It's amazing when they can meet the needs of others but for our needs, they will say there is no money.

We should be involved in the planning or certain electoral decision-making processes. "Remember there is nothing for us without us", he said.

He enjoined INEC and political parties to always consider or think of the strengths or potentials of Visually Impaired Clusters and not their weaknesses.

For Mr. Moses Breh, a Teacher and University of Jos graduate of Guidance and Counselling from Miango, in Bassa LGA who belongs to the cluster of Persons with Albinism (PWA),

He said compared to the last electoral act there is great improvement for all clusters of PWD's.

He however said his cluster are facing challenges despite INEC's claim to have put modalities to carry them along.

"That's what I read in the new electoral act 2022. But we await the implications to see the claim.

I realize my people lost interest in applying for the adhoc duties. INEC didn't reserve any chance for PWDs in general, the blind, the deaf, the physically challenged in their adhoc staffing and this is not a very good development I must say".

"Political parties talk about us in their manifestos to woo voters, but very few actualize these promises of inclusivity. I shouldn't mention names but can only say we're ready to vote for and work with political parties that are more promising and prepared to carry us along in their projects. We're going to give block votes to any viable candidate in such parties that plans to include us from their campaigns, appointments and employments. I promise you, our votes can make a very sharp difference in the election of any leader across all levels in Plateau State".

"We're citizens too, with equal rights as anyone no matter their position and social standing. We want to have a space to contribute our quota and prove our claim that there's ability in disability".

Mr. Shindol Aaron, from Kombun District of Mangu Local Government of Plateau state is of the Physically Impaired cluster. He expressed displeasure that no PWD is contesting the elections in his state. "I haven't heard any", he lamented listing the different disability clusters to include the visually impaired, hearing impaired, physically impaired, the albino and the lepers.

He disclosed that although the population of persons with disability on the Plateau as at 2006 census was above 86,000 thousand



Joshua Yenle, Chairman Plateau Blind Association of Nigeria

persons, current statistics estimates a population of very close to 200,000 thousand persons with disability on the Plateau which makes the Association of PWD's in the state to have a very strong voice to demand for inclusion in every space available.

He said PWD's are more than ready to go out for the 2023 elections to exercise their civic duty. In the recent past, the state executive of joint national association of persons with disabilities interacted with INEC to know her level of preparedness, and ensure that persons with disabilities are not disenfranchise from performing their civic duty. In the meeting we had with INEC, they told us in clear terms, that there has been a significant improvement from the previous elections which will certainly guarantee more inclusion of persons with disabilities in the forthcoming election. According to the electoral umpire, they have made provision for braille ballot papers for the visually impaired and a magnifier for the albinism because of low vision. They also promised to provide sign language interpreters for the hearing impaired. However, all of these things that INEC claimed to have provided, we have not seen any yet but we believed them.

As much as we appreciate INEC for their effort to improve on their electoral processes for proper inclusion of persons with disabilities in exercising their franchise, notwithstanding, we are faced with challenges that needs urgent attention. Some of these challenges includes: delay in the involvement of PWD's to familiarize themselves with the newly introduced braille ballot papers, which is a serious challenge to us.

"The users of the braille ballot papers, need some form of training and enlightenment on how to use them but because of delay, this is not feasible anymore and of course

this could lead to waste". "Another area of concern, is the fact that decisions that have to do with our plight are taken without due consultation and therefore most times, you find out that these decisions which are taken on our behalf without consulting us does not address the core needs of the individual persons with disability".

"The various political parties are to a large extent not accommodating to us as persons with disabilities. You can see it displayed in their mode of engagement. At best, they just cluster us under disability campaign group and feel they have included us, but I am saying that there is still a lot to do to ensure an acceptable standard of inclusion of our people in the political space".

"We as PWD's hardly make it to the highest decision making body of any of the political part and that is indeed a serious concern for us. Their mode of operations and the processes of bringing party leaders on board are most of the times not accommodating to us and therefore participation for us becomes quite difficult".

He however says subsequently, sample of newly introduced voting materials for PWD clusters should be made available early enough to allow room for the proper training of the users which will help in avoiding or minimizing waste of voting materials.

"I wish to advise that before decisions are take to address the needs of persons with disabilities, the decision makers should ensure a wide range of consultation is carried out to meet the specific needs of the individuals. In fact it will make it more awesome if persons with disabilities are made to be part of the decision making body which will seriously enhance the process", he said.

To the various political parties, he advised that every clause of non-inclusive policies should be removed to allow meaningful participation PWD's at all levels.



Moses Breh

THE SLOW WORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Beauty-Bytes

What's your skin type?

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

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

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

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

Normal Skin Type

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

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

Combination Skin Type

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

Combination skin can have:

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

Dry Skin Type

You may have:

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

Your skin can crack, peel, or become itchy, irritated, or inflamed. If it's very dry, it can



It can show up as:

- Redness
- Itching
- Burning
- Dryness

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

Why Does It Matter?

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

- **Your skin complexion.** Does your skin burn easily, rarely, or never?

- **Your skin care goals.** Are you trying to prevent premature aging? Do you have a skin problem, such as acne or rosacea, or other concerns, such as dark circles under your eyes or fine lines?

- **Your personal habits.** Do you smoke? Do you spend a lot of time in the sun? Do you take a daily vitamin? Do you eat a well-balanced diet? All these factors may affect how you should care for your skin.

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

The Basics of Skin Care

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

Use a broad-spectrum sunscreen that blocks both UVA and UVB rays.

Avoid direct sunlight, and wear a hat and sunglasses.

Don't smoke.
Stay hydrated.

Wash your skin gently but thoroughly every day and never wear makeup to bed.

6. Moisturize.

become rough and scaly, especially on the backs of your hands, arms, and legs.

Dry skin may be caused or made worse by:

- Your genes
- Aging or hormonal

changes

- Weather such as wind, sun, or cold

- Ultraviolet (UV) radiation from tanning beds

- Indoor heating
- Long, hot baths and showers

- Ingredients in soaps, cosmetics, or cleansers
- Medications

Use these tips to help your dry skin:

1. Take shorter showers and baths, no more than once daily.

2. Use mild, gentle soaps or cleansers. Avoid deodorant soaps.

3. Don't scrub while bathing or drying.

4. Smooth on a rich moisturizer right after bathing. Ointments and creams may work better than lotions for dry skin but are often messier. Reapply as needed throughout the day.

5. Use a humidifier, and don't let indoor temperatures get too hot.

6. Wear gloves when using cleaning agents, solvents, or household detergents.

Oily Skin Type
You may have:

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

Related

- Oiliness can change

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

- Puberty or other hormonal imbalances

- Stress
- Heat or too much humidity

To take care of oily skin:

- Wash it no more than twice a day and after you sweat a lot.

- Use a gentle cleanser and don't scrub.

- Don't pick, pop, or squeeze pimples. They'll take longer to heal.

- Look for the word "noncomedogenic" on skin care products and cosmetics. This means it won't clog pores.

Sensitive Skin Type



BUSINESS WORLD



Adebayo

Poor regulation enforcement and Nigerian businesses

One of the key functions of government is the regulation of practices in all sectors of the economy. This is to ensure that organisations operate within set standards and laws for the benefit of the society. Daniel Obi writes.

CHAOS and disorder in the race for profit and survival are inevitable in any competitive environment without necessary regulation. Regulation therefore promotes fair deal and it is requisite to the good functioning of societies and economies, globally.

While operators, especially in Nigeria, appreciate the importance of regulation, some of them in various sectors have largely kicked against the style and method that regulations and enforcements are being implemented or carried out. In some instances, outright quest for revenue, sleaze and corruption have underlined and defined regulation rather than government agencies ensuring that directives and spelt-out rules are maintained and infractions punished.

This pervasive exercise of regulating principally for revenue, both official and unofficial, is common among road traffic agencies and some other government bodies. Often times, the traffic officers, without prior warning by placing road signs, wait to apprehend an unfamiliar offender, only to turn around to demand for 'settlement' or issue bill for payment into state government purse.

Media reports allege that some regulating agencies have been turned into revenue machines in some states. While this is an aberration, this mandate, of course will alter regulators' sense of applying the rules which is injurious to individuals, organisations and the society.

Ordinarily, penalty or pardon which is a norm for non-compliance to regulation should be exercised after notices and

cautions have been proven to be given or displayed prominently for practitioners to see or read. But some regulators and their law enforcers, like traffic officers, have deliberately capitalised on hidden rules to dissolutely reap and rip off Nigerians to their chagrin.

Nigeria's Out-of-Home industry, which employs over 4,000 Nigerians and contributes significantly to the country's GDP, is also a victim of disjointed and jumbled regulation capable of relegating or dipping the age-old industry.

In May this year, marketing communication industry frowned at some of the regulatory activities of Lagos State Signage and Advertisement Agency (LASAA) and Kaduna State government.

The industry complained of LASAA's arbitrary fixing of fees payable on billboard platforms as well as the Agency's insistence on payment of advert fees on vacant billboards.

The marketing industry under the aegis of Heads of Sectoral Groups (HASG) also accused LASAA of continued granting of individuals that are not registered practitioners to own billboards and operate in Lagos State contrary to the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON) guidelines.

HASG also alleged that LASAA plans to concession seven of the major roads in the state to bidders, and the successful ones to own and operate franchises on not fair and just in competition.

Such roads for a period of 10 years. To HASG, this planned concession amounts to favouring some practitioners

which is not fair and just in competition.

It described it as a grave danger and monopoly. "If allowed, the backlash would include the loss of businesses and the means of livelihood of many out-of-home-practitioners." It should be noted that one of the guarantees of regulation is level playing field.

On Kaduna, the body accused the state of giving its members 7 days within which to remove their structures from certain areas of the city. Kaduna's reason, the body alleged, was that the affected areas are populated by LED (electronic billboards).

"We have since found out that the whole essence is to allow some favoured business owners, close to the corridors of power in Kaduna State to install their LED platforms in those areas, and have the monopoly of practicing there. This is another form of franchising, and HASG frowns at it". If this is true, it is also unfair in a competitive market.

In some states, Out-of-Home industry is seen as a big revenue source. This perception has pushed for certain needless regulations to squeeze funds from the operators instead of regulating to grow and promote the industry. This is telling heavily on the industry, as stated by the operators.

Outdoor Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (OAAAN), the umbrella body of practitioners in the industry, recently expressed confusion and misunderstanding on signage agencies' regulatory pattern.

"Some of the signage agencies

do not really know what they are regulating. Is it the structure, the advert on the structure or both" that they are regulating? the association asked.

Further concerned, the association's President, Emmanuel Ajufo, speaking recently at the OAAAN 37th annual meeting in Lagos said "if, for instance, signage agencies are concerned with the structure, as we believe they should be, then why do they charge per face of a billboard?"

"If on the other hand, they are charging for the advertising on the board, where then is the justice in charging when the board is vacant? Ajufo said most of the debts levelled against OAAAN members by signage agencies are from charges on vacant sites.

Manner of enforcement of regulation in certain instances in various sectors is also a concern and worrisome. There are reported cases of critical patients and pregnant women being arrested by traffic officers.

For outdoor, "We feel that enforcement should not be used to cause more problems for a company than it already has. It is always better that the company concerned should be asked to switch off or blank his/her billboard as this will prevent wanton destruction when officers of a signage agencies embark on the enforcement exercise themselves", OAAAN said.

For 16 years, signage agencies have become central in regulating outdoor business following the creation of LASAA in

2006 which some other states

have copied the model.

"The implication of this is that control and regulation of outdoor advertising in states have, at least for the present, been effectively removed from local government councils and vested in state agencies in these states," said a lawyer, CIC Chikwendu at the OAAAN meeting.

Presently, "It appears that the outdoor advertising agency is the most exposed of all advertising agencies to external control and regulation by the federal, state and local government agencies", the lawyer believed.

While organisations such as OAAAN support government on earning income from out-of-home operations and other services, the OAAAN specifically pleaded that government should not see its industry as major source of IGR after oil. "We believe that signage agencies should rather focus their minds on how to ensure sustainable growth of outdoor industry"

Regulation all over the world has socio-economic benefits which include evasion of monopolies, safe environments, protection of the poor, and growth of industry.

But when regulation and enforcement are poorly handled, it can cause harm than good, hinder industry growth and stifle job creation and innovation. It is therefore important that every regulator and their enforcers should wear human face, be friendly, and reassess their functions, perhaps in collaboration with operators for suitable regulation for operators and society good.

Source: BusinessDay

BUSINESS WORLD

Over N500bn old notes yet returned to CBN -Bawa

THE Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) Chairman, Abdulrasheed Bawa, had said that over N500 billion old naira notes stashed by politicians yet to return to the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN).

Abdulrasheed Bawa stated this during an interview on Channels TV's Politics Today.

The EFCC chairman added that the commission had a lot of information on some of the means politicians were devising to buy votes during elections.

He said, "The only option politicians have now is to buy votes, as BVAS will do a lot of wonders. They want to maximize the numbers they have. That is the intelligence we have and I am happy that all the security agencies are working to make sure the election is successful."

"Some people stashed money for the purpose of the election. Even as of today we still have over N500 billion old naira notes that are yet to be returned to the CBN. And the



Bawa

CBN has printed N500 billion new naira notes which is in circulation.

"We have our own way of getting such Intel and God willing we are going to use it maximally this time around."

AfDB, others deliberate on food security measures

THE Global Centre on Adaptation (GCA), in collaboration with the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the Wangari Mathai Institute, have reiterated the importance of improving food security in Africa.

Prof. Patrick Verkooijen, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of GCA, in a statement issued on the AfDB website, called for urgent financial support to put Africa on the path of food sovereignty.

Verkooijen spoke at a three-day regional forum on the future of resilient food systems in Africa organised by the GCA and AfDB.

The forum urged the Future of Resilient Food Systems in Africa - AAAP Digital Solutions for a Changing Climate provided through training for stakeholders across Eastern Africa.

The training strengthened

their capacity to design and implement solutions to improve food security and climate resilience.

It was also meant to facilitate knowledge sharing among farmers on scaling up the use of Digital Climate-informed Advisory Services (DCAS).

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that DCAS are tools and platforms that integrate climate information into agricultural decision-making.

Globally, more than 300 million small-scale farmers have limited or no access to DCAS because service provision is still fragmented, unsustainable beyond project cycles, and not reaching the last mile.

According to Verkooijen, Africa needs urgent support to scale up the implementation of adaptation solutions.

"Through the African Adaptation Acceleration Programme (AAAP), we are rolling out a 350 million dollar project to build resilience for food and nutrition security in the horn of Africa.

"This is toward mobilising new digital climate technology for market information, insurance products, and financial services that can and must be tailored to smallholder farmers' needs," he said.

The AfDB's East Africa Regional Director-General, Nnenna Nwabuofo, represented by Dr Pascal Sanginga, the Regional Sector Manager for Agriculture and Agro-Industries, said the forum was timely.

"The AAAP is already contributing to closing Africa's adaptation gap by supporting African countries to make a transformational shift in their development pathways.

"It is putting climate adaptation and resilience at the centre of their policies, programmes, and institutions.

"There is no doubt that AAAP will be a strong component of the country's Food and Agricultural Delivery Compacts.

"As it will accelerate the transformation of Africa's food systems and build a more resilient Africa," Nwabuofo said.

Prof. Stephen Gitahi, Vice Chancellor of the University of Nairobi, said 70 per cent of the population in Eastern Africa live in rural areas and depend on agriculture for their livelihoods.

Gitahi encouraged the trainers to simplify the modules to remove the fear of technology and accelerate adaptation for rural farmers.

"We acknowledge that gaps exist on climate adaptation in the rural communities, and

THE National Council on Privatisation (NCP) has approved the sale of a NITEL/MTEL property located at No 3-5, Moloney Street, Tafawa Balewa Square, Onikan, Lagos, to the Lagos State Government.

A statement by the Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE) on Friday said the property was one of those listed for sale by the liquidator of NITEL/MTEL Non-Core assets at the cost of N2.5 billion.

Meanwhile, the property is presently encumbered by the activities of illegal occupants and the Lagos State Government has promised a harmless takeover.

The council chaired by the Vice President Yemi Osinbajo granted the approval at its second meeting for 2023 held on Tuesday, February 21, 2023, the statement added.

Recall that NITEL was incorporated in 1984 but formally commenced operations in 1985 and was jointly owned by the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) with 93.3 per cent share and First Bank of Nigeria Plc (FBN) with 6.7 per cent.

However, MTEL was established in 1996 out of NITEL to provide cellular services. It started a General System for Mobile

FG sells N2.5bn NITEL property to Lagos

communication (GSM) in March 2003 after NITEL transferred its GSM licence it acquired when the Nigerian Communication Commission (NCC) first auctioned Digital Mobile Licences in February 2000.

The National Council on Privatisation (NCP) at its meeting on February 27, 2012, approved the privatisation of Nigerian Telecommunications Plc (NITEL) and Nigerian Mobile Telecommunication (MTEL) through "guided liquidation".

The strategy was adopted by the council after due

consideration of other options and considering the previous failed attempts to privatise NITEL and MTEL through Strategic Core Investor Sale and Negotiated Sale strategies and the huge liabilities to creditors to the tune of over N300bn.

Under the guided liquidation strategy, all the core assets and business undertakings of NITEL and MTEL were to be sold as a single or multiple lots to a qualified bidder by the Liquidator under the general guidance of the National Council on Privatisation.



Buhari

CBN, banks deny financial transactions plans during election

THE Association of Corporate Affairs Managers of Banks, a group representing Corporate and Marketing Communications Professionals in Nigeria's banking sector, has

debunked the message claiming that the Central Bank of Nigeria is shutting down banking services for five days for the Saturday's presidential election.

CBN also debunked the rumor stating it as fake news and implored the public to be

cautious of such.

Specifically, the reports claimed that banks would shut down between February 23rd and 27th.

In a statement issued by the ACAMB on Wednesday, and signed by President, ACAMB, Rasheed Bolarinwa, the body described the report as fake news.

The statement read in part, "There is no iota of truth in the viral message that is being circulated. Up until this moment, no Deposit Money Banks or other institutions providing financial services have received any directive or communication from the CBN to close the doors of their physical banking halls or shut their digital platforms and online banking channels against their customers because of elections."

ACAMB assured customers that banks had put adequate measures in place to ensure depositors continue to access money in their accounts during this period.

It added, "Customers who wish to carry out transfers or use electronic banking services will have unhindered access to these services before, during, and after the elections."



Adeshina



Emefiele

ENTREPRENEUR WATCH

WITH CELESTINE D. ATTSAR

Entrepreneurship development in Nigeria: Problems, prospects

The need for entrepreneurship development in Nigeria has never been so high in the history of the country. However, despite the increased call for entrepreneurship, it still requires much improvement. The reason for this is the huge number of the challenges that entrepreneurship development in Nigeria is facing today. This article has highlighted some of the major problems and how we can overcome most of them. Entrepreneurship development in Nigeria problems and prospect. JOHNSON OLAWALE writes.

A person who has created and owns a business is known as an entrepreneur. But some people believe entrepreneurship is more than just starting a business. It is a mindset, a way of thinking and acting. Entrepreneurship in these modern age involves thinking of new ways to solve problems and create value. An entrepreneurial spirit is said to be characterised by innovation and risk-taking. ADVERTISEMENT Ads by Read also Reasons for underdevelopment in Nigeria and possible solutions Entrepreneurship in Nigeria Brief history of entrepreneurship in Nigeria History very often has a direct impact on what the nation is facing in the present. Entrepreneurship in Nigeria today is not what it used to be. Majority of Nigerians used to be entrepreneurs.

Before the colonization era, a lot of Nigerians were majorly involved in trading. In fact, the wealthiest at the time were the traders. Even before money was generally accepted as the ledger tender, people exchanged what they had in surplus for what they don't have.

Entrepreneurship was a way of life for most people then. Nigeria always was full of people with a business mindset and Nigerians always had a high moral standard and value system for doing business. During the colonial era, the mode of entrepreneurship changed.

The colonial masters brought their goods and made Nigerians their middlemen. Then came formal education and the companies established by the colonial masters. A lot of young Nigerians were employed by these companies.

As many Nigerians began to accept formal education, most people were being trained to join the labour force and not to be entrepreneurs. The entrepreneurial mindset began to fade away. Read also Challenges of entrepreneurship in Nigeria and potential solutions READ ALSO: Federal Government loan scheme for youth in Nigeria 2017 - Youth Ignite Project Youth Empowerment Schemes Nowadays, there is a high need for entrepreneurship in Nigeria and many organisations and the government have been working on improving entrepreneurship development in Nigeria. However, due to the set of challenges the entrepreneurship in Nigeria is not flourishing as in many other countries. Let's have a closer look at these problems.

Entrepreneurship development in Nigeria Major problems of Nigerian entrepreneurs As the need and call for entrepreneurship increases day by day, the development of entrepreneurship has been stalled in the last few years. This is because of the problems affecting and limiting its development. Many Nigerian entrepreneurs face a lot of challenges. Here are the major ones that have been affecting the development of entrepreneurship in Nigeria. 1. Lack of capital There are thousands of Nigerians with wonderful ideas that could be



Adebayo

turned into a real business. However, most of them lack the capital to push their ideas into reality.

The lack of capital is the number one reason why the development of entrepreneurship has not improved over the years. Read also Meaning of entrepreneurship, its development and use for the economy 2. Difficulty in securing loans from financial institutions In the first point, we established that the first problem most Nigerian entrepreneurs face is the lack of capital. Most people then try to turn to banks and other financial institution to secure loans to fund their idea or business. But getting a loan is very difficult and most times impossible for average Nigerians who are looking for funds to start up a business or who already have a small business.

The reason for this is that the banks and financial institution feel it is a huge risk lending money to them. Financial institutions are not sure if entrepreneurs will be able to pay back the loan. Another major reason why securing a loan is so difficult is the requirements needed for securing this loans. Most of the financial institutions demand huge collateral and high-interest rate that small business owners or start-ups cannot afford.

This discourages most Nigerian entrepreneurs and kills many promising ideas. Read also 10 social issues Nigeria has to deal with right now Challenges of Entrepreneurship development in Nigeria 3. Poor state of infrastructure in Nigeria The lack of

good infrastructural facilities is another major problem affecting the development of entrepreneurship in Nigeria. The number one issue of infrastructure affecting entrepreneurship is the unstable power supply that has forced a lot of businesses to close down. Most entrepreneurs have to rely on generators to run their businesses. They have to spend a lot of money on fuel to run their generators. Also, lack of good roads and transport system in another infrastructural challenge plaguing entrepreneurship in Nigeria. The poor state of infrastructure in Nigeria makes the cost of running a business or company high. Most small businesses and start-ups can't afford it. 4. Unstable state of Nigerian economy The state of the Nigerian economy is also a major challenge for entrepreneurs in Nigeria.

The state of a country and its economy plays a significant impact on the level of entrepreneurship in any country. The socio-economic problems and the unstable economy of Nigeria has killed a lot of businesses in the last couple years. All these mixed with political instability is not helping businesses at all. Read also What are the major causes of poverty in Nigeria?

Aliko Dangote, Nigeria most successful entrepreneur 5. Inconsistent government policies There is no continuity in Nigerian government especially when there is a change in governance. Unfortunately, there are no good policies that could create necessary

conditions for the development of entrepreneurship in the country. The government needs to create policies and an environment that will give more freedom and possibilities for entrepreneurs. 6. Poor knowledge on how to run a business Not all the problems are from the government or capital related. Another problem is that most people don't know how to manage and grow a business properly.

They don't seem to learn or have the resources to learn how to manage and grow a business. 7. Inadequate planning and poor execution This is the result of the poor knowledge on how to run a business. Most people don't plan properly before they start their business. They don't make researchers about the business, the market for the business, the cost of production, etc. Many do not even make a business plan. So, after they start a business, they get stuck and the business fails. Also, a lot of people start off the wrong path and eventually the business ends up failing. Read also Top 5 benefits of entrepreneurship for Nigerian economic development Small and Medium-sized Enterprises 8. Lack of patience and greediness A lot of new business owners and young entrepreneurs are looking to make money quickly. They are more money oriented and not entrepreneurship oriented. In fact, a lot of people go into business because of the money and they want it fast. Many people want quick money but as a result, they don't have enough patience to grow a business that has the potential of becoming big. Also, due to the desire for quick returns and greediness, a lot of people try to find easier means of making more money in business and ends up getting duped. 9. High risk involved in starting a new business Many are afraid of the risks and give up the idea to start own business. However, it is important to understand that a business and risk go hand in hand. no pain, no gain. 10. Lack of entrepreneurial mindset Read also 3 reasons why entrepreneurship is important for all developing countries This is the result of the mentality that was brought instilled in us in the last decades. This is how the colonial era influenced the mindset of many Nigerians. As we have already mentioned, most people were taught to be in the labour force and not to be entrepreneurs.

Development of entrepreneurship in Nigeria What are the prospects of entrepreneurship in Nigeria? You have read about the problems of entrepreneurship in Nigeria. However, you also need to know that despite all challenges there are great prospects for entrepreneurship in Nigeria. With the present on-going economic transformation plan by the Nigerian government, solid foundations for economic growth are being made. Also, the government is making effort to create an environment that will allow businesses grow profitably. Entrepreneurship development

can affect the future of Nigeria in the following ways: 1. Entrepreneurship will promote Nigeria's economic development.

The role entrepreneurship development has to play in the economic development of Nigeria cannot be overemphasised. Even though there are a lot of barriers limiting entrepreneurship in Nigeria, it is still needed for the country to develop. Read also National development: What positive changes should happen in Nigeria? In 2009, reports showed that small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) in the industrial sector contributed about thirty-seven percent (37%) of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for that year. It was the second largest contributor after the oil sector.

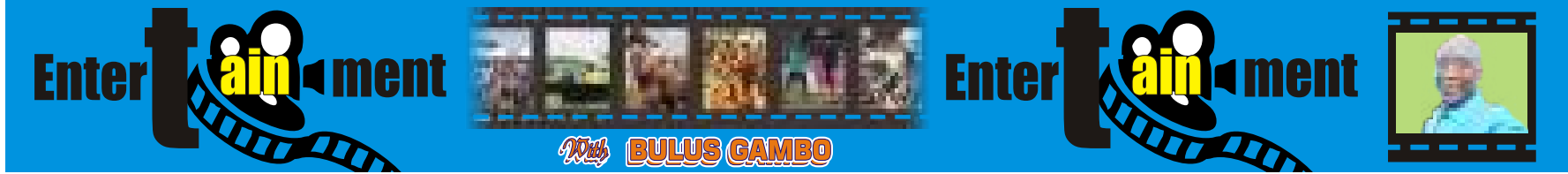
So, entrepreneurship development has got a lot to offer and improve the economy of Nigeria. 2. Entrepreneurship will create employment opportunities and help to reduce the level of unemployment in the country Entrepreneurship creates new opportunities of employment for many Nigerians. More programmes are being laid out to encourage and facilitate Small and Medium-sized businesses (SME's) in Nigeria. In most developed countries, the existence of SME's has provided more jobs for their citizens.

And so, if entrepreneurship continues to develop in Nigeria, more SME's will arise and in turn reduce unemployment in Nigeria. 3. Development of entrepreneurship will also improve the standard of living of Nigerians Prospect of entrepreneurship development in Nigeria Finally, we would like to suggest some moves we believe will foster entrepreneurship development in Nigeria: Read also What are the 10 economic problems that Nigeria is facing?

The government needs to work with other organisation to foster the creating a better environment for entrepreneurship and the private sector in Nigeria. This will include improving the level of infrastructure in the country. Also, formal education needs to be revised to produce more innovative mindsets rather than ordinary job seeking dummies. Mark Zuckerberg in Nigeria Also, easy access to capital should be provided by the government and financial institutions. The government should also increase the funding of financial institutions that provide loans to SME's and start-ups. Modern technology needs to be incorporated in the country and also in the educational system. The agricultural sector needs to be actively revitalised.

It has a lot of entrepreneurial potentials and it is embedded in the culture of Nigerians. Tony Elumelu, Chairman United Bank of Africa. Nigeria is said to have the second largest economy in Africa. So there is a great potential and prospect for entrepreneurship development in Nigeria. All that is needed for everyone involved, is to work together in advancing the course of entrepreneurship in the country.

Source: Legit.ng



Nigerian musicians to look out for

Continued from page 18

airplay. His latest single "Call on Me" proved that Yemzzy is a pure talent, good music background, consciousness and this reflects in his lyrics and sounds, as he is always out to create music that has a



Raebel

RAEBEL is a Nigerian artiste who is currently creating her own space in the music industry with a fresh sound that is a reflection of alternative R&B, Neo-soul, reggae/dancehall, and a sprinkle of the traditional Nigerian flavor.

Raebel's 2022 biggest song 'Miniskirt' was originally a freestyle she did became a smash hit single after she teamed up with Timbun who produced the song. The song is now a radio anthem and dance floor filler, one of the trending songs on social media.

The song fuses elements of dancehall and afrobeat into an infectious beat met with Raebel's powerful and distinct vocal style. Her lyric, 'I'm Not Like Your Other Girls' message is beautifully captured by the instant sing-along hook, ensuring MINISKIRT will be ladies' anthem in nightclubs this festive period.

She also teamed up with Africa's finest video director TG Omori who now doubles as her Creative Director to give life to the visuals of the song. Raebel is ready to take her fans on a new journey this year, especially THE RAEBELLIONS; the name of her fan base across the

world.

WHILE Kayode is an undeniable talent and star in rising, who's been making music officially for the past three years, he blew up the music charts with Live Forever, which dropped in 2021.

Like everyone else, he grew, up hooked on sounds from Wizkid, Mo'Hits and other acts but he was especially drawn to music from American rapper Lil Wayne, up till the time he had to take a break from making music and cites him as a major influence of his sound.

Live Forever, by Kayode was a top trending record on Tik Tok. Due to its nicely composed vocals, this joint has also been gaining lots of streams and views on the various music platforms.

With his full name being Oluwakayode Oyetoro also known as Kay Kay, is seriously working hard for himself, to ensure he achieves his desire for music.



Kayode

WITH a growing discography, Oluwo Yusuf Gbolaga also known as YKB has steadily been building his profile in Nigeria. Armed with a passion in wordplay, polished vocal delivery and over the past few years YKB has been homing his artistry. Sitting between the worlds of Indie, R&B, Afrobeats and Pop, YKB has found his sound and space in the global soundscape.

Born in Ketu, Lagos Nigeria, YKB (Yusuf Kan Bai) grew up with a desire to express himself creatively. Experimenting with in photography, graphic design, and fashion, YKB would find a home in music. Growing up listening to the eclectic sounds of Celine Dion, Lil Wayne, Drake, and many others it was not long before he successfully took a go at music.

With the independent release of his project "Before I Blow", YKB captured the attention of fans, peers, and media alike around the world and amassed over 2 million streams. YKB recently dropped "SAN SIRO" and it's huge.



YKB (Yusuf Kan Bai)
it's huge.

SNAZZY the Optimist is unique—his hypnotizing voice flirts with worldwide superstardom whilst still sounding like your little secret. Born in the eastern part of Nigeria and grew up in South Africa. His talent and creativity has steered him into songwriting, where he began writing and covering songs. He produced and recorded his first-ever single "Ekele" in 2018, under the moniker Lil Snazzy. Since then, he has released couple covers on his Soundcloud.

Snazzy the Optimist brand of emotive singing is warm, fuzzy, and instantly addictive. The Nigerian born rapping singer (because that's probably the easiest way to describe what he does) made a splash with his 2021 hit single "Seluna". A somber expression of love, one of the best singles of 2021, taking advantage of his moment. Since its release, he has received critical love but maintained a pretty low profile.

Snazzy the Optimist has kept his releases precious but powerful, gracefully confirming himself as one of the most compelling artists of the now, but most importantly he's a highly talented musician with an ear for melody and a natural charisma.



SNAZZY

Nigerian celebrities who quietly ended their marriages

Continued from page 18

Mofe Duncan, Jessica Kakkad

Mofe Duncan and Jessica Kakkad had one of the most discreet breakups in the history of celebrity marriage crashes. It had to take a die-hard fan of Jessica to burst the bubble in September 2019.

A few hours after the news broke, Mofe Duncan took to his Instagram page to release a statement where he revealed that the marriage had crashed a year earlier and that he still maintains a cordial relationship with Jessica and her family.



Anita Iseghohi, Tom Iseghohi

Another celebrity marriage collapse that was very discreet was that of former Most Beautiful Girl in Nigeria, Anita Iseghohi, and her business executive husband, Tom.

The former beauty queen took to her Instagram page in November 2018 where she revealed that her 11 years marriage to the former MD of Transcorp Corporation had ended. The union is blessed with three children.



Damilola Adegbite, Chris Attoh

Just like Osas and Gbenro, Damilola Adegbite and Chris Attoh had one of those onset beautiful love stories. The couple got hitched on February 14, 2015, in Accra, Ghana.

In April 2017, Chris Attoh slammed divorce rumours in a radio interview. The couple had earlier unfollowed each other on Instagram.

The actress remained silent about their separation after that. However, in September that same year, Attoh finally revealed that their marriage had crashed.



Blossom Chukwujekwu, Maureen Esisi

Blossom Chukwujekwu's split from Maureen Esisi was probably the most shocking separation gist in 2019. Social media will not forget in a hurry how Blossom and Maureen showcased their beautiful and 'happy marriage' to the admiration of many.

In September 2019, the news broke of their separation.

While blogs gave different accounts of the reason behind their marriage collapse, the couple remained mute. Although Maureen has made several cryptic comments about their failed marriage.

Blossom on the other hands has done a great job keeping conversations about his failed marriage out of his way.



SUNDAY FEATURE

Substance Use Disorder (SUD): Symptoms, treatment

Drug addiction isn't about Heroin, Cocaine or other illegal drugs. You can get addicted to alcohol, nicotine, sleep and anti-anxiety medication and other legal substances. You can also get addicted to prescription or illegally obtained narcotic pain medication or opioid. These problems are at epidemic level in the United States. In 2018, opioid played a role in two - third of all drug overdose deaths.

AT first, you may choose to take a drug because you like the way it makes you feel. You may think you can control how much and how often you use it. But over time, drug changes how your brain works. These physical changes can last a long time. They make you lose control and can lead to damaging behavior.

Addiction VS: Abuse and tolerance

Drug abuse is when you use legal or illegal substance in ways you shouldn't. You might take more than the regular dose of pills or use someone else's prescription. You may abuse drug to make you feel good, ease stress or avoid reality. But usually you are able to change your unhealthy habits or stop using altogether.

Addiction is when you can't stop. Not when it puts your health in danger. Not when it causes financial, emotional and other problems for you or your loved ones. That urge to get and use drugs can fill up every minute of the day, even if you want to quit.

Addiction also is different from physical dependence or tolerance in cases of physical dependence. Withdrawal symptoms happen when you suddenly stop a substance. Tolerance happens when a dose of a substance becomes less effective over time.

When you use opioids for pain for a long time, that is you may develop tolerance and even physical dependence. This does not mean you are addicted. In general, when narcotics are used under proper medical supervision, addiction happens in only a



small percentage of people.

Effect on your brain

Your brain is wired to make you want to repeat experiences that make you feel good. So you are motivated to do them again and again.

The drugs that may be addictive target your brain reward system. They flood your brain with a chemical called Dopamine. This triggers a feeling of intense pleasure. You keep taking the drug to chase the high.

Overtime your brain gets used to the extra Dopamine. So you might need to take

more of the drug to get the same good feeling. And other things you enjoyed, like food and hanging out with family may give you less pleasure.

When you use drugs for a long time, it can cause changes in other brain chemical systems and circuit as well. They can hurt your:

Judgment, decision making, memory, ability to learn.

Together, these brain changes can drive you to seek out and take drugs in a way that is beyond your control.

Who is most likely to become addicted

Each person's body and brain

are different. People also react differently to drugs. Some love the feelings and first time they try it and want more. Others hate it and never try again.

Not everyone who uses drugs becomes addicted. But it can happen to anyone at any age. Some things may raise your chances of addiction including:

Family history: Your genes are responsible for about half of your odds. If your parents or siblings have problems with alcohol or drugs, you're more likely as well. Women and men are equally likely to become addicted.

Early drug use: Children's brains are still growing, and drug use can change that. So taking drugs at an early age may make you more likely to get addicted when you get older.

Mental disorder: If you are depressed, have trouble paying attention or worry constantly, you have a higher chance of addiction. You may turn to drug as a way to try to feel better. A history of trauma in your life also makes you more likely to have addiction.

Troubled relationships: If you grew up with family trouble and aren't close to your parents or siblings, it may raise your chances of

addiction.

Signs of addiction

You may have one or more of these warning signs:

An urge to use the drug every day, or many times a day.

Taking more drugs than you want to, and for longer than you thought you would.

Always having the drug with you and buying it even if you can't afford it.

Using drugs even if they cause you trouble at work or make you lash out at family and friends.

Spending more time alone.

Not taking care of yourself or how you look.

Stealing, lying or doing dangerous things, like driving while high or having unsafe sex.

Spending most of your time getting, using or recovering from the effects of the drug.

Feeling sick when you try to quit

How to prevent addiction to prescribed painkillers

Most people who take their pain medicine as directed do not become addicted, even if they take the actual dose. But if you've abused drugs or alcohol in the past or have family members who have, you may be at a higher risk.

To avoid pain medicine addiction:

Take the drugs exactly as your doctor prescribes.

<https://www.addictioncenter.com>

"Your brain is wired to make you want to repeat experiences that make you feel good. So you are motivated to do them again and again. The drugs that may be addictive target your brain reward system. They flood your brain with a chemical called Dopamine. This triggers a feeling of intense pleasure. You keep taking the drug to chase the high. Overtime your brain gets used to the extra Dopamine. So you might need to take more of the drug to get the same good feeling. And other things you enjoyed, like food and hanging out with family may give you less pleasure."

NEWS

ICCES enlightens political parties on managing election aftermath

From ANENE AIKE, Sokoto

THE Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES) in Sokoto State has counseled all political candidates contesting for national and state positions on how to manage election victories and losses in the state.

This development is contained in a statement issued to newsmen in Sokoto on Tuesday by DSP Sanusi Abubakar, the Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO) in the state command.

According to Abubakar, the action was part of the agreements reached at the committee's crucial meeting with all the candidates of the 18 political parties that fielded positions in the state and their chairmen.

He said the meeting, which was chaired by Mr. Muhammed Gumel, the Commissioner of Police in the state, centered on the way forward towards successful elections across the state.



Mahmood

"The politicians have been generously guided on prohibited activities on the election days.

"They brainstormed on the emerging security challenges that could mar the electoral process especially in

banditry-prone local government areas," he said. Abubakar added that the discussion was far-reaching and productive enough for a way forward towards safer 2023 electioneering processes.

NPC trains journalists on activities

THE National Population Commission, Sokoto State Level has successfully concluded the 2023 Population and Housing Census state level training of journalists on the preliminary knowledge and technical knowhow of its mandate.

In his keynote address and formal opening of the workshop, the Honourable Federal Commissioner of the state, Sokoto, His Excellency, Chiso Abdullahi Datijo defined Housing and Census as the overall collecting, processing, analysing, tabulation and publishing the demographic, economic and social data at a specified period of time known as and called Census Reference Point.

Chiso, a one time Deputy

Governor of Sokoto State said the main objectives of the 2023 Population and Housing Commission, PHC is to produce comprehensive and statistical data; benchmark for SDGs and housing data for housing policies.

Other main objectives, he said, include comprehensive and updated frame and household data base through special methodology with special interest on the use of the census and survey processing system (CSPRO) which is public domain software package used by organisations.

In his paper titled "Enumeration Demarcation Area for the 2023 Population and Housing Census," Malami Mafara Gagi, the State Director NPC Sokoto outlined what is EAD, the

objectives, EAD in Nigeria, Role of Maps in Census, EAD Strategies, Organization and Outcomes.

He also stated that the objectives of EAD is to delineate enumeration areas in the country, Nigeria to facilitate the smooth enumeration of inhabitants during the enumeration period.

Mr. Jibreel Musa in his paper - "Processes and Methodology for the conduct of the 2023 Population and Housing Census" said that with the projected population of 216,783,381, Nigeria is reputed to be the seventh most populous country in the world and most populous on the African continent.

He pointed out that due to the rapidly growing nature of the population, Nigeria is also projected to be the third most populous country in the world come the year 2050 after India and China.

Hajiya Safiya Abdullahi in her presentation "History of population Census in Nigeria focused on Pre-Independence Census of 1866 - 1953 and Post-Independence Censuses of 1952 - 2006 where she stated that Nigeria's census history can be divided into two parts, that is the pre independence (Colonial) and post- independence census eras.

Safiya also touched on the structure of the commission, its mandate and the Act that

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

HEAD of Saturday's presidential and governorship elections across the country, the federal government has reassured participating corps members in the conduct of the polls nationwide of their security.

The Director-General of NYSC, Brigadier-General Y.D. Ahmed gave the assurance during the sensitization programme on likely challenges for corps members engaged for the national assignment in Kogi State.

He said that the sensitization programme is in collaboration with the security and paramilitary agencies in Kogi State.

The Director-General who was represented by one of his directors from NYSC headquarters, Abuja, Mr. Tonlek Palndimen also gave an assurance that the federal government will ensure the provision of needed materials for the success of the national

2023 elections: FG assures on corps security



Buhari

assignment just as he promised that government will accord priority to the welfare of corps members engaged for the conduct of the elections.

"Adequate arrangements have been put in place to meet with the likely challenges NYSC members may face in the discharge of the national assignment

"You should all therefore,

strive to exhibit high level of patriotism in the conduct of this all important assignment with the fear of God.

"I advise you with all seriousness and sense of humility to shun any form of gratification to the detriment of the call for the national service. Don't allow yourself to be used by politicians for their selfish reasons as you will be made to face the full wrath of the law if caught in the negative act," the NYSC DG warned.

"Once again, I want to emphasize the need for all of you to show patriotism, commitment and integrity before, during and after the elections," Brigadier-General Ahmed pleaded.

He commended Governor Yahaya Bello's efforts to ensure peaceful environment and security of lives and property since assumption of office.

He lauded corps members for answering the clarion call for them to participate in the service of their father land.

"Be security conscious and endeavour to report any threat to lives, malpractices to the security personnel nearest to you. In case of technical challenges, try and report to the INEC technicians."

The representative of the Police, ASP Joshua Tanko and that of the DSS, Dan Agu, in their separate remarks, advised NYSC members to be more alive to the issue of their safety while on the field.

"If there are issues like threat to live, just be calm irrespective of what is happening even if you are attacked. You should simply take the option of reporting such issues to security personnel around you for necessary action."

CBN hands over sensitive materials to INEC

From ANENE AIKE, Sokoto

THE Central Bank of Nigeria Sokoto has handed over to INEC in the state all the sensitive electoral materials for onward distribution to all the 23 local government areas in Sokoto.

In his address during the handing over of the sensitive materials by CBN, Resident Electoral Commissioner, Alhaji Dr. Nura Ali said the items are made up of ballot papers for Presidential, Senatorial and Representatives electorate voters.

Fielding questions by journalists, the REC said other items include the Result Sheets, Collation Forms, Registration Area Collation Forms and Election Returning Forms. On the Beavers, Nura Ali said this will be the next item to be sent to all the appropriate centers in readiness for the election conduct come February 25, 2023.

It could be recalled that the State's Resident Electoral Commissioner recently in a chat with our correspondent stated

how ready he was concerning the conduct of the election in all nooks and crannies of Sokoto State, Nigeria. Members of the European Union who have been in the state for the past number of days were also present during the handing over exercise.



Emefiele



Isiguzo

NCWS partners NAWOJ on voter education

THE National Council for Women Societies (NCWS) in collaboration with NAWOJ embarked on a sensitisation and advocacy walk in Jos Thursday, to draw the attention of the public especially women that it's their civic responsibility to vote and partake in the election process starting with the Presidential and National Assembly elections on Saturday 25th February 2023.

The walk took off from Old Airport Round about where the women convened by 9:00 am. They were accompanied with music which attracted the public who came out of their comfort zones to hear the message of the women.

From Old Airport roundabout, they walked towards Dadin Kowa, all along, charging all and sundry especially women to come out with their children who are of age to vote for their choice. They also gave out tracts which give step by step voting process to the public as they moved along.

At Dadin Kowa Market the women educated the women



Lau

step by step, what to do and what not to do. They were told to make sure they avail themselves for voting as early as 8:30 am along with their households who are of age. "Come along with your PVC", they sounded. "Make sure you queue up to await your turn for verification", the women in one accord advised.

Going over the process of voting, the NAWOJ Chairperson, Nene Dung said "When voting, make sure you use your index finger to stamp it within the box of the

candidate of your choice. After that, blow it dry before folding it backward to ensure the ink does not run to another box in which case, it would invalidate your vote."

Mrs Celina Ali, the NCWS state Chairperson emphasized on the need to be peaceful as election is not war. She advised women to talk to their children not to allow themselves to be used to foment trouble and to guard against selling of votes. "Your PVC is your power to ensure change", she told the women who were obviously excited.

PROF. Mohammed Nasirudeen-Suleiman of the Department of Botany, Federal University Lokoja, has called for global intensive study in Mycology (Fungi) in all secondary schools as part of measures to check food deprivation.

He made the call while delivering an inaugural lecture entitled: "Pathogenic Fungi and Food Deprivation: The Challenges of Plants Pathologists," held at the Federal University of Lokoja (FUL) Auditorium, Adankolo Campus, Lokoja.

He noted that the destructive effects of fungi on the nation's crops ranging from yams, potato, beans, maize, cocoa and groundnuts, among others, are enormous.

"Fungi, until recently, are highly under reported, marginalised and totally ignored in secondary schools to the extent that only plants and animals are being studied leaving a large number of students ignorant of a whole fungi kingdom.

"I am making a case for a global intensive study of mycology in all secondary schools because a secret of our living may be there," he said.

While warning on effects of

Don proffers solution to food deprivation

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

chemicals being applied by farmers to checkmate pest, insects and plant diseases, he regretted that they (farmers) had limited resources and lack the technical expertise required to handle imported fungicides and pesticides.

"There's no plant that is useless, its usage can be for food, medicine or shelter, just as it's estimated that there are more than 500,000 species of plants on earth with more than 10 per cent being used as food by man and animals," he observed.

He noted that a major factor to food deprivation "is disease inflicted on plants and its products by pathogenic fungi in transit and in storage, which could lead to hunger, starvation,

nutritional deficiencies and malnutrition with broad impacts on cognitive functioning.

According to him, one major challenge being faced by plant pathologists is the inappropriate plant disease control measure, in-vitro or outside the host (takes place in the laboratory) and the in vivo or on the host (takes place on the field).

Nasirudeen-Suleiman thanked Prof. OlayemiAkinwumi, the Vice-Chancellor of the university and the management team for giving him the privilege to deliver the lecture.

He also appealed for funds to equip the university's laboratory to begin the manufacturing of drugs from the plants.



Nasirudeen-Suleiman

Bauchi APC uncover plans to rig elections

From ABBAS GUNGURA, Bauchi

THE All Progressives Congress (APC) in Bauchi State has accused the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) of planning to rig the Saturday Presidential and National Assembly elections in the state for all its candidates including the presidential flag bearer, Atiku Abubakar.

The Chairman of the Media and Publicity Committee of APC Campaign Council in the state, Comrade Sabo Mohammed, who addressed journalists at a media briefing in Bauchi, alleged that the PDP in the state in it's desperation to win the election at all cost has resorted to cause chaos during election by using their supporters to intimidate voters especially in APC strongholds in the state so that the election will be cancelled and they will have the upper hand.

He alleged that PDP in the state had recruited fake

National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) members to work with the genuine ones divert results during the elections, adding that the party has already assembled computers and Information Communication Technology (ICT) experts to hack the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) server.

"Some of the antics that the ruling PDP in the state is deploying to rig the election, which have already intimidated our people is that they are trying to woo the masses through the food and relief materials that was given by the federal government to cushion the effects of flood that happened about seven months back in the state, this is to able them know the potential voters of Bauchi state. However, we have already educated our people to collect the relief materials given to them by the government because it rightfully belongs to them, but

they should vote the APC"

"The second antics they are employing now is that they have started threatening traditional institutions in the state that they should not listen to the APC. The PDP have told them to frustrate us and do everything within their powers to ensure that they have the upper hand, but unfortunately for them that antics has not worked because we have already enlightened our people and we have told the traditional leaders to allow people to vote according to their conscience"

"We have informed our supporters about this, any corps members they suspect to be fake, should be reported to the security personnel for proper identification in order to fish out the fake ones recruited for the criminal jobs. We are determined to ensure that every vote counted in Bauchi state. We have communicated to the relevant agencies and our party structure to be at alert and steadfast to ensure that

the rule of law is further entrenched" he said

The Chairman said that the APC is ready to accept the outcome of the election if people are allowed to vote according to their conscience and the election is conducted in a free and fair manner, adding that anything short of that will be resisted and reported to the appropriate electoral authorities.

NUJ partners NPC on capacity building

From ABBAS GUNGURA, Bauchi

THE National Population Commission (NPC) Bauchi State in partnership with the Nigeria Union of journalists (NUJ) Bauchi State Council, has organised a one-day capacity building workshop for working journalists in the state as the 2023 Census approaches.

The training, which took place at the NUJ Secretariat in Bauchi on Thursday, drew participants from the electronic and print media located in the state.

In his welcome address, the NUJ Chairman Umar Sa'idu, said that the training is critical for effective media coverage of the 2023 census.

Umar pledged to continue organising such trainings to improve the capacity of working journalists to contribute to national development.

He then commended the Population Commission for Collaborating with NUJ and assured him of effective and objectives coverage of the 2023 Census.

Also speaking at the occasion, Chairman of the Elders Committee of NUJ Bauchi Council, Alh. Ibrahim Idris Shall, commended the

leadership of the NUJ for collaborating with NPC to put together the training which he described as timely and appropriate.

Shall charged the participants to assimilate the training and put it to practice while on the field during the census exercise in March.

In his speech at the training, the Federal Commissioner, NPC, Bauchi State, Alh. Ibrahim Muhammad Darazo, expressed concern over the misuse of social media and observed that the social media has negativity impacted on smooth flow of accurate and objective information circulations rather fake news, selfish and unprofessional way of disseminating information takes over and become order of the day.

Darazo explained that the capacity building workshop became necessary in order to bring Journalists up to date on how to accurately report the census exercise with minimal information problems.

He advised Journalists who will be on the field to ensure factual and unbiased information dissemination and reportage to refute myriad of fake news about Nigeria's population demographics.

He stressed that accurate and factual coverage of the 2023 housing and population census will make the outcome of the exercise credible and acceptable to all.

Ibrahim Darazo, further said that the overall success of the exercise hinges on the flow of accurate and factual information to members of the public which can only be achieved through the various media organisations in the state.

He opined that Journalists are the best and most effective channel of destination of information, thus making them critical stakeholders for the 2023 success of the housing and population census.

According to him, "with the current prevalence of misinformation and fake news about Nigeria's demographics for political and oftentimes sentiments, it is a national calling for Journalists to fact check and refute such unverified information in circulation."

He then called on Journalists to be professional and unbiased in the coverage of the census stressing that postulations of figures will marr the best outcome of the exercise.



FEATURE

How Nigeria's presidential candidates plan to fight corruption

This report reviews the manifestoes of the four leading presidential candidates in the 2023 election on how to fight what is regarded as worsening corruption in the country. Kunle Sanni writes.



It is hours before the 2023 presidential election which has 18 candidates jostling to take over from outgoing President Muhammadu Buhari in May.

As campaigns closed on Thursday, over 93 million registered voters are now waiting for Saturday to pick from among the candidates whose electoral promises they have found to be most persuasive in the last few months.

Predictably, insecurity and bad state of the economy have dominated the campaigns in this election cycle. The two issues were part of Mr Buhari's top three focus areas that he promised to tackle decisively while campaigning for office in 2015. Most of the presidential candidates in this election season have criticised the Buhari administration's approach to handling the issues, insisting that more Nigerians have become poorer and the country less secure on his watch.

Another of Nigeria's ageless problems is corruption, the third prong of Mr Buhari's three-point agenda with which he rode to power in 2015. "Corruption will kill Nigeria if Nigeria does not kill corruption," he famously remarked during the 2015 campaigns in acknowledgement of the threat corruption poses to the country.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes (UNODC) has similarly said "corruption affects all aspects of public life, continues to undermine the social, economic and political development of the country and is a major obstacle to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals."

But almost eight years in the saddle, Mr Buhari has brought little improvement in the level of corruption.

In its report released in April last year, the United States Department of States' 2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices in Nigeria, said there was still massive, widespread and pervasive corruption at all levels of government. It attributed this to a lack of consistent implementation of the relevant laws against corrupt practices in public offices.

Nigeria, especially in the later years of Mr Buhari's administration, has seen an unimpressive ranking on Transparency International (TI)'s annual Corruption Perception Index (CPI), a tool for assessing the prevalence of corruption in countries.

Nigeria came 150th among 180 countries in the latest 2022 ranking

released in January this year. It was an improvement in ranking, even though its score of 24 out of 100 points was the same as it was in the previous year when it was ranked 154th. Prior to the 2021 ranking released in 2022, Nigeria was better placed, occupying the 149th position in the 2020 ranking.

The Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC) attributed Nigeria's poor ranking in 2021 partly to the failure of the government to act on the Pandora Papers revelations, one of the biggest-ever corruption leaks led by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) and over 600 journalists from 117 countries, including PREMIUM TIMES in Nigeria.

Commenting on the stagnancy of the points Nigeria recorded this year, CISLAC, which is the Nigerian chapter of TI, said the pardon granted two former governors serving jail time for corruption – Joshua Dariye of Plateau State and Jolly Nyame of Taraba State – in 2022 "is a major setback in the efforts to address corruption in Nigeria."

"This singular act is damaging as it fails the test of equity and fairness as those pardoned were Politically Exposed Persons (PEPs) and the poor citizens who have been jailed for similar crimes (or even lesser offences) were left out of the pardon."

But rejecting the TI's ranking, the Nigerian government said it was not fighting corruption to impress the assessing organisation.

"We are not fighting corruption because we want to impress Transparency International or any organization whatsoever," the Minister of Information and Culture, Lai Mohammed, said in the wake of the release of TI's CPI.

The minister also highlighted the administration's proactive efforts to tackle corruption including allowing the National Sovereign Investment Fund to manage Abacha loot that was returned from the United States, the United Kingdom and other European countries. The initiative, according to the minister, largely prevented the returned loot from being stolen or re-looted.

The administration has also put the Open Government Partnership (OGP), the whistleblower policy, and the Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS) in place to bring more transparency and accountability into governance.

The lack of political will to push through the effective implementation of some laudable policies of the administration remains a problem. For instance, the latest report by the Independent Corrupt Practices and other related offences Commission (ICPC) states that 204 MDAs don't have Whistle-blowing policies.

This report reviews the manifestos of the four leading presidential candidates in the 2023 election on how to fight what is regarded as worsening corruption in the country.

The four front-runners whose manifestos this review focuses on are Rabiun Kwankwaso of the New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP), Atiku Abubakar of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Bola Tinubu of the All Progressives Congress (APC), and Peter Obi of the Labour Party.

Bola Tinubu: Wealth sharing and reducing the cost of governance

Mr Tinubu, a former two-term governor of Lagos State, has always insisted that he would ride on the achievements of President Buhari.

At one of his discussions with the Arewa Joint Committee in Kaduna last October, Mr Tinubu promised to fight corruption by focusing more on preventive measures if elected president.

Part of his strategy, he said, would be putting a system for effective wealth redistribution to reduce the temptation to commit corruption.

The presidential hopeful also vowed that his administration would support the "existing anti-corruption institutions" and also address the underlying issues of corruption in the oil industry.

In his manifesto, Mr Tinubu also said he would "streamline the civil service to fight corruption, reduce bureaucracy in government agencies and decrease inefficiency and waste."

"Such expenditures will have a low priority in our administration. Bona fide hard-working members of the civil service are to be commended for their public service and shall be protected. However, we will continue the process of weeding out ghost workers, as well as ghost projects and expenditures from the system," the campaign document read in part.

But his wealth distribution plan as a strategy to fight corruption has been criticised.

"Wealth distribution is not a strategy," says Festus Ogun, a rights activist. "Tinubu should explain his strategies to achieve that. Anything short of a well-thought-out strategy is a fluke," he added.

According to political analyst Jide Ojo, such a "wealth distribution" plan would likely be misunderstood as an attempt to mindlessly share the country's resources.

"The assumption by Mr Tinubu is that he would want to improve living standards in such a way that people would not need to be corrupt. But corruption is not about money and sharing of money. But corruption is an abuse of office for private gain." Mr Ojo said.

Supporting the plan towards reducing "inefficiency and waste" in the civil service, Mr Ojo said any government that would succeed "would need to trim down the costs of governance and change the culture of wastage".

"There is a lot of wastage in the system, until we do this, we will not go far," he said.

Mr Tinubu's manifesto and campaign speeches lack specific details on how he aims to actualise his ideas on fighting corruption

Peter Obi on true federalism to fight corruption

The corner piece of Mr Obi's anti-corruption plan in his manifesto tagged, 'Our Pact with Nigerians,' is the implementation of a true federal system of government.

The former Anambra State governor also planned to review the 68 items on the exclusive list of the federal government.

This, according to him, would ensure the enthronement of the rule of law, and decisively tackle all forms of corruption.

"Embark on comprehensive legal and institutional reforms and practicable restructuring measures, to fight corruption; to ensure the enthronement of the rule of law, and decisively tackle all forms of corruption," his document reads.

According to Cheta Nwanze, lead partner at SBM Intelligence, Mr Obi's idea of restructuring would most certainly hit a brick wall because "his party will not have a majority in the National Assembly."

Similar to Mr Tinubu, Mr Obi advocated lowering the high cost of governance as a means of combating corruption and cutting down waste. But unlike the former Lagos State governor, who did not specify the details of how he intended to implement the plan, Mr Obi said he would implement the Orasanye Report's recommendation to consolidate government agencies.

He said, "This will be our top priority within the first year of our

administration. We will review the recommendations of that report while engaging with industry players to design the implementation of the proposed reforms.

"While we are focused on cost reduction and streamlining of government operations for efficiency and effectiveness, we will ensure that the implementation of the reforms is pursued in a way that protects the livelihood of our hardworking and efficient civil servants."

The Labour Party presidential candidate also proposed to establish several offices that would check irregularities in government spending and waste.

Mr Obi also aimed to establish the Office of Special Counsel to investigate and prosecute every executive abuse of power and corrupt public practices that do not fall under the prosecutorial power of existing agencies or are bureaucratically concealed.

He said he would seek a constitutional amendment to exempt prosecution by the Special Counsel from the exercise of the power of Nolle Prosequi of the Attorney General of the Federation.

Atiku and preventive measures to fight corruption

Atiku Abubakar, the presidential candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), emphasises preventative measures over detection and subsequent sanction.

In his manifesto titled, 'My covenant with Nigerians,' the former vice president proposes building strong institutions that will be resistant to manipulation.

He said he would "also build a culture of accountability, effectiveness, efficiency and transparency," adding, that he would "rigorously enforce judicious use of public resources, with zero tolerance for nepotism, corruption and poor management."

He also proposed to champion institutional reforms of anti-corruption agencies and strengthen them for more effectiveness.

He added that he would "ensure that judgments on corruption cases are fully followed through and enforced by the appropriate law enforcement agencies and as well review the reward system for public and civil services."

Prior to the 2019 general elections, Atiku during a live town hall programme hosted by ace journalist Kadaria Ahmed said he would consider granting amnesty to corrupt persons willing to surrender their loot.

Kwankwaso also propose preventative measures

The anti-corruption strategy of the presidential candidate of the New Nigeria People's Party (NNPP), Rabiun Kwankwaso, is also pivoted on prevention.

His strategy is mapped out in his manifesto titled, 'My Pledge'.

Mr Kwankwaso, a former two-term governor of Kano State, proposes to expose corrupt activities. He said he would enforce adherence to the seven principles of public life – selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, and leadership by example.

He also promised to strengthen anti-corruption institutions.

He said his government would publish on weekly basis, the proceedings and decisions of the Federal Executive Council, similar to what he did as governor of Kano State. This, according to him, would help citizens to track his administration's activities, and ensure open government and transparency.

SUNDAY MAGAZINE

Nigeria decides, what next?

Continued from page 10

intimidation of electoral officials by thugs paid by politicians.

A presidential candidate must receive the largest number of votes cast nationwide and at least a quarter of the vote in no fewer than 24 of Nigeria's 36 states.

If no one clears both hurdles, the top two candidates will compete in a run-off. The constitution says the run-off must take place within 21 days of the announcement of the result.

However, no run-off has been necessary since the transition to democracy in 1999.

For the parliamentary poll, candidates for a seat in the House of Representatives or the Senate must win a simple majority of votes in the constituency or senatorial district they are contesting in order to win.

The counting and collating process is expected to take several days.

While INEC has not said exactly when it would declare official results, this is expected to take place as soon as possible.

Meanwhile, as Nigerians await the declaration of the final results in what could be the most credible and close electoral contest since military rule ended nearly a quarter of a century ago - and the first in which a presidential candidate who is not from one of the two main parties stands a chance

Whoever Nigerians choose to succeed President Muhammadu Buhari - only the second incumbent in Nigerian history to bow out willingly after serving two democratic terms - will have to resolve a litany of crises that have worsened under the retired army general's administration.

These include banditry and militant violence now affecting most parts of the country, systemic corruption that deters investment and enriches a well-connected elite, high inflation and widespread cash shortages after a botched introduction of new bills late last year.

All three candidates have made roughly similar promises to tackle these issues.

Amid fears that a close poll may be disputed and trigger even more violence and chaos, all candidates signed a peace pledge on Wednesday, promising to seek redress the courts for any grievances.

"This is the only country we have, and we must do everything to keep it safe, united and peaceful," Buhari said at the signing in the capital Abuja. "There should be no riots or acts of violence after the announcement of the election results."

Voters will also choose new parliament members.

"This is one of the closest elections that has ever been held in the history of this country," Abiodun Adeniyi, professor of mass communication at Abuja's Baze University, said.

"We must take these polls with a



generous amount of salt," said Nnamdi Obasi, senior Nigeria advisor for the International Crisis Group think tank.

"The samples are small (and) ... these are online polls with literate people, but there are large numbers of people who are not literate and not online, especially in the north."

Obi's known support base is in the south, whereas Abubakar and Tinubu are both popular in the north.

Though the contest looks close, Nigerian electoral law makes a run-off unlikely, as the winning candidate needs only a simple majority, provided they get 25% of the vote in at least two-thirds of the 36 states.

Spreading insecurity - especially Islamist violence in the northeast and banditry in the northwest and southeast - threatens to make voting impossible for many thousands of Nigeria's 93.4 million registered voters.

But an increasingly professional Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has made strides in tackling fraud that marred previous polls. A law enacted last year provides for electronic voting machines, card readers to confirm voters are registered in a central database, and the cancellation of results from polling centres where the ballots cast exceed registered voters.

Many Nigerians now trust the process. "We thank God the election is going to be fair this time," said Ngozi Nwosi, 51, who sells clothes at a Lagos market stall, her voice barely audible above cheering and traditional drumming during a rally for her preferred candidate, "We trust INEC. Nigerians with their votes must get who they voted for."

Not surprisingly, therefore, at the threshold of civilization, and faced with innumerable problems associated with the state of nature and the possibility of violent extinction, man conceived the organization of society in a controlled and regulated manner, so much so that the idea of governance was born. Thus individual rights were freely given up to the leviathan as the sovereign for protection, welfare, and safety of the society. In this wise and self-effacing survival arrangement, the state existed for the benefit of the individual and not the individual for the state. The state was all too powerful in this role that it became a deus ex machina and shows interest in the affairs of individual, dead or alive.

And there is no better way to express this revulsion than with the power of one's vote. This is why I refused to align with Alexander Pope when he said 'for forms of government let fools contest, what is best administered is the best'. Says

an anayst. A form of government that did not give room for citizens' ultimate power of choice and determination in my educated opinion would not be the best, no matter how well practiced. It may at best be likened to a whited sepulcher that looks glowing and glorious from the outside but rotten and full of worms on the inside. Democracy has no alternative because it is all about freedom and citizen's power. Freedom in this context is the power or right to act, speak, or think as one wants without fear, hindrance or restraint, and absence of authoritarian order."

Since political independence, Nigerians have lived with promises of a shared and glorious future by the political class who bestride our clime like a colossus. Those promises were never kept. And every election circle they come back to ask for people's mandate to renew the same promises. And it goes on and on and the same individual at the end discover they have been taken for a ride while they masses sudden burst of energetic dance steps of the blind often evoke temporary praise and adulation, an attempt to make the dance a continuum will only lead to distaste and derision.

The nation have been through a lot as a people. But many have even asked if the election can translate into charting a prosperous destiny and future to

consign the agony and woes of yesterday dividends of democracy which also appears full of empty rhetorics.

Again this election is widely seen as a litmus test and all-important, because, it is the decision of all Nigerians who have chosen the candidate of your conviction in terms of character, competence, integrity, and capacity.

Whichever way the pendulum to swings, what matters most to many Nigerians is the future of their children and children's children destiny which are chipped in the with the only voice which they have spoken.

So, as the whole nation sits and anxiously wait for the man of the moment to be declared President and Commander-in Chief of Nigerian Armed Forces, the general mood among most citizens is that of positive expectations for a new peaceful and prosperous nation devoid of fussing and fighting which many people are now against violence and hatred.

The call by stakeholders such as security agencies, Traditional and religious leaders including the political class have all in their separate call asked all the candidates and their followers to treat this election as a game, and show sportsmanship. There would be life after elections as must have been expressed in the free will of the people.

METRO-FOCUS

Naira scarcity and excesses of POS operators

BY EZEKIEL DONTINNA

HERE is this undefined attitude in us that keep overheating every new government policy causing untold hardship to citizens just to give the dog a bad name even when it is meant for the development of our country because we politicized everything.

It is quite disheartening that some few privileged individuals among us derive so much pleasure in watching people carrying shoes on their heads and crying home empty handed and hungry simply because of their excesses and evil dealings.

Some surreptitiously connived among themselves, connecting their network in whatever form to instigate their fellow partners who are into the business of POS business to over charge and extort money from poor citizens. These are the masses who are for a living through their sweat to get cash to feed their families.

Annoyingly, they dramatise the unfortunate situation to the extent that some nicknamed each other "Ba Cash" meaning "No Cash" without any remorse or pity for these families who run from one shop to another looking for how to survive. Some even sell Nigeria's currency to Nigerians in their father land. What a shame!

Infact, out of ten (10) POS shops in Jos/Bukuru metropolis, one may be lucky to have one or two with cash in their disposal with standing order of disbursing only #2000 or at most, #5000 with 200% to 300% charges attached to it, unlike the normal 10% they used to charge.

Some even charged as high as 400% especially when you need the new currency and at the end of the day, what you take home after trekking around may not be sufficient to take care of your family needs. That shows that one must go out every blessed day to look for any available POS' shop around if at all luck shines your way.

Imagine someone looking for one thousand naira to buy vegetables and he or she was charged 300% or 400%. What would be left for one to enter the market? It baffles one when people turn away their faces from God and worship money in the night and still expect same treatment the following morning.

What remains inexplicable to us are the roles and models used by these commercial banks in disbursing these currencies to these cash vendors? Do the banks charge them extra fee before accessing the cash or could it be out of their individual greed and wickedness that they decided to add more pains to the citizens of Plateau State? We need an explanation in that respect!

However, the truth still remains that in every society, there exist the good, the bad and the ugly and Plateau is of no exception. Our findings revealed that a few still maintain the old charges of 10% to 20% among who is one Samuel Alfred Okoja, with POS shop



around Tudun-Wada Park who opined that, such exorbitant interest brings no good but bad luck.

One Mustapha around Ahmadu Bello way who charges as low as 20% said, "whatever you do, if not in the name and mercy of Allah, certainly, there is no blessing. So, I feel service to humanity is service to Allah." The only prayer is I have accessing the cash much that it can go

round the people. People are really suffering and I want government to do something urgently to help cushion the hardship people facing".

Interestingly, Governor Simon Bako Lalong through the Secretary to Government of Plateau State, Professor Danladi Abok Atu, received the management of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) at the Government House Rayfield Jos

on a courtesy call and it was fruitful deliberation.

The Governor promised to put modalities for checks to separate among these POS operators the fake and the authentic so that, genuine operators would be identified. The Federal Government currency swap was to curtail high level of corruption and not intended to incur pains on citizens.

However, as religious as you claim to be in their respective faiths, there is need for us to look at issues such as this with human face, but be mindful of the fact that whatever you do to your fellow human being, you are indirectly doing it to Him who protects you because our being alive today is not by might. Think!

SUNDAY PEOPLE

2023 GENERAL ELECTIONS, PRESIDENTIAL AND NASS

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) yesterday conducted the 2023 General Elections for the Presidential and National Assembly candidates all over the federation



Governor Simon Bako Lalong, (CON) his wife, Mrs. Regina Lalong and other voters queuing up to perform their rights



Ever busy center city of Jos captured during the elections monitoring



Rt. Hon. Simon Bako Lalong (CON) casting his ballot at Nyak, Ajikamai Polling Unit of Shendam LGA



INEC Officials sorting out the election materials at Ungwar Rogo Polling Unit of Jos North LGA



Large turnout of voters waiting for their turn to vote at the Township School of Jos North LGA



Children turn the road to football field at Filin Ball of Jos North



Mammoth crowd at Tudun Wada, Jos, waiting to perform their civic duty



Ballot boxes captured during the election monitoring

PHOTOS: DANLADI DUK



Road Runner
 Michael Agada
 SAFER TOGETHER
 magada122@gmail.com
 +234 803 333 5313

Automobile fire prevention and protection techniques



WHAT is fire?

FIRE is a rapid combination of two or more substances which produce heat, light, smoke and carbon. For fire to occur, oxygen, heat and fuel must be present. OXYGEN is the gas that supports burning (Nigeria Highway Code, 2018). HEAT is the sufficient temperature needed for ignition of fire while FUEL is any combustible (free burning) material (solid, liquid or gas).

Fire Triangle: this is the combination of oxygen, heat and fuel.

Fire Extinction: when an automobile or any type of fire is starved of any of these elements (oxygen, heat or fuel), the fire goes out.

Classes of Fire

For easy identification and extinction purposes, fire is classified into four categories:

Class A

This is fire involving free burning materials like wood, paper, textiles, etc. WATER is the best means of extinguishing this class of fire, please note that the water must be in form of jet or spray.

Class B

This is fire involving flammable substances like petrol, paint, grease, etc. fire under this category can best be extinguished with LIQUID FOAM extinguisher. Dry chemical powder, carbon dioxide extinguisher and dry sand are also good media to put out class B fire.

Class C

This fire involves combustible gases or liquefied petroleum like propane and butane. they can best be extinguished with dry chemical powder fire extinguishers. Water in spray form could be used to cool down the cylinder.

Class D

This class of fire involves metals, e.g. Potassium, Aluminum, Magnesium, Zinc, etc. they can best be extinguished with dry chemical powder fire extinguisher or dry sand.

Fire Protection

This is the protective measure of providing equipment, device and gadgets that are handy in case of fire incidence. These include fire extinguisher, dry sand, blankets, smoke detector and fire alarm systems, etc.

Fire Prevention

This are measures put in to ensure that fire does not break out. It simply means that fire occurrence is preventable. It is of utmost interest of everybody to prevent fire. This is because fire is a good servant but a bad master. Fire must be subjected to control measures at all time to ensure that is within bounds and does not go out of hand. Within bounds, fire is a good servant but out of control fire becomes a dangerous and life-threatening master. Some of the techniques of preventing automobile fire includes:

1. Watch out for fuel leakages, exposed wires and cracked hoses.
2. Be alert to changes in

vehicle sound as it might involve metal grinding.

3. Ensure that the positive terminal of the battery is completely insulated to avoid contact with the body of the vehicle.

4. Clean regularly all areas where flammable liquids may collect.

5. Do not leave fabric for cleaning the engine parts within the engine compartments.

6. Ensure that the contact point of the high-tension cables to spark plugs is not exposed.

7. Do not carry fuel in cans in the vehicle.

Extinguishing Automobile Fire

Fire can be extinguished by knocking off any of the three sides of the fire triangle. This can be achieved by:

1. Cooling

This is the act of using water to reduce the temperature of the burning material(s). before ignition point (the flash point).

2. Smothering

This is the act of cutting off air by the use of foam or fire blanket. This deprives fire of oxygen which is necessary for combustion.

3. Starving

This is the act of removing the burning material from the fire to a safe place thereby hurting its spread.

How to operate a Fire Extinguisher

To effectively operate a Fire Extinguisher, hold it upright and do the followings:

1. Pull the safety pin break cartridge
2. Aim the horn at the base (bottom) of the fire
3. Press/squeeze nozzle

NEWS

PLASU holds farewell dinner for Prof Izam

By EZEKIEL DONTINNA

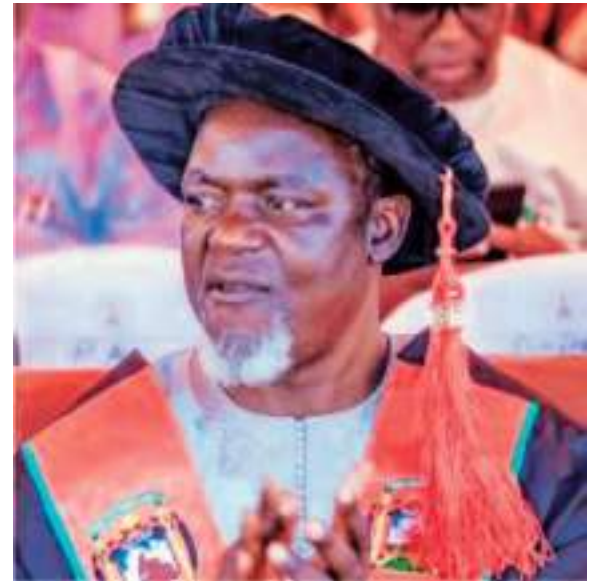
THE Deputy Vice Chancellor, Administration, Associate Professor Jurgi Nengak Gomos, said the tenure of the outgoing Vice Chancellor, Professor Yohanna Izam, was a quantum leap in both intellectual and infrastructural development of the University with the quality of programme of teaching and non teaching staff.

This was contained in a press statement signed by University's Public Relations Officer, John K. Agam and made available to **SUNDAY STANDARD** in Jos, the Plateau State capital shortly after the farewell dinner in honour of Professor Yohanna Daniel Izam, held at Crispian Hotel and Suites Rayfield Jos.

Declaring the event open, Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academic, said, "the event was to appreciate the Vice Chancellor who we described as a jolly good fellow whose style and quality of leadership, human relations and simplicity was exemplary and worthy of emulation.

"The tenure of the Vice Chancellor witnessed a quantum leap in both the intellectual and infrastructural development of the University and the quality of programmes, teaching and non teaching staff. The University had the highest number of internal teaching staff who attained the Professorial rank thus setting a solid foundation for the future growth of the University", he highlighted.

On his part, the Registrar of the University, Yakubu Ayuba, praised Professor Izam's style of leadership and that, it was characterized by team work, selfless service and capacity development



Nengak

which has impacted positively on the University's growth and that, the outgoing Vice Chancellor's humble disposition and depth of knowledge and character has been unequalled and praised his wife for standing beside him in all situations.

However, in their separate remarks, the Bursar Longsen Kerrekum Lawrence, University Librarian, Associate Professor Victor Chuku Nwokedi, the Dean School of Postgraduate Studies, Professor Thomas Shut and the Director of Academic Planning, Professor Bulus Gyang poured encomiums on outcome VC for transforming and lifting the University from a four faculty University to eight Faculties in addition to other physical and academic developments which now makes the University visible both locally and internationally.

They, therefore, commended Governor Simon Bako Lalong and Chief Joshua Chibi Dariye and other

development partners for not only establishing the University but for supporting its growth.

Responding, the outgoing Vice Chancellor, Yohanna Daniel Izam thanked them for supporting him to grow the University to what it is today and promised to continue to identify with the University and offered his services as Visiting Professor in the Faculty of Environmental Sciences.

Wife of the outgoing Vice Chancellor, Yossy Izam, appreciated both the Management of the University and the Deans and Directors for their show of love and support to her husband which made his work easy and prayed God to continue to bless them.

Highpoint of the event was the presentation of a plaque of excellent performance and gift to Professor Izam by the Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic, Professor Galadima Moses Pyefa on behalf of the University Management, Deans and Directors.

PSC urges security officers to exhibit patriotism

From DORCAS PANKYES, Abuja

THE Police Service Commission has urged police officers and other security agencies to exhibit the highest level of patriotism in ensuring that Nigerian voters, voting materials, and the atmosphere for elections are secured and safe for the elections.

The commission also charged the security agencies to ensure that Nigerians can freely vote and that their votes count.

The spokesperson for the PSC, Ikechukwu Ani, gave the charge in a statement obtained by our correspondent on Friday.

Ani said, "The PSC believes that the success of the 2023 general elections depends largely on the commitment of the police and other security agencies on election duty. The Commission calls for inter agency collaboration and synergy so that there will be visible unity in the conduct of the security agencies.

"The commission notes that Nigerians look forward to the security agencies for the motivation to step out and exercise their franchise.

"Meanwhile the commission's monitors have arrived at their duty posts across the nation and have been part of all the pre-election activities in the states. They will also participate in both the security control room activities and the civil society situation rooms."



Presidential Elections: Lalong, wife vote at Nyak-Ajikamai

By PALANG KASMI

PLATEAU Governor, Simon Bako Lalong, was among Nigerians that cast their votes on Saturday, during the 2023 Nigeria's elections.

He voted at exactly 11: 14am at his polling unit, Ajikamai 015, LEA Primary School Nyak,Ajikamai.

After voting in company of his wife, Regina, and daughter Stephanie, he expressed happiness that the entire process in the state is going on peacefully, based on security reports that were made available to him by security agencies.

Lalong while speaking to newsmen after exercising his franchise expressed optimism that his party the All Progressives Congress (APC) will win the Presidential elections.

However apart from the currency challenges caused by the Central Bank of Nigeria's Naira redesign policy which has affected the people, and smooth running of the electoral process, Lalong said the people in his state are passionate about their country and have come out peacefully to vote.

"As you can see, I am in my village at NyakAjikamai to vote and from what I have seen in my ward, people are passionate and are voting," he said.



Lalong

He praised INEC and security agencies for their job in the electoral process, and appreciated Plateau people for supporting him and his party the APC in the elections stating further that he is optimistic that the elections will favour his party.

He however said he will accept the outcome of the elections in good faith because at the end of the day, whoever emerges as president of Nigeria should be supported.

A domestic election observer at the polling unit, Mr. Arinze Eze, participating under a Civil Society Organisation created by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)

tagged Center for Strategy, Ethics and Value, who was at the polling unit said the voting process has been going on as expected, although actual accreditation and voting started late, by 10:00 am due to late arrival of materials.

He disclosed that there is an excellent security arrangement, while priority has been given to People with Disabilities (PWDs) and vulnerable groups.

"I observed that a physically challenged person came on a bike and rode straight to the front of the long queue of voters, where he was attended to immediately by the electoral officers", said the elections observer.

TARABA State Governor and candidate of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) for Southern Taraba Senatorial District, Darius Ishaku has complained about the late arrival of voting materials even as results sheets have been declared missing.

Ishaku who voted at his polling Unit PU 004 in Takum at about noon time then appealed to the Independent National Electoral Commission to extend the voting time in Taraba to enable voters in areas where electoral materials arrived late to exercise their franchise.

Speaking further, he said it was too early to give assessment of the Bio-modal Accreditation System (BVS) technology deployed by INEC.

"We had hitches regarding the distribution of election materials and it was sorted out late. Most areas received their voting materials late and I want to appeal to INEC to extend the voting time beyond 2pm," he said.

Meanwhile, the Presidential and National Assembly election results from ECE8 were declared missing in Takum, forcing security agencies to recall all vehicles who left to various wards in Takum Local government area to return to Takum late last night to sort out the missing result sheets.

The Police Spokesman, Taraba State Command, Usman Abdullahi confirmed the situation but said the issue have been resolved.

"The election result sheets were declared missing and the Electoral Officer was held in custody, but the result sheets were later found."

Meanwhile, Minister of Transportation, and

Result sheets missing in Taraba

From VICTOR GAI, Jalingo

Coordinator, Taraba for Tinubu/Shettima Campaign Council, Mohammed Jaji has cast his vote at his Sintali A polling unit in Jalingo Local Government Area.

He praised the turnout and conduct of people in the unit, describing the elections as generally peaceful.

"You can see that the election is going on peacefully without any rancour. Everything is well organized. The people are queuing up nicely, peacefully and obediently. We are very confident that the All Progressives Congress will prevail over all parties."

On the challenges experienced so far, he said, "at a time one of the BVS machines broke down. But it was effective later on."

Also, the PDP House of Representatives candidate for Jalingo, Zing, Ardo Kola, IsmailaMaihanchi was equally impressed with the conduct of elections. After casting his vote at his Bayan Gidan M Abi polling unit in Jalingo LGA, Maihanchi simply said, "I am impressed with the turnout. I am comfortable with the turnout".

Some voters have expressed confidence in the election and described it as peaceful than previous ones.

At the Turaki A ward, one of the flashpoints of election violence in Jalingo, Abdulrasheed Ibrahim said everything went well. "There were little issues. The voting was peaceful without any violence".

"My gratitude is to God. The election was peaceful. We and our opponents; there was no any form of fight between us. It was very successful,"



Ishaku

2023 election: Police confirm killing of one

From VICTOR GAI, Jalingo

THE Police has confirmed the killing of one person yesterday in Jalingo.

Unconfirmed reports had earlier linked the victim to an agent of the Vigilante Group of Nigeria (VGN) who was shot by a soldier after a scuffle.

"This morning during a patrol, they stopped

someone on a motorcycle. He took to his heels and so they shot at him," Police Spokesman Usman Abdullahi confirmed to The Nigeria Standard.

The Area Commandant of the Vigilante Group of Nigeria (VGN), Munir Bello, who earlier confirmed to The Nation about the

event, just confirmed that the victim was not his member.

"He is not our operative. After it was reported to me, I rushed to the hospital. We identified he is not our operative. We followed our records to authenticate and there is no record of the victim in our office," he stated.

el-Rufai worries over women voter apathy

From JOHN FWAH Kaduna

GOVENOR of Kaduna State, Nasir el-rufai, has expressed concern over

women voter apathy in the state.

OVENOR of Kaduna State, Nasir el-rufai, has expressed concern over women voter apathy in the state.

The governor, while waiting to cast his vote, urged the electorate to come out en-mass to exercise their right by voting candidates of their choice.

El-rufai who waited for hours on the queue to cast his vote disclosed this at PU 024 ward 7 Unguwar Sarki, Kaduna, where he said that there are reported cases of Bi modal Voter Accreditation System (BVS) in the state.

The governor however, revealed that a BVS machine was snatched at the Southern part of the state, just as he also said that two other incidents happened within the state but did not explain further



el-Rufai



Pankshin Local Government Council

ISSUANCE OF CERTIFICATES TO NEW DISTRICT HEADS

DISTRICT heads have been charged to be more proactive in discharging their royal responsibilities. This is by safeguarding the Norms, Values and Traditions of their various communities for the development of the State and the Nation at large. This assertion was made yesterday by the Plateau State Commissioner of Local Government and Chieftaincy affairs **Slyvanus Tapgun** during Presentation of Certificates of appointment to some Senior Districts Heads and other Newly Created Districts and Upgraded Chiefdoms of the central zone held at Nefur Arena Pankshin Local Government Area.

Plateau State Commissioner of Local Government and Chieftaincy affairs Slyvanus Tapgun stressed the need to be more United in the pursuit of a common goal in the interest of Peace and development irrespective of tribe, religion or other affiliations of the separate communities.

Earlier in his welcome address Executive Chairman of Pankshin Local Government Council Spoke on behalf of his colleagues in the Central Senatorial District represented by the Council Secretary **Hon. Edward Sunkur** commended the new appointees on their exalted position and also applauded State Governor, **Hon. Barr. Dr Simon Lalong** for the careful selection, upgraded and creation of more Districts and chiefdoms.

Hon Kakmena said Posterity will remember the Governor for standing up for the Central zone and Plateau State as a whole by building capacity of Districts and villages to have sense of belonging.

The Executive Chairman emphasized Strength in Unity which he said helps to address vices in Communities.

In their separate address the Gbong Gwom Jos Da Jacob Gyang Buba represented by the Miskhaham Mwaghavul John Putmang Hirse, President Joint Traditional Council Pankshin and Kanke Miskom Yusuf Walle congratulated the new Royal Father's on their appointment. They urged them to always abide by the ethics of the Traditional instructions so as to attract growth of the Various communities.

Responding on behalf of the new Districts heads, District head of **Panyam Miskhaham Aminu Derwan** expressed appreciation to the State Governor for finding them worthy. He assured of their readiness to work in line with the philosophy of the Traditional institutions towards bettering the lot of the people across all communities in the Central Zone.

High light of events were cultural Parade by groups of dancers across the Central Zone, issuance of certificates of appointment.



Signed
Jacqueline Dakat

SUNDAY SPORTS

Seven top events where Nigeria will gun for glory

ALTHOUGH Nigerian sports' failure to qualify for the 2022 FIFA World Cup is among the year's most discouraging events, there is much to look forward to in 2023.

Beyond the General Elections, which seem to take center stage, the year 2023 has a lot to look forward to, from football to racetracks.

The Green and White of Nigeria will be featured in several international events, of which PREMIUM TIMES has chosen seven.

Hopefully, the country will not just make up the numbers at these events, but the athletes will make some appreciable impact.

Another World Cup test for the Super Falcons

In this part of the world, there is a popular saying that goes, "What a man can do, a woman can achieve even better."

Even though they were not at their best, the Falcons maintained their impressive record of qualifying for every FIFA Women's World Cup, while the Super Eagles could not make it to Qatar in 2022.

Australia & New Zealand will host the World Cup in 2023, following a historic event in France in 2019.

Expectations are high for a glorious celebration as the competition will feature 32 nations for the first time.

While dethroning the United States Women's National Team (USWNT), which won the most recent tournament in France, may be too much to ask of the Super Falcons, matching their performance in the quarterfinals from 1999 will be viewed as a victory for Randy Waldrum and his women.

Group B includes the Super Falcons, Australia, one co-host, as well as Canada and Ireland.

Amusan to defend her crown at the World Championships

Millions of people will remember Team Nigeria's gallantry, particularly that of Tobi Amusan, from the most recent World Athletics Championships in Eugene, Oregon, for years to come.

Unfortunately, Amusan will have to defend her title faster than normal because the 19th World Athletics Championships are scheduled for August.

Amusan won the gold in the



Falcons of Nigeria

hurdles event while also breaking a world record in Oregon. ①

While 'Tobi Express' is definitely hungry for more titles and records, we wait to see if she can do it in Hungary in some months' time.

For Ese Brume, she improved on the bronze medal won in Doha to give Nigeria a silver in Oregon. Will her golden moment come in Budapest? Optimistic Nigerian fans are already shouting a resounding YES!

Hopefully, the show in Budapest will not be just about the ladies; but that Nigerian men will also rise to the occasion.

Team Nigeria returns to Ghana for the African Games

Nigeria has competed at every

edition of the African Games (formerly All-African Games) since its inception in 1965.

The country's best outing was on home soil at the 2003 edition in Abuja.

It was Nigeria's second time hosting the continental fiesta, following Lagos in 1973. Now, 20 years after the historic triumph in Abuja, Team Nigeria will seek glory in Ghana.

We expect the 13th African Games to be held in three cities in Ghana in 2023, on dates that have yet to be confirmed.

This will be the second time in history that the games will be decentralised in a process that

started in the previous edition held in Morocco.

With more than a thousand medals won over the years, the African Games has always been a good hunting ground for Team Nigeria.

A new era begins for Golden Eaglets

NdukaUgbade is on a mission to create a new set of youngsters who will grow to rule the football world. Having achieved legendary status as a player and coach by winning the FIFA U-17 trophy in both capacities, Ugbade, is out to assert Nigeria's influence once again in this cadre of football.

The signs are good, as the Eaglets were crowned WAFU B champions last year in Cape Coast, Ghana. Their next assignment is at the Africa tournament in Algeria.

The top four teams of the tournament will qualify for the 2023 FIFA U-17 World Cup in Peru as the CAF representatives. Cameroon are the defending champions, having won the 2019 edition and the cancellation of the 2021 edition.

U-20 AFCON/ FIFA U-20 World Cup

Just like the Golden Eaglets, the Flying Eagles are going to the U-20 AFCON as regional kings, having won the WAFU B qualifiers last year.

LadanBosso and his team have their work cut out for them already with a somewhat tricky group where they are pitted against hosts Egypt, Senegal, and Mozambique.

While winning an unprecedented eighth title will be worthwhile for the Flying Eagles, the prime target will be to be one of the four teams to represent Africa at the U-20 World Cup, which will take place in Indonesia later this year.

FIBA Basketball World Cup
The 2023 FIBA Basketball World Cup will be the 19th edition of men's national basketball teams. And after

Nigeria failed to show up in the women's version, owing to a self-imposed ban, many hope the D'Tigers will make it.

Unlike the last World Cup, when the D'Tigers were the first to qualify from the continent, it hasn't been smooth sailing so far in the 2023 World Cup qualification series.

While the 2023 tournament will be the second to feature 32 teams, it is the first time in its history, multiple nations will host the World Cup in Asia.

2023 Commonwealth Youth Games

This will be the 7th edition of the Games, and it will be the first to be held since the death of Queen Elizabeth II and the accession of King Charles III as Head of the Commonwealth and the reigning monarch of the Commonwealth Realms on 8 September 2022.

We have confirmed seven sports in which Nigeria will participate at the 2023 Commonwealth Youth Games. They are aquatics, athletics, cycling, Fast5 netball, rugby sevens, triathlon, and beach volleyball.

Only those between the ages of 14 and 18 are qualified for the Youth Commonwealth Games.

CAF Women's Champions League
The date and host for the 2023 CAF Women's Champions League is yet to be determined, but there is every likelihood it will take place in the last three months of 2023.

2023 will be the third edition after MamelodiSundowns Ladies of South Africa clinched the first edition with a 2-0 win over Hasaacas Ladies FC of Ghana in 2021.

ASFAR FC of Morocco won the 2022 (second edition) with a 4-0 win against MamelodiSundowns Ladies. Bayelsa Queens represented Nigeria in the last edition and finished in a credible third-place.



Nigeria's Golden Eaglets: WAFU B U-17 Champions

SUNDAY SPORTS

Chelsea boss lament mental health suffer after email abuse

CHELSEA boss Graham Potter says his mental health has suffered after he and his family received anonymous abuse following the club's poor run of form.

The Blues have won just two of their past 14 games in all competitions and lost to Premier League strugglers Southampton last Saturday.

Chelsea say they are offering their full support to Potter and his family.

"I've had some not particularly nice emails come through, that want me to die," Potter said.

"That's obviously not pleasant to receive."

The former Brighton boss said the anonymous emails had also referred to his family.

Under Potter, who was appointed in September following the sacking of Thomas Tuchel, Chelsea have won just nine of their 25 games.

"You could ask my family how life has been for me and for them. It's been not pleasant at all," Potter added.

"If you go to work and somebody's swearing abuse at you, it's not going to be pleasant."

"You can answer it two ways. I could say I don't care, but you know I'm lying. Everyone cares what people think, because we're hardwired to be socially connected."

Chelsea say they are offering Potter and his family whatever support they need but that it is a personal matter.

The Blues are currently 10th in the league, 11 points off the Champions League places.

Speaking before Sunday's Premier League game against Tottenham, Potter said: "With the results as they are, you accept criticism."

"That's not to say it's easy at all. Your family life suffers,



Potter

your mental health suffers, your personality - it is hard."

Potter acknowledged that fans were "entitled to be angry" with recent results, but he said he would not be undone by the abuse.

"Life is tough for lots of people," he said.

"You ask me is it hard, I say yes it is hard. You suffer. You get upset. When you're in private, you show real emotion with your family."

"But the world is tough. We're going through an energy crisis, a cost of living crisis. People are striking every other week. No one wants to hear about the poor old Premier League manager."

Spurs assistant manager Cristian Stellini, who remains in charge on Sunday as boss Antonio Conte continues to recover from gallbladder surgery, believes Potter is a "great manager".

"I studied Potter since I arrived here because he was a manager that was at Brighton last season and I followed Brighton a lot,"

Stellini said.

"It surprised me the way they play, the way they changed system many times and the way they were good to challenge with Potter."

PSG indicates interest in Salah

THE Egyptian forward, Mohammed Salah 30, is on the radar of the French mega spenders amid doubts over the futures of all three of their iconic forwards - Lionel Messi, Kylian Mbappe and Neymar.

Salah signed a new three-year Liverpool deal last year worth nearly £400,000-a-week, taking into account bonuses, running until the summer of 2025.

He has had a mixed campaign but remains an ace goal poacher and goal creator and has lost none of his devastating speed.

Salah's return of 19 goals and nine assists from 34

SUBSTITUTE Manor Solomon scored for the third consecutive game as European hopefuls Fulham fought back to claim a hard-fought Premier League draw at home to struggling Wolves.

Solomon's superb curling effort into the right corner rescued a point for the hosts, who generally underwhelmed as they missed the opportunity to move level on points with fifth-placed Newcastle.

Until the Israel international's intervention, Wolves had looked on course to claim a valuable three points courtesy of Pablo Sarabia's sweeping first-half effort.

The Spain winger, who had earlier seen a weak attempt saved by home goalkeeper Bernd Leno, expertly turned in Raul Jimenez's knock down after twice linking with the Mexico international in the build up.

Had Jimenez been able to turn home a second-half header he narrowly glanced wide the game might have proved beyond Marco Silva's side, who barely threatened until the closing stages.

Fulham fought back to claim draw



Manor Solomon is the first Israeli player to score in three consecutive Premier League appearances since Ronny Rosenthal in November 1992

The result leaves the Cottagers sixth in the table on 39 points, while Wolves remain 15th, four points above the relegation zone.

Both sides are likely to come away from this contest with a tinge of regret, with a point hardly an ideal outcome for sides with disparate ambitions this term.

Fulham will look back

ruefully on a chance lost to apply further pressure on Newcastle and Tottenham as they look to secure European football for the first time since 2011-12.

However, they did little to merit more, delivering a flat performance that provided little for the home supporters to get excited about until the final 15 minutes when, having levelled, they pressed forward in search of a winner and Carlos Vinicius forced visiting goalkeeper Jose Sa into a superb save.

"Many things were different in the second half, the dynamic of the team and the way we pressed the ball. We didn't do that well enough from the start," Fulham boss Silva told BBC Sport.

"It was a reaction that I wanted but that's how we should have started. He [Manor Solomon] needs to keep doing what he's doing. He doesn't have 90 minutes in his legs yet. He has been really important but let's hope he continues doing it."

Solomon's goal-scoring cameo was another step forward for the on-loan Shakhtar Donetsk winger, who only returned in January from a serious knee injury sustained in the first game of the season.

Until he struck Wolves' only concern appeared to be a second-half injury to forward Matheus Cunha, who was taken off on a stretcher after lengthy treatment following a seemingly innocuous challenge.

With Sa making routine stops from a tame Vinicius header, an Andreas Pereira free-kick and a Joao Palhinha effort, Wolves appeared on course to claim a welcome fifth win in nine top-flight matches under former Spain boss Julen Lopetegui.

Aside from good chances for Sarabia and Jimenez, Ruben Neves also headed wide from Matheus Nunes' cross with Wolves in control.

But they were eventually made to pay, with the visitors now having dropped 15 points from winning positions this term.

"The match changed after the injury to Cunha. We have the need to get a lot of points to stay out of relegation. It's going to be a hard and tough task but we have one more today," Lopetegui told Sky Sports.

Antony: We want to put United where it belongs

THE Reds travel to London today to face Newcastle in the final of the Carabao Cup.

One of the players who will be hoping to have an impact on the day is summer signing Antony, who says he is determined to put United "back where we belong."

Antony: It's a dream come true Antony reveals that it was always his ambition to play at Wembley, ahead of the Carabao Cup final...

"When I came here, I said that Manchester United is a huge club and we're going to put this club back where it belongs - fighting for and winning trophies," he told club media ahead of the final.

"We know that it'll be a tough task, but we're aware of how big we are as a club and how good we are."

"It'll be a dream come true, in my first season, if we can win a trophy. I hope that I can keep at this so more glory follows."

Today will be the first time the Reds have played at Wembley since the 2018 FA

Cup final, which we narrowly lost 1-0 to Chelsea.

In a stadium steeped in history, Antony is expecting it to be a "special" occasion.

"I'm really excited," he said. "I was talking to my mates at home about this, it's going to be my first time there. It'll be a huge day for me, I can't wait for this day

to come around.

"Your first final in your first season is always going to be special."

Ahead of the clash with Newcastle, our Brazilian winger wants the fans to know how much he appreciates their unrelenting support.

"I'd like to say to them

[the fans] to keep on supporting us and believing in us. Obviously our fans never give anything less than 100% in all of our games, they're always there for us.

"They need to keep at this as it's really important for us to feed off their energy and have them there. When we're on the pitch we feel like we've got an extra gear, so we want them to keep believing in us because we're always fighting for them."

Luke Shaw says the Reds must be wholly focused on the football when United take on Newcastle in the Carabao Cup final.

Lisandro explains United's determination to convert our Carabao Cup final place into a trophy on Sunday.

Wembley awaits for the Reds, as we bring you all the details ahead of Sunday's showdown in the capital.

Erik has been asked about Marcus, after the striker was substituted during the second half of the Barcelona game.



Antony



Salah

is not looking to sell Liverpool but indicated that fresh investment will be found.

FSG run the club on a self-sustainable basis and that means a series of expensive new signings are out of the question without new investment, or one or two big-name sales.

Football Insider revealed earlier this month (11 February) that Salah is the one Liverpool superstar the club may be willing to sell this summer who could secure a huge fee, with internal discussions held over who a potentially big-name sale.

The number of Liverpool players worth £50million-plus is a small group and would most likely only include Salah, Luis Diaz, Trent Alexander-Arnold, Alisson and Nunez, with the latter four either at or approaching their peak.

Perhaps Diogo Jota and Virgil van Dijk would make the select band but the Dutch defender, widely seen as the best in the Premier League over the last half-decade, turns 32 in July and the Portugese has been badly hit by injury over the last 12 months.

SUNDAY SPORTS

Man United's threat can hurt Newcastle

MANCHESTER United take on a Newcastle side contesting their first final at the new Wembley in Sunday's Carabao Cup showdown. Alex Keble breaks down the battle.

Their players won't share in the supporters' anxious memories of those back-to-back FA Cup final defeats in the 1990s, but they will be shaking a little more than their opponents before kick-off.

The stark contrast in psychological readiness - between the upstarts feeling the desperation from a starved Geordie crowd and the easy composure of stalwarts with bigger fish to fry but keen to kick-start the Erik ten Hag era - could have big ramifications for the tactical battle at Wembley.

Much rests on how nerves affect the first 20 minutes. Get past the opening, and Newcastle can feel their way into a contest full of intriguing tactical match-ups.

Newcastle were overwhelmed by Liverpool's aggressive forward intent last weekend and it seems likely Ten Hag, studying the game, will decide to adopt a similar ploy from the outset to take advantage of his team's psychological edge.

The presence of Loris Karius in goal only strengthens the argument that Man Utd should hit them hard.

After laying the groundwork with more individualistic and measured football in his first half-season, Ten Hag has shown more of his Ajaxian tactical principles in 2023 by moving towards purposeful and direct possession football.

This is characterised by a



Hag

desire to take advantage of turnovers - when the team who just lost the ball is out of their defensive shape - with fast vertical play filtered chiefly through the runs of Marcus Rashford and Alejandro Garnacho.

Newcastle will deploy a relatively high line, as usual, and depend upon their ability to squeeze the middle third to keep United at arms' length, yet at least for the opening 20 minutes this could prove very challenging.

Rashford's movement is lethal, and potentially being without their first-choice central midfielders to block off the passing lanes could lead to an aggressively direct approach from the favourites which could obliterate

Newcastle just as Mohamed Salah and Darwin Nunez did last weekend.

Should Newcastle survive that opening spell of pressure there will still be a major problem trying to stop Rashford, who has six goals in his last five games in all competitions.

Howe's tactical model is also focused chiefly on transitions, with his ultra-compressed 4-3-3 tending to crowd out the central column of the pitch and pressing hard once opponents enter the middle third giving Newcastle defensive security (15 goals conceded in 23 league games) while remaining in a relatively advanced position on the field.

That usually works, but a new position for Bruno Fernandes and the return of Allan Saint-



Bruce

Maximin throws a spanner in the works.

Saint-Maximin has struggled to get into the team because of his relative lack of work rate, emphasising that Howe prioritises tireless running over quality, yet the Frenchman has found his way back onto the left wing lately.

He won't track back all the time, and with left-sided central midfielder Joe Willock facing a late fitness test Newcastle are, it seems, unusually weak in that left-centre space which just happens to be where Fernandes is excelling.

Moved out to the right wing, Fernandes is drifting infield to pop up in the right half-space and create chances for Rashford, using his unfamiliar positioning to confound opposition midfielders while opening up the angle for a right-footed through ball.

Saint-Maximin will leave the midfield light in Fernandes's area, plus Elliot Anderson who looked out of his depth against Leicester City may have to start in place of Willock. It is potentially the game's most serious mismatch.

Casemiro's return from suspension could not come quickly enough. Over the last two weekends Fred and Marcel Sabitzer have struggled as a pair, looking static and easily surrounded when in possession and hopelessly open to being bypassed on the counter.

However, with Casemiro dropping deep to dictate the tempo Man Utd should overcome the potential stumbling block of Howe's stubborn organisation.

But of even greater significance is his defensive awareness and capacity to break up play, which will be needed to deal with the unusual narrowness of Howe's attacking structure.

Saint-Maximin and Miguel Almiron will make darting diagonal runs to support Alexander Isak centrally after the ball is won back, which puts Casemiro under significant pressure alone at the base; Fred and Sabitzer couldn't handle the speed of Leicester's narrow counters last weekend, so Fred will likely again be a passenger when the opposition breaks.

Newcastle's transitions haven't been particularly effective throughout February but it is no coincidence that this winless run coincides with Bruno Guimaraes' suspension.

Back at the base of midfield to play delicate passes through the lines and find the feet of those inverted wingers, Guimaraes could be the difference. It certainly would not be a surprise if the winner of the EFL Cup final was decided by one of the Brazilian number sixes.

Either Man Utd can make a very quick start that allows Ten Hag's vertical possession football to dominate a nervous Newcastle or, if the game settles, Fernandes can take advantage of extra space while Howe's side wait for moments to overcrowd the returning Casemiro.

Taking a wider lens, the intangible factor of confidence under pressure is likely to be more important than the tactical battle-plans which puts Manchester United firmly in the driving seat.



SUNDAY SPORTS

Mirzo shines at WTA Dubai duty championship

STATISTICALLY, Sania Mirza may be no match for all-time greats like Serena Williams, but it's hard to overstate the tennis star's impact on sport in India, especially for women.

Her black hair tied in a quick bun, Mirza's dark eyes focused across the net on Tuesday, as she bounced the ball three times before serving, her iconic nose pin glinting with every move.

She was playing against Russia's Veronika Kudermetova and Liudmila Samsonova at the WTA Dubai Duty Free Championships - hundreds of spectators, many of them fans from India, packed the courtside seating to watch her "last dance".

Mirza and her partner Madison Keys lost the first round match in straight sets, drawing the curtains on her 20-year professional tennis career.

With six Grand Slam doubles titles under her belt, Mirza is easily India's most successful tennis star.

Over the decades, she's won 43 major career titles, becoming the first ever Indian to make number one in the WTA doubles rankings, a feat achieved in 2015.

The devotion of Mirza's fans has remained unrivalled, surviving triumphs by her opponents and injuries that dogged her over the years. Her best run came in 2015 when she and Martina Hingis won 16 titles, including three grand slams, ranking them the greatest women's doubles pair of all time.

But Mirza's story is special because she made it as a professional sportswoman, despite the odds being stacked against her. Born in 1986, she grew up in the southern city of Hyderabad at a time when tennis as a profession was only for the wealthy.

Mirza was famously asked about choosing between motherhood and her career in an interview by a senior journalist

She began playing aged six on potholed courts made of cow dung - a frugal trade-off between between clay and hard courts.

Mirza turned out to be a natural and found success as a junior tennis player, winning the 2003 Wimbledon Championships girls' doubles title when she was 15.

But she burst into the spotlight in 2005 when she made it to the third round of the Australian Open - the first Indian woman to reach this stage of a major in singles - to face superstar Serena Williams.

It was an extraordinary feat - cricket-obsessed Indians tuned in to watch the teenager go up against a player already cementing her place as the greatest of all time. Mirza lost the match but her career embodying not just tennis but women's sport in India had taken off.

In a pre-internet era, her matches brought people together as they watched her play, glued to their TV screens. She was a regular feature in Indian sports pages. Many Indians have early memories of a player who, for once, looked and spoke like them, and was doing great things.

But while many celebrated Mirza's rise, a group of Muslim clerics issued a fatwa, denouncing her tennis clothes as "indecent", "un-Islamic" and "corrupting".

Sania Mirza's immense popularity often made her the subject of



intense scrutiny and vitriol in her own country

It marked the start of waves of backlash the star, then just 18, would receive for the choices she made on and off court.

Mirza, proudly Muslim, practised her religion on her own terms without it really impeding her goals and aspirations and it was liberating to watch this unfold in public.

Her responses to comments on her clothes, like her tennis moves, were measured yet incisive, sometimes even dramatic. The player would wear T-shirts and caps with searing one-liners - 'You can't handle the truth' or 'You can either agree with me or be wrong' - to tournaments and events.

Her immense popularity would often make her the subject of intense scrutiny and vitriol in her

own country. But Mirza appeared to have an ironclad sense of self and was never seen cowed by it.

In 2008, she announced she had no desire to play in India as she chose to boycott its most prestigious tennis tournament, the Bangalore Open.

"Every time I play in India, there is a problem," she told reporters.

Days before she had been accused of desecrating the national flag after she was caught on camera resting her bare feet on a table in front of the Indian colours. Earlier that month, she had also drawn the ire of Muslim groups after she filmed an advert at a historic mosque in her hometown, Hyderabad.

In 2010, Mirza married

Pakistani cricket player Shoaib Malik, prompting frequent questions about her loyalty to the country of her birth.

Mirza, pictured with with husband Shoaib Malik from Pakistan, often faced questions about her patriotism

Eventually, Mirza managed to do something seemingly impossible - transcend these differences to become a South Asian icon instead of just an Indian one.

On Tuesday, her fans in the Dubai arena and online cheered her on as she hugged her son after the match. It's a testament to how Mirza managed unapologetically to dismantle notions about what she should or shouldn't do.

In a country where women have been discouraged from building a professional career in sport, Mirza managed to do exactly that - and so

much more.

When Rajdeep Sardesai, one of India's most respected journalists, asked her about "settling down" during an interview in 2016, she chided him for "sounding disappointed I'm not choosing motherhood over being number one in the world".

"That's the question I face all the time as a woman, that all women have to face - the first is marriage and then it's motherhood. Unfortunately, that's when we're settled, and no matter how many Wimbledon we win," she said.

Through her time in public life, Mirza's been a vocal advocate of women's rights, routinely speaking against domestic violence, sexual assault and other issues. She's also been an incessant critic of the unfair standards in Indian sport, where good facilities and fair pay are still hard to come by for women.

Mirza's tennis career may have come to an end but the impact of her legacy as a sportswoman is far from over

Some see her cool, hard-talking attitude as arrogance. For her fans, her outspokenness was golden.

"I would like people to remember that this girl fought for the right things. She believed in herself when nobody else did," she told ESPN, days before her retirement. "She always thought that you can fight the odds."

Mirza's tennis career may have come to an end but her legacy as a sportswoman looks far from over.

Apart from her tennis academies in Dubai and Hyderabad, she will be mentoring women cricketers of the Royal Challengers Bangalore franchise who will soon be playing in the Indian Women's Premier League.

"The thought process is to try and help the next generation and try and find the answer to that question I'm asked all the time - 'Who will come after you, that we have not been able to find for the last 20 years?'"





Next african footballer of the year?

WITH perennial winners of the CAF African Footballer of the Year Award- Egypt's Mohamed Salah, Sadio Mané of Senegal and Algeria's Riyad Mahrez not enjoying the best of the season; the trio having shared the top spots among themselves since 2016, Nigeria international and Napoli of Italy striker, Victor Osimhen is set to break their monopoly. With the form of the Serie A top scorer, nobody would want to bet against him winning the CAF top prize, last won by a Nigerian in 1999

With no African Nations Cup or World Cup competitions, Victor Osimhen is even more favourable to emerge winner of the African Player of the Year in 2023.

In 1997, Victor Ikpeba, then at AS Monaco, emerged as the best Player in Africa having not featured in an African tournament.

The AFCON tournament that was set to for this year was postponed till 2024 and Ikpeba has advised the 24-year-old to keep his form at Napoli to stay ahead.

"Victor Osimhen has done well, he has been fantastic and he is on form. It's not easy to score 20 goals in all competitions just in February which is a proof of how good he is.

"Time will tell, the only thing Victor Osimhen needs to do is to keep his head down, focusing on winning the Serie A, and emerging as top scorer."

"The Nations Cup and the World Cup was last year so it shouldn't factor in much, Osimhen has won individual awards already and he currently is the best African player."

"Remember that there is no AFCON this year so it makes Osimhen have a strong case especially if Napoli wins the Serie A.

"In 1997 when I won (African POTY award), there was no AFCON so I was judged based on my performance at my club side.

"So, he just needs to remain focused and keep doing what he's doing because he has a huge chance to win the award."

The Nigeria international has recently been tagged as one of the best attackers in Africa after tallying 18 goals in 19 league matches for the Partenopeans.

The Super Eagles striker has garnered attention recently for his performance, winning various accolades and tallying a sizable number of goals.

The 24-year-old has been compared with Drogba by former Chelsea boss, José Mourinho, who once managed his Ivorian Idol. After Napoli's 2-1 triumph against The She-Wolf, the current AS Roma manager told Soccer.net.ng that the Nigerian is on "the same level" as the Ivorian great.

However, this might be the



Osimhen

consequence of Osimhen emulating his idol for years, Osimhen confessed that he enjoys the way he plays and thinks he is the finest in a video posted on the club's social media page.

"I watched Drogba a lot, how he played. I consider him one of the best attackers ever," he said.

Former Real Sociedad midfielder, Mutiu Adepoku has backed Napoli's Victor

Osimhen to beat all other challengers to this year's Africa Player of the Year award.

Regular suspects - Liverpool's Mohamed Salah, Bayern Munich's Sadio Mané, and Manchester City's Riyad Mahrez - start as frontrunners for the honours.

The trio have shared the top spots among themselves since 2016, and it will take something, someone special,

to break their monopoly, especially since they are still active at the top level.

But if anyone can usurp the status quo and power to a podium finish, it is the seemingly unstoppable Victor Osimhen.

The Napoli forward has been by a country mile the best striker in the Italian Serie A with 18 goals from 19 games, at least three more than his closest rival.

The former Lille lad was named the best player in the league for January after scooping the best goal award in the same month.

Winning the CAF Africa Footballer of the Year award, however, goes beyond just scoring goals. And Osimhen may have to lift the league title with Napoli before he can be considered one of the favourites for the prestigious honour.

But former Nigerian international, Mutiu Adepoku believes Osimhen is already deserving of the award ahead of others.

"Nobody is at the level he is now, and I believe he still has time to do more," Adepoku told Brila FM. "If now was the moment to pick the Africa best player, he would win it easily.

No Nigerian has scooped the prestigious award since Nwankwo Kanu was named the continent's best in 1999. Nigerian players - Rashidi Yekini, Emmanuel Amunike, Victor Ikpeba, and Nwankwo Kanu - won five of the first eight Player of the Year awards CAF started issuing in 1992. But no Nigerian has claimed the honour since Kanu last won it in 1999.

Osimhen's excellent form in Italy also suggests that PSG's Kylian Mbappé and Manchester City's Erling Haaland are no longer the sole heirs to take over from Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi as perennial winners of the Ballon d'Or.

Messi and Ronaldo won 11 of the last 14 Ballon d'Or awards, but with age no longer on their sides, both superstars will likely not be in the running in a few years.

Frenchman Kylian Mbappé and Norwegian striker Erling Haaland are the two youngsters already considered world-class.

Manchester United's Marcus Rashford and Barcelona's Pedri may have recently been introduced into the conversation of future winners of the award.

But Osimhen's remarkable exploits in the Italian top flight this term indicate that a new superstar has been lifted into that exalted class.

The Super Eagles forward is without equal at the top of Serie A's goalscorer chart, with 18 goals in 19 appearances - the most he has ever managed in his professional career.

In netting his latest league strike in Napoli's 2-0 win over Sassuolo at the weekend, Osimhen struck his 100th professional goal, which he achieved in 197 games.

Incredibly, that is faster than it took Lionel Messi (210 matches) and Cristiano Ronaldo (301 games) to reach their first century of goals.

Winning the Ballon d'Or and becoming its first Nigerian recipient, though, will require more than just scoring goals. It must also involve winning titles.

Fortunately for Osimhen, he is leading Napoli's charge for a first Serie A title in over thirty years while the club is performing excellently in the UEFA Champions League, where they are one leg in the quarter final after defeating German side, Eintracht Frankfurt in the first leg of the round of 16.

Falcons beat Costa Rica to end losing streak

THE Nigeria national women's team, the Super Falcons, have finally ended their poor run of seven consecutive defeats.

In their final game at the Revelation Cup four-nation tourney, the Super Falcons early Wednesday morning at the Estadio León in Leone de los Aldamas beat Costa Rica 1-0.

Esther Okoronkwo's maiden goal for the Super Falcons was all Nigeria needed to claim their only win at the four-nation invitational tournament and salvage what was left of their battered image.

Before finally getting it right against Costa Rica, nine-time African champions, Nigeria had suffered identical lone-goal defeats against the Revelation Cup hosts, Mexico and Colombia.

Though down and out without a chance of winning the tournament's trophy, the Super Falcons showed a great deal of determination to finish on a high and they achieved that against Costa Rica's Las Ticas.

The Super Falcons largely dominated the Costa Ricans

with their physicality and superior ball intelligence, but they failed to convert the several goal-scoring chances they created.

The breakthrough came for Randy Waldrum's ladies just before the halftime break.

Jennifer Onyichegini, who had been very lively all through the first half, wriggled

her way past the Costa Rica defenders.

She delivered a cross to the back post, where Esther Okoronkwo nicely controlled before curling the ball past the goalkeeper into the far post.

There were a couple of other chances for the Super Falcons to increase their tally

with the likes of Ihezuo, Kanu, and Rasheedat Ajibade coming close at different times.

The Super Falcons are gearing up for the World Cup where they will be up against co-hosts Australia, Olympic champions Canada and debutants the Republic of Ireland.



Esther Okoronkwo's maiden goal helped salvaged the battered image of the Super Falcons