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Three days to elections: APC govs, banks meet to clear naira mess

In a last-ditch effort to resolve the lingering cash crisis that has thrown the entire country into turmoil, governors elected on the platform of the All Progressives Congress on Sunday met with the party leadership at the APC National Secretariat in Abuja.

This was as the chief executive officers of banks also met to proffer solutions to the situation which had led to attacks on banks and the death of no fewer than 13 persons across the country.

The development is coming barely six days before the presidential and National

Assembly polls slated for Saturday, February 25, 2023

No fewer than 12 governors turned up for the crucial meeting with the APC National Chairman, Senator Abdullahi Adamu, and other National Working Committee members, which started at 2.37pm

At the meeting were governors Nasir El Rufai (Kaduna), Abdullahi Sule (Nasarawa), Muhammad Inuwa Yahaya (Gombe), Mai Mala Buni (Yobe), Abubakar Badaru (Jigawa) and Abubakar Sani Bello (Niger), Yahaya Bello (Kogi), Simon Lalong (Plateau), Biodun Oyeboji (Ekiti), Sani Bello (Niger), Atiku Bagudu (Kebbi), Babajide Sanwo-Olu

(Lagos) and members of the National Working Committee of the party in attendance.

Governors Abdullahi Ganduje (Kano) and Dapo Abiodun (Ogun) were absent, while Imo and Katsina state governors were represented by their deputies.

The party's presidential candidate, Asiwaju Bola Tinubu, later joined the meeting at 4.45pm.

Addressing journalists shortly before their closed-door session, Adamu expressed delight with the turnout, noting the imperative of the meeting.

He said, "It is my privilege to welcome you to this important and emergency meeting. We

have found a situation where there is a pressing need to get together as standard bearers of our states in Nigeria who were elected on the platform of our great party, the APC.

"I am happy with the response so far. And it is my understanding that more of the governors are on their way. You will recall the recent development that has necessitated the need for this invitation.

"We do not want to sit in judgment over anybody or bodies with regard to what is going on today in the country as it affects our great party. I thought it best to get all those who are holding forth in the

critical positions in the party to get together and have some interaction so that we can have a better interpretation and appreciation of the situation that we are in. That is the essence of this invitation."

Contrary to an order of the Supreme Court that the Federal Government should suspend the February 10 deadline for swapping the old naira notes with new ones, the Central Bank of Nigeria refused to shift the deadline.

The apex court order followed a suit filed by Zamfara, Kogi and Kaduna state governments against the Attorney-General of the Federation, Abubakar Malami.

States including Lagos, Ondo, Ekiti, Kano, Sokoto, Ogun and Cross River have also joined the suit as co-plaintiffs.

The crisis between the governors and the President, Major General Muhammadu Buhari (rtd), worsened on Thursday when the President in his nationwide broadcast ignored the apex court by extending the validity of old N200 notes while insisting that old N500 and N1,000 remained illegal.

Buhari in his state broadcast said the old N200 note would be legal tender for the next 60 days, till April 10, 2023, while urging Nigerians to deposit their old N500 and 1000 notes with the

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2023: We're ready for elections

The Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), Gen. Lucky Irabor, on Monday, assured Nigerians that the Armed Forces and other security agencies are ready to provide a safe and secure environment for the February 25 and March 11 elections.

Irabor gave the assurance while briefing newsmen shortly after the meeting with Service Chiefs and heads of security agencies in Abuja.

He also warned those that intend to cause trouble during the elections to have a rethink "because they will have a bloody nose."

Irabor held a closed-door meeting with the Service Chiefs of Army, Navy and Air Force, Inspector-General of Police, Directors-Generals of the Department of State Services and National Intelligence Agency, as well as the Chief of Defence Intelligence.

He said the purpose of the meeting was to review the election security and develop action plans to ensure that the elections are held under a peaceful atmosphere.

We have just finished the meeting – the Service Chiefs, the Inspector General, Police, the DSS, represented by the Director of Operations, the DG NIA and the CDI – looking at the security for the elections,

and, as you know, the Police is the lead agency for elections security, and we have compared notes and assessed the entire situation and we are good to go.

"The assessment is that we are set on all fronts. We got

representation from the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), who, of course, you have interacted with, who has also told Nigerians and the world that they are ready for this election.

"So, by and large, we are good to go and I like to use the opportunity to assure Nigerians that on the security front, we are good to go on all fronts," he said.

Irabor also gave assurance that the security agencies

were also ready to ensure that every part of the country would have peaceful elections and that Nigerians exercise their franchise.

He added that contingency actions had been taken to address the areas with

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From left are, Gubernatorial candidates of APC, Dr. Nentawe Yilwatda Goshwe, Labour Party, Dr. Patrick Sunday Dakum and PDP, Barr. Caleb Mutfwang putting heads together at a public function in Jos recently

2023: US issues security advisory to citizens

The United States Embassy in Nigeria has issued a travel security advisory to its citizens ahead of the 2023 election.

Titled, "Reissued With Updates to Staffing and Do not Travel Areas," the embassy said violent crimes, common across the country, were often targeting dual nationals, who have returned to Nigeria.

Violent crime – such as armed robbery, assault, carjacking, kidnapping, hostage taking, banditry, and rape – is common throughout the country.

Kidnappings for ransom occur frequently, often targeting dual national citizens who have returned to Nigeria for a visit, as well as

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News



Four days to election: APC govs, banks meet to clear naira mess

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Central Bank.

After the APC NWC and governors' meeting which ended at 7.15pm, journalists were invited into the venue, where the chairman addressed them on the outcome of the parley.

Adamu lamented that although the naira redesign was a good move, the timing and the pain it had brought on Nigerians has necessitated the need for both the CBN Governor, Godwin Emeifele and the AGF, Abubakar Malami to avoid misleading the President.

He said, "I'm sure you are quite aware of the fact that a meeting comprising the APC governors was held today and the leadership of the NWC of our great party was summoned. We had a discussion and at the end of the discussion, we have resolved as follows: That this resolution is without prejudice or whatsoever to the case that is lying at the Supreme Court at this point in time. This has to do with the issue of currency redesign.

"We noted very seriously that the programme and its implementation are causing tremendous difficulties to the people of Nigeria and to the national economy. That we urge the Attorney General of the Federation and the Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria to respect the supreme court order of interim injunction which is still subsisting

"That the meeting is urging his Excellency, Mr President, to intervene in resolving issues that are causing this great difficulties to the economy,"

When prodded to comment on the need for the presence of the APC Tituba, at the meeting, Adamu disclosed that "Tinubu's visit is a normal visit."

Addressing journalists after the meeting, the Chairman of Progressives Governors Forum and the Governor of Kebbi State, Atiku Bagudu, expressed satisfaction with the level of mobilisation that had gone into the campaign of their presidential candidate.

He stated, "As the chairman spoke, the governors and the party are one and the same. And I am very proud about the conduct of our campaign by our presidential candidate

"The Director General of the campaign and indeed, governors and the candidate across the country have been doing a tremendous job of mobilizing the Nigerian populace and we are very, very impressed with the support of the majority of Nigeria."

Although some of the governors like Sanwo-Olu and El Rufai wore long faces when they came out of the meeting, it is not immediately known if certain governors are in support of the naira swap policy.

Tinubu refused to address the press when he came out of the meeting at about 7.15 pm.

Despite entreaties by the journalists who kept pestering him with questions, he snubbed them and stepped into one of the waiting cars in his convoy and drove off.

It was gathered that during the meeting most of the governors, who spoke, said there was the need to prevail on the President to ensure the

obedience of the court order.

Our correspondent learnt that Bagudu, who spoke first after the chairman's opening address, rallied other governors and the APC NWC to kick against the CBN policy during the meeting.

"This informed the strong position they took against the policy, the CBN governor and the AGF," a source explained.

The source added that the governors that spoke criticized the implementation of the naira redesign, which they said was not good for the party.

The source also gathered that the Bankers Committee was considering extending the collection of old notes this week to avert protests ahead of the polls.

It was learnt that the chief executives of commercial banks took the decision during a virtual meeting on Saturday as part of moves to avert fresh protests this week.

The meeting, it was further gathered, was aimed at getting the CBN to give approval for banks to resume the collection of old notes on Monday.

It was learnt the top bank officials believed doing so would reduce tension and prevent further protests that could increase tension ahead of Saturday polls.

"Bank CEOs met over the weekend to find a solution to the crisis. You can see that some banks collected old notes deposits on Saturday. The idea is to get banks to resume old notes collection from customers on Monday (today). This will prevent further attacks on bank officials and bank property this week. This is the last week before the polls, so the CBN and banks want to ensure there is no tension," a top official privy to the development revealed.

Meanwhile, in defiance of the directive by the President, Major General Muhammadu Buhari (rtd), that the old N1,000 and N500 have ceased to be legal tender, the Kaduna State Government has directed ministries, departments and agencies to accept payments in the old naira and new notes.

El-Rufai had last Thursday slammed Buhari over his directive which he said was in disobedience to the February 8 Supreme Court Order restraining the Federal Government from ending its cash swap policy on February 10.

The governor asked residents of the state to continue using the old naira notes.

A statement by El-Rufai's Special Assistant on Media and Communications, Muyiwa Adekeye, on Sunday, noted that the directive became necessary following the Supreme Court's order that allowed for the use of old naira notes as legal tender. In the statement, titled, 'KDSG asks agencies to accept payments in old and new notes,' the governor stated, "In line with the subsisting order of the Supreme Court, the Kaduna State Government has directed its ministries, departments and agencies to ensure that their collection agents continue to accept payments made in all denominations of the naira, old and new."

Also on Sunday, the state government raised the alarm over an alleged plot by some disgruntled elements to destabilise the state a few days before the 2023 general elections using the platform of the cash scarcity crisis.

The state Commissioner for Internal Security and Home Affairs, Samuel Aruwan, who disclosed this in a statement, explained that the government was in possession of credible intelligence reports of planned protests across the state.

The commissioner warned that such a protest remained prohibited in the state, noting that security agencies had been placed on the red alert to forestall any act capable of disrupting peace in the state.

However, a member of the House of Representatives representing Kaduna North Federal Constituency, Samaila Suleiman, argued that El-Rufai's statement amounted to treason, declaring that the governor should be made to face the law.

This was contained in a statement by the lawmaker titled, 'illegal counter order on currency redesign: an act of treason,' released to newsmen in Kaduna recently.'

To being the same path as Kaduna, the Ogun State Government on Sunday said its directive that the people in the state should continue to spend the old naira notes still subsisted.

When asked if the directive still subsisted, he said, "Yes," adding, "The Supreme Court is the only arbiter on this case."

Similarly, the Zamfara State Attorney-General and Commissioner for Justice, Junaidu Aminu, affirmed that the state government would continue to use the old naira notes as legal tender until the Supreme Court delivered its final pronouncement on the case pending before it.

In a related development, the Lagos State Commissioner for Information and Strategy, Gbenga Omotosho, said the recent directive on the collection of old N500 and N1000 in the state was merely advisory to ensure peace and tranquility.

In a related development, the Association of Senior Staff of Banks, Insurance and Financial Institutions has called off its stay-at-home order and told its workers to resume work at their various banks nationwide.

It also called on the Federal Government to make cash available to the banks.

The association said this in a statement signed by the President, ASSBIFI, Oluwole, on Sunday.

Meanwhile, no fewer than 13 persons have died in protests provoked by the shortage of new naira notes across the country, according to findings.

Also, at least 12 states have witnessed protests as a result of the policy.

The states are Edo, Delta, Oyo, Ondo, Benue, Kwara, Ogun, Lagos, Akwa-Ibom, Osun, Rivers, and the Federal Capital Territory.

A breakdown indicates that two persons died during a protest against naira scarcity at Mowe in Ogun state on February 18.

Also, three persons were shot dead in Benin City, the capital of

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Edo State, when youths staged a protest against currency swap on February 16.

On February 15, two persons lost their lives in the protest that erupted in the Udu road area of Delta State over new notes' scarcity.

One person died following a riot that broke out in Abeokuta, Ogun State, on February 7.

Also, protests at the Dogo community in Apata, Ido Local Government Area of the Oyo state, led to the death of three persons on February 5.

A bank customer slumped and died after standing in a queue for long hours at a bank in Agbor, Delta State, on February 3.

Also, a heavily pregnant woman in Kasuwan Magani, Kajuru LGA, in Kaduna, lost her life to the scarcity of the new naira notes after her husband could not access cash for her treatment on February 2.

As naira crisis worsened, the President on Sunday appealed for more patience from Nigerians.

Buhari who said he was fully aware of the hardship argued

that the policy is meant to improve Nigeria's economy.

"I am appealing to you to exercise further patience as we take appropriate measures to ease these hardships. God willing, there will be light at the end of the tunnel," Buhari said in a video recording from Ethiopia where he attended the just-concluded African Union summit.

Senior Special Assistant to the President on media and publicity, Garba Shehu, this in a statement on Sunday.

Speaking recently, the President said "I want to once again assure you that I am fully aware of the current hardship you are facing as a result of some policies of the government which are meant to bring overall improvement to the country.

"I am appealing to you to exercise further patience as we take appropriate measures to ease these hardships. God willing, there will be light at the end of the tunnel."

In the video, Buhari also drummed support for the Presidential Candidate of the All Progressives Congress, Bola Tinubu, saying "he is reliable

and I know he will build on our achievements."

The President thanked Nigerians for electing him to the country's highest office for two terms, and urged them to vote for the APC flag bearer because "he is reliable and I know he will build on our achievements."

"I am not a contestant in this election, but my party, the All Progressives Congress, has a candidate in the person of Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu.

"As I mentioned before, Tinubu is a true believer in Nigeria, who loves the people and the development of our country.

"I am calling on all of you to vote for Asiwaju Bola Tinubu. He is reliable and I trust he will build on our achievements," he said.

The President emphasised that the APC presidential candidate has demonstrated his commitment to the development of the country and the well-being of its people.

His message comes barely two days before the grand finale of the APC presidential campaign rally in Lagos on Tuesday which he is expected to attend.

2023: US issues security advisory to citizens

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US citizens with perceived wealth. Kidnapping gangs have also stopped victims on interstate roads.

"Terrorists continue plotting and carrying out attacks in Nigeria. Terrorists may attack with little or no warning, targeting shopping centres, malls, markets, hotels, places of worship, restaurants, bars, schools, government installations, transportation hubs, and other places where crowds gather. Terrorists are known

to work with local gangs to expand their reach.

There is civil unrest and low-level armed militancy in parts of Southern Nigeria, especially in the Niger Delta region. Armed criminality, including kidnapping and maritime crime, is also pervasive in this region.

"Violence can flare up between communities of farmers and herders in rural areas. The US Government has limited ability to provide emergency services to US citizens in many areas of Nigeria due to security

conditions," the updated advisory issued on Monday, read in part.

The embassy, therefore, warned Americans in Nigeria not to travel to "Borno, Yobe, Kogi, and northern Adamawa states due to terrorism and kidnapping.

"Bauchi, Gombe, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, and Zamfara states due to kidnapping "Coastal areas of Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, and Rivers states (with the exception of Port Harcourt) due to crime, kidnapping, and maritime crime."

We have sufficient PMS for Feb, March supplies -NNPCL

In its efforts to sustain the supply of petroleum products nationwide, the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL), on Monday, said it has 1.8 billion litres of Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) in the country for February and March.

In a statement issued on Monday, by Garba Deen Muhammad, Chief Corporate Communication Officer of NNPCL Limited, the

company has a total of 1.805 billion litres of PMS stock, representing 805.35 million litres in all the land depots nationwide and 1,000.20 million litres on marine vessels, which is equivalent to 30.09 days sufficiency."

An additional PMS supply of 884 Million Liters is also expected into the country by 28th February, 2023.

For March 2023, a total of 2.3 billion litres of PMS is

expected into the country, while about 2.5 billion litres, which is equivalent to 42 days sufficiency, will be the closing stock for the month under review," he explained.

While assuring motorists that it has adequate and sufficient volumes on both land (all the depots) and marine vessels, he said the NNPCL Limited, as the provider of energy security for the country, will continue to sustain the availability of petroleum products across the country.

Federal High Court announces election vacation

The Federal High Court has asked its judges across the federation to proceed on a short break to enable them to participate in the February 25 presidential and national assembly elections.

The development was disclosed in a circular titled, "BREAK FOR THE 2023 GENERAL ELECTIONS".

Dated February 20 and signed by the Chief Judge of the FHC, Justice John T. Tsoho, the circular said, "In view of the forthcoming

2023 general elections, Your lordships are by this circular letter permitted to observe a short break in order to perform your civic duties."

The courts were directed to sit up to Wednesday, February 22, 2023, before proceeding on the break and are to resume work on Tuesday, 28th February, 2023.

While the break is to be observed, Tsoho directed the Abuja, Lagos and Portharcourt divisions to assign a judge to preside

over "urgent" cases coming from their respective jurisdictions.

Your Lordships are to sit up to Wednesday, 22nd February, 2023 before proceeding on the break and shall resume work on Tuesday 28th February 2023.

"The administrative judges in the Abuja, Lagos and Portharcourt judicial divisions shall ensure that a judge is designated to cater for the north, south-west, south-south/south-east geopolitical areas respectively, regarding urgent matters during the period," the circular added.



Business & Economy

Old cash deposit confusion on banking customers

The past week has been hard for many Nigerians with several information being released to the public, leaving many more confused than before. As the deadline for the old notes as stated by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) elapsed on Friday, February 10, 2023, it became unclear to many if they should accept or reject the old notes. BUKOLA IDOWU writes.

THIS is because there was a pending case instituted against the federal government by some state governors on the implementation of the deadline. The Supreme Court had ruled that the government maintain status quo and allow both the old and the new notes to remain in circulation up until the time it decides on February 15.

At the end of its sitting last Wednesday, the Supreme Court adjourned the case till Wednesday, February 22, 2023, insisting that the federal government maintain status quo on the naira. However, President Muhammadu Buhari, in ensuing for peace amongst the turmoil that arose from the scarcity of the Naira, extended the legal status of the N200 note till April 10, 2023 while stating that, the N500 and N1,000 would only be deposited at the CBN.

According to the president, the redesigning policy was prompted by the need to restore the statutory ability of the CBN to keep a firm control over money in circulation. "In 2015 when this administration commenced its first term, Currency-in-Circulation was only N1.4trillion.

"The proportion of currency outside banks grew from 78 per cent in 2015 to 85 per cent in 2022. As of October 2022, therefore, currency in circulation had risen to N3.23 trillion; out of which only N500 billion was within the Banking System while N2.7 trillion remained permanently outside the system; thereby distorting the financial policy and efficient management of inflation.

"I am not unaware of the obstacles placed on the path of innocent Nigerians by unscrupulous officials in the banking industry, entrusted with the process of implementation of the new monetary policy. I am deeply pained and sincerely sympathise with you all, over these unintended outcomes.

"To stem this tide, I have directed the CBN to deploy all legitimate resources and legal means to ensure that our citizens are adequately educated on the policy; enjoy easy access to cash withdrawal through availability of appropriate amount of currency; and ability to make deposits.

"I have similarly directed that the CBN should intensify collaboration with anti-corruption agencies, so as to ensure that any institution or person(s) found to have impeded or sabotaged the implementation should be made to bear the full weight of the law.

"I similarly consulted widely with representatives of the State



Governors as well as the Council of State. Above all, as an administration that respects the rule of law, I have also noted that the subject matter is before the courts of our land and some pronouncements have been made.

"To further ease the supply pressures particularly to our

“A guideline on the depositing of the N200, N500 and N1,000 old notes commenced, and on Wednesday's afternoon, the CBN portal remained open with instructions that customers upon completion of the form and generating a code, should go and deposit the old notes at their respective banks. To encourage deposit of old notes, deposit money banks had sent out messages to their customers requesting that they deposit their old notes as they would remain open all through the weekend to receive old notes.

”

citizens, I have given approval to the CBN that the old N200 bank notes be released back into circulation and that it should also be allowed to circulate as legal tender with the new N200, N500, and N1000 banknotes for 60 days from February 10, 2023 to April 10 2023 when the old N200 notes ceases to be legal tender. In line with Section 20(3) of the CBN Act 2007, all existing old N1000 and N500 notes remain redeemable at the CBN and designated points," the president added.

To this end, the CBN had on Wednesday evening opened the portal for individuals as well as corporates who have old notes to deposit to fill up forms. On the portal which is open on cbn.gov.ng, depositors are required to fill in their Bank Verification Number (BVN), phone number, email address, bank details, address, the amount to be deposited as well as the denominations to be deposited, after which a reference number is generated.

A guideline on the depositing of the N200, N500 and N1,000 old notes commenced, and on Wednesday's afternoon, the CBN portal remained open with instructions that customers upon completion of the form and generating a code, should go and deposit the old notes at their respective banks.

To encourage deposit of old notes, deposit money banks had

sent out messages to their customers requesting that they deposit their old notes as they would remain open all through the weekend to receive old notes.

Confusion, however, set in on Friday after the CBN issued a statement that it had not authorised banks to receive the old notes on its behalf.

According to the statement issued by the director, Corporate Communications of the CBN, Osita Nwanisobi, in line with Mr. President's broadcast of February 16, 2023, "the CBN has been directed to ONLY reissue and recirculate the old N200 banknotes and this is expected to circulate as legal tender for 60 days up to April 10, 2023.

the public should therefore disregard any message and/or information not formally released by the Central Bank of Nigeria on this subject."

Despite the statement which ensued from the apex bank, commercial banks across the country continued to receive the old notes as the CBN portal for depositing the old notes referred customers who had filled the forms to go onward to their respective banks to deposit the old notes.

Meanwhile, the Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria (CIBN) has continued to call for peace as the cash crunch led to violence against banks. This is also as the Association of Senior

Staff of Banks, Insurance and Financial Institutions (ASSBIFI) had ordered banks' staff to stay off duties, following series of attacks of banking staff and bank facilities.

President and chairman of CIBN, Ken Opara, whilst noting that the institute is liaising with the Body of Banks CEOs to address the current challenges in the country, said the safety and security of staff of banks is of paramount importance.

"Hence, where there is security challenge, the Management of banks have been empowered to take proactive measures to close their operations in such location and inform the Central Bank of Nigeria.

"Therefore, the safety concerns being expressed in various quarters are already being addressed. Banks will continue to ensure that adequate security are in place to protect staff and customers whilst safeguarding their assets in contending with the current challenge.

"Consequently, we appeal to the general public to remain calm and eschew any act of violence as the banking industry remain resolute and committed to finding ways to address all the related issues," he stressed.

The scenario may continue in the new week as the banking customers are actually confused on what to believe and what to do to change their old Naira notes.



Business & Economy

CBN to push out more N200 notes

THE Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has marshalled out a plan to flood the system with N200 notes.

Aside from meeting with bank chief executives to release the old and new N200 notes in their vaults, the CBN will, on its part, push out the old N200 notes that were initially deposited as banknotes to be phased out.

A very senior member of the bank told The Nation that "by today, there should be enough of the old N200 notes combined with the new ones to flood the banking system with enough cash to meet the genuine cash needs of normal people and small enterprises".

The official noted: "More cash will get into circulation to stimulate demand for goods and services which had experienced a lull because of shortage of cash."

When asked how much of the N200 denomination has so far been printed by the CBN to meet this demand, the CBN official said he does "not have information on the quantum of new N200 notes printed. One thing I am sure of is that the CBN will put into circulation the quantum of new naira notes it judges to be optimal".

Last week, CBN Governor Godwin Emefiele had suggested that about N700 billion is the optimal quantity of cash the economy requires.

According to the official, "with the old N200 notes being put back into circulation plus the new notes, Nigerians will experience substantial relief in the next few days, especially if the commercial banks do not sabotage the directives".

He then quickly chipped in that "there's no relief for hoarders of N500 and N1,000 notes as these have ceased to be legal tender".

An underlying reason for the demonetization agenda of the CBN is the desire to quickly move Nigeria from a predominantly cash based society to a cashless society.

However, following the lack of interest shown by Nigerians to adopt the eNaira digital currency of the Central Bank, the apex bank has mandated all staff of the bank to open an eNaira wallet.

The Nation gathered from a staff of the CBN that the allowances of staff will be paid into the wallet to fund their eNaira account, while basic salaries will go into their regular accounts.

Since October 2021 when the eNaira was launched, less than 99.5 percent of Nigerians have refused to use the CBN's digital currency, the eNaira, preferring instead to use cash that they are used to.

The CBN staff who spoke to The Nation said the Central Bank in mandating its staff to operate the eNaira account was copying commercial banks when they introduce new products.

According to the staff, "when



Emefiele

a new product is introduced in the bank, the bank's staff are asked to use the product so that they can be able to sell the product properly".

The central bank in October, 2022 decided to replace all high-denomination cash bills in the economy with the aim of shifting Nigerians to use less cash.

However, the apex bank had in October hinted that it will significantly reduce the quantity of higher denomination notes (N500 and

Petrol price increased by 54.52% in one year-NBS

THE National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), says the average retail price paid by consumers for Petrol increased from N166.40 in January 2022 to N257.12 in January 2023.

This is according to the NBS Premium Motor Spirit (Petrol) Price Watch for January 2023 released in Abuja recently.

The report said the January 2023 price represented a 54.52 per cent increase when compared to the value recorded in January 2022 at N166.40.

"Comparing the average price value with the previous month of December 2022, the average retail price increased by 24.70 per cent from N206.19.

It said on state profiles analysis, Imo paid the highest average retail price for petrol at N332.14, followed by Rivers and Akwa Ibom at N327.14 and N319.00, respectively.

Conversely, Sokoto state paid the lowest average retail prices for petrol, at N191.43, followed by Plateau at 192.14 and Borno at 193.91

Analysis by zone showed that the South-East recorded the highest average retail price in January 2023 at N307.85, while the North-Central recorded the lowest

N1,000) it will print going forward.

The CBN official who spoke to The Nation revealed that the CBN is in a race with other central banks around the world to institutionalise Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC).

According to the official, "114 countries, representing over 95 percent of global GDP, are exploring a CBDC while the Bank of England is tinkering with the idea of the digital pound.

at N217.15.

The NBS also revealed in its Automotive Gas Oil (Diesel) Price Watch Report for January 2023, that the average retail price paid for diesel by consumers was N828.82 per litre.

It said the January 2023 price amounted to a 187.69 per cent increase from the N288.09 per litre recorded in January 2022.

"While on a month-on-month basis, the price increased by 1.34 per cent from N817.86 per litre reported in December 2022."



Kyari

THE Naira on Monday exchanged at N461.50 to the dollar at the Investors and Exporters window.

The figure represented a decrease of 0.05 per cent compared with the N461.25 it exchanged after the close of business on Feb. 18.

The open indicative rate closed at N461.60 to the dollar on Monday.

An exchange rate of N462.06

Naira loses marginally, exchanges N461.50 to dollar

to the dollar was the highest rate recorded within the day's trading before it settled at N461.50.

The Naira sold for as low as N440 to the dollar within the

day's trading.

A total of 40.28 million dollars was traded at the official Investors and Exporters window on Monday. (NAN)

FG, states, LG share N750 billion January allocation

THE Federation Account Allocation Committee (FAAC), at its Meeting shared a total sum of N750.174 billion to the three tiers of government, as Federation Allocation for the month of January, 2023.

From this stated amount, inclusive of Gross Statutory Revenue, Value Added Tax (VAT), Electronic Money Transfer Levies (EMTL), Augmentation from Non-Mineral Revenue, and an additional sum of N15.000 billion from Savings, the Federal Government received N277.334 billion, the States received N244.975 billion, the Local Government Councils got N180.135 billion, while the Mineral Producing States received N32.730 billion as Derivation, (13% of Mineral Revenue).

The additional N15.000 billion from Savings, according to the Committee at the end of the meeting, will be shared



Ahmed

accordingly to the three tiers of government.

The Communiqué issued by the Federation Account Allocation Committee (FAAC), at the end of the meeting, indicated that the Gross Revenue available from the Value Added Tax (VAT) for the month of January, 2023 was N250.009 billion, as against N250.512 billion distributed in the preceding month, resulting in a decrease of N0.503 billion, from this amount, the sum of N10.000 billion was allocated to Cost of Collection, while the sum of N7.200 billion was given to transfers, Savings, Recoveries and Refunds. The remaining sum of N232.809 billion was distributed as follows; Federal Government got N34.921 billion, the States received N116.405 billion, Local Government Councils got N81.483 billion.

Accordingly, the Gross Statutory Revenue of N653.703 billion received for the month which was lower than the sum of N1136.183 billion received in the previous month by N482.479 billion. From this amount, the sum of N23.494 billion was giving to Cost of Collection and a total sum of N241.091 billion to Transfers, Savings and Refunds. The remaining balance of N389.118 billion was distributed as follows; Federal Government received the sum of N189.745 billion, States got N95.227 billion, LGCs received N73.416 billion, and Derivation (13% to Mineral Producing States) got N32.730 billion.

Also, the sum of N13.799 billion from the Electronic

Money Transfer Levies (EMTL) was distributed to the three (3) tiers of government as follows; the Federal Government received N1.987 billion, States got N6.624 billion, Local Government Councils received N4.636 billion, while the sum of N0.552 billion was allocated to Cost of Collection.

The Communiqué further disclosed the Augmentation of the sum of N100.000 billion from Non-Mineral Revenue, which was shared accordingly: Federal Government received N52.680 billion, States got N26.720 billion, Local Government Councils received N20.600 billion.

Petroleum Profit Tax (PPT), Companies Income Tax (CIT), Oil and Gas Royalties and EMTL all decreased considerably. Value Added Tax (VAT) decreased marginally. However, Import and Excise Duties increased, albeit marginally.

According to the Communiqué, the total revenue distributable for the current month of January 2023, was drawn from Statutory Revenue of N389.118 billion, Value Added Tax (VAT) of N232.809 billion, an Augmentation from Non-Mineral Revenue of N100.000 billion, N13.247 billion from Electronic Money Transfer Levies (EMTL), and an additional N15.000 billion from savings, bringing the total distributable for the month to N750.174 billion.

However, the Excess Crude Account (ECA) balance as of February 20th, 2023 stands at \$473,754.57.



Cash capture and the 'nudity' of Nigerian depositors

After two weeks of protests over the inability of Nigerians to withdraw and access cash in banks, President Muhammadu Buhari has reviewed the implementation of the naira redesign policy. From now till April 10, 2023, the old ₦200 note is to be recirculated into the economy as legal tender alongside the new redesigned denominations. However, ₦500 and ₦1000 old notes ceased to be legal tender. OLUDAYO TADE writes

THOSE still having them are to take them to Central Bank office in their respective states. The President's address provides hint into how this reviewed strategy is oriented towards checking vote buying by politicians who may have stockpiled their homes with billions of the old ₦1000 and ₦5000 denominations. By rendering them illegal, politicians who are unlikely to have stored the ₦200 old notes may not find the latest presidential order palatable. There is the need for proper governance of the latest order so that politicians and banks will not hijack it again and suffer depositors.

About two weeks ago, a video of semi-nude, light-skinned woman went viral on the internet. She was inside her bank to access her money but could not achieve her goal. After efforts to achieve her aim fell on deaf ears, there was nothing more to hide – she stripped herself. She lamented her inability to withdraw her money which has not allowed her children to go to school for two days. Left with bra and pant, this woman contested and angrily demanded that her account be closed and her deposit released to her. Few days later, the video of a man totally naked inside another bank went viral. Blended with messages of hopelessness and the futility of efforts to withdraw his savings to save his wife and children from dying from ill-health and of hunger, the nude-male protester proclaimed that he was frustrated to go undressed after he had appealed to top executives of that bank without result. He wanted his ₦520, 000 naira which he saved with the bank released to him. He said "give me my money let me go. You frustrated me. You frustrated me. Give me my money. My wife is in the hospital...about to die. There is nothing again. How old are my children? Seven years, four years...give me my money. I don't taya. And when a policeman was brought-in, he said: If una wan shoot me, shoot me make I die. Let them bury me make I forget the problems. Make dem shoot me make I die... make I forget my wife, make I forget my children...make una shoot me. Give me my money let me go. If you see me here again, kill me. Let me go and take care of my family."

Semi-Nude or total nude protests are not exclusive to Nigeria. It has been reported in Zimbabwe, Australia, South Africa, London and the United States of America. Where getting justice in law courts becomes difficult people resort to protest to show displeasure and their unpleasant experiences on their inability to move/transport, purchase goods and withdraw money just because the Central Bank of Nigeria with the approval of President Muhammadu Buhari decided to redesign three denominations of ₦200, ₦500 and ₦1000. By protesting nude, these depositors did not only show they



Buhari

have nothing again to hide, they also show how government policies affect the downtrodden who save little for trading and survival. It further shows the weaponisation of the body for the extraction of action, sympathy and ultimately halt an unpleasant event. Despite the fact that people in the banking halls were more interested in recording, observing and sharing their nude videos than covering them, the nude protesters challenged institutional authorities and imposed themselves on spaces they would not have dared. They represent millions of Nigerians who were tricked to deposit their money into the formal banking system before they were literally stripped, disempowered and rendered beggars to access their own monies.

That the President eventually reviewed his stance on the policy is victory attributable to the protests within banks and those on the streets. Sadly, with destruction of properties and loss of lives, protests are democratic rights to engineer social change. The protests brought to the fore the inner sufferings and feedbacks of a poorly implemented policy which presidential aides may not be able to tell the president. How do we ensure that those in hospitals and need care are not allowed to die because of loopholes in a currency redesign policy? What digital infrastructure has the CBN put in place for smooth transition to digital payment systems? How do we strengthen security to check frauds and cybercrimes? How will people who cannot withdraw the new legal tender eat, transport themselves and perform other mandatory roles in their lives? Nigeria needs to learn how Kenya



Emefiele

and countries in the global north are achieving this feat. India started this policy around 2016-2017 which they called demonetisation with the almost similar objectives as Nigeria. Today, India is experiencing remonetisation with cash.

The Naira redesign policy of President Muhammadu Buhari and Governor of Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Godwin Emezie failed to appreciate the unintended consequences that come with the policy by not anticipating the massive informal economy that thrives on cash. The primacy of cash for economic, social and cultural uses in Nigeria needs to be appreciated in making interventions. In an international study with my colleague, the Acting Head of Marketing and Consumer Studies, University of Ibadan, Dr. Oluwatosin Adeniyi, we found that uptake of digital naira in Nigeria was low because it failed to add anything new to the functions already served by existing payment systems. Indeed, we found that fear of fraud in digital transaction, large informal economy based on cash, and poor digital infrastructure to support transition affects the uptake of digital naira and affects the drive for financial inclusion. The report of the global

study can be found at <https://dci.mit.edu/research/011323>. Our findings align with what is happening to the naira redesign policy. Stories from those who have opted to use transfer or Point of Sales (POS) payment options are not different. Its either the bank Apps are not working, or the transfer is hanging or not delivering. When you transfer, you have to wait for minutes for confirmation. God help you if your confirmation comes early but our research documented that some people had to wait for more than three hours! Furthermore, our study found that while some are receptive to accept transfers, poor infrastructure challenge, fake alerts, and delayed crediting of account frustrated such acceptance. Traditional practices and informal economy are still heavily cash-based despite the fact that the young educated persons prefer transfers to old people who associate more with cash. When policy is poorly-conceived and badly executed such as this, it creates extortion opportunities to the extent that the Nigerian naira now operates in the black market!

Every policy must first understand what problem exists before designing intervention. In the case of Nigeria, we have the cash-dependent, less cash-

dependent and digital users within the financial space. Product and policy design must factor in these end-users. We cannot have one size fits all policy if our aim is indeed to include all and not exclude people. Poor understanding or appreciation of the variety of financial product users (including the financial literacy level, poor rural penetration, and unbanked populace) is what is driving the present crisis occasioned by the naira redesign policy. You cannot aim to drive financial inclusion by fraudulently bringing people in and denying them access to their money. What the CBN and banks have done is the tyranny of intermediary control and denial, a strategy used to lure people to deposit old naira into banks with the intention of not giving them access to their money as they would love to. It may also pass for cash seizure, cash-arrest, cash-kidnapping or cash abduction simply because the owners now pay 'ransom'(using naira to buy naira) to be able to access a fraction of their money, usually at a loss! The ongoing crisis should teach the CBN that they underestimated the importance of cash in the financial ecosystem of Nigeria and failed to prepare for this backlash.

"Semi-Nude or total nude protests are not exclusive to Nigeria. It has been reported in Zimbabwe, Australia, South Africa, London and the United States of America. Where getting justice in law courts becomes difficult people resort to protest to show displeasure and their unpleasant experiences on their inability to move/transport, purchase goods and withdraw money just because the Central Bank of Nigeria with the approval of President Muhammadu Buhari decided to redesign three denominations of ₦200, ₦500 and ₦1000. By protesting nude, these depositors did not only show they have nothing again to hide, they also show how government policies affect the downtrodden who save little for trading and survival. It further shows the weaponisation of the body for the extraction of action, sympathy and ultimately halt an unpleasant event. Despite the fact that people in the banking halls were more interested in recording, observing and sharing their nude videos than covering them, the nude protesters challenged institutional authorities and imposed themselves on spaces they would not have dared".

Politics

Governorship candidates to sign peace accord

From VICTOR GAI, Jalingo

ALL party governorship candidates in Taraba will sign a peace accord ahead of the governorship elections slated for March 11.

The peace accord which is organized by Kukah Centre in collaboration with the National Peace Committee and the Taraba State Independent Peace Committee is expected to be the first of its kind in the State.

According to the Secretary, Taraba Independent Peace Committee, Justin Tyopuusu, in a press statement, the theme of the event will be: "Deepening Stakeholders Participation and Amplifying Voices of Citizens for Peaceful 2023 General Elections in Taraba State".

The statement further stated: "It is expected to identify issues capable of disrupting peaceful elections in the State and device ways of preventing such possible occurrence".



Ishaku

Also, the engagement which is expected to be graced by Governor Darius Ishaku "will provide an opportunity for the governorship candidates to commit themselves to peace before, during and after the elections".

Aside the governorship candidates, heads of security agencies, top government functionaries, traditional and religious leaders, Civil Society Organizations, the media and other stakeholders will participate.

Southern senatorial zone: APC assured of victory

By PALANG KASMI

PLATEAU State Governor Simon Bako Lalong has taken his Campaign to represent the people of the Southern Senatorial Zone in the Senate, to his kinsmen.

He has also given them an assurance that the APC will coast home to victory in all elections starting from the Presidential and national assembly on 25th February 2023.

The Governor made the promise Saturday at the APC Southern Zone campaign rally in his stronghold of Shendam, thanking the people for their support and collaboration over the years which has given him the confidence to serve not only the zone but the state and nation at large.

This was contained in press statement make available to THE NIGERIA STANDARD recently.

According to the statement, he said he doesn't have a record of contesting and loosing any election which clearly shows that Tinubu and all the candidates of the APC will win in the forthcoming elections.

The Governor said his administration has paid back the people of the Southern Zone for their consistent support by executing various projects in the area which are a far departure from the neglect that the previous administration meted out on them.

He enumerated many projects such as roads, water, schools, hospitals among others that have been carried out in the zone by both the State and Federal Governments under the APC.

Lalong assured them that when elected as Senator with Asiwaju as President and Dr. Nentawe Yilwatda as

Governor, the people of the zone will witness yet another round of bumper harvest of projects and programmes which have direct impact on their livelihoods.

He advised the people of the zone and the state to shun politicians who have nothing to offer but using religion and ethnicity to deceive the people in order to win.

He said his Rescue Administration has exposed such persons who also collaborate with some religious leaders to pretend that they are speaking for the people with the sole aim of deceit and propaganda.

Lalong prayed for the victory of Tinubu/Shettima, Dr. Nentawe Yilwatda, Chief John Dafaan, Rt. Hon Idris Wase and all APC candidates of the zone during the elections.

Deputy Speaker House of Representatives, Idris Wase, said the APC is a party of equity and justice with track record of performance which is evident from the collaboration between the Governor and APC Federal legislators to attract projects such as the Federal Medical Centre Wase, Federal Polytechnic Nyak, National Orthopedic Hospital, Jos, Nigerian Law School Jos Campus, Federal University of Education, Pankshin, among others.

Member Representing Pankshin, Kanke, Kanam Federal Constituency, Yusuf Gaggi, expressed displeasure with what he described as disloyalty of some APC members who hold political appointments but have chosen to stay aloof from making tangible effort towards the success of

A PDP stalwart and former Deputy Speaker to Dimeji Bankole in the Federal House of Representatives, Usman Bayero Nafada, says his party has calculated no fewer than 26 States it is sure of winning convincingly in next Saturday's Presidential election.

Bayero Nafada, who is also the Director General of the PDP Governorship Campaign Council for Gombe State told Journalists in an interview that the 26 States that will vote Atiku is the minimum his party requires to be declared winner.

He said apart from their projection, the ruling APC federal government has already campaigned in favour of PDP through their policies just the way it's Presidential candidate, Bola Ahmed Tinubu does by saying, he will continue from where President Buhari stopped.

According to him, PDP has been favoured to win because of these

'26 states will vote for Atiku' -Nafada

From WILLIE ATTAH, GOMBE

utterances and more.

He said, "the Presidential election has been concluded in our favour already, as far as the policies of the APC Government is concerned.

"No one in Nigeria today will tell you that he will vote for the APC because the Presidential candidate of the APC always says he will start from where President Buhari stopped.

"You can see the way Nigerians are suffering now, non of you can produce N10,000 cash. Atiku can not be compared with Tinubu, he is a better candidate than Tinubu, comparing them is like comparing black and white.

"Black and white are incomparable, Atiku has served this country as Vice President, you saw what they did and Nigeria was stable, their leadership style kept Nigeria stable.

"When he comes back as President, he will continue from where he stopped. You know how the dollar was

changed during their time, you know the price of essential commodities then cannot be compared with what is happening today", he stated.

He explained further that the opposition of the G-5

Governors cannot make a negative impact on the Atiku/Okowa movement because most of them are contesting for various positions in the coming elections as such, they cannot ask their people not to vote for any PDP candidate as doing that will negatively affect them.

In his words, "G-5 is just one Governor, the other four are nominal members. We didn't go to Rivers for rallies but we went to the other four States and you saw what happened, it was successful.

"Enugu State Governor is contesting for Senate, is he going to tell the people of Enugu not to vote for PDP? Same thing with Benue Governor.

"Oyo Governor wants second term. Even Wike has candidates in PDP contesting various positions, seats at State and Federal levels and the voting is the same day.

"I think the issue can be resolved before the end of next week, we believe PDP will win in Rivers State", he assured.

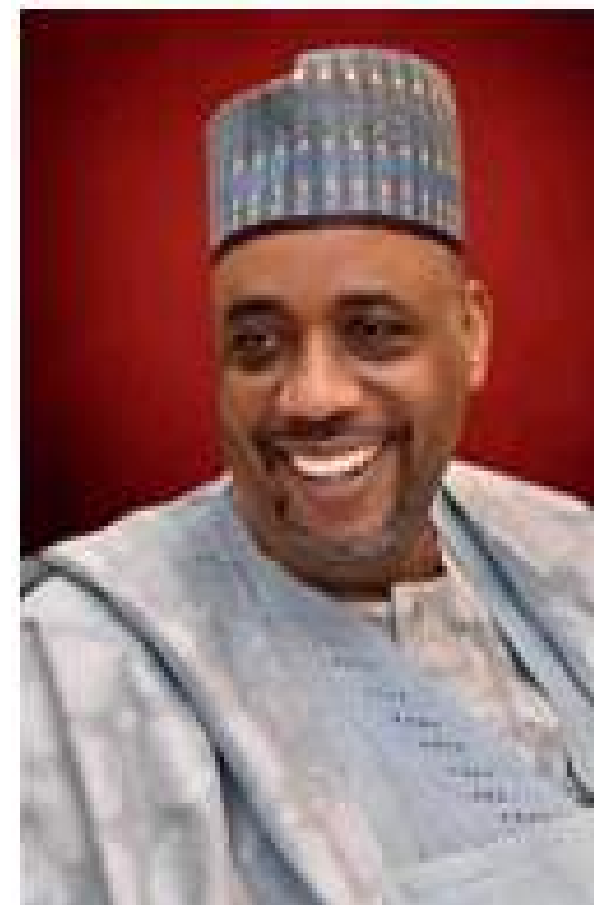
Speaking on the chances of the PDP to defeat the ruling APC in Gombe State, he stated again that Governor Inuwa Yahaya has finished his campaign in the favour of the PDP.

"The Governor has done that for us because the suffering of the people is too much. Just the way Buhari has finished campaign in our favour at the top, Inuwa has done that for us too at the State level.

"So how do you expect a reasonable person in Gombe to go and vote for APC? It is not possible. If you compare the immediate past Governor with Inuwa, no reasonable person will vote for APC again. APC is a dead party here", he stressed.



Lalong



Nafada

Politics

Peculiar characteristics of 2023 election in Nigeria

In a few days, voting will begin for the new President and Vice-President, Governors, Senators and Members of the Houses of Representatives and Assembly in Nigeria. About 15,000 candidates will contest the numerous offices. Elections in Nigeria have many characteristics which are defined by the nature of the political life, electoral campaigns and voting, writes BUNMI MAKINWA.

SINCE 1999 when the new democratic dispensation started, each election has brought along some peculiarities and the four-yearly election cycle for the president and others shows the most striking trend or evolution of a new direction.

This article will look at some distinguishing features of the campaigns and preparation for the elections of 2023.

It is the first since 2003 where the name of President Mohammed Buhari will not be on the ballot as a candidate for the office of the president. He contested the five preceding elections and won in the last two.

It is the first election since 1999 that the four leading contestants are billionaires. All Progressives Congress (APC) party's Bola Tinubu, Labour Party's Peter Obi, Rabiu Kwankwanso of New Nigeria Peoples Party (NPP) and Atiku Abubakar of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) are listed variously as politicians, businessmen, wealthy and billionaires.

Two presidential candidates, Atiku Abubakar and Omoyele Sowore of African Action Congress, have run previously two times as presidential candidates but did not win the elections. Abubakar has run as well in numerous party primaries to qualify as a candidate for different parties. Sowore, an anti-establishment voice and untypical politician, has been able to gain national attention despite very limited resources and many odds.

It is the first election where a presidential candidate, Peter Obi, emerged from a relatively small, hitherto inconsequential party to constitute a national movement in a short time. The movement of mostly a group of people comprising disenchanted voters, angry young people, and sectional groups who feel alienated, among others, is impacting on campaigns and will affect election outcomes.

There is no basis for comparison yet but it would appear that this election season has witnessed extensive arson on assets of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), and perhaps most destruction on INEC than any previous election.

Just ahead of the elections, INEC's arbitration and capability as umpire were put to question by the Osun State Elections Petitions Tribunal ruling of January 27, 2023 on



Yakubu

the Ademola Adeleke and Adegboyega Oyetola dispute on the winner of the Osun State gubernatorial election of July 16, 2022. INEC, according to reports on the judgment, appeared to have presented two different results of the election figures from INEC's Bimodal Voter Accreditation System machines to Adeleke and Oyetola.

INEC's BVAS can read Permanent Voters Cards (PVCs) and authenticate voters using the voters' fingerprints and will be used nationwide for the first time to decrease election malpractices.

As elections approach, propaganda is used more heavily to misinform and mislead people. Through the advancement of technology, fake news propagation has become easier. Very little skills are required to manipulate audio and video settings – change images, voices, appearances of people and mislead even the most vigilant. Party supporters have devotees who use the social media to spread wrong and biased information.

Parties and politicians hire experts who are adept at using fake news and combating fake news, and also at manipulating information to achieve their objectives. There are about 170 million mobile phone subscriptions in Nigeria. Among the country's population of about 220 million, most Nigerians can be reached by phone and some 90 million

people access the Internet using mobile smartphones. WhatsApp is the number one social media access of information followed by Facebook in the country. The influence of social media is huge and will continue to grow.

The media has played its traditional role. With the inherent biases of the newspaper, television and radio organisations in mind, one can better comprehend how they may slant their reports. Government-owned media will claim to be more objective than privately-owned media, but such a distinction has to be checked with their practice. Some outstanding professional journalists have emerged from the coverage, interviews and reporting carried out. The line is blurred on the separation of social media from traditional media as almost all traditional media organisations also have online presence.

There have been reports of polling reportedly done by reputable pollsters. From previous political campaigns, reliable expectations on actual election outcomes from polling are tenuous. In one of the most disappointing polling known, most polling in the USA projected that Hillary Clinton would win by as much as 70percent to 90percent in the 2016 presidential election against Donald Trump. The convincing projected victory did not happen and Clinton lost.



Okoye

There has been unprecedented demand for security support from both government and private agencies. About 15,000 candidates for the elections will rely on various levels of security support. The total number of polling booths is 176,606 after 240 polling booths were dropped from the initial number. INEC has said that it would deploy over 500,000 security agents to service its activities. Given the general state of insecurity in the country, there will continue to be a lot of security work needed.

Printing of posters, flyers, and information documents has increased at this period. Transportation of candidates and their supporters is important. Organising rallies and events require the use of equipment and workers. Consumption of foods and drinks is very important for crowds. Gifts are packaged, handed out and mementos are distributed to supporters. These functions and many others engage macro, small and medium-scale enterprises (MSMEs) around the campaign and electoral processes. Whether the volume of transactions involved does compensate for the MSMEs that are hindered from their normal business during the period is not known.

A major highlight of the current electioneering is the new policy of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) to redesign

the currency and enforce currency swaps under strict deadlines. No matter the good intentions of the policy, its implementation has caused massive disruption of the economy at all levels. The policy has negatively affected especially small business owners who rely on cash transactions. It has reduced the movement of persons and the flow of transactions in all parts of the country.

As a result of the policy, protests and arson against private and public facilities have started and are continuing in many places. Planning for private and official activities has been curtailed or stopped. As usual with major official policy changes that are hardly ever properly analysed and understood before implementation, the CBN action has sorely made life difficult for ordinary people. The poor have been more impoverished and carry heavier social and economic burdens.

The anger and deprivation will affect the elections in ways that will be seen later on. It is not an exaggeration to say that no previous financial or economic policy has had such a disruptive effect on any election since Nigeria's independence in 1960. The extent of its negative effects at this time has been more visible than the positive expectations, and only time can show whether the policy is beneficial in certain ways.

IMAGES

APC RALLY, NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN ZONES

The All Progressives Congress (APC) rally for the party's candidates in the General elections for the Northern Zone took place at the Bukuru Mini Stadium, Jos South LGA and Southern Zone at the Shendam Mini Stadium, Shendam LGA



All Progressives Congress Deputy Gubernatorial candidate, Hon. Pam Bot-Mang and wife acknowledging cheers at the rally at Bukuru



Long Jan of Namu Chieftdom, Qua'an Pan LGA, HRH Miskoom (Engr.) Safiyanu Suleiman Allahnana (left) with other traditional rulers praying for Governor Lalong, APC Southern Senatorial Zone candidate and other candidates of APC



Mammoth crowd cheering the candidates at the rally



Chief of Staff to the DG, PCC, Hon. Yakubu Dati (right) and other personalities



APC, Director General of PCC, Rt. Hon. Simon Bako Lalong (CON) and the party's senatorial candidate at the Northern Zone rally



Governor Simon Bako Lalong (CON), APC candidate for the Plateau South Senatorial District Canvassing for the people's votes



Large number of APC supporters listening to speeches



APC Gubernatorial candidate, Dr. Nentawe Yilwatda with other candidates of the party during Shendam Zonal rally

Politics

How the 2023 elections will be conducted

The moment Nigerians and members of the international community have been waiting for, with bated breath, has arrived: the conduct of the 2023 general elections. The moment represents the seventh election cycle since Nigeria democratised in 1999, NICK DAZANG writes.

THE 2023 general elections consist of a presidential election; governorship elections in 28 states of the Federation, and 1,462 legislative elections representing 109 Senate seats, 360 House of Representatives seats; and 993 State House of Assembly seats.

Some 93,469,008 Nigerians have been registered to vote in the elections. The elections are coming at a defining moment. They are holding at a time when the country is at its nadir or keeping up the rear in almost every department. Not less than 130 million Nigerians live in extreme poverty. Inflation has shot through the stratosphere. Insecurity bestrides the land like some grotesque colossus. And in the latest top ranking of universities on the African continent by WEBOMETRICS, none of Nigeria's best is in the first 15!

In the small hours of Saturday, February 25, 2023, not less than 1.4 million election staff of the commission shall fan out of 8,809 wards/registration area centres, to the 176,846 polling units, PUs, across the country.

They shall be made up of electoral officers, assistant electoral officers, supervisory presiding officers, presiding officers, assistant presiding officers, and security agents who would have camped overnight in these centres, some of which are called "SuperRacs" (clusters of RACs). This is one of the largest deployment of men and materials in peacetime. The massiveness of this operation is best appreciated against the fact that the number deployed is more than that which would have been used to conduct elections in the entirety of the Economic Community of West African States, ECOWAS, with the exception of Nigeria. It is reminiscent of Operation Overlord, the historic Battle of Normandy, which the War Correspondent, Cornelius Ryan, chronicled in *The Longest Day*. On June 6, 1944, 1,600,000 Allied troops under the command of General Dwight D. Eisenhower, crossed the English Channel and invaded France, which was then under German conquest.

After setting up the Polling Unit (PU) between 8.00am to 8.30am and pasting relevant electoral information such as the list of registered voters, the presiding officer shall explain the accreditation and voting procedures to all present. He or she shall declare the PU open for accreditation and voting. The voter shall present his or her Permanent Voter's Card, PVC. Thereafter, the voter shall be verified and authenticated using the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System, BVAS, device. A voter who has been verified and



authenticated shall be accredited and issued with a ballot paper. He proceeds to a cubicle, without a recording device or Android phone. He indicates the candidate/party of his choice in secrecy. He folds the ballot paper and proceeds to insert it in the appropriate box in the full glare of other voters, party agents, observers, journalists, INEC monitors, and poll officials.

After voting, a voter can elect to remain, so long as he does so peacefully and without disrupting the process. After every voter in the queue has voted, the presiding officer shall declare the voting closed. The ballots shall be sorted out by the poll officials according to the parties or candidates contesting them. They shall then be counted in the full glare of voters and party agents. The results shall be inputted into the result sheets, the Form EC8A and the Form 60E. A tear off of each result sheet, whose original copy shall be signed by the poll official and party agents, shall be given to each of the agents and the security agents, usually the police, who are the lead security agency, for their records. The Form EC8A shall be scanned using the BVAS device.

The list of accredited voters will also be scanned. Both shall

be transmitted electronically to the Commission.

The list of accredited voters will also be scanned. Both shall be transmitted electronically to the Commission. The Form 60E, known as the poster form on account of its size, shall be pasted at the PU for all to view. The Form EC8A and the list of accredited voters shall be further uploaded on the INEC Results Viewing Portal, IReV. Interested Nigerians can log onto this portal and view, in real time, the outcome of the elections at each of the PUs across the country. By putting together all these results, one can determine the number of votes scored by each candidate.

In addition to the electronic transmission at the PU, the results shall go through rigorous manual collation at the ward, local government, and state levels (for the presidential election). What is key is that all the candidates shall be represented by their agents up to the presidential collation stage. The notion is to maintain a paper trail and to ensure that all the results collated (at the various stages) bear fidelity to the ones transmitted. The fact that the results are transmitted and collated in the full glare of eagle-eyed agents, observers, and journalists confers integrity and transparency to the process. Their vigilance also makes it impossible to manipulate the process or whimsically change

the results.

At the level of the Commission, the conduct of the elections shall be monitored through its Situation Room and Collation Centre. Apart from the army of staff deployed to conduct the elections, thousands of supervisors will be deployed at the ward, local government, and state levels. The remit of these supervisors is to report and escalate, timeously, any untoward event(s) to the Situation Room for further and immediate remedy. The supervisors also serve as monitors. And in their capacity as monitors, they can intervene and correct the process if there are lapses or challenges. In addition to the supervisors, there are not less than 1,000 Registration Area Technical Support Staff, RATECHS, whose duty it is to troubleshoot any glitches that might arise in the use of the BVAS devices.

On election day, the situation room and the collation centre are commanded by the INEC chairman, who is assisted by national commissioners, directors, and technical staff. Reports from the field are received and attended to through the Commission's Election Monitoring and Support Centre, EMSC; Electoral Operations Support Centre, EOOSC; and the INEC Citizens Contact Centre, ICCC. The Commission's social media handles (Website:

www.inecnigeria.org; Twitter: @inecnigeria; Facebook: www.facebook.com/inecnigeria) and telephone lines (070-CALL-INEC; 0700-2255-4632, etc) are open to Nigerians to send in complaints, which are then responded to in real time by a team of dedicated and ICT-savvy staff. Nigerians must note that for the presidential election, the INEC Chairman is, by law, the returning officer by virtue of his exalted position as the Chief Electoral Commissioner of the Federation. In this capacity, he shall be assisted by a number of National Commissioners and other technical staff who input the results as they are forwarded and presented from the states by the respective Returning Officers.

The results of other elections shall be returned by INEC officials at their respective constituencies.

It should be noted that for a candidate to be declared the winner, he must meet two salient benchmarks: He must win with the most votes cast in the election. In addition, he or she must win at least 25 per cent, or a quarter, of the votes in not less than two thirds of the states of the Federation and the Federal Capital, Abuja.

Each time stakeholders work professionally, with commitment, and in concert, we always record huge successes.

NEWS

Remains of late Dan Suleiman laid to rest

By DUMAH RANDONG

THE remains of late Air Commodore Dan Suleiman, Former Military Governor of Plateau State have laid to rest in his home town, Guyuk Local Government of Adamawa State amidst eulogies.

THE NIGERIA STANDARD reports that the Plateau State Deputy Governor, Professor Sonni Tyoden and some of the Executive Council member as well as elders in the state were part of the sympathizers who paid their respect to the late elder statesman in Adamawa State.

The remains of the elder statesman, on arrival in Yola Airport, was conveyed to the Palace of Kwandi Nunguraya, the Chief of Lunguda, Dishon Dansanda for laying in state by traditional rulers and other sympathizers.

The Chief of Lunguda, Dishon Dansanda described the deceased



Suleiman

as a worthy son of the land who would continue to be remembered by the people.

Plateau State Deputy Governor, Sonni Tyoden who led the delegation, sympathized with the traditional rulers, family of the deceased and the people of Adamawa State over the loss.

The Air Commodore

Dan Suleiman was among the pioneer military officers who commissioned to form the Airforce.

He also served as a member of the General Murtala Mohammed Supreme Military Council in 1975- 1976 and became the first Military Governor of Plateau State after Benue- Plateau was divided in 1976.

From DANLADI DUKS

PLATEAU Central and Southern Zones Unity Forum (PC&SZUF) Jos North North, Jos North Local Government Area on Saturday last week end held endowment fund raising ceremony for women and youth empowerment. The, the event took place at the GSS Kyan, Rikkos of Jos North.

Delivering his speech, the Plateau Central and Southern Zones Unity Forum Chairman, Chief Danjuma Mabur said that the forum is observing new year and raising #15million fund for empowering women, youths and widows with skill acquisitions.

PC&SZUF is a body of people from the eleven local governments Local Governments of the two zones that seeks to identify with our host communities and find solution to our problems.

He explained that the forum is a non political body but politically inclined., Mabur added that politicians said politicians are expected to come and showcase their party manifestos for the forum to sign social contract as well as make an informed decision to vote.

Chairman of the forum used the opportunity to commend the efforts of the people of Central and

Forum raises youth empowerment funds



Mabur

Southern Zones Unity Forum for the cooperation given to him and the executive EXCO both at the larger house and branch executive council, before and during the planning of the ceremony.

In his words, one of the chief launchers and a gubernatorial candidate for the Labour Party, Dr. Patrick Dakum through his representative, Hon. Iliya Dutse, one time Mangu LGC Chairman said that if voted into office as Governor of Plateau State, his administration is going to look at the issue of women, youths and widows. He also advised electorates to vote wisely during 2023 General Elections.

He also advised electorate to vote wisely during 2023 general elections. The LP candidate after his speech demanded for the Forum's account details for an undisclosed amount.

Mr. Jonathan Emmanuel, challenged people of the Central and Southern Zones Unity Forum, especially youths to always come out to vote because they are leaders of tomorrow. He and donated ten thousand naira for the project.

The climax of the event was display of cultural dances from the two zones.

According to her, Reuters' report came as a surprise, pointing out that the Ministry or any of its agencies has not recorded any case of abortion or massacre of children as alleged by Reuters and that women and children in the said camps are given the basic care and support by the state government.

On the possibility of the military or any person administering drugs like oxytocin to abort pregnancies of women and girls in the rehabilitation camps, she said it is not true because according to her, soldiers are not allowed in these camps apart from guarding the entrance and the perimeter of the camps.

"The women are emotionally attached to their husbands and the allegation that soldiers or other public servants could abort pregnancies of their beloved wives is unimaginable", the Commissioner added.

According to her, the men at some point complained to the representatives of the state in the camps that they would not want their wives to be attended to by men, so she wondered how such "jealous men" could allow anyone to touch their wives let alone aborting their pregnancies.

Asked by the panel secretary, Mr. Hilary Ogbonna, if these rehabilitation camps have witnessed casualties resulting from secret abortions that the authorities are not aware of, she answered in the negative, adding that some casualties involving children in the camps are usually as a result of early childhood diseases like measles and diarrhea and so on.

High pregnancy rate, our concern

THE Borno State Commissioner of Women Affairs, Hajiya Zuwaira Gambo has said the state government is concerned about the high rate of pregnancies and procreation at the rehabilitation centres.

Apart from early childhood diseases such as measles and diarrhea etc., the Commissioner recalled that frequent pregnancies among the young women pose a challenge as some women take in after four months of previous deliveries.

The Commissioner, a trained journalist and former Special Assistant to the immediate past Governor of Borno State, Sen. Kashim Shetima made this disclosure before the Special Independent Investigative Panel on Human Rights Violations in Counter-Insurgency Operations in the North East (SIIP North-East).

She noted that such occurrences (pregnancies) consequently diminished the ability of such women to properly breastfeed two babies whose age gap is negligible, given that the

From DORCAS PANKYES, Abuja

difference between their dates of birth is not much.

According the mass media professional, one man had his four wives put to bed on the same day and the Ministry usually makes the necessary intervention to ensure their welfare.

On the impact of the insurgency concerning the lives of the vulnerable group, the state executive member disclosed that of the 93,000 returnees including men and women, 78,000 of them are farmers who were forcefully abducted by the Boko Haram members at the heat of the insurgency in the North East.

Testifying before the panel Chaired by Justice Abdu Aboki (rtd), Hajiya Gambo said that the state government through the Ministry of Women Affairs camped many women, children and couples returning from the bush around Banki, Dambua, Goza, Mungonu.

After profiling at Hajj Camp, the former Special Assistant to Niger State government on Media

Matters said it usually becomes clearer as to who among the returnees are farmers or combatants, and those who are fighters will be taken to Joint Investigation Centre for further action, while the farmers will be taken to Hajj camp for rehabilitation.

She revealed that the state Ministry of Women Affairs overseas Hajj Camp and two others which include Shokari and Bwumkutu camps and that Bwumkutu Camp harbours children, women and men who do not pose a security risk to the camp and the larger society.

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News

FRSC, Keke riders clash in Jos

By JIDAUNA DARING

A mild drama ensued yesterday morning between some officers of the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) and some Keke NAPEP riders which resulted to stoning of the officers who had to take to their heels for safety.

Our correspondent reports that the drama took place along No. 5 J.D. Gomwalk road by THE NIGERIA STANDARD Junction in Jos, the Plateau State capital.

The incident occurred when the officers were carrying out their daily official routine work along the above mentioned junction.

Some of the Keke NAPEP riders who spoke with THE NIGERIA STANDARD said that their members' action was as a result of anger, particularly against the officers' mode of operation on daily basis, saying that the officers operation has for long remained one sided within the metropolis.

While expressing their unpleasant feelings, some of the riders described the FRSC officers operation within the said area as a day light robbery on them as they were



Biu

being forced give them money without evidence of payment or transactions.

The riders while warning the officers on concentrating in one area in their operations, said that they would continue to pursue them, if they would not take their operations to other areas.

According to them, even those with complete particulars are sometimes not safe from the officers' hands when it comes to money issue. They maintained that the

officers' operation within THE NIGERIA STANDARD junction on daily basis is from morning, afternoon and evening respectively.

The riders also expressed worry, saying that even at this moment of the scarcity of the Naira notes that has brought about untold hardship to citizens, the officers continue to make some of their members to ply the road with serious fear, especially within the said area, at all times.

Commonwealth observer group calls for peaceful elections

THE Commonwealth observer group on Monday called for a peaceful election in Nigeria.

At a press briefing held in Abuja, Thabo Mbeki, former South African president and leader of the group, urged "stakeholders in Nigeria to uphold their commitment to ensure a peaceful and inclusive election in which the people of Nigeria are able to freely exercise their right to vote, with the fundamental freedoms of expression, association and assembly fully respected."

Underscoring the importance of a peaceful election in Nigeria, he said it will be Africa's largest democratic exercise. The outcomes of the elections will be significant not only for Nigeria but also for the entire

continent, he said.

There are genuine concerns about election violence due to the insecurity across Nigeria, especially in the south-east and north-west regions.

PREMIUM TIMES reported the acute scarcity of cash across Nigeria due to the currency redesign by the Central Bank of Nigeria. Though old large-denomination notes have been withdrawn by the central bank, new notes introduced into the system have been grossly inadequate.

This has led to people spending hours in banks and has led to violent protests in some parts of the country.

PREMIUM TIMES has also reported the violence in different parts of the country

caused by armed groups. Armed secessionists in the South-east routinely attack security officials as well as officials and offices of the electoral commission, INEC.

In the North-west and some parts of the North-central, terrorists, locally called bandits, continue to attack locals in rural communities, displacing hundreds of thousands of people from their homes. The Boko Haram insurgency in the North-east, though degraded, has also not been totally eliminated.

Nigeria will hold presidential and federal legislative elections on 25 February while state elections will be held on 11 March.

Mr Mbeki noted that the Commonwealth team's role is to observe and assess the pre-election period, activities on polling day and the post-election period. In doing this, the group pledged to be objective, independent and impartial.

On 27 February, the group will announce an interim statement, which provides the group's preliminary assessment of the electoral process. The Observer Group comprises 16 observers from different Commonwealth countries including politicians, diplomats and experts in law, human rights, gender equality and election administration.

The 16 observers will on 23 February be deployed to about seven states in the country.



Mahmood



Pain as part of our existence

NIGERIA has a lot of existential challenges. Since the return to democracy, the country has grappled with many of these challenges and it has shaped the experiences of leaders variously. We have struggled through the Niger Delta militancy to the demonstrations in the Western part of the country. Also, the Central part of Nigeria has not been spared the wrath of land grabbers nor has the North East and North Western Nigeria been free of the activities of insurgents who have revolted against the State first to protest against perceived injustices and later as a way of enforcing their religious beliefs.

There is need to change the process of our leadership recruitment process. Whoever wants to be given a leadership must be schooled in such a manner that he would see the country as first is up to us to take up the gauntlet and change the narratives. We have not minding where he comes from. Unless we remove our attachments to some of our primordial sentiments, we might not be able to build a strong and virile country. We must endeavour to demonstrate the Nigerianess in us by serving faithfully and being just and truthful in all we do.

Unless we begin to see ourselves as one people with shared destiny, we are not likely to move forward. When we reduce everything to our small localities, we will continue to be local champions. Our society is over ripe to start churning out leaders who can be trusted to deliver the goods. If we can only replicate the good things we see outside our shores at home, we will build beyond the imagination of our capacity, ability and the drive to do that which is right. If we field the best in our society, we are sure to have quality results not what we have seen since the return to democracy in 1999 where rogues and loquacious characters have been occupying the political space and messing everyone else.

To be sure, it is time to take back Nigeria from those who have held it captive and are struggling to kill and bury it. That is unacceptable and should not be allowed to happen. We owe our children and those unborn the responsibility of leaving a virile and strong country for them given the kind of resources at our disposal. Like our singers have often said, *Nigeria go survive*, ours is to make sure that happens.

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News

Lalong appoints new VC for PLASU

By PALANG KASMI

PLATEAU Governor Simon Bako Lalong has approved the appointment of a new Vice Chancellor for Plateau State University, Boko (PLASU).

He is Prof. Benard Malau Matur, a seasoned academic.

The new appointment was announced in a statement Monday February 20, 2023, signed by the Director of Press and Public Affairs to the Governor, Dr. Makut Simon Macham.

Prof. Matur's appointment was approved following recommendation of the Governing Council of the university, and he is to succeed Prof. Yohanna Izam whose tenure ends on Tuesday 21st February 2023.

Until his appointment, Prof. Benard Matur was the Honourable Commissioner for Higher Education, Plateau State.

He is a Professor of Public Health Entomology and Parasitology and has held several positions in the academia.

He was once Deputy Vice Chancellor, Veritas University Abuja and had previously served as Dean, College of Sciences; Dean, Student Affairs; and Head of Department, Biological Sciences at the University of



Lalong

Abuja. He was also Head, Department of Remedial Studies at the University of Jos.

Governor Lalong while congratulating the new Vice Chancellor, used the opportunity to appreciate the outgoing Vice Chancellor, Prof. Yohanna Izam for his meritorious service and pragmatic leadership which has lifted the standard of the university, making it one of the most sought after in the country and one of the best among its peers. He wished him success in his future endeavours.

Meanwhile, the governor in accordance with the law passed by the Plateau State House of Assembly has approved the change of nomenclature and upgrading of the College of Arts, Science and Technology Kurgwi into Ignatius Longjan Polytechnic. The bill for the Establishment of the Ignatius Longjan Polytechnic and for other matters connected takes effect from 2022, while the College of Arts, Science, Technology and Remedial Studies Kurgwi Law No. 20 of 2020 and amended Law of 2005 are hereby repealed.

By EZEKIEL DONTINNA

ACReSAL partners AFR100 Initiative, NAGGW

ACTING National Project Coordinator of the Agro-Climatic Resilience in Semi-Arid Landscapes (ACReSAL), Engr. Anda Yalaks has revealed that the body was willing and ready to partner with AFR100 initiative and the National Agency for Great Green Wall (NAGGW) to achieve the National landscape Restoration Target of 4 million by 2030.

This came in a press statement signed by the Jos Office of ACReSAL Communication Officer, Mathew Bawul and made available to NIGERIA STANDARD in Jos, the Plateau State capital recently, shortly after a virtual meeting with AFR100 Initiative NAGGW and ACReSAL participating states hosted in Abuja, Nigeria's Federal Capital Territory.

The Acting NPC opined that there was need for a robust monitoring and evaluation system in place to enhance on the ground monitoring, tracking and reporting of project implementation and capacity building to ensure the delivery of the targeted 1 million hectares target specifically for ACReSAL.

He said, "the component of livelihood is critical in the project given that, the communities living at the project corridors are bedeviled with abject poverty and for ACReSAL to achieve its



Buhari

land restoration target, the project needs both technical and financial assistance to help the communities.

"The AFR100 initiative would aid the project to obtain technical assistance, facilitate resources mobilization, more importantly, grants as well as knowledge sharing and project visibility to see to the success of this project where those living in abject poverty will be eased of their conditions", Yalaks

enthused.

On his part, the Acting Head of Environmental Sustainability Division at the African Union Development Agency (NEPAD) Mamadou Diakhite, noted that every year, nearly 3 million hectares of forests were lost in Africa. "65% of land in Africa is affected by degradation and 3% of GDP is lost annually from soil and nutrient depletion on cropland," he said.

"Rural smallholder farmers suffer the most, as they are largely dependent on the stable weather patterns, healthy soils and tree cover as well as water that degraded land threaten. The African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative (AFR100) which is a project under (AUDA-NEPAD) is a country-led effort to bring 100 million hectares of these deforested and degraded landscapes across Africa into restoration by 2030", Mamadou highlighted.

He, therefore, indicated that presently, 30 African nations including Nigeria have signed onto AFR100 and committed a combined 126 million hectares of land to be restored and that, the initiative connects political partners, participating African nations with technical and financial support to scale up restoration on the ground and capture associated benefits for food security, climate change resilience and poverty alleviation.

Earlier, the Director General, National Agency for the Great Green Wall (NAGGW), Dr. Yusuf Maina Bukar, said that he was extremely happy about the ACReSAL project because 11 out of 20 states in partnership were in the front-line states of the (NAGGW). What ACReSAL is doing is similar to that of NAGGW, so, there is need for synergy and commitment to help each of the organisations to upscale landscapes restoration in Nigeria leveraging on the AFR100 Initiative to meet our national target of 4 million hectares by 2030 and even surpass it", he said.

the agency for the gesture, saying that the hospital is ready to collaborate with any NGO and MDAs whose intention is geared towards enhancing the productivity of the hospital to provide effective service delivery especially to those suffering from various ailments.

He therefore admonished other sister agencies to emulate the humanitarian gesture. He however, reiterated his commitment to quality service delivery and charged the public to cooperate with the management of the hospital to achieve the desired goal.

Also speaking, the HOD of Orthopedics Department, ATBUTH Bauchi, Dr. Ibrahim Shapat appreciated the agency for the support and appealed for more in that direction.

He assured that the items donated will be judiciously used by patients especially the low income earners.

Governor pats military on the back

From ABBAS GUNGURA, Bauchi

GOVERNOR Bala Mohammed Abdulkadir of Bauchi State, has said that civil-military relationship is a key instrument for societal peace and harmony as well as improving good understanding among citizens.

Bala passed the comments while speaking in his capacity as the Special Guest of Honor at the 2022 West African Social Activities (WASA) of the Nigerian Army held at the 33 Artillery Brigade, Shadawanka Barracks, Bauchi recently.

The governor appreciated the military for being able to handle the security challenges in North-East, North-West sub-regions and other parts of the country, saying that peace has been restored to some certain extent.

Governor Bala who was ably represented by his deputy, Sen. Baba Tela, applauded the military in complementing the efforts of the police, the Nigeria Security and Civil

Defense Corps and other security agencies in securing lives and property of citizens of the state.

According to him, "The efforts of the military in building synergy with other security agencies in securing lives and property of the citizens cannot be over emphasized." Bala Mohammed was proud to say that, "Bauchi is one of the most peaceful states in the country today because we enjoy the support of the military and other security services in the state."

He then said that WASA activities were aimed at sustaining the tradition of the military which has greatly helped in strengthening the combat spirit and promoting the family values in the army. The governor further stressed the need for the military to use such important events to

promote peace and harmony with their host communities all the time.

Bala Mohammed however pledged continued support of his administration for the military and other sister security agencies in the state.

Speaking earlier, Commander of 33 Artillery Brigade, Brig. Gen. Emmanuel Egbe, assured that the military would continue to defend the nation against criminal elements so

that their lives and property would remain secure.

He said that the event was a social activity aimed at celebrating the previous year and usher in the new year.

According to him, "WASA is also a forum through which the authorities of the Nigeria Army foster national cohesion and promote the various rich cultural heritage of all the ethnic groups in our regiments."

WASA is aimed "To enhance civil-military relationship in

HAND donates medical kits to ATBUTH

From ABBAS GUNGURA, Bauchi

MANAGEMENT and staff of the Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University Teaching Hospital, Bauchi have been commended for exhibiting high sense of professionalism in the discharge of their responsibilities.

The commendation was made by a donor agency, Health and Development Support Programme (HAND) while making a donation of some medical kits targeted to be used for patients of Cub Foot and management.

This followed signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the hospital and the agency.

The items presented include POP in dozens, Ortho ban in dozens, Miracle feet brace orthotics in different sizes and a smart phone among other related medical equipments for the orthopedic

department.

The agency also organized a training for health personnel in the orthopedic department to rebuild their capacity as medical practitioners on the front line guiding policy and other professional responsibilities.

Mr. Priestly Adora, who is the state focal person of HAND programme presented the items to the hospital, where he commended management and staff of the health institution for exhibiting high sense of professional practice over the years.

He noted that many states across the country including FCT Abuja had benefited from similar gesture by the donor partner.

He therefore urged beneficiaries of the programme to make good use of the items received and advised them to handle them with care.

Responding, the Chief Medical Director, Prof. Yusuf Jibrin expressed gratitude to



Mohammed

Foreign commentary

Will the war in Ukraine end this year?

Amid preparations for a Russian offensive and a Ukrainian counteroffensive, various scenarios for how the war will unfold appear likely. LEONID RAGOZIN writes.



Guterres



Zelenskyy



PUTIN

IT has been almost a year now since Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine, sowing death and destruction across the country. The toll of the war is grim: thousands of Ukrainian civilians dead, tens of thousands of soldiers on both sides killed, millions displaced, whole Ukrainian towns and villages razed to the ground.

As we move into the second year, both sides are preparing large-scale offensives, with tens of thousands of new recruits and new sophisticated hardware being sent to the front line. A wide range of scenarios that are viable to a different extent may unfold this year. The only thing we can predict with a high degree of confidence is that we are going to see a bloodbath on a larger scale than last year.

In their public rhetoric, both Russia and Ukraine sound confident in their victory, but they seem to define it in different terms.

The government in Kyiv has made it clear that its goal is the liberation of all Ukrainian territories Russia currently occupies, including the Crimean Peninsula. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy himself has said in a November interview for a Czech TV channel that once the Ukrainian army achieves victory, he will be on vacation in Crimea.

Some Ukrainian officials have gone even further, spelling out the goal of breaking the Russian Federation up. Earlier this month, the chief of Ukraine's National Security Council, Oleksiy Danilov, wrote in an op-ed published in the Ukrainian news outlet *Ukrainska Pravda* that Russia should be "decolonised", its statehood in the current form undone, and the

independence movements of various peoples within its borders encouraged.

The Ukrainian army has been able to liberate some areas, but much of the territory occupied in the last 12 months remains under Russian control. Mobilisation is going on across the country, and the Ukrainian army is getting new training and weapons from the West.

Russian President Vladimir Putin's initially declared goals were to "liberate" Ukraine's Donbas region and to "de-nazify" and "de-militarise" the country.

The Russian army has failed to fully occupy the two Donbas regions, Donetsk and Luhansk, but it has seized large chunks of two other Ukrainian regions in the south, Zaporizhia and Kherson, thus securing a land bridge to Crimea. In October, Putin signed legislation formally annexing those regions to Russia.

In the fall, the Russian authorities carried out a nationwide mobilisation campaign, adding some 300,000 troops to the country's regular forces. Some of them have already been deployed on the front lines, as part of the new Russian offensive, but most, it seems, remain in the reserves.

With this mix of military successes and failures, the Kremlin has deliberately left its definition of "victory" in Ukraine quite vague. It is thus allowing itself a much wider range of acceptable outcomes on the battlefield.

Meanwhile, the West, while united in its moral support for Ukraine, has also been ambiguous about how the war should end. The official rhetoric from Washington, Kyiv's biggest

supporter, is that it will support the Ukrainian government and army "for as long as it takes" in order to secure a decisive victory over Russia. In Europe, some have been more cautious. French President Emmanuel Macron, for example, has said that Russia should be defeated, but not crushed.

Ukraine has received close to \$40bn in military aid from the West, around \$30bn of it from the United States alone. Last month, NATO countries just crossed one more of the self-imposed "red lines" by allowing the supplies of modern German and US tanks to Ukraine, though in limited numbers.

Unofficially, though, as a recent *Washington Post* article suggests, the Ukrainian government is being warned that this year it may have the last chance to change facts on the ground with full Western support before the inevitable peace talks.

A recent poll of European Union policymakers, conducted by the European Council on Foreign Relations, shows that European capitals differ widely on what outcome in Ukraine war they see as realistic. Only a handful of the respondents appear to perceive Kyiv's "full liberation" as a likely outcome. Many expect that Russia will retain control over some Ukrainian territory.

There are far too many unknowns to make any confident predictions of where Ukraine and Russia will find themselves after another year of carnage. But there are some scenarios that appear more likely.

An overwhelming Ukrainian victory, as envisaged in Kyiv, would be a triumph of justice. But it is also a Russian roulette scenario, because Putin's defeat, especially the liberation of Crimea, may very

well prompt him to use nuclear weapons. The fate of humanity, in this case, will be in the hands of one troubled man who has already done the unthinkable by unleashing a large-scale war in Europe.

Russian victory, on the other hand, will mean a decisive defeat of the West and the world order upended by an aggressive autocracy. But Russia is unlikely to achieve that given its less-than-impressive battlefield performance so far.

Between these two extremes lies a whole range of more realistic scenarios, based on a new equilibrium that will emerge after this year's season of Russian offensives and Ukrainian counteroffensives.

Russia is likely to retain some Ukrainian territory, but future battles will decide how much and also how permanently – or, in other words, at what human and economic cost it will be able to hold on to them.

An important factor is the enormous difference in social expectations in Russia and Ukraine with regards to the outcome of war. The Russian society is lukewarm about Putin's military adventurism and territorial expansion. It will accept a broad range of outcomes that are not manifestly humiliating or costly.

Ukrainian expectations, on the other hand, are extremely inflated. Almost any kind of compromise could threaten Volodymyr Zelenskyy's government, which took a lethal gamble by refusing to implement the humiliating Minsk agreements and resolving to put up a fight instead of succumbing to Putin's ultimatums.

For now, almost any realistically attainable arrangement appears to be worse for Ukraine than the terms of the discarded Minsk agreements, which warrants the question: What were all these enormous sacrifices for? For this reason, Zelenskyy has a very strong incentive to keep fighting.

If he does not, he is facing the threat of domestic backlash, all the way to an armed coup by radical military elements and far-right militants. These fears, however, derive largely from the bellicose wartime rhetoric by radical lobbyists and opinion polls conducted at a time when people, especially those more inclined to compromise, have a very strong incentive not to be honest about their preferences.

Unless their subject is Russia's full capitulation, any viable peace negotiations will involve Ukraine ceding territory. Depending on the country's battlefield performance, this could be Crimea alone; Crimea and parts of Donbas that Russia effectively controlled prior to the start of the full-out aggression last year; or these territories along with those that Russia seized in the last 12 months or may seize in future. Only under the first scenario will Ukraine be able to claim that it has achieved victory, as in improving its positions compared to those envisaged in the Minsk agreements.

What lies ahead this year feels very dark. Even brushing aside the very real nuclear threat, it is hard to avoid the nagging feeling that tens of thousands will die in order to prove that this is a stalemate which is best resolved at the negotiating table.

Source: Aljazeera.

Foreign News

Taiwan would continue co-operation with US

TAIWAN is bolstering its military ties with the United States and will cooperate even more closely with it and other friendly nations to deal with "authoritarian expansionism", President Tsai Ing-wen has told a group of visiting lawmakers from the United States.

The bipartisan delegation including Ro Khanna from California and Tony Gonzales from Texas arrived on the self-ruled island on Sunday amid heightened tensions between the US and China over an alleged Chinese spy balloon.

The US, like most countries, has no formal diplomatic ties with Taiwan, but is the island's most important international backer and arms supplier.

"Taiwan and the United States continue to bolster military exchanges, and going forward Taiwan will cooperate even more actively with the United States and other democratic partners to confront such global challenges as authoritarian expansionism and climate change," Tsai told the five lawmakers at her office in Taipei. No further details were given.

While the United States no longer maintains military bases in Taiwan, the countries' military ties have deepened as China has stepped up pressure on the island, which it claims as its own.

Illustrating the strength of ties with the United States, the delegation is on the island after a sensitive visit by a senior Pentagon official on Friday that was reported by the Financial Times.



Ing-wen

Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said it had no information about any such visit.

China opposes any form of exchange between Taiwan and foreign governments. Nor has it ruled out the use of force to take control of the island.

Khanna, a member of the US House China Select Committee, told Tsai the group, which on Monday met the founder of Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co (TSMC), was there to boost security and economic ties. TSMC is the world's largest contract chipmaker.

In August, China staged its largest ever military exercises

around Taiwan, including sending missiles over the island, after then-US House Speaker Nancy

UN opposes Israeli settlements

THE United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has expressed "deep concern and dismay" over Israel's settlement activity in a watered-down statement replacing a draft resolution that would have explicitly condemned

Israeli policies. The UNSC presidential statement — approved on Monday by all 15 members of the council, including the United States — also underscored what it called the "obligation of

the Palestinian Authority (PA) to renounce and confront terror". The Security Council reiterates that continuing Israeli settlement activities are dangerously imperiling the viability of the two-state solution based on the 1967 lines," the council said.

The symbolic measure came in response to a decision by the Israeli government earlier this month to authorise thousands of settlement units in the occupied West Bank and retroactively legalise unlawfully built settlement outposts.

"We are very happy that there was a very strong united message from the Security Council against [Israel's] illegal, unilateral measure," Riyadh Mansour, the Palestinian envoy to the

Last week, the UNSC appeared set to vote on a draft resolution calling for an end to Israel's settlement expansion.

THE US will back Ukraine in its fight against Russia for "as long as it takes", US President Joe Biden has said on an unannounced visit to Kyiv.

Mr Biden's first trip to Ukraine as president came days before the first anniversary of Russia's invasion.

He said that Russia's President Vladimir Putin had been "dead wrong" to think Russia could outlast Ukraine and its Western allies.

He met Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and the pair visited a memorial to soldiers who have died in the nine years since Russia annexed Crimea and its proxy forces captured parts of the eastern Donbas region.

Mr Biden's presence was intended to reaffirm America's "unwavering commitment to Ukraine's democracy, sovereignty, and territorial integrity", according to a White House statement.

He had taken a 10-hour train journey from Poland to reach Kyiv in secret, later returning to Poland. Russia was informed about the trip a few hours before President Biden's departure for "deconfliction purposes", a US official said.

After the visit, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced a new package of security assistance for Ukraine valued at \$450m (£373m), including ammunition for howitzers and the Himars rocket system, Javelin missiles and air surveillance radars.

The US will also provide Kyiv with an extra \$10m in emergency assistance to maintain Ukraine's energy infrastructure, Mr Blinken said.

A new wave of sanctions against individuals and companies "that are trying to evade or backfill Russia's war machine" will also be announced later this week.

Mr Zelensky said Ukraine's

EU imposes new sanctions on military-ruled Myanmar

THE European Union has imposed asset freezes and travel bans on 16 individuals and entities in military-ruled Myanmar — including the energy minister, influential businessmen and high-ranking officers — over "grave" violations of human rights inside the country.

Also included in the sanctions list are politicians and administrators in Myanmar's largest city, Yangon, who were said to be involved in the executions of four pro-democracy activists in July 2022, and who oversaw massacres, air raids, and used civilians as human shields during military operations in the country's northern Kachin state.

"Those responsible for the coup, as well as the perpetrators of violence and gross human rights violations, should be held accountable," the EU said in a statement on Monday.

UN opposes Israeli settlements

the Palestinian Authority (PA) to renounce and confront terror".

The Security Council reiterates that continuing Israeli settlement activities are dangerously imperiling the viability of the two-state solution based on the 1967 lines," the council said.

The symbolic measure came in response to a decision by the Israeli government earlier this month to authorise thousands of settlement units in the occupied West Bank and retroactively legalise unlawfully built settlement outposts.

"We are very happy that there was a very strong united message from the Security Council against [Israel's] illegal, unilateral measure," Riyadh Mansour, the Palestinian envoy to the

Last week, the UNSC appeared set to vote on a draft resolution calling for an end to Israel's settlement expansion.

THE US will back Ukraine in its fight against Russia for "as long as it takes", US President Joe Biden has said on an unannounced visit to Kyiv.

Mr Biden's first trip to Ukraine as president came days before the first anniversary of Russia's invasion.

He said that Russia's President Vladimir Putin had been "dead wrong" to think Russia could outlast Ukraine and its Western allies.

He met Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and the pair visited a memorial to soldiers who have died in the nine years since Russia annexed Crimea and its proxy forces captured parts of the eastern Donbas region.

Mr Biden's presence was intended to reaffirm America's "unwavering commitment to Ukraine's democracy, sovereignty, and territorial integrity", according to a White House statement.

He had taken a 10-hour train journey from Poland to reach Kyiv in secret, later returning to Poland. Russia was informed about the trip a few hours before President Biden's departure for "deconfliction purposes", a US official said.

Mr Zelensky said Ukraine's

massacres, raids, arson and the use of human shields committed by the military in Kachin". In Yangon, Lieutenant Colonel Myo Myint — who previously served as a military judge — was alleged to be involved in the sentencing to death and execution of democracy activists in July 2022.

"During his tenure as Military Judge, numerous members of the opposition were sentenced to death and prison terms. He is therefore responsible for serious human rights violations since the 2021 coup," the EU statement said.

"The EU reiterates its call for increased international preventive action, including an arms embargo in order to cease the sale and transfer of arms and equipment, as they facilitate the military's atrocities."

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"Putin 'dead wrong' on Ukraine war"

He also said that the two leaders had discussed the possibility of sending other weapons. Mr Zelensky has repeatedly called for F-16 fighter jets, something the US and other allies have so far stopped short of approving.

Commenting on the trip, Russian foreign ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova said failure would befall those who, as she put it, "sold their souls to the Americans".

In a scene that added drama to the most high-profile visit to Ukraine since the war began, air raid sirens wailed while President Biden and Mr Zelensky were in St Michael's Cathedral in central Kyiv. The sirens sound regularly in the city.

Mr Biden laid a wreath to commemorate those killed during nine years of conflict.

While other world leaders have visited Ukraine over the past year, the US president's appearance in Kyiv during a war in which American soldiers are not fighting is a show of unity at a time when Russia says Western support for Ukraine is waning.

The visit was welcomed by Ukrainians in Kyiv. "I'm so grateful for his support - it means so much to us," Roksoliana Gera told the BBC. "I appreciate his courage, that he took on this challenge and came to show the support of the American nation."

Oleksandra Soloviova said the visit showed Russia that "the US supports us and will continue supporting us, with sanctions and military equipment".

The Ukrainian president's chief of staff, Andriy Yermak, said the visit had been

strategic as well as historic. "Many issues are being solved and those that have stalled will be accelerated," he said.

The US is one of Ukraine's biggest allies and the state department has so far announced \$24.9bn in military assistance.

In January, Mr Biden announced that the US would send 31 battle tanks and longer-range missiles are also on their way.

However, there is a growing political divide in the US over the amount of aid Kyiv should receive in future.

President Biden's visit to Kyiv came ahead of a three-day visit to Poland where he will meet the country's President, Andrzej Duda, and east European members of the Nato military alliance.

In another development, China's foreign minister has said Beijing is deeply worried by the escalation of the war in Ukraine and the danger it could spiral out of control.

Qin Gang delivered a keynote speech at the Lanting Forum

"We will continue to urge peace and promote talks and provide Chinese wisdom for a political solution to the crisis in Ukraine," Qin Gang told a forum in Beijing.

"Together with the international community, we will jointly promote dialogue, negotiate and address the concerns of all parties and seek common security. In the meantime, we urge certain countries to immediately stop fuelling the fire, stop shifting the blame to China and stop hyping up Ukraine today, Taiwan tomorrow."

Earlier, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken suggested China was considering supplying weapons and ammunition to Russia for the war - a claim strongly denied by the Chinese.



BIDEN

Feature

Banks: Customers forever at their mercy

Doctors are there at our bedside when we are born. We look up to them when we fall sick. They are at our death bed when we expire, thus making them an integral part of our existence. In between birth and death, sound of mind and body, we work hard to make money, most of which we entrust to our bankers. Accessing that money can be frustrating sometimes, especially now with the ongoing currency swap in Nigeria. THEWILL examines the attitude of bank workers to customers now eternally at their mercy. MICHAEL JIMOH writes.

SHORTLY before last Christmas, Ademola Oloriegbe (not his real name), a teacher in one of the pricey secondary schools in GRA, Ikeja went to a branch of his bank in the same locale. It was a Friday and there weren't too many customers in the bank's premises. But there was the ubiquitous presence of three or so security men – all of them dressed in white with partly crumbling shoes.

As the teacher approached them, two of the security detail manning the revolving doors at the entrance snapped to attention like soldiers meeting a superior officer. "Good afternoon sir," both of them said simultaneously pressing their index fingers to the button on the revolving doors, eager to green-light the customer into the banking hall. Ademola acknowledged both of them with a smile and then made his way inside.

Of course, the teacher understood perfectly why the security men were so deferential to him when he got there. Now leaving, he pressed a folded N500 note to the palm of one of them, saying "for both of you." The security men bowed low from the waist, both of them telling Ademola "God bless you sir," something they conveniently forgot to say to him when he first got there.

On February 10 last week, also a Friday, the teacher was in the same branch of the bank to make some withdrawal from his savings account. This time, there was a crowd milling about the bank premises. The green-coloured awning that used to be directly in front of the bank was gone. So were the half a dozen or so plastic chairs. Standing alone, in twos, groups of four or more, the reason for the impromptu gathering was evident on the anguished faces of those around: the deadline for swapping old naira notes for the new, redesigned ones was that very day.

Many of them had the old notes which the bank refused. Getting the new ones was even less certain because none of the customers outside was allowed into the banking hall. Luckily for Ademola, he saw one of the obsequious security men he met last December standing by the entrance to the bank – same white uniform, same crumbling shoes. "Of course, he will recognise me," the teacher assured himself, already envisaging some preferential treatment. After all, a favour received, so the saying goes, is a debt owed.

"But when I got close enough to him," Ademola later told friends, "the yeye man pretended he didn't know me. He just looked over and above my head and started whistling to himself. It



broke my heart."

The teacher's tale is not an isolated one. It is the same story for most Nigerians now as they crowd banks, ATMs and POS avenues for unavailable cash. Nor are the bank staffers making things any better for depositors.

On the same Friday, the security man snubbed Ademola, scores of customers were treated even more shabbily in another branch of a different bank as they waited in vain to withdraw money bank staffers insisted was not there. Left unattended to in the bank premises, they chaffed at the bits, complained about everything from an uncaring Presidency to an even less caring CBN who initiated the currency swap in the first place and politicians who have made life generally unbearable for the masses.

While they were at it, they heard laughter coming from within the banking hall as if there was a party going on. It was the bank workers inside joking among themselves. Whatever it was, the waiting crowd outside could not say.

"How can they be laughing inside the hall," an impatient customer wondered, "while we are out here waiting?"

Nigerians have been waiting, waiting with febrile anticipation as the deadline for currency swap neared mid-February spawning serpentine queues reminiscent of the fuel lines in petrol stations across the country at about the same time. The fuel queues have since gone. But the never-ending Indian files in banks have remained.

Serious fights have broken out at such queues. On the lighter side, there have been solo displays of protest by men and women alike: frustrated to no end, a man went in the buff right inside one of the banking halls; a woman had a mind to do the same thing but for the dignity of the female folk, she left her bra and tights on.

Amidst all these, bank staffers remained aloof, secure in their air-conditioned offices as if the problem was not theirs, as if the trouble was with the customers who had come for money in their custody. No instance better captures this standoffish and churlish attitude more than the bank workers laughing inside one of the banks in GRA Ikeja while the apprehensive customers waited outside in vain.

Coupled with the no cash refrain (old or new notes), that lack of empathy may have sparked off the spate of demonstrations and attacks on some of the financial institutions across the country lately – in Asaba, Benin, Ibadan and Warri.

Speaking on the attacks on the local office of the CBN in Benin and some other banks, Crusoe Osagie, spokesperson for Edo State Government blamed it on hoodlums. "The hoodlums then started attacking and vandalising banks," Osagie said. "They also blocked roads and forced businesses to close." It may have gotten out of hand but for the prompt intervention of the police.

A similar scenario played out in Asaba, Delta state where, according to Delta Police Public Relations

Officer, Bright Edafe, "unguided youths/miscreants in the name of protests also set two banks and two vehicles on fire." Nine persons have been arrested so far in connection with the protest and assault on the banks.

The riot and demonstrations at Ibadan, Oyo state capital, was more extensive, recording two or so deaths in its wake. It began two Wednesdays ago. Edafe's counterpart in the State Police Command, Adewale Osifeso, confirmed that "there were pockets of protest this morning by some aggrieved bank customers" at Apata, Dupe, Mokola and Ogunpa areas.

The disaffection soon spread to Lagos, the sprawling commercial nerve centre of the country. Although youths in the coastal city had been restive over the scarcity of the naira – old and new – it took until just last weekend for the demonstration proper. By the early morning of Friday February 17, hoodlums at Mile 12 down to Ojota had taken to the streets, burning tyres, attacking banks and motorists. Benjamin Hundeyin, the State Police spokesman, confirmed the attacks but told journalists the situation was under control.

Though there is a lull in the country-wide protests and acts of vandalism for now, the tension resulting from the cash crisis lingers on. Last Friday, for example, when this reporter visited two branches of two banks on Mobolaji Bank Anthony Way, Ikeja, the situation had not changed much. If anything, it had worsened. A security man in one said the bank

was not open for business.

Customers were allowed in the second bank but they came off empty handed: no money, period! A group of five men in neon-coloured construction jackets left in a huff, just like most angry and disappointed customers have been doing these past weeks.

Part of their anger is that the CBN did disburse the new notes to most of the banks. What did they do with it? There is talk of some of the banks in question allowing privileged customers access to the new notes at the expense of the general public. To shore up their claim, they readily cite the example of Oluwadarasimi Omoseyin a Yoruba actress now at Kirikiri Correctional Centre Lagos for tampering with and spraying N100, 000 of the new notes at a party. For every Omoseyin, most Nigerians now believe, there are hundreds of other beneficiaries who are roaming free, not nabbed by the ICPC or EFCC. In that sense, the anger of millions of customers unable to access the new notes in banks is understandable. The banks, in their reckoning, have been more selective in dispensing the new notes.

That view may be right or wrong. But what is pretty much clear, as a loony character in a short story once mused, is that whoever keeps your money virtually has your life in his hands. In the light of unfolding events, that character may not be so crazy after all, as millions of customers are now at the mercy of bankers like never before.

THE NIGERIA STANDARD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Living

Handling trauma bonding in a relationship

TRAUMA bonding occurs when a victim develops a strong emotional attachment with an abuser. In the context of relationships, a trauma bond can develop when domestic violence or psychological abuse occurs.

For example, a wife or girlfriend subjected to ongoing physical assaults from her partner may develop a strong trauma bond with her partner, despite the partner being abusive.

Trauma bonds occur because, at the start of the relationship, abusive, manipulative partners will shower their new significant other with love.

The manipulators also use strategies, such as isolating the partner from others and making the partner financially dependent upon them so that when the relationship turns sour, the victim cannot leave.

Because of the strong bond that occurred in the initial stages of a relationship, the victim will remain with the abusive partner because they are convinced the abuser will change or that the relationship will go back to the way it was in the beginning before the abuse began.

Stages of trauma bonding in a relationship

Part of understanding the trauma bonding definition realizes that trauma bonding occurs in stages.

The love bombing stage

The love bombing stage attracts the victim to their significant other and leads them to develop a strong bond. During this stage, the abuser is especially flattering and charismatic.

The stage of trust and



dependency

Once you move to stage two, trust and dependency, the abuser will "test" you to see whether they have your trust and commitment. They may place you in a situation where they test your loyalty or become angry with you for questioning it.

The criticism phase

After going through love bombing, this criticism can come as a surprise. You may convince yourself that you must have done something terrible to go from being your partner's perfect soulmate to now being worthy of contempt.

You'll end up apologizing to your partner and then feeling that you're lucky they still accept you, as flawed as you are.

Giving in

Once the victim in the relationship gives in, they will stop fighting back against the

abuser. The victim will "walk on eggshells" or do everything they can to please the abuser and reduce the likelihood of fights and violence.

losing your sense of self

People in a trauma bond often lose their sense of self and identity. Most of their time and energy goes into pleasing the abuser. They may have to give up their interests and hobbies because of the abuser's controlling behavior, and they've likely been isolated from friends and family.

Having no sense of self can be another barrier to leaving a trauma bonding relationship because the relationship becomes the victim's entire identity.

Once the cycle has gone through, and the victim is at their wit's end, having lost their sense of self and their complete sense of safety, the abuser will likely return to love bombing.

Over time, the victim becomes addicted to this cycle.

The victim knows that once things cool down after a fight, the abuser will return to loving and attentive again. This becomes addictive because the victim longs for the "high" of the love bombing stage and will repeat the trauma bonding cycle to return to the good times.

How to break the 7 stages of trauma bonding

While a trauma bonding relationship may feel like real love, the truth is that you are not bonded to your partner because of a healthy attachment or mutual connection. Instead, you're addicted to the cycle.

It would help if you broke the cycle to have a healthy relationship and overcome the effects of trauma bonding. Learn how to get over a trauma bond with the tips below.

1. Acknowledge that the trauma bond exists

The first step in breaking the trauma bond cycle is acknowledging that you have been involved in an abusive relationship that has led to developing a trauma bond rather than real, healthy love.

You must stop blaming yourself for the abuse or trying to convince yourself that something you did caused the trauma bond.

Stop fantasizing

A trauma bond will continue as long as you convince yourself that the situation will change. Perhaps you're holding onto the hope that your partner will stop their abusive behavior and become the person they pretended to be during the love bombing stage.

Make an exit plan

If you're set on leaving the relationship, it will require some planning. For example, you might need to ask supportive friends or family members to help you plan or to provide a place to stay once you leave the relationship if you're living with

your significant other.

You may need to change your phone number or set aside money to help you exit the relationship.

Whatever the case, making a plan is important, with your safety as a top priority. This could include filing for a protection order, staying in a secret location, or developing a "code word" with friends or loved ones you can call in case of an emergency.

Go no contact

Once you leave the relationship, it's important to go no contact. Remember, part of the trauma bonding relationship is an addiction to the cycle.

If you maintain any contact with the abuser, they will likely try to use love bombing and other manipulative tactics to lure you back into the relationship.

Going no contact allows you to heal and move on while breaking the addictive trauma bond cycle.

Seek therapy

It's essential to recognize that being involved in a trauma bonded relationship can significantly affect your physical and mental health. You may experience anxiety, depression, low-self esteem, and symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder.

Many people benefit from seeking therapy to help them overcome the side effects of trauma bonding. In therapy sessions, you have a safe space to process your emotions and learn healthy coping skills.

Therapy is also ideal for exploring underlying issues, such as unresolved childhood wounds that have led you to accept abusive behavior within your relationships.

Watch this video to learn more about why you should try therapy:





Health

Secret health benefits of pineapple skin

By KATE

DO you know that those pineapple skin peels you throw away have health benefits that your body needs?

Pineapple is one of the most popular fruit in the world because of its health benefits, but many people don't know that pineapple peels also contain amazing benefits.

Pineapple fruit also known as Ananas Comosus is an edible fruit from Bromeliaceae family. It can be usually found in tropical climate countries, but it is also cultivated worldwide due to its sweet and delicious taste.

Aside enjoying the benefits of pineapple juice, fermented pineapple skin drink offers many health benefits. This is because pineapple peel composition contains vitamin B, C, folate, thiamin, pantothenic acid, bromelain, niacin, and fiber.

It is also packed with mineral including magnesium,

potassium, copper, manganese, calcium, iron, and other nutrients. It also contains antibacterial, anti-inflammatory, anti-aging and anti-cancer properties.

It is also an excellent source of antioxidants that can help your body fight free radicals which can cause numerous diseases. After reading this article you will never throw away pineapple skin.

Here are health benefits of pineapple skin peels women should know about:

Anti-inflammatory

Bromelain, a powerful enzyme found in high concentrations in pineapple skin, helps to cut down inflammation in the body. It reduces swelling after surgery or injury.

Aids Digestion

Not only do the peels serve to make digestion smoother, but they also help to fight intestinal parasites, constipation. They also build up healthy gut flora.

Boosts immune system



The high levels of vitamin C in the pineapple and its skin prevent and fight infections. Bromelain and vitamin C act as a bacteria fighter, mucus cutter, cough suppressant, wound healer, and overall system booster in the body.

Fights arthritis and joint pain

Bromelain works its anti-inflammatory magic in those who have arthritis or joint pain. Drinking pineapple peels juice works directly on the source of the pain.

Protects vision

Pineapple skin tea benefits include beta carotene and vitamin C. They are present in the entire plant and aid in battling degenerative eye diseases like glaucoma.

Strengthens bone and teeth

Pineapple skins have high manganese content. Manganese helps to grow, strengthen, and repair bones and teeth. Vitamin C and astringent properties keep gums clean and healthy.

Anti-cancer

Pineapple skins contain manganese, vitamin C, and antioxidants that have the ability to fight tumours and aid in cancer prevention.

Keeps blood pressure stable

Bromelain helps with preventing blood clots from forming, and the copper content in pineapple juice

increase the formation of healthy red blood cells. Bits of potassium helps the blood vessels stay healthy and can counteract large amounts of sodium, enabling the blood pressure to be stable.

Aids fertility

Pineapple is important to women trying to conceive because of its beta carotene and bromelain properties. It reduces inflammation in the womb that helps create an ideal environment for implantation.

Enhances libido

Consuming the juice from pineapple peels enhances your libido. It is a natural way to get your sex groove back without complications.

These sweet peels also promote healthy skin and hair, aid weight loss, ease nausea, and reduce acne and pimples. The benefits also include treating intestinal worms, hydrating the skin and preventing hair loss.

How to prepare pineapple peels juice:

Ingredients

- 1 whole pineapple, unpeeled
- 1 litre of water
- A natural sweetener to taste

Procedure:

Wash the pineapple and separate the peel from the flesh. Put the peel in a pan filled with water and add some pineapple pulp, then boil them together. Dilute the mixture in a litre of water and add natural sweetener to improve its taste.

Editorial

The need to seek God as Nigeria decides

AS Christians world over celebrate Ash Wednesday today, it is a call to repentance for Nigerians and is necessary as a people to reflect soberly on action and inactions that have caused us to err.

THE act of one putting ashes on the forehead in the Bible is a sign of repentance and seeking forgiveness for sin committed against God. When one wears sack clothes and seat on ashes, it is an outward sign of the heart's true repentance.

HOWEVER, Nigerian Christians should use this period to eschew hatred, learn to forgive and seek the face of God as it decides at the 2023 elections come Saturday the 25th of February. The week signifies an important date in the nation as Nigerians will elect leaders that will be saddled with the responsibilities of governance and piloting the affairs of the country.

NEVERTHELESS, when the right leaders are not chosen, the citizens pay the price and suffer the consequences of their nonchalance in decision making.

DESPITE the present disposition of what Nigerians are going through, these elections should be taken seriously by all in view of the situation affecting the citizenry.

WE call on Nigerians to use this Lenten season to seek the face of God to bring succor to the nation through forgiveness and divine healing.

INSPITE of the situation, Nigeria is in need of a saviour with solutions to take its citizens out of the ditch. In years past, the nation has suffered all kinds of afflictions due to leaders that could not salvage or uplift the people out of their suffering. Many hopes were dashed, insecurity, banditry, kidnapping, cultism, inflation became the order of the day.

WE therefore call on Christians to meditate on the message of Lent as a wake-up call to seek the face of God in absolute humility and repentance by not relying on their wisdom to vote the right leaders. But seek the help of God to show mercy and give us leaders after His heart.

HOWEVER, this week should be seen as a week of repentance and submission to the will of God to take the nation to the polls and allow him take preeminence. Where God is in charge, failure is implausible

RECREATION Refers to Activities such as a form of play that amuses diverts or stimulates ones body and mind, it also makes ones leisure time more interesting and enjoyable. Some of the types of recreational activities include sports, listening to music, writing letters, playing games, etc.

However some of the benefits of recreational activities to one's Mental and physical health include stress reduction, promotion of mental alertness which also creates room for fun and enjoyment, relaxation and also reduces crime in the society.

Therefore, I wish to appeal to the government to establishment more Parks and recreational centres in communities, as establishing of recreational centres will definitely go a long way in reducing the high level of crime and also generating revenue to the economic growth and development of the Community.

Meanwhile, reducing the level of crime in the sense that when there is space for entertainment, dance and fun, Youths are more creative, with the highest sense of discovery in exploring their talents.

Youths can earn a living through their creativity and talent discovery by mingling

with their peer groups in various parks and recreational centres by sharing ideas and showing to the world what they can offer, by so doing it reduces the number of unemployed citizens in the society.

In as much as introverts love others perform a task often repeatedly, until they feel they can replicate the actions on their own, so if an individual loves to learn

Tackling insecurity through establishing recreational centres

more by watching rather than doing then there is a chance that you have a more introverted personality.

Take for instance, communities in Jos the Plateau state capital where there are no enough parks and recreational centres, crime in such areas can be prone to crime in such communities include armed robbery, cultism and drug abuse.

Majority of these addicts indulge themselves in such vices as a result of being bored, stressed, unemployed and so on.

Lastly I admonish organizations, to be specific media organizations to create the necessary awareness that would attract both government and



private sponsorship of activities, games and road walk to help reduce stress to both their physical and mental health.

Writes Jonathan Rabo Dammo, from the plateau state polytechnic, Mass Communication department.

KENNETH DARENG.

Jos Abattoir Market kicking up a stink

ABATTOIR is located along Dogon Karfe road Jos, It is somewhere between the boundaries of Jos South and Jos North local government, but actually within Jos south. As one proceeds into the market premises, a strong smell emanating from animal waste hits with a powerful blow. Abattoir market sanitation is very poor. The environment in which animals are dressed for Human consumption is very poor.

A lot more can be done concerning the hygiene of the environment to reduce horrible stench.

The market used to be a very big market until when the crisis in Jos happened, making most of its part to be mainly for butchers.

Major butchers come to abattoir for large purchases and subsequent distribution of the meat through their business outlets in different parts of the city, but one considerable concern of this marked is hygiene status of the facility. Its hygiene status needs to be improved for public safety. If possible, the government should provide a public private initiative towards this direction and also the training and empowerment of local butchers on global best practice will be a needful. Apart from the woeful condition of the place, the Abattoir lacks water and security. It is under this challenges that the butchers always busy themselves to meet up. While the security challenges affecting the market is the issue of boys coming around to smoke and fight one another and vandalize government property. The cut pipes and cables. In some cases, they breaks shops and steal butchers' property. Those in authority should look into this urgently to create a more safety marked environment for all.

Furthermore, securing government and forces, information from being leaked to kidnappers will help to keep them in the dark on actions against them. A special court should be set up for speedy trials and conviction as culprits.

Also the government should prioritize security and stop Supplies of information, food items, and other basic amenities to kidnappers and enact punitive laws against sponsors of kidnapping.

Ibrahim Khadija Hassan is an it from Federal Polytechnic Bauchi.

Lama Esther Daniel, I.T Student from Jpts, Institute of Science Management and Technology, Jos.

How to end kidnapping in Nigeria

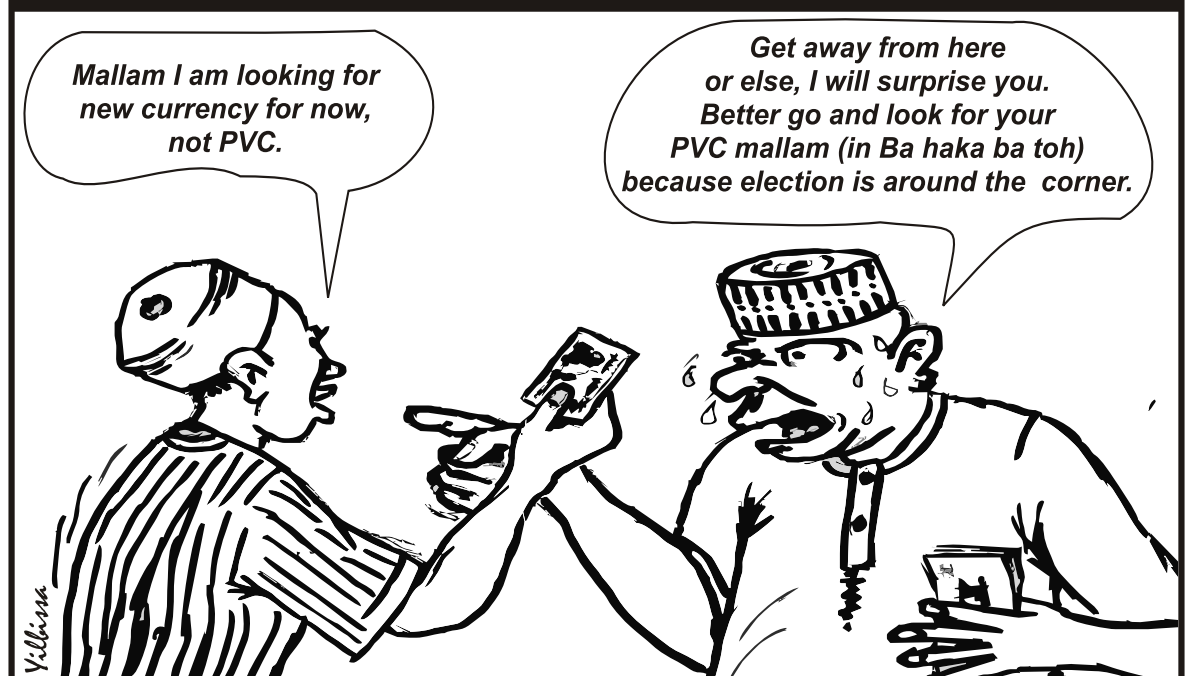
KIDNAPPING in Nigeria is getting worse particularly in the North West and North Central region. It became more pronounced in communities with less security and counter enforcement. Although the government took some actions against the rising cases of kidnapping around the country however nothing seems to have changed.

The kidnappers invade schools and other places and abduct people including very important personalities and destroyed properties without witnessing any stringed resistance from security agencies in most cases. Therefore changing the security architecture and

reformation will maximally overcome the power of these kidnappers and it will enable the Nigeria forces to have full control of every region or hideout around the county.

Furthermore, the change from old tactics by the Nigerian forces to apply New ones, that is creating a modern system of operation of combating kidnappers, is necessary. This will surely help the forces to tackle them after gathering the information about how they operate around small communities and tracking their pathways to bombard their hideouts using drones and other technology.

Standard Cartoon



Opinion

Towards ending farmers/herders clashes: The Abuja declaration

By
Bode Olagoke

FOR years, Nigeria has witnessed conflicts between farmers and herders leading to loss of over 4,000 lives within seven years, with several injured. The conflict caused tensions and negatively affected the image of the country.

Government at the centre had taken various initiatives to end the problem, but fruitlessly. It however took the initiative of Kano State government recently to gather 500 experts from across the country, including researchers, security experts, government officials, academia and representatives of international agencies to prepare a blueprint on what should be done.

The state Governor, Dr Abdullahi Umar Ganduje, set up a 27-man committee led by the former Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) Prof Atairu Jega to "work towards planning and organising a befitting national conference on farmers-herders conflicts in Nigeria and select appropriate theme for the conference, select chairman, paper presenters/speakers, panelists, special guest(s) of honour, guests of honour, other dignitaries and delegates for the conference, as well as appropriate date and venue for the event.

The committee was to also provide adequate publicity before and after the event, submit a report with observations and recommendations for appropriate action. It was also to examine ECOWAS protocol pertaining to the movement of cattle across member countries, of the sub-region.

The committee also had Pro-chancellor, Yusuf Maitama Sule University, Prof Jibrila Dahiru Amin, former SSG, Niger state and professor of Veterinary Medicine, University of Ibadan; Prof. Muhammad Yahaya Kuta, managing director, Guardian Newspaper, Mr. Martins Oloja, executive secretary, National Commission for Nomadic Education; Prof Bashir Haruna Usman; managing director L&Z Integrated Farms Ltd; M. D. Abubakar; chairman, All Farmers Association of Nigeria, Arch Kabiru Ibrahim, former Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) representative in Nigeria; Rabe Isah Mani, Usman Danfodio University, Sokoto; Prof. Aminu Ibrahim Daneji, Department of Sociology, Bayero University, Kano (BUK). Prof Isma'ila Zango, among others as members while the

commissioner for information, Malam Muhammad Garba, served as secretary. The governor recalled that in 2019, the federal government launched a 10-year National Livestock Transformation Plan to curtail the movement of cattle, boost livestock production and control the country's deadly herder-farmer conflict, but inadequate political leadership, delays, funding uncertainties and a lack of expertise derailed the project alongside COVID-19 pandemic challenges.

According to Ganduje, the move by the federal government to establish the Ruga Settlement-which was received out of misconception with massive criticisms resulted in the suspension of the project in which contracts had already been awarded.

"There is also a clear sense which I think must be appreciated. That the federal government cannot dictate to states what to do with their land. This is so because the Land Use Act of 1978 puts land under the control of governors on behalf of their states. Even for use of federal lands in the states according to the Supreme Court, building or development control, permit must be sought from the governors of the states.

"I am a strong proponent of restriction of herders' movements into Nigeria from neighbouring countries as part of solution to tackling herder/farmer clashes. However, another issue worth taking into account is the ECOWAS Protocol which Nigeria signed in 1998. This guarantees free movement to pastoralists, herders across the sub-region. As signatories to that protocol, Nigeria is obliged not to restrict the movement of herders and their cattle from other ECOWAS countries. This is an issue to be looked into.

"This has added a further complication to the problems we already have; besides most foreign herdsmen are exposed to the firearms market and are unknown to the local farming populace."

The governor said his administration since inception has led the way and have been pioneering the initiation of development-oriented interventions at reformation of the livestock sector to mitigate farmer/herder conflicts by tackling the issue headlong.

"You may wish to know that until our

intervention, activities of cattle rustlers such as rape, killings, abduction and banditry had paralyzed economic activities in communities particularly in Sumaila and Doguwa local government areas, which left a lot of cattle farmers in a state of despair.

"We started by mobilising security agencies and hence the formation of a Police Anti-Cattle Rustling Squad, Ambush Squad and Tactical Observation points along the Falgore Forest. The police teams were deployed to Tundun Wada, Doguwa and Sumaila local government areas of the state, and were given all the support they need to arrest the rustlers and prevent further loss of cattle in the state.

"A military formation was also established in the forest to further reinforce the police effort, in addition to the construction of four prototype security dormitories at Kano entrances that included rearing industry from socio-cultural to socio-economic venture.

It also aimed at putting an end to the persistent wandering of herdsmen and also help expand them economically. The Kano State Bureau of Statistics has undertaken a statistics of all herdsmen in Kano for planning purposes."

The two-day conference had in attendance traditional rulers, government officials, other major stakeholders and experts.

The Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Sa'ad Abubakar, used the conference to declare that people were angry and hungry, hence the need to look for ways of dousing tension in the country.

The Sultan said the clashes between farmers and herders in Benue state has continued because all the suggestions made to the government were not implemented.

"Let's keep politics aside. The issues of development especially for the common man should not be prioritised. These people that God Almighty gave leadership over, one day, God forbid, will rise up against us.

"I have been to Benue at least two times as Sultan to sit with the governor and traditional rulers to discuss peace in the Benue valley. At the end of it, the suggestions were thrown away. Let this conference not be in the same manner, let's do it and

let's do well and now.

In his speech, Governor Ganduje said there is need for aiding information, education and strategic communication on the development of grazing reserves to mitigate the consequences of these conflicts.

According to him, "Modernising the livestock sector is not only key to resolving the herder-farmer conflict, but was envisaged that this economic investment pillar would support and strengthen the development of market-driven ranches for improved livestock production through breed improvement and pasture production."

"It is also very important that we avoid the dangers of allowing these conflicts to harden religious or ethnic conflicts. This is the responsibility of political, religious and all other parts of our leadership elite in Nigeria. It is my hope that this conference will produce a working document that would go a long way in mitigating conflicts between herders and farmers in this country."

In his keynote address, the vice President of Islamic Development Bank, Dr. Mansur Muhtar, said various farmers-herders clashes that took place at various times across the country have claimed the lives of 4,000 people with several thousand others injured.

He said while fatalities were initially confined to the North-central, it has since spread across the country.

Muhtar said northern Nigeria has been the epicentre of this conflict, given the relatively poor performance of the region in terms of education, health and other human development indicators, this situation, he said is untenable.

In his opening remarks, chairman of the organising committee, Prof Jega, said the conference was designed as an all-inclusive process to generate ideas that would contribute to addressing an acute national problem.

"As Nigeria searches for sustainable ways and means of diversifying its economy, a national strategic focus on the livestock sector and its perennial challenges is an imperative that has assumed significance."

Recommendations

At the end of the two-day conference, it was recommended for the establishment of a Ministry

of Livestock Resources.

According to a communique signed Prof Jega, it said, "In the alternative, federal and state governments should expand the scope of existing Departments of Livestock Production to address the broader needs of the industry.

Similarly, they stressed the need for the creation of additional research institutions for beef, dairy and pasture production as a strategy for expanding funding and enacting policies and programmes for the development of the sector at all levels of government.

They called on the united nations (UN) Agencies, Bilateral institutions, regional organisations (AU and ECOWAS), national and international CSOs and other support organisations to increase the level of funding and support to Nigeria in mitigating the impact of climate change, addressing technology gaps, addressing poverty and skills gap and improving people's livelihoods.

They also stressed the need to strengthen and improve the security architecture for the prevention of violent crimes including cattle rustling, raiding of villages, kidnapping of persons for ransom and trade in illicit arms and drugs.

"There is need to strengthen the process of litigation for more effective dispensation of justice and handling of the various litigations relating to violent crimes and other perpetrators of violent conflicts.

"There is the need to reform the security and judicial architectures to ensure the curtailing of farmer-herder conflicts, cattle rustling, illegal arms trade, importation and proliferation in the country.

"Political leaders at all levels need to refrain from politicizing the issue of farmer-herder conflicts and other associated issues while pursuing inclusive processes that will strengthen unity and cooperation in the country."

While appreciating the state government for the conference, participants urged Governor Ganduje to use his good office and influence to present the resolutions to the National Council of State and Nigeria Governors Forum (NGF).

Climate justice, health equity in Nigeria

By CLAIRE NWACHUKWU

CLIMATE change poses current and increasing threats to human health. As the climate continues to warm, the risks to human health will grow, exacerbating existing health threats and creating new public health challenges.

Many disadvantaged communities currently bear the brunt of climate-induced health risks from extreme heat, poor air quality, flooding, extreme weather events, and vector borne diseases.

Food insecurity, the result of climate change is related with accelerated dangers of beginning defects, spreading diseases, terrible oral health decrease vitamin intakes, and even persistent stipulations such as depression, worry disorders, back pain, persistent pain, arthritis, asthma, behavioural problem, hypertension and even suicide thoughts. In infants, food insecurity is related with diminished academic efficiency, mental development, and underweight, minimizing emotional, stunting and iron imperfections.

It is important to say that vulnerability to these health effects will increase as people get older and are less able to adapt to climate change. In addition, the level of vulnerability to certain health impacts will vary by location. The co-benefits of improving health while addressing climate change will improve public health infrastructure today, while mitigating the negative consequences of a changing climate for future generations.

For example, food insecurity comes with

factors of mental misery and well tense, when people are no longer aware when they will eat their subsequent meal and this impacts negatively on tens of millions of people in Nigeria whose suffering may also now, not show up on the outside, however whose intellectual and bodily fitness are nonetheless threatened by way of starvation and weak nutrients. On top of all this, monetary obstacles to clinical care capacity means that many people who are food insecure frequently are identified a lot later, when an affliction might already have advanced and then then, it becomes a greater problem. Additionally, there is every tendency that the effect climate change has on agriculture is in all likelihood to make extensive contributions to not only the deficiency of food supplying the nearest future, however, it could also lead to the continuous increase in food prices.

The incessant level of stress related to being food insecure adjusts the way we consider and acquire food; changes the methods we eat, how we eat and leads to worse physical and mental health outcomes over time. Another mechanism whereby food insecurity can have an impact on health outcomes is via its impact on adherence to clinical recommendations. Again, considering diabetic food-insecure adults, it has proven that they encounter difficulties affording diabetic weight loss programs and decrease competences to tackle

issues pertaining diabetic.

Food is emaciated for the most part due to the fact of wasteful developments, rough or bad roads, over discriminating customers and incompetent storage facilities. If storage services are multiplied and also upgraded and their ample preparations for how the food will be used, less food will be emaciated and there will be a greater food impervious community.

Most of our farming lands are exhausted of their natural fertility levels and cannot produce a whole lot as they did years ago and even so, some farmers find it hard to get their produce to the market due to the fact of poor infrastructure including roads, storage facilities and food processing equipment. Sometimes because of the difficulty involved in transporting their produce, they tend to transport in bits and this can have negative effects on the produce because farm crops are perishable. If the infrastructure is improved, more food will be available in the market and the food insecurity levels will go down.

The ultimate goal of beating food insecurity should devote a focal point on constructing stable, sustainable and local food systems. In targeting global hunger, all-encompassing exertions need to be created to both improve agriculture results, processing, trade and people's monetary capacity to collect nutritious food.

For climate change and its impact on

health, two main strategies are proposed to tackle it. First, mitigation or reducing the greenhouse emissions and secondly, adaptation or enhancing the capacity to cope with health consequences resulting from climate change. There is a need to place more emphasis on renewable energy such as solar, wind and hydropower, and nuclear power. In addition, citizens can contribute through lifestyle changes such as switching to efficient lighting, solar heating, and use of public transport. These mitigation efforts can also bring direct health co-benefits such as by reducing the risk of heart diseases and other non-communicable diseases.

Adaptation on the other hand requires efforts to prepare for, and minimize the health burden of climate change. Health sector can take a lead in these efforts specifically to carry out comprehensive assessments of climate risks and vulnerabilities, establish an integrated environmental and health surveillance, and ensure mechanisms for efficient delivery of health interventions. Health system should be made climate resilient and ready to be able to anticipate ill effects and remain ready and prepared for an effective response. The national programmes on diarrhea disease control, vector control, and zoonosis must be strengthened and capacity to respond to disasters and emergencies ramped up.

Nwachukwu writes from the Centre for Social Justices (CSJ), Nigeria.

News

Shun overpricing of govt contracts, services - BPP DG

THE Director-General of the Bureau of Public Procurement (BPP), Mr Mamman Ahmed has advised government officials to shun the idea of inflating and overpricing government contracts.

This is contained in a statement issued by BPP Head of Media, Janet McDickson in Abuja on Tuesday.

The statement said Ahmed made the call while receiving a delegation from Due Process Bureau in Bayelsa State.

He emphasised the need for due process in undertaking government contracts and services.

According to him, there should be no overpricing of contracts or services.

He urged the Bayelsa delegation to look into BPP's structure and learn from its workings to improve theirs.

Ahmed said that the BPP was ready to share from their own experiences as no one had monopoly of knowledge.

"You are free to ask questions that can help improve your services," the director-general said. Earlier, the director-general, Due-Process Bureau of Bayelsa, Aaron Timiye said that the visit was to tap from the vast experience of the BPP boss and his team.

Timiye, who was represented by the Director, Price Intelligence, Mr Richard Afenia, said that the visit would also help to



Ahmed

improve procurement services to the Government of Bayelsa.

"We are encouraged by the achievements of the BPP and the direction the office is providing as a leading Public Procurement Regulatory Agency in Africa.

"This study tour falls in line with our corporate desire to achieve improved public processing practices in Bayelsa in the short run.

"We also intend to achieve increased transparency, accountability, value for money and public confidence participation," he said.

He said that the study tour was also to enable his team take home advancements in Public Procurement Regulation and Identify possible areas of collaboration.

According to him, such collaboration will improve

capacity, regulation processes, workflows and structures. (NAN)

Cashless policy'll tackle corruption, insecurity

REV. Yakubu Pam, Executive Secretary, Nigerian Christian Pilgrim Commission (NCPC), has said that the Naira Redesign/Cashless Policy of the Federal Government was targeted at tackling corruption and insecurity in the country.

Pam told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Abuja on Monday that the policy was neither aimed at individuals or to cause hardship for Nigerians.

Pam said that all Nigerians should rally round President Muhammadu Buhari as he stands his grounds to deliver a Nigeria free

THE Executive Secretary, Nigeria Christian Pilgrim Commission (NCPC) says its policies on enhancing Nigeria's image and pilgrimage has earned the country visas on arrival to Jordan.

Pam made this known during an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on the state of the nation on Monday in Abuja.

According to him, the NCPC has made sure it built a good relationship not only with stakeholders within the country but with the host countries outside Nigeria.

"At this moment, we have good relationship with Jordan; we have visas on arrival, it is only

NCPC policies have earned Nigerians visas on arrival to Jordan - NCPC boss

Nigerians who go there get visas on arrival now.

"It took this commission a very good policy to build bilateral relationship with our host countries outside; we can beat our chest today that we opened the road for Nigerians to have visas on arrival to Jordan," he said.

Another policy Pam said the commission initiated to enhance the pilgrims exercise was building integrity for acceptability by partners involved.

"We are glad that immediately I came into office, first and foremost, we tried to build on an integrity for acceptability for our

partners and our host countries, who we all know are Israel and Jordan and others.

"Making sure that we have fished out people running away, staying in those lands illegally, which is called abscondment.

"And that is one policy we made sure we built to ensure people do not use the opportunity for pilgrimage to mar the image of Nigeria.

"And that is really working; that is why our host countries are inviting us to come for more pilgrim exercises knowing that we have built a very good image for the country," he added. (NAN)

Rev Pam

President; we need to encourage him. Everybody has witnessed in the past few weeks how he has stood his ground on the new naira note to tackle corruption, especially among the elite. We should encourage him.

"Knowing that we are passing through a transition period where power will move from one government to another, the current administration must have witnessed a lot and want to deliver solutions to so many challenges, especially insecurity and corruption, that have been bedeviling the country," he said.

The executive secretary called on Nigerians to be patient with the challenges accompanying the policy, saying that the CBN was doing everything possible to cushion the pains.

According to him, there is no new policy that will not come with its challenges.

"The challenges are to be expected. We must endure some of these challenges so as to prepare for a better future."

Pam charged religious and traditional leaders to engage citizens in their jurisdiction on the gains of the policy to prevent them from being misled by mischief makers. (NAN)



Rev. Pam

from insecurity and corruption as promised

during his campaigns. "This is the moment we need to rally round the

2023 UTME: JAMB registers 1.6 million candidates

NO fewer than 1.6 million candidates have been registered for the 2023 Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) Unified Tertiary

Matriculation Examinations (UTME) at the close of registration.

The Registrar of the Board, Prof. Ishaq Oloyede, disclosed this

at the end of a joint monitoring exercise with the Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Education, Mr David Adejo, in Abuja on Monday.

Oloyede, however, disclosed that in the cause of registration 15 culprits were discovered to be defrauding the process, adding that the culprits have been apprehended and were currently detained.

He also disclosed that the registration for direct entry candidates commenced this Monday.

According to him, "So far we have registered about 1.6 million candidates because we

do not expect more than that, and that is because the direct entry starts today.

"We have the challenge of the normal people who want to defraud the process as we have been monitoring what has been happening.

"We are ahead of them even when they think they are clever."

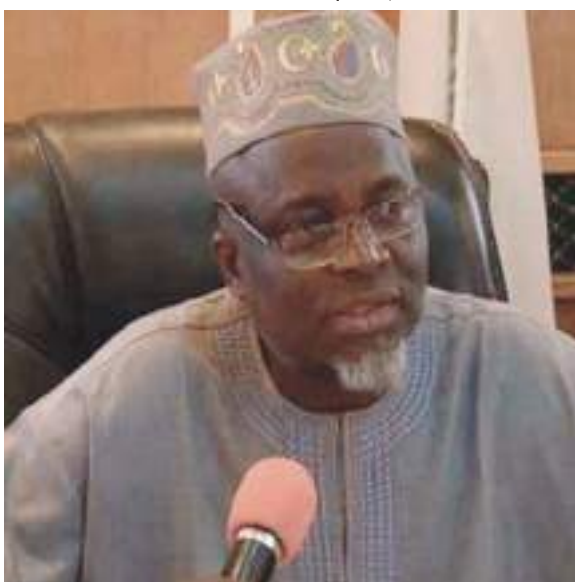
The Permanent Secretary in his remarks said that there was need to extend the registration to give others faced with the challenge of naira redesigning opportunity to register.

"This is especially because registration

process is dependent on bank operations and we've not have the top level of bank operations in the last two to three weeks for understandable reasons," he said.

Asejo noted that before the extension of registration for one week, JAMB had actually registered about 98 per cent candidates, saying that no one would be left behind in its registration process.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the exercise took place at one of the Computer Based Center (CBT), the Global Distance Learning Institute (NAN)



Prof. Oloyede

News

Lalong appoints Matur as VC PLASU

BY EZEKIEL DONTINNA

GOVERNOR Simon Bako Lalong of Plateau State has approved the appointment of Professor Bernard Malau Matur, as Vice Chancellor of the Plateau State University Bokkos following the expiration of the tenure of the former VC, Professor Yohanna Izam yesterday.

This is contained in a press statement signed by the Secretary to the Government of Plateau State (SGS), Professor Danladi Abok Atu, and made available to THE NIGERIA STANDARD in Jos, the state capital yesterday.

The statement said, "the Executive Governor of Plateau State, His Excellency, Rt. Hon. Simon Bako Lalong CON, KSG, has in accordance with the recommendations of the Governing Council, approved the appointment of Vice Chancellor, Professor Bernard Malau Matur, as Vice Chancellor of the Plateau State University, Bokkos.

"Bernard Malau Matur is a Professor of Public Health, Entomology and Parasitology. He has held several positions in academics including Deputy Vice Chancellor Veritas University Abuja, Dean of College of Sciences, Dean of Students Affairs and Head of Department of Biological Sciences of the University of Abuja respectively.

"He has also been Head of the Department of Remedial Sciences, University of Jos among others. Until his appointment, Professor Malau was the current Honourable Commissioner of Higher Education of Plateau State. He is succeeding Professor



Lalong

Yohanna Izam whose tenure expires on Tuesday February 21, 2022", it highlighted.

The Governor, sincerely, used the opportunity to express his appreciation to Professor Izam for his meritorious service to the University and wish him success in his future endeavours.

In the same vein, the Governor in accordance with the Law passed by the State House of Assembly, announced the change of nomenclature

and upgrading of the College of Arts, Science and Technology, Kurgwi to Ignatius Lonjan Polytechnic.

The statement also revealed that, "the Bill for the Establishment of the Ignatius Lonjan Polytechnic and for other matters connected takes effect from 2022, while the College of Arts, Science and Remedial Studies Kurgwi Law NO: 20 of 2000 and the amended law of 2005 are hereby repealed".

THE Bwacha Gubernatorial Campaign Council (BGCC) has disclosed that Senator Emmanuel Bwacha's name has been added to the INEC portal and so he remains the governorship candidate of the APC in Taraba.

There has been uncertainty in the state over the status of the governorship candidate with the public holding divergent views over the issue. Some say his name has been uploaded into the INEC portal while others deny it.

However, in a statement signed by spokesman Aaron Artimas, the party had successfully conducted its rerun primaries and "INEC had accepted and uploaded" Bwacha's name.

"It has become highly important to reassure all members of the APC and teeming supporters that distinguished Senator Emmanuel Bwacha CON remains the authentic and undisputed gubernatorial candidate of the APC in Taraba State. His name has been added to the INEC portal as Taraba's APC governorship candidate in Taraba State.

"In view of this, we are not only reassuring our supporters on this wonderful development but also advising them to ignore any rumours,

Bwacha Campaign Council dispel rumours

From VICTOR GAI, Jalingo

speculations, and outright lies to the contrary.

"It is imperative to stress that recently, INEC had issued a statement, saying that its duties are to respect and implement court orders and not to interpret them.

"The APC had successfully organized its re-run Gubernatorial Primary in the state, duly supervised by the state INEC commissioner and his staff on the directives of the National Commission. Following this development, the National Working Committee of the party had

written and submitted Senator Bwacha's name to the commission. The name has been accepted and uploaded to the INEC portal," the statement read.

Artimas thereby assured party members and supporters that the party will start its state-wide campaign in a few days towards installing an APC regime in the state.

He also appealed to all "to discount such wild rumours and deliberate falsehood against the APC and its highly respected gubernatorial candidate".



Adamu

Senatorial hopeful strategises against farmer/herder clashes

From VICTOR GAI, Jalingo

The All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA), senatorial candidate for Taraba Northnorth, Jeremiah Jacob Kane, has promised to study the controversial Waterways Bill before the National Assembly with a view to ending the farmer/herder clashes in his constituency and in the

nation in general. Taraba has the longest stretch of the River Benue which runs through Taraba Northnorth Senatorial district.

Kane while speaking during the Media Parley of the Correspondents Chapel of the Nigerian Union of Journalists, Taraba State Council on Tuesday, said he would engage

farmers and herders as well as look into the Bill with a view to settling the dispute between the warring parties.

"In regards to the dispute between the Fulani and locals, I will stress it more to uniting them that they must live together. The Fulani are herders and the rest of the locals are farmers. Both of

them are productive to their communities and offer service to humanity. So, we would work hard in uniting them, forming them into clusters of understanding. We need one another to survive," he stated.

According to him, politicians have bewitched the people "with the evil intention of segregating them to divide and rule to gain their simple interest by emerging into the political scene".

He therefore offered himself as the one to salvage the situation.

"So if we have an honest person like myself, I will use that and I will also engage in a proper orientation on peaceful coexistence among citizens of

Taraba and the nation at large. If it means putting up a strategic bill to engage stakeholders in taking responsibility by law, I think I will do it," he added.

He said he would look into the controversial Waterways Bill when elected.

"On the issue of the Waterways Bill, I will study the bill. I have a knowledge which I would not like to preempt in proffering solution to that. I think Nigeria has over taken time to find solution to this problem. What we need to do is engage in a proper way in putting up dams that would curtail this large disaster that we have been experiencing," he concluded.

APC guber candidate vows to eliminate corruption

From ABBAS GUNGURA, Bauchi

THE gubernatorial candidate of the All Progressive Congress (APC) in Bauchi State, Rtd Air Marshall Sadique Baba Abubakar, assured that his administration will eliminate all forms of corruption if elected as governor of the state.

The former Air Chief equally promised to reposition the state by ensuring justice to every zone in terms of

resource allocations and fulfilling its promises during its campaigns in 2019.

According to him, "Our administration will ensure that corruption and all kinds of criminal activities are eliminated in all government agencies and contracts must follow due process before awarding to any bidder"

Adding that the era of family and friends in the affairs of the state resources will be over and would no longer be business as usual.

"We'll ensure equitable distribution of resources, government positions as well as projects across all 20 local government area councils

"We'll provide an enabling environment for every individual to contribute his quarter to the development of the state.

The APC gubernatorial candidate also pledged to address the problem of out-of-school children, revitalise agriculture and empower small and medium enterprises as well as youth and women.

The colourful rally attracted hundreds of party supporters and, APC stalwarts, thrilling

solidarity songs from musicians and singers as well as the unveiling of the party candidates vying for political offices by the gubernatorial candidate Rtd Air Marshall Sadique Abubakar.

Group tasks Supreme Court over Benue LP guber crisis

A group under the aegis of the Benue Youth Vanguard has challenged the Supreme Court to end what it referred to as "rape" of justice at the lower and appellate courts over the crisis that trailed the governorship primary of the Labour Party in the state.

The group said both the Makurdi High Court and appellate court failed the integrity test by their inability to ensure justice in a matter that many were optimistic would be a straight win for Engr. Ben Akaaka.

"But the two courts went ahead to give Mr. Herman Hembe, who was not apparently qualified to vie for the primary of the party, having earlier participated in the All Progressives Congress (APC) exercise, a clean bill," it said.

Engr. Akaaka had challenged the emergence of Hembe, the National Assembly member representing

Vandeikya/Konshisha constituency, as the gubernatorial candidate of the LP in the state.

He had approached the court seeking his recognition as the duly elected candidate and the disqualification of Mr. Hembe for being invalidly elected.

The Chairman and secretary of the group, Mr Tsetim Timbee and Harry Nungwa, in a statement, cited the results of the APC's governorship primary election, which had Hembe's name, indicating that he had participated in that election, and sought that INEC be ordered to replace Hembe's name with that of Akaaka, being the first runner.

However, in a ruling, the Makurdi High Court ruled that Hembe's name was erroneously printed in the APC primary elections results.

The Court of Appeal sitting in Makurdi also upheld the decision of the lower court on the matter.

The group said the decisions of both courts were suspicious and did not reflect the true situation on ground.

The statement, which advised Engr Akaaka to head to the Supreme Court, pointed out that the courts, which are supposed to be unbiased umpires, have turned justice on its head.

The statement urged the Supreme Court that if confronted with the issue, the Court should redeem the situation and uphold the integrity of the judicial arm by declaring Akaaka as the governorship candidate of the party for the forthcoming governorship election in the state.

It said Akaaka, by his past antecedent and wealth of experience, is better placed to address the many challenges plaguing the state and steer it on the path of development and growth.



Abubakar

Feature

Residents sleep at ATM points across northern Nigeria

While some spend the night in the cubicles around the ATMs, others leave their houses around 4:00 am to join the queue. Many Nigerians in the north of the country are sleeping in the cubicles of Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) in banks and other places as the scarcity of the new naira notes bites harder.. MOHAMMED BABANGIDA writes.

WHILE some are residents of urban areas, most of those who spend the night at the ATM points are mostly from communities without bank services and have to wait till they get the cash before they can return home, PREMIUM TIMES gathered.

"I left my home around 5:12 a.m. on Tuesday with the hope of being number one on the queue because one of my friends who works at the bank told me to come early, but when I reached there, I met 15 people that spent the night there," said Umar Ashura, a non-academic staffer at the Federal University Dustin Ma in Katsina, who has an account with Unity Bank.

He said that was the first time he came to know that people spend nights at banks to get money.

"It's surprising because the highest you can get is N20,000. That day I could only get N10,000 because the bank officials said there was not enough cash. This is our new reality," Mr Ashura told this reporter.

In October last year, the federal government through the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) announced that it would redesign the N200, N500 and N1000 notes to, among other things, promote a cashless society, tackle counterfeit money in circulation and manage inflation in the country.

A deadline of 31 January was given but it was later extended to 10 February following public outrage. Three governors of the ruling [All Progressives Congress \(APC\)](#) ran to the Supreme Court to oppose the policy and after the first sitting on 15 February a new date, 22 February was fixed for a hearing.

Since the January deadline, Nigerians have been queueing to get cash from their banks while the number of Point of Sale (POS) operators with available cash keeps reducing as the scarcity worsens.

In Talata Mafara area of Zamfara State, a POS operator, Fahad Aminu said he has slept at the bank thrice to get cash.

"I went to the Access Bank beside the local government Secretariat around 12 midnight, then slept. This was the third time I'm doing that for three straight days. I was given N20,000 each which I gave out to my customers in the morning," he said told PREMIUM TIMES over the phone.

Nazifi Yahaya, a football viewing centre attendant in Talata Mafara, said he went to the bank around 2:00 a.m. and left "very early in the morning" when bank officials loaded money into the machine.

Banks usually load cash in



ATMs in the evening and morning. Most of the money loaded in the evening is withdrawn before night and some residents say they spend the night there so that when the machines are loaded in the morning, they will be first to withdraw.

"I slept outside Zenith Bank walahi but I didn't get the money in the morning. It's funny now but I nearly cried that day," Umar Sulaiman, a teacher in Gusau, Zamfara State capital told PREMIUM TIMES over the phone. Once the queue reached him, he said, the ATM stopped dispensing cash. He stayed for over an hour after some bank officials promised that money would be loaded into the ATM. They did not fulfil the promise. He left brokenhearted.

Some residents said they preferred spending the night at the banks than joining long queues in the day when one is not certain of getting the

money. Others who come from faraway communities without banks also have no choice but to spend the night there.

Some from the urban areas said they experience the cold weather at night at the bank because they need money for basic services.

"Some people still don't accept transfer or use POS," a car wash attendant in Katsina, Bashir Dan Waire, told PREMIUM TIMES. "To settle small services like Okada, you need the cash because you can't tell someone you want to transfer N200 or N100 to him."

Idris Abdurashid slept at the Jaiz Bank branch on Kofar Kaura in Katsina and he got N10,000. He insisted it was worth the trouble because he now had money in his pocket.

In the Sokoto metropolis, residents of local communities have been trooping into the state capital to get cash but most of them have to spend the night there before they could get it.

Yahaya Alhaji was seen at a Unity Bank on Kano road in the metropolis where he said he would be spending the night since he knew no one in the metropolis. He is from Dange, a community 35 kilometres from the Sokoto metropolis.

"I've been here since 10 a.m. When the cash they loaded finished, I went to other banks in the city but couldn't get so I was informed that they would load more money in the night or very early in the morning and since I don't have anything (cash) to return to Dange this night, I'll spend the night here so I could get it on time but as you can see, they're other people on the queue before me," he said.

Umar Shehu is from Yabo town, which is 54 kilometres from Sokoto metropolis and has joined the list of those trooping into the city to get cash.

"It's very hard for me to be spending the night here. If not in Nigeria, where would

anybody be suffering just to get hold of his hard-earned money?

We defy insecurity to leave our hometown and sleep on the street just to get money, our own money for that matter. This is not the first time I'm even spending the night here," Mr Shehu, who was at Union Bank on Bello Way, said.

Adamu Ali is from Kurya in the Rabah area on the border with Zamfara State, some 47 kilometres from the Sokoto metropolis. He said there was one POS operator in his community who has now run out of cash.

"I had to come here and I'll take any cash whether new or old because nobody will accept transfers in our community," Mr Ali said. He said he was number 102 on the list being written for those hoping to get money Saturday morning.

Others, according to him, have put down their names and left but those who have nowhere to spend the night prefer to sleep outside the bank.



By FRANCISCA ADIDI

THE random killings across the country especially in the North is a thing of concern in the society, especially for the present administration.

So many lives are being lost and property worth millions of Naira destroyed from attacks by terrorists on a daily basis. This is because insecurity has become order of the day.

It seems the present administration of President Buhari does not appear to have answers to the challenges of security which the society is facing today.

Should we continue like this? How long? And when should Nigerians expect an end to these killings? Nigerian roads are not safe as most people are being kidnapped on their journey. The killers on the roads and other criminals in the society appear to be comfortable as not enough is being done to stop their activities by the government. That is why they have gained more confidence in their

attacks. The security situation in the country has gone worst under this administration such that the cry of the common man is for Nigeria to have a messiah to take over from Buhari. This is because it seems our leaders are more concerned with politicking than the wellbeing of

Nigerians are tired of recycled politicians who are moving themselves from local government to state and from state level to National Assembly and to the presidency without tackling the security situation. Today politicians are cross carpeting and switching from one political party to the other



The need for leaders to act

its populace. Nothing is being taken serious today as everything is being politicized because of the greedy nature of politicians. Remember, Nigeria is bigger than all of us. The country needs to be fixed before it is being governed.

Everyone wants to contest into leadership position and not because they want to govern and fix things but rather because of position, money and fame that comes with it.

Everyday, the media reports killings here and there. They are also tired of reporting such news. They also love Nigeria and would want to report good things about the country.

Nigerians are saying enough of the bloodshed. Enough of kidnapping, enough of terrorism. Government should therefore wake up to its responsibility. Nigerians are not asking for too much, they need peace, they need security of lives and property.

Today Nigerians are praying for good and genuine leaders who will be totally committed to free the country from the numerous challenges the nation has been battling with.

just to get elected into leadership positions.

Former President Goodluck Jonathan was accused of being the architect of insecurity in the country. As a way out, a retired General of the Nigeria Army was brought in thinking he would change the narrative. But the situation got worst day by day that some Nigerians are calling for his resignation as insecurity has grown worst.

Nigerian government is duty bound to protect the lives of its citizens as enshrined in the constitution. But this can only be achieved if government reconstructs the security architecture of the country, by bringing modern technology to

bare so as to keep the security forces ahead of the insurgents.

The recent attacks on Kaduna/Abuja road and that of Plateau State in Kanam Local Government Area, where so many lives were lost and property destroyed, is pathetic and unfortunate. These attacks show the helplessness of our security personnel. Yet it is, only when terrorists strike before the presence of police or military will be seen.

And each time an attack is made, government is quick to condemn such attacks without apprehending those culprits. Are they invisible? Where are the perpetrators?

Nigerians only talk about

elections without tackling the issue of insecurity which has gained grounds in the Nigerian society. The leadership does not come closer to the people for effective management of the situation.

We are a people that are suffering and smiling. They are killing us yet we are not tired of lining up under the sun to elect leaders that allow terrorists to kill us without being caught.

Security issue needs to be tackled fast to save the lives and property of the remaining Nigerians.

Is there nothing to be done to curb this insecurity in the country? Why are our leaders so quiet and nonchalant about the issue of security and lives are being wasted everyday as if human lives are valueless?

Our leaders should not allow the country to be battered and buffeted as in the words of Father Kukah. Our leaders should not inflict morals, psychological and emotional damage on Nigerians that will take a long time to heal.

Our leaders should not allow Nigeria to bleed as insecurity grows worst everyday.

“

Our leaders should not allow the country to be battered and buffeted as in the words of Father Kukah. Our leaders should not inflict morals, psychological and emotional damage on Nigerians that will take a long time to heal.

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What is the fate of the Nigerian child?



By HOSEA NYAMLONG

THE dream and hope of the Nigerian children must be kept alive for a brighter future. Every year, May 27th is marked as International Children's Day to celebrate the well-being of the children and to assess their development both physically and mentally.

Sadly today, the child development is often hampered by numerous challenges that threatens their future, especially in a developing nation like Nigeria.

Some of the challenges facing the Nigerian child includes early child marriage, sexual exploitation, child labour, illiteracy, domestic violence, child trafficking, rape, torture, etc

It is worrisome that many children today have died as a result of such ill-treatment across the country either from their masters, mistress or care givers. And many of the ages of such children are from one to sixteen that have being reportedly defiled, mostly are the female children that are raped.

On the other hand, the male child is also a victim of sodomy sexually abused by some and mindless adults.

The crux of the matter is that only a few of such cases of abuse are heard or reported to constituted authorities, because of the fear of the unknown from the perpetrators who mostly threaten to harm such children, if the case is expose in the public domain

However, in such situations,

children are left with a physical and psychological trauma in their lives, if not being handled immediately, such victims might likely end up being hostile or brutish and this would affect the well-being of the society

Again, the trouble being face by Nigerian children is their educational as some parents cannot take care of their welfare, as a result of poverty or divorce. The Nigerian child cannot develop without education.

Education is a major tool for national development and without a good foundation, they won't be bright, if children lack quality education

It is on record that the Nigerian Child Right Act Bill was signed into Law in 2003 by the National Assembly and about the well-being of the Nigerian Child to have free education and 19 years down the line only 28 states have signed the Bill into Law, but the challenge is the implementation process is been viewed very slow since

inception.

According to the United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), "one in every five of the world's out of school children is in Nigeria". About 15 million Nigerian children work the highest rate of working children in West Africa and mostly are engaged in street hawking, car wash, etc.

Over the years, the Almajiri programme by the former president Goodluck Jonathan, school system has failed to take effect as a formal school for the Almajiri boys, it was reported that N15 billion was spent for the project, this was to integrate the basic education into the Almajiri school system.

In addition, such structures built for the purpose of the Almajiri programme was not being used for conventional educational purpose, the pupils have gone back to their old ways of street begging, which would further expose the children to inhumane conditions and vulnerability to abuse.

To this end, despite the Child Right Act Bill being signed into law, many children are still experiencing violence across the states of the federation. No day passes without a reported case of child molestation and these perpetrators are not punished according to the Law.

The Government and security agencies should ensure they do the needful in order to stop such abuse of the Nigerian child, because the future of the country belongs to them. To achieve these children's lives must be protected and safe guarded from criminals that would want to destroy their future.

Parents, care givers, should ensure that they educate their children or wards to stay off any danger that would lead to abuse or molestation. Government alone cannot fight this menace in society, it must be a collective effort by all to see that offenders are punished according to the law of the country.

The future is bright, we must protect it.

By EZEKIEL DONTINNA

CEPTIONAL celebration of a new beginning when the family of Nde Silas Wukwa and Nde Jonathan Ishaku ushered to stage their children as bride and groom for them to take a vow as husband and wife at COCIN Headquarters, Jos recently.

The Church was filled to the brim with relations, friends, the Church members and other dignitaries who trooped in from far and near to support this young couples in their blissful marriage journey of life on that morning of February 11 2023.

The service was graced by officiating ministers of God led by COCIN President, Rev. Dr. Amos Mozoh, as he was backed by the former COCIN President, Rev. Prof. SojaBewarang, Rev. Sylvester Dachomo, Rev. Moses Chagumi, Rev. Elisha D Pam, Rev. BulusTsok, Rev. Alexander LismanMaisaini, Rev. Victor Da'ap, Rev. Elisha Gufwan, Rev. Stephen A. Gyang and Pastor Martins Pam respectively

The couple after passing through the mandatory questions and answers from the leading officiating ministers, were gloriously pronounced husband and wife amid praises and music administration from the Praise and Worship Church band, Choir, Women Fellowship and other groups singing differently in worship to God Almighty.

It was truly like the rising morning sun from its horizon aligning with a new day for the couple's journey in life. The joy that came with this special day was glaringly seen on the faces of the couple's parents as they were but dancing giving God the glory for making the day a reality.

The most interesting part of

it all was at the venue of the reception, the Gowon Hall of Crispan Hotel and Suites Rayfield Jos, the Plateau State capital, where it was all through dance, dance and dance. In fact, no lesser word could be used to describe how sparkingly and astonishingly decorated the hall was.

After the opening remarks from the Chairman of the

dress code. Add that to the well decorated hall and it was wow!

It became quite thrilling the more when the mother of the groom, Mrs. HauwaIshaku and that of the bride, Mrs. Sarah Wukwa were seen dancing together with their arms around each other's necks. This, no doubt, depicted a harmonious family



Former PPC GM's son ties the knot



occasion, who is CEO of Jos Business School and former Plateau State Secretary to the Government (SSG), the hall unprecedentedly went into a dance galore.

Family and friends were colourfully dressed in wine, baby pink and grey colours as

bond already at play and the hall was provoked into uncontrollable dancing.

No wonder, there were no much speech making at the reception because of the gay mood at play. For BejiAminuIshaku (groom) and his bride PanmunWukwa, it

was an open heaven and unending joy with a brighter future. The two were dancing and jumping uncontrollably, changing in styles as DJ T-brown played all the popular music. The DJ should be commended for the exceptional rolling of the old and new generation tracks' arrangement.

The Ngas Cultural Dance group were not left out of the celebration. Dressed in their cultural attires, the group held the crowd bound for almost an hour even when the Master of Ceremony, Funny G, kept signaling them to stop. To a majority of the guest, it was a recall of the old good days in Ngasland.

This to a large extend, frustrated our correspondent's efforts to reach the couples' parents and other dignitaries to get their feelings about the occasion. It was not far from how carried away they were with celebration and the continued music they all were so palm cloaked in.

Beji Ishaku Groom it is one of my best daay in lif. Iam so escited to have this wonderful lady as my wife. I promised to take care of her, nurtime her

and love her with God supporting us.

you know, every with God is possible because without God building the house, the builder builds in veini and I promised to love her and we will one as husband and wife for the rest our life.

However, there is no denying the fact that every parent's dream and prayer is to bear a child, nurse the child and see him or her growing to start a family like this, especially after reaching the necessary maturity stage. What an honour to continue with the familylineage through the right channel not in a dishonourable way. That way one can enjoy the blessing when it comes.

It is our prayer that the Lord who gave them the third eye to be connected together as husband and wife will continue to lead them and lay a solid foundation for the new family. For the couple, we wish them a happy married life.

As reiterated in church they should ensure that they adhere to the biblical principles of marriage and God will see them through. Congratulations!



IMAGES

PLATEAU CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN UNITY FORUM RAISES EMPOWERMENT FUND

Plateau Central and Southern Zones Unity Forum (PC & SZUF) Jos North-North Branch last week Saturday held N15million Fund Raising empowering women, youths and widows with skill acquisitions at GSS Kyan Rikkos, Jos North LGA



Chairman of the Forum, Chief Danjuma Mabur (right) putting heads together with one of the Chief Launchers and LP Gubernatorial candidate, Dr. Patrick Dakum, represented by one time Chairman, Mangu LGC, Hon. Iliya Dutse (left)



Vice Chairman of the Forum, Mr. Titus Lar (right) with other members and dignitaries dancing during the new year and fund raising ceremony



Chairman, Central Planning Committee (CPC) Comrade Ponsak Daniel Nansak (2nd right) with some members of the Committee



Father of the day, Rev. Prof. Justin J. La-Nibetle Snr. (middle) discussing with Elder Gideon Ibrahim and Mr. Yakubu Gideon (right)



PC & SZUF Chairman, Chief Danjuma Mabur (left) with the woman leader of the Forum, Mrs. Phoebe A. Emmanuel



From left are, Mr. Ayuba Sendeht, Chief Danjuma Mabur and Mr. Jonah Hakuri



Mr. Jonathan Emmanuel making donations of ten thousand naira at the ceremony



Cross section of members and dignitaries dancing at the event

PHOTOS: DANLADI DUK

Odd World

'Aliens abduct me in my sleep'

A woman who believes aliens have repeatedly abducted her in her sleep say they've left her with "weird bruises and punctures" in her skin.

Maria Leiva, 51, claims the abductions have been going on for as long as she can remember and she's come into contact with heavy-handed extraterrestrials numerous times.

The mum, from Ramsgate, Kent, says she often wakes up to find bruises or finger marks on her body which she's certain are evidence of an extra-terrestrial visit.

Maria, a support worker, says she sometimes wakes up in locations far away from her house with no idea how she got there - and once even had to get a taxi home.

Maria Leiva said that has repeatedly been abducted in her sleep

Maria said: "For as long as I can remember I have had these encounters, the earliest memories were from when I was around four-years-old and I knew it was happening.

"I remember being sad at night and going out onto the terrace at my family home in Columbia and crying out to the stars. I would ask them why they left me here and I would tell them I wanted to go back home.

"I have always been able to see things in the sky, as well as actually seeing beings as well.

"I am sometimes awakened by telepathic communications between the hours of two and four in the morning, being told to wake up and go to the window as something is out there. Sometimes I can record videos of what is out there, but sometimes I can only take photos.

"I don't have any control over when it happens, but in the past two weeks I have seen two flying objects in the sky, up to three times in one night.

"There can also be quiet patches where there isn't much happening, but they communicate with me through my dreams and I will then know when they are visiting.

"When they visit, they will leave me with weird bruises on my body.

"I would wake up with marks on my body, bruises, finger marks, punctures in my skin and cuts as well, and this is how I'd know something had happened in the night.

"My daughter also has these experiences and she has for her whole life, but we never really speak about it with people.

"She believes she can see them too, seeing her first UFO when she was ten. We were living in Hackney and it was one morning when I was taking her to school she looked into the sky and could see the shape of a UFO in the sky, she has now seen several since.

"At the beginning, when I was younger, I wasn't sharing much of what I was experiencing as these aren't things you'd talk about much and if I shared it people would think I was crazy.

"As I got older I started to share little parts of what was happening with friends but I didn't want to scare people.

"My parents knew what was happening but it was something that would never be spoken about.

"There was one particular time in Columbia at my parents' house where one night I was taken in my sleep and I woke up in a completely different place and I was left quite far away.

"I had to get a taxi home, and I didn't even have my house keys so I had to knock on the door. My dad answered and he was so puzzled as to what had happened and why I had left and was only just coming home."

Maria has had unusual alien encounters for as long as she can remember, and being taken in the night, communicating through her dreams. Because of this, Maria has been heavily involved in the UFO community her whole life.

Maria adds: "I enjoy going to conferences around the world for E.T and flying saucers, I speak to people who have experienced the same things as me such as seeing UFO's and aliens.

"I have also seen aliens as well. I saw them in Barcelona when I was living there in the mountains.

Source: The Mirror.



As our woes, sufferings continue

THE past few weeks have been full of communities and societies can integrate anxiety and unpalatable discourse with the sole aim of moving us forward. Their desire was to have a nation where our conduct of party primaries in Nigeria. differences would be sought out for the betterment of us all.

Though it has become almost a tradition that transitional periods as such usually Unfortunately, several decades after our comes with so much pressure on side of independence, Nigeria for the greater fault the citizens of the country, the pressure of our greedy elites have wasted our this time around has been opportunity towards creating an enabling unimagined. Yet, our discussions environment for greater prospects. They must continue even in the midst of the calamity we have found ourselves in and denied us of helping ourselves, they this very moment. are ensuring on leaving behind a nation in ruins if care is not taken

Regarded as the most populous black nation in the world with great business opportunities, Nigeria is a nation which has continued to fumble and wobble since the advent of the present democratic dispensation. Indeed, the nation is always under pressure not because of anything but our collective insincerity of purpose, selfish interests and other miscalculations due to inherent administrative ingenuity.

When Nigeria returned to democratic governance in 1999, those who witnessed this epoch-making event had high hopes for the nation. Following many years of military tyranny and open unapologetic display of callousness, the citizens of the nation had high hopes that a new era had come.

In the past few decades, our democratic experimentation has not turned out as anticipated. Of course, no nation of the world practicing this system of government has continued to succeed without any significant challenges. Therefore, our experience cannot and or may not be different from the obvious.

In contemporary times, many Afrocentric scholars have opined that though our democratic journey cannot be compared with an advanced nation of the world like the United States of America, we must also take into consideration, the sacrifices made both by the leaders and followers of this the great nation which has propelled them to where they are today. Unarguably, More pitiable is our education sector with over two hundred years of uninterrupted democratic system of governance, American is one nation which can rightfully boast of crossing many rivers and beating all odds to stabilize its polity. Though one cannot conclude that it is all well, even as the nation continue to battle the issues of racism, gun violence and other avoidable acts of economic dislocation and system failure this country has remained on the side of progress.

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One thing for sure however is that in the midst of these challenges, America has not lost its focus but remained resolute on the initial pragmatic philosophy of the nation's founding fathers. This gesture is reflected on each and every American who knows the value of dying for his or her country.

Interestingly, in the aftermath of the liberation of Nigeria from shackles of colonial subjugation, our founding fathers had a well cut out reliable ideology for this nation. Though many historians can also submit with unshakable evidences that the emergence of this country was a marriage of inconvenience, the general consensus of our nationalists then was to build a corporate nation where our multifaceted and heterogeneous

like this, we must not please. Nigeria is sick. For those who care to know, our country is in the intensive healthcare unit with little chance of surviving. Aside the issue of insecurity as a result of activities of insurgents, bandits, armed robbers and kidnappers, our educational sector has completely failed not forgetting the elliptic healthcare system in the country.

More pitiable is our education sector which for the past decade has remained in complete comatose. Yet, in the midst of this debacle, the political class unperturbed about the plight of the common man conducted party primaries to solidify their selfish interest. Many of us are today very concerned about unfolding developments in Nigeria. This is because, the handwriting on the wall is indicative of the fact that the nation is nose-diving into a failed state. Just imagine, a few days ago, innocent worshipers were murdered in Owo in Ondo State for no justifiable reasons. Whether we like it or not, the souls of these innocent ones will continue to hunt this country until the perpetrators of these dastard acts are apprehended and brought to face the full weight of the law. Most significantly, this nation will not know peace until the needful is done towards protecting the remaining of us from harm.

Though since the advent of the present democratic dispensation, Nigeria has continued to lose hundreds of thousands of its citizens, the killing of innocent women and children in cool blood by blood thirsty marauders in Owo is an unspeakable act of inhumanity ever imagined in most recent times. The bottom line in all this development is that we cannot continue like this, we must not please.

View Point

Andrew Bogoro: A blooming candle in the wind

By BULUS GAMBO, Bogoro

THOUGH death is one experience all mortals must taste, it is always logically accepted as conscientious providence that the transition of a believer to the great beyond is a tremendous gain to the entire body of Christ. In fact, the Holy Bible in a more definitive term is clearer on this premise to die in Christ is gain. While knowing too well that losing a loved one in the family humanly speaking is quite traumatic and excruciating, many deceased's relations are usually comforted over this inevitable situation when their loved ones though no longer around with them lived a life worthy of emulation in every ramification.

Such soul lifting testimonies filled the air last Thursday, the 16th February 2023 during the funeral service of Barrister Andrew Elias Bogoro which was held at the Church of Christ in Nations (COCIN) Local Church Council (LCC) Gwarrangah in Bogoro Local Government Area of Bauchi State. As individuals who graced this solemn gathering took turns to share their memorable experiences when they came in contact with the deceased, it eventually became quite obvious that it is not how long a man lives on earth that matters, but how well. Their testimonies encapsulated the mere fact that the late Barrister Andrew Bogoro lived a short but impactful life which was beneficial to humanity.

I can still recall with great nostalgia that on the New Year's eve, we exchanged some text messages with Prof. Suleiman Bogoro where he informed me that his brother Andrew had been hospitalized after a surgery and he on that fateful day, had breezed into town to see him before proceeding to honor an invitation by Vwang community in Vom, Jos South Local Government Area of Plateau State. Despite this disturbing message; we had all hoped that the deceased would survive the surgery and have more fruitful years ahead, not knowing that God had a different plan for him all together.

Against our collective anticipation as humans, in the early hours of 5th February 2023, it pleased our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ to take Andrew away from this sinful world to that beautiful heavenly mansion to spend eternity with him. As a promising young man who contributed greatly to the upliftment of his community, Andrew Bogoro was respected by all who knew him.

Speaking during the funeral service, President of the Church of Christ in Nations (COCIN), Dr. Amos Mohzo appreciated the former Executive Secretary of TETfund, Prof. Suleiman Bogoro for helping humanity the best he was doing noting that the Professor's kind gesture has continued to baffle many citizens of the nation.

According to him, even the trees around the people of God can testify of the good works of the



Late Andrew Bogoro



Former TETfund Executive Secretary, Prof. Bogoro with Clergy conducting the grave site rites

former TETfund Executive Secretary to humanity adding that the church which his deceased brother is laid for the rites was the handwork of the professor.

The COCIN president then prayed the deceased brother of Prof. Bogoro to find eternal rest in heaven and urged Christians while alive to continue to be their brother's keeper in this life.

Also speaking, the Executive Governor of Bauchi State, Senator Bala Mohammed noted that he holds in high esteem, Prof. Suleiman Bogoro and is saddened by the demise of Barrister Andrew Bogoro. The Governor prayed for the repose of the soul of the deceased in the bosom of the Lord.

Both the Vice Chancellors of University of Jos, Professor

Ishaya Tanko and that of Karl Kumm University, Prof. Nanven Gambo in their separate remarks also expressed great sadness over the unfortunate incident that enveloped the family.

The Vice Chancellor of Karl Kumm University disclosed that the entire management of the institution were in Bogoro to condole the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the great institution following the death of his younger brother.

Prof. Gambo explained that though he did not have the opportunity to meet the deceased before his demise, the testimonies which herald his death have clearly revealed the personality of the deceased as a loving and caring father and friend whose interest was to better the lot of humanity.

The Vice Chancellor of Karl Kumm University thanked God for the memorable life the deceased lived in Christ and urged christians to always be prepared for death which usually comes unannounced.

In his contribution, the Plateau Head of Service and National President of GOSA, Engineer Sunday Hyat, the death of Barrister Andrew Bogoro came as a rude shock to many and prayed God in His infinite mercy to continue to comfort the entire family over this great loss.

Others who spoke at the service including the Sum Pyem, Gindiri, His Highness, Charles Mato who represented the Miskaham Mwaghavul, His Royal Highness John Hirse the Sarkin Gubgu Gwarrangah, Dadi Nabasu, member representing Bogoro at the Bauchi State House of Assembly, Hon. Musa Nakwada, all prayed God to grant the deceased eternal rest.

In his sermon, Rev. Alexander Usman Maisamari who took his text from Psalm 46:1 admonished all Christians to live a righteous life knowing too well that death will surely come on everyone as there is a time to be born and a time to die.

Barrister Andrew Elias Bogoro was born on the 20th May 1966 at

1993 and 1996. Not satisfied with the Post-Graduate Diploma (PGD) and Master of Business Administration (BAM) which he obtained from ATBU Bauchi, he subsequently enrolled as an undergraduate at the University of Jos to read Law. Upon completion of his programme in 2004, Andrew after he was called to bar obtained a Master's Degree in the University of Jos in 2006.

The late Andrew commenced his PhD programme in Law at the Nasarawa State University, Keffi in 2018 and was about commencing his thesis when he was called to glory. In 2011, Barrister Andrew joined the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR) where he worked and rose to the rank of Senior Research Fellow until his resignation in 2022. As a Research Fellow, Andrew wrote several research papers while at IPCR and some of them have been published in reputable academic journals.

Andrew, a devout Christian was baptized in COCIN Church in 1982 and remained a dedicated member serving in different arms of the church until his painful exit.

In his tribute to his deceased younger brother, Prof. Suleiman Elias Bogoro noted that "Like a blooming candle in the wind, the Lord took you away from us at a time you were aglow with confidence that you are with our heavenly father. Those were your words in your residence in Abuja less than two weeks to your transition to glory in the early hours of Sunday February 5th at JUTH in Jos. As I left you, I realized you were fully prepared for your final journey on earth.

For me, you were the angel in the family. Each time I talked with you, I always admired your exemplary sobriety, calmness and contentment. Each time you met me, you were always appreciating me for things I might have done for you more than 20 to 30 years ago. You were never avaricious.

Little wonder, you were recently quoted as saying you are planning to go for training as an evangelist, most likely after you have completed your PhD programme in Law at Nasarawa State University, Keffi. Each time I saw you, you reminded me of our late Dad who lived most of his adult life and also died a Sunday school teacher, eventually inside COCIN church, Yelwa on 5th February 2023.

Although you wanted to take after Baba, God has decided to grant you rest. When we told Mama about your, she asked about your children, Ngabchong and Amanda and of course your wife. On behalf of Mama who is 94 years this year, we thank you for your exemplary life-style and we wish to tell you we and your wife and children will miss you most.

Adieu my beloved brother. May the Lord provide for us and grant us what we shall use to stand for and support your family."

The late Barrister Andrew Elias Bogoro is survived by his wife, two children, mother, brothers, uncles and several other well-wishers too numerous to mention. Good bye our brother till we meet to part no more.



Last minute campaigns as Lalong appoints new PLASU VC

Finally after months of series of inter-state campaigns by Presidential contestants, coupled with a current biting economy marred by cash scarcity caused by CBN's Naira redesign policy, Nigeria is just days away from its Presidential and National Houses of Assembly General elections, billed to take place this week on Saturday February 25, 2023.

Days to the elections, Plateau Governor Simon Bako Lalong who is also the Senatorial Candidate of the Southern Zone, and the Campaign Director General (DG) of his party, the All Progressives Congress (APC) was on his toes to meet up the last minute preparations for the elections with his heavy work load at his constituency, state and federal level.

As such, last week, aside shuttling in between states to join the Tinubu/Shettima



Campaign train, the Governor as Party Leader of his state also spearheaded the APC Zonal Governorship campaign rallies that attracted party stakeholders, candidates vying for different posts, and party loyalists.

Lalong was able to attend the last lap of the Zonal APC campaigns that took place simultaneously starting from the Central, to the Northern and Southern Zones.

At all the forums, the Governor alongside key party stakeholders like Deputy House of Representatives Speaker, Rt. Hon. Ahmed Idris Wase, Member representing Pankshin Kanke Kanam Constituency, Rt. Hon. Yusuf Gagdi, Deputy Governor, Prof. Sonni Gwanle Tyoden, Party Chairman Hon. Rufus Bature, Speaker Plateau House of Assembly, Rt. Hon. Yakubu Sanda, among others called for support for the Governorship Candidate Dr. Nentawe Yilwatda and his running mate, Pam Bot-Mang urging the people to ensure they equally vote the Presidential Candidate Asiwaju Bola Tinubu and his running mate, Kashim Shettima to make Plateau remain in mainstream politics at the National level.

At the various zonal rallies, decampers from other parties were received into the APC fold, as last minute campaigns continues.

After the Zonal rallies, the Governor also embarked on campaigns for his senatorial bid by holding consultative meetings with party key players at the Southern Zone where he promised to give the people quality development-oriented leadership if voted into power.

Aside paying homage to traditional rulers, the Governor also attended a mass to pray for a peaceful conduct of the elections and submit his political ambition and aspirations to God

The Governor equally did a major appointment which was announced on February 2023 in a statement signed by his Director of Press and Public Affairs, Dr. Makut Simon Macham. He appointed a new Vice Chancellor (VC) for the Plateau State University by approving Prof. Bernard Malau Matur to replace the outgoing VC Prof. Yohanna Izam.

He appreciated Izam, whose tenure ends on Tuesday 21st February for setting structures for the university to stand on a solid ground, with numerous enviable development strides that has made the state owned institution to stand tall among its peers.

Lalong also approved legal legislative structures for the renaming of the College of Arts, Science, and Technology Kurgwi into the Ignatius Longjan Polytechnic in honour of the Late State Deputy Governor.

Another Press statement from Government coffers indicated that President Muhammadu Buhari is expected to visit Plateau state to Commission the British American Junction Flyover/ Road linking JUTH which is at asphalt level of completion, including other numerous projects executed by the Lalong led administration.

Owing to his many political caps, Lalong as DG of the APC PCC is not only leading the team, but is among party big wigs that are performing the grand finale of the APC Presidential Campaign Rally in Lagos state on Tuesday February 21, 2023 to woo support of Lagosians for the Tinubu/Shettima Presidential bid.



News

NIPSS recommendation, strategies will fast-track industrialization- Osinbajo

RECOMMENDATIONS and strategies by the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies would serve a roadmap to fast-track the process of industrialization in Nigeria, Vice President, Yemi Osibanjo has said.

Osinbajo stated this on Monday at the inauguration of the Senior Executive Course 45 of the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies NIPSS, Kuru in Jos.

The formal inauguration of the 92 nominees for the

From DUMAH RANDONG, Vom

Senior Executive Course 45 marks the beginning of their eleven months of study at the Nigeria's apex policy making institution.

The Vice President who was Special Guest at the inaugural ceremony said records of the institute and the combined efforts of the participants' contributions and recommendations have gradually found their way into the heart of government.

Represented by the Plateau State Deputy Governor, Professor Sonni Tyoden, Osinbajo said President Muhammadu Buhari recently inaugurated two different committees to assist and guide the institute in carrying out its mandate and ensure workable recommendation were realised at the end of this year's programme.

Governor Simon Lalong who was also represented by the state Deputy Governor,

Professor Sonni Tyoden, while congratulating the participants for being worthy to be selected, said the study may not be easy but believed that they were prepared and ready to add value to governance in Nigeria.

Earlier, Director General of NIPSS, Professor Ayo Omotayo said participants were drawn from the federal and state civil service, the military, police, para-military organizations as well as professional bodies and the private sector.

He noted that the participants were carefully selected based on merit to study on the theme: "Industrialization, Climate Change Energy and Security in Nigeria: Issues, Challenges and Prospects." They were expected to present their findings to the president at the end of the programme.

The Gbong Gwom, Jos, Jacob Gyang Buba and other notable dignitaries were also present at the event.



Osinbajo

APC guber candidate vows to eliminate corruption

From ABBAS GUNGURA, Bauchi

awarding to any bidder" Adding that the era of family and friends in the affairs of the state resources will be over and would no longer be business as usual.

"We'll ensure equitable distribution of resources, government positions as well as projects across all 20 local government area councils.

"We'll provide an enabling environment for every individual to contribute his quarter to the development of the state.

The APC gubernatorial candidate also pledged to address the problem of out-of-school children, revitalise agriculture and empower small and medium enterprises as well as youth and women.

The colourful rally attracted hundreds of party supporters and, APC stalwarts, thrilling solidarity songs from



Bala musicians and singers as well as the unveiling of the party candidates vying for political offices by the gubernatorial candidate Rtd Air Mashall Sadique Abubakar.

Sports

What FSG staying could mean for Liverpool

JOHN Henry has dropped a bombshell by revealing Fenway Sports Group (FSG) has no plans to sell Liverpool, so what does that mean for the Reds?

Goal said that, Liverpool owner John Henry had been thought to be willing to sell the Reds but has now announced that it's investment he's after, rather than a sale.

FSG claimed in November 2022 it would "consider new shareholders", which had prompted speculation there could be a takeover at Anfield.

Yet a sale is now very much off the table, so what does it mean for the club, manager Jurgen Klopp, potential transfer targets and the future? **GOAL** takes a look...

Borussia Dortmund starlet Jude Bellingham is expected to have his pick of top sides this summer after becoming a vital player for club and country at the grand old age of 19.

Liverpool are set to battle the likes of Manchester City and Real Madrid for Bellingham's signature and have already made the midfielder their top summer target.

Yet the Reds will be well aware that Bellingham will not come cheap. Liverpool will likely have to break their transfer record and make the midfielder their highest-paid player if they are to bring him to Anfield.

The money will obviously be an issue, particularly if investment is not forthcoming, and the big questions fans will be asking is whether FSG are willing to fund a big-money move for Bellingham in the summer.

Liverpool are also in the midst of a difficult campaign both at home and abroad. Failure to qualify for next season's Champions League will impact the club financially and on a sporting level.

The news that FSG are not selling up will be met with frustration by some sections of the Liverpool support.



Fans have been angered during FSG's reign by hikes in ticket prices, a failed attempt to trademark the name 'Liverpool' and the decision to furlough non-playing staff during the Covid-19 pandemic. That decision came just six weeks after Liverpool announced pre-tax profits of £42 million and was very swiftly reversed.

There was also the European Super League fiasco which brought another U-turn from Liverpool after players and supporters made it clear they were completely against the idea.

There's no doubting that FSG have done a lot for the Merseysiders, but the team is

struggling on the pitch which will leave many fans wanting serious investment in the summer to strengthen the squad.

FSG have long wanted to redevelop Anfield and are not far off seeing their plans realised.

Work on the new Anfield Road End Stand began in 2021 and remains on track to be completed in time for the new 2023-24 season.

FSG's redevelopment plan will see the famous old ground's capacity rise by 7,000 to 61,000 spectators, making it the fifth-biggest stadium in England and the third largest in the Premier League.

Liverpool's owners have made mistakes during their tenure but their work to redevelop the ground certainly shows plenty of ambition.

It will also have attracted jealous glances from neighbours Manchester United who are eager to see their dilapidated Old Trafford redeveloped.

Given FSG are still rooting around for fresh investment in the club, it won't fill people associated with Liverpool with confidence that their will be funds available to keep everyone happy.

If the Reds don't show ambition in the summer, or simply aren't able to because their hands are tied by financial constraints, that could provoke an exodus - especially if they fail to qualify for the Champions League.

Although he signed a new contract last summer, Mohamed Salah's future is still fairly

uncertain, while other such as Luis Diaz and Ibrahima Konate could be tempted away by big-money offers from elsewhere.

Jurgen Klopp's future at Liverpool is, of course, secure with the manager having signed a new contract in 2022 that runs until 2026.

The Reds boss has recently opened up on his decision to stay and made it clear he wants to oversee a rebuilding process at Anfield.

Part of the process will involve finding a new sporting director to replace Julian Ward, who announced in November he would be stepping down at the end of the season, much to the surprise of the club.

Klopp will obviously need help rebuilding the squad but it's not clear yet who will replace Edwards and who will choose the next sporting director. Will Klopp have the final say or will FSG make the appointment?

Liverpool may not be up for sale but bitter rivals Manchester United have been the subject of takeover bids in a move which could see the Glazer family depart Old Trafford.

The Reds have enjoyed great success under FSG, winning the Premier League, FA Cup, Champions League and Club World Cup, while the Red Devils are without a major trophy since 2017 and haven't been crowned champions of England for almost a decade.

Yet any takeover at Old Trafford could bring fresh investment in a bid to see United restored to the top of English football once more.

Liverpool certainly won't enjoy seeing the Red Devils enjoying life at the top of the table once again and will be well aware that manager Erik ten Hag already has the team moving in the right direction on the pitch.

The Reds managed to beat United to Cody Gakpo in the January window but may need significant investment to compete with their fierce rivals if new owners are installed at Old Trafford.



Sports

Murray beats Sonogo at Qatar open



Murray

ANDY Murray saved three match points and won a final-set tie-break to beat Lorenzo Sonogo 4-6 6-1 7-6 (7-4) in the first round of the Qatar Open.

The Briton lost his opening service game to love as Sonogo went on to claim the first set before Murray raced through the second to level the match.

Murray saved three break points when 4-5 down in the decider and then came from 3-0 down in the tie-break to win.

"It was really tough," 35-year-old Murray told Amazon Prime.

"We've never played or practised against each other. I didn't know exactly how the match was going to go and took a while to get used to his game.

"He's a very aggressive player and takes a lot of chances, plays high-risk tennis.

"He rolled the dice at the end and it looked like he had the momentum and then, thankfully in the mid-part of that tie-break, he made a couple of mistakes and I managed to turn it around."

Murray was playing his first

match since being beaten by Roberto Bautista Agut in the third round of the Australian Open in January.

Sonogo, 27, quickly took the initiative by taking the first game on Murray's serve and the Italian went on to take the opening set without facing a break point.

Murray, who is 70th in the men's rankings, quickly addressed that in the second set as he took it in dominant fashion against a player ranked one place lower than him.

Both players held their serve in the decider to take the match into a dramatic third-

set tie-break, which Murray won to set up a second-round tie against Alexander Zverev.

"He [Zverev] was one of the top players in the world and had a bad injury at the French Open last year and is just coming back from that," added Murray, who won in Doha in 2008 and 2009.

"He's going to be improving every week just now. He's not quite back at the level he was but injuries take time.

"Hopefully, I can keep building on this one."

Britain's Liam Broady also progressed to the second round by beating Ukraine's Oleksii Krutykh 6-0 4-6 7-6 (7-2).

Rahm destined for golfing greatness

IN a sport notorious for offering very few guarantees, it still feels fair to bet that Spain's Jon Rahm is destined for golfing greatness.

With his thrilling victory at the Genesis Invitational in Los Angeles, the 28-year-old claimed his 10th PGA Tour win to nudge ahead of his late, great compatriot Severiano Ballesteros.

Of course, in different times Ballesteros had far fewer

opportunities for success on the American circuit, but Rahm's current rate of progress is astonishing and even earning comparisons with 15-times major winner Tiger Woods.

"He is a spectacular golfer," said Max Homa after being beaten into second place by the Basque golfer at famed Riviera on Sunday.

"I would say other than

Tiger, he's the most consistent player I've seen. I've known him since college and he's been like this since then, number one amateur in the world, number one player in the world, all the accolades."

This was Rahm's fifth win in his past nine starts; his third victory from his most recent half dozen events. He has

banked prize money of nearly \$10m in 2023 alone and is currently 93 under par for the still fledgling year.

The revamped world rankings are in a state of flux but there can be no arguing with his return to the top of the tree, succeeding Rory McIlroy and then Scottie Scheffler - whose reign after winning in Phoenix has been limited to a single week.

Djokovic equals Graf's record

NOVAK Djokovic has equalled Steffi Graf's record for most weeks as world number one after starting his 377th week at the top of the men's rankings.

The 35-year-old Serb has held the record for the most weeks as men's world number one since March 2021.

On Monday, he moved level with Germany's Graf, who first rose to the top of the women's rankings in 1987.

Djokovic first became world number one in 2011 and like Graf, is a 22-time Grand Slam champion.

After first becoming world number one, Graf remained at the top of the rankings for 186 consecutive weeks, a women's record that was later tied by Serena Williams in 2016.

Djokovic's longest continuous run at the top was 122 weeks between July 2014 and November 2016. For that

record, he trails Roger Federer (237 weeks), Jimmy Connors (160) and Ivan Lendl (157).

Djokovic returned to the world number one position for the first time in six months by winning the Australian Open in

January. He is currently on 7,070 points, 590 more than Spain's Carlos Alcaraz.

The men's world rankings were introduced in 1973, while the women's rankings were introduced two years later.



Djokovic returned to the world number one position after winning the Australian Open in January Djokovic returned to the world number one position after winning the Australian Open in January

Argentina Open: Norrie loses Spain's Alcaraz final

BRITISH number one Cameron Norrie suffered a straight-set defeat by Carlos Alcaraz in the final of the Argentina Open on Sunday.

The 27-year-old missed out on a fifth ATP title after losing 6-3 7-5 to the top seed in Buenos Aires.

Alcaraz, 19, was playing in his first tournament of the year following a four-month injury lay-off.

It is a seventh title for Spain's world number two, who won the US Open in 2022.

"I felt very comfortable playing the final," Alcaraz said post-match.

"I knew that it was going to be really difficult. I started really focused on what I had to do at the beginning - my game, my level. This is the level that I have to play in finals."

Norrie took a 3-2 lead in the opening set but Alcaraz went on a seven-game winning run to give himself a commanding 6-3 3-0 lead.

The Spaniard failed to serve for the match as Norrie levelled the second-set score at 5-5, but held serve in the next game before breaking the Briton to triumph.

Alcaraz is the first Spanish player to win the title in Buenos Aires since Rafael Nadal in 2015.

Medvedev beats Sinner to win Rotterdam Open

Russia's former world number one Daniil Medvedev

won a 16th career title with victory over Italy's Jannik Sinner in the final of the Rotterdam Open on Sunday.

The 27-year-old, who won the US Open in 2021, beat Sinner 5-7 6-2 6-2 to claim a first ATP crown since winning at the Vienna Open in October.

Medvedev, currently 11th in the world, will now return to the top 10 of the ATP rankings on Monday.

Despite dropping a hard-fought opening set, Medvedev forced the world number 14 into making early

errors in the second and broke twice in the deciding third set

"It was a very tough match, I would say mentally for both of us, I think," he said.

"Jannik was on top of me, especially in the first part of the first set. I managed to come back into the set even though, in my opinion, I was playing worse than him.

"I just managed to continue pushing him mentally down until the end of the match."



Cameron Norrie has won four of the nine tour-level finals he has played

"The guy's incredible," Homa added. "Rory, Jon and Scottie are kind of in a league of their own at times and it's just our job to go catch them."

Rahm was vexed at the end of last year when his November victory at the DP World Tour Championship in Dubai, his second victory in three weeks, did not result in a climb from number five in the world.

The man who is back on top of the standings knows exactly what he is achieving at the moment.

"I don't need a ranking to tell me - to validate anything," he said.

As for comparisons with Woods - who had won 39 PGA Tour events, including eight majors, by the time he turned 28 on 30 December 2003 - the thoughtful Rahm again knows where he sits in the pecking order.

"How many times had he done this at the age of 28?" Rahm observed. "It's absolutely incredible.

"I've been able to match a very small aspect of it and hopefully I can keep doing a lot of great things this year to put my name up there to one of his years.

"But the fact that he was able to do it year after year after year including swing changes and golf style changes, it's pretty remarkable.

"I've been able to appreciate Tiger for a very long time and admire him, but it's taken me six years as a professional to get to this point."

Sports



Plateau United loss to Gombe United 3-2

NPFL - Gombe beat Plateau United

THE two concluding fixtures of the Nigeria Premier Football League, (NPFL), matchday nine were played in Gombe and Jos respectively on Monday.

Newsnow said that, both Group A games ended in home wins for the host teams as the week long fixtures failed to produce any away victory.

Monday's fixtures were the last set for games before the league proceeds on a three-week break as a result of the General Elections.

At the Pantami Stadium, it ended in a five-goal thriller as a last minute penalty from Mahamadou Souley made the difference in a derby clash between Gombe United and Plateau United.

Anayor Ogbonna put the hosts in front in the 12th minute but Albert Hilary restored parity for the Peace Boys six minutes later. However, Rahman Olarewaju put the Savannah Scorpions in front in the 23rd minute as they ended

the first half with a goal advantage.

But it took the visitors just two minutes into the second half for Moses Adikwu to net the equaliser that unsettled the home fans.

While it initially appeared Plateau United had picked their second consecutive away point on the road, Mahamadou Souley converted a 95th minute spotkick to move the hosts to sixth spot on the group while Plateau United remained in fourth, one point behind Akwa United.

Elsewhere at the New Jos Stadium, Nasarawa United halted their floundering performance with a resurgent 2-0 win over Remo Stars.

For the Sky Blue Stars, it was another bad day as they are now without a win after four consecutive matches.

Joshua John gave the hosts the lead in the eighth minute before Emmanuel Ogbole's strike at the cusp of the first half sealed all three points for the struggling club in Jos.

With the win, the Solid Miners have moved from 10th to the eighth position on the league table while Remo Stars remained in fifth, a point adrift of the last super six qualification spot.

Atsu's body returned to Ghana

THE body of footballer Christian Atsu, who died after an earthquake hit Turkey two weeks ago, has been returned to his native Ghana.

BBC SPORT said that, the flight landed in Accra late on Sunday, and his coffin was carried away by members of Ghana's armed forces.

Atsu was found dead on Saturday under his home in southern Turkey. He had been playing for the Hatayspor club.

The winger played 65 times for Ghana's national team and helped his side reach the 2015 Africa Cup of Nations final.

The 31-year-old also played for Premier League sides Everton and Newcastle.

Speaking at Kotoka airport in the capital Accra, Ghana's Vice-

President Mahamudu Bawumia said: "We hoped against hope, every day that passed, we prayed and prayed. But alas, when he was found, he was no more."

Mr Bawumia added the late footballer was much loved and would be sorely missed. "It is a painful loss, a very painful one."

He promised Atsu would be given a "befitting" burial.

Atsu had been missing since the devastating 7.8 magnitude earthquake on 6 February caused the collapse of his apartment in Antakya, in hard-hit Hatay province.

The Hatayspor club initially reported the player had been rescued with injuries, but this position was later changed - and his agent confirmed the news of his death on Twitter on Saturday.

Over 44,000 people are confirmed to have lost their lives across south-eastern Turkey and northern Syria.

The footballer's remains were

Bosso allays fears despite Flying Eagles' loss



Flying Eagles

is to reach the World Cup."

Nigeria's next opponent is hosts Egypt. The young Pharaohs drew their opening game against Mozambique, and they will desperate to get a win. Bosso is aware of the threat they pose.

"The next match is very difficult, especially since it will be against Egypt, the host country," Bosso added.

"Egypt's draw against

Mozambique will make it more difficult because their desire to win will multiply."

Nigeria have to win their next game against Egypt to stand a good chance of qualifying from their group. The Flying Eagles will square off against the hosts on Wednesday.

The competition also serves as a qualification process for the World Cup. Only the four semi-finalists will earn World Cup tickets.



Atsu

accompanied from Turkey by his family and Ghana's ambassador to Turkey, Francisca Ashietey-Odunton, Ghana's foreign ministry said.

The plane landed at 19:25 GMT in Accra where it was met by relatives, government officials and representatives of the Ghana Football Association.

The coffin was later due to be transported to a military hospital morgue.

On Saturday, his wife Marie-Claire Rupio and their three children joined fans marking a minute's silence in Newcastle, before the side's Premier League match against Liverpool. Atsu played for Newcastle from 2016 to 2021.

Atsu's face was shown on the big screen and away fans chanted "you'll never walk alone", before breaking into applause.

On Sunday, Ghana captain Mohammed Kudus paid tribute to his former teammate after scoring for Dutch side Ajax, removing his jersey to reveal a white shirt with "RIP Atsu" written on it.

Meanwhile, the charity Arms Around The Child hailed Atsu - who has been an ambassador for the organisation since 2016 - and said he had been the "main benefactor" of a school in Ghana that supports abandoned children, orphans, the chronically ill and those rescued from trafficking.

Atsu, they said, was "a young boy from poverty in Ghana who followed his dreams and used his talent and platform to help others".

Liverpool's owner says he is not selling the club



Henry and Klopp

LIVERPOOL owner John Henry says he is not selling the Premier League club, but does expect some investment.

BBC SPORT said that, Henry's Fenway Sports Group (FSG), which bought Liverpool in 2010, said in November it "would consider new shareholders" in the Reds.

FSG chairman Tom Werner later said

the club's owners were "exploring a sale" but could continue their "stewardship for quite a while".

"Are we selling LFC? No," Henry told the Boston Sports Journal.

"Are talking with investors about LFC? Yes. Will something happen there? I believe so, but it won't be a sale."

The American was speaking in a question-and-answer session conducted over email.

FSG has been open to investment in Liverpool for several years, and has recently engaged Morgan Stanley and Goldman Sachs in that process.

"I know there has been a lot of conversation and quotes about

LFC, but I keep to the facts: we merely formalised an ongoing process," said Henry.

His comments were published prior to Liverpool facing Real Madrid in the first leg of their Champions League last-16 tie at Anfield on Tuesday.

The Reds go into the game eighth in the Premier League having won their past two matches.

FSG bought Liverpool in a £300m deal following the controversial tenure of former

owners Tom Hicks and George Gillett.

American basketball star LeBron James has been a part-owner of Liverpool since 2011 and has a 2% stake which cost him £4.7m.

He has since become a minor partner in FSG, which also owns baseball side Boston Red Sox.

In March 2021, RedBird Capital Partners, a private investment firm, bought a stake in FSG for about \$735m (£533m).

Osimhen names his football idol

NIGERIAN forward, Victor Osimhen, has named Chelsea legend, Didier Drogba, as his football hero.

The Super Eagles striker has garnered attention recently for his performance, winning various accolades and tallying a sizable amount of goals.

Meanwhile, 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 Soccernet.ng that the Nigerian is on "the same level" as the Ivorian great.

However, this might be the consequence of Osimhen



Osimhen

emulating his idol for years, much as Kylian Mbappé admires Portuguese and former Real Madrid forward, Cristiano Ronaldo.

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.

Drogba scored 302 goals in 688 appearances across his tenure at clubs around Europe. During his time at Chelsea, he scored 164 goals in 381 games for the Blues.

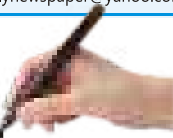
At the age of 24, Victor Osimhen presently has 85 club goals, and he still has plenty of time to surpass his idol's total.



Quest



writer



FRAGMENT

"Let me re-assure Nigerians, that strengthening our economy, enhancing security and blockage of leakages associated with illicit financial flows remain top priority of our administration. And I shall remain committed to my oath of protecting and advancing the interest of Nigerians and the nation, at all times. In the last quarter of 2022, I authorised the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) to redesign the N200, N500, and N1000 Nigerian banknotes. For a smooth transition, I similarly approved that the redesigned banknotes should circulate concurrently with the old bank notes, till 31 January 2023, before the old notes, cease to be legal tender."

President Muhammadu Buhari

PRESIDENT MUHAMMADU BUHARI

'Vote for candidates of your choice'

MY Dear Compatriots, I have found it necessary to address you today, on the state of the nation and to render account on the efforts of our administration to sustain and strengthen our economy, enhance the fight against corruption and sustain our gains in the fight against terrorism and insecurity which has, undoubtedly, been impacted by several internal and external factors.

Particularly, I am addressing you, as your democratically elected President, to identify with you and express my sympathy, over the difficulties being experienced as we continue the implementation of new monetary policies, aimed at boosting our economy and tightening of the loopholes associated with money laundering.

Let me re-assure Nigerians, that strengthening our economy, enhancing security and blockage of leakages associated with illicit financial flows remain top priority of our administration. And I shall remain committed to my oath of protecting and advancing the interest of Nigerians and the nation, at all times.

In the last quarter of 2022, I authorised the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) to redesign the N200, N500, and N1000 Nigerian banknotes.

For a smooth transition, I similarly approved that the redesigned banknotes should circulate concurrently with the old bank notes, till 31 January 2023, before the old notes, cease to be legal tender.

In appreciation of the systemic and human difficulties encountered during implementation and in response to the appeal of all citizens, an extension of ten days was authorized till 10th February, 2023 for the completion of the process. All these activities are being carried out within the ambit of the Constitution, the relevant law under the CBN Act 2007 and in line with global best practices.

Fellow citizens, while I seek your understanding and patience during this transient phase of implementation, I feel obliged to avail you a few critical points underpinning the policy decision. These include:



Mamood

a. The need to restore the statutory ability of the CBN to keep a firm control over money in circulation. In 2015 when this administration commenced its first term, Currency-in-Circulation was only N1.4trillion.

b. The proportion of currency outside banks grew from 78% in 2015 to 85% in 2022. As of October 2022, therefore, currency in circulation had risen to N3.23 trillion; out of which only N500 billion was within the Banking System while N2.7 trillion remained permanently outside the system; thereby distorting the financial policy and efficient management of inflation;

c. The huge volume of Bank Notes outside the banking system has proven to be practically unavailable for economic activities and by implication, retard the attainment of potential economic growth;

d. Economic growth projections make it imperative for government to aim at expanding financial inclusion in the country by reducing the number of the unbanked population; and

e. Given the prevailing security situation across the country, which keeps improving, it also becomes compelling for

government to deepen its continuing support for security agencies to successfully combat banditry and ransom-taking in Nigeria

Notwithstanding the initial setbacks experienced, the evaluation and feedback mechanism set up has revealed that gains have emerged from the policy initiative.

I have been reliably informed that since the commencement of this program, about N2.1 trillion out of the banknotes previously held outside the banking system, had been successfully retrieved.

This represents about 80% of such funds. In the short to medium and long terms, therefore, it is expected that there would be:

a. A strengthening of our macro economic parameters;

b. Reduction of broad money supply leading to a deceleration of the velocity of money in the economy which should result in less pressures on domestic prices;

c. Lowering of Inflation as a result of the accompanying decline in money supply that will slow the pace of inflation;

d. Collapse of Illegal Economic Activities which would help to stem corruption and acquisition of money through illegal ways;

e. Exchange Rate stability;
f. Availability of Easy Loans and lowering of interest rates; and
g. Greater visibility and transparency of our financial actions translating to efficient enforcement of our anti- money laundering legislations.

11. I am not unaware of the obstacles placed on the path of innocent Nigerians by unscrupulous officials in the banking industry, entrusted with the process of implementation of the new monetary policy. I am deeply pained and sincerely sympathise with you all, over these unintended outcomes.

To stem this tide, I have directed the CBN to deploy all legitimate resources and legal means to ensure that our citizens are adequately educated on the policy; enjoy easy access to cash withdrawal through availability of appropriate amount of currency; and ability to make deposits.

I have similarly directed that the CBN should intensify collaboration with anti-corruption agencies, so as to ensure that any institution or person(s) found to have impeded or sabotaged the implementation should be made to bear the full weight of the law.

During the extended phase of the deadline for currency swap, I listened to invaluable pieces of advice from well meaning citizens and institutions across the nation.

I similarly consulted widely with representatives of the State Governors as well as the Council of State. Above all, as an administration that respects the rule of law, I have also noted that the subject matter is before the courts of our land and some pronouncements have been made.

To further ease the supply pressures particularly to our citizens, I have given approval to the CBN that the old N200 bank notes be released back into circulation and that it should also be allowed to circulate as legal tender with the new N200, N500, and N1000 banknotes for 60 days from February 10, 2023 to April 10 2023 when the old N200 notes ceases to be legal tender.

In line with Section 20(3) of the

CBN Act 2007, all existing old N1000 and N500 notes remain redeemable at the CBN and designated points.

Considering the health of our economy and the legacy we must bequeath to the next administration and future generations of Nigerians, I admonish every citizen to strive harder to make their deposits by taking advantage of the platforms and windows being provided by the CBN.

Let me assure Nigerians that our administration will continue to assess the implementation with a view to ensuring that Nigerians are not unnecessarily burdened. In this regard, the CBN shall ensure that new notes become more available and accessible to our citizens through the banks.

I wish to once more appeal for your understanding till we overcome this difficult transient phase within the shortest possible time.

Fellow citizens, on the 25th of February, 2023 the nation would be electing a new President and National Assembly members. I am aware that this new monetary policy has also contributed immensely to the minimization of the influence of money in politics.

This is a positive departure from the past and represents a bold legacy step by this administration, towards laying a strong foundation for free and fair elections.

I urge every citizen therefore, to go out to vote for their candidates of choice without fear, because security shall be provided and your vote shall count.

I however admonish you to eschew violence and avoid actions capable of disrupting the electoral processes. I wish us all a successful General Elections.

Thank you for listening. God bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

National Broadcast By His Excellency Muhammadu Buhari, President, Federal Republic of Nigeria on the challenges of the currency swap and state of the nation, on 16th February, 2023.