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The road to 2023 guber elections

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The 2023 gubernatorial elections was held on Saturday across 28 out of 36 Nigerian states, concurrent with elections to every state house of assembly, three weeks after the presidential election and National Assembly elections. While in Imo State, Kogi State, and Bayelsa State elections will be held on the 11th November. The last regular gubernatorial elections for all states were in 2019. All states have a two term limit for Governors which makes 18 incumbent governors ineligible for re-election.



CBN cashless policy and Supreme Court ruling

Nigerians of late are going through tougher times as the struggle for non-acceptance of old naira notes and scarcity of the new notes heightened, making life unbearable for many citizens in the country.

Stakeholders in the financial sector and banks were divided over the re-issuance of old naira notes following the Supreme Court Judgment which extends their legal tender status till December 31, 2023.

Unfortunately, banks did not commence re-issuance of the old notes as directed saying until they were given further directives by Central Bank of Nigeria as they wouldn't do anything contrary. Stakeholders on their part including bank customers, financial experts and business owners called for immediate re-issuance of the old notes in compliance with Supreme Court but it seems to have fallen on deaf ears.

However, this policy did not adequately carry the interest of Nigerians as it leaves many people confused and sad that their expectations have been dashed. Introduction of the policy was without proper awareness on the part of the masses which made it very difficult for them to comprehend.

The Supreme Court order is a welcome development as this will cushion the effects of the difficulties of the masses. Due to the hardship being faced, most Nigerians recently have decided to trade by barter in a bid to survive as the new notes were not available for easy transaction. It has been quite frustrating that most banks refused to pay the new naira notes. They always complain of not having cash in their banks to meet the needs of customers. Sadly, the new policy has adversely affected businesses because Nigeria is not yet a cashless society because for many years people have always done their businesses using cash. The time frame given was unrealistic which made it difficult for Nigerians to have deposited the old notes in the bank.

The online transaction is not completely new in Nigeria but people have not fully adopted it. So long as the people want to engage in the cashless transaction, they encounter several problems. There are many cases where people are on banks' website and social handles complaining of unfulfilled transactions.

At last, the long-awaited directive from CBN to commercial banks and other financial institutions in the country to continue to accept and transact business using old N200, N500 and N1000 notes till December 31, 2023 in line with recent Supreme Court ruling is harkened to.

In a statement signed by Central Bank's Acting Director, Corporate Communications, Dr Isa Abdulmumin, he disclosed that he had met with the Bankers' Committee and directed that the old naira notes remain legal tender alongside the redesigned notes. Similarly, the President through his spokesperson Mallam Garba Shehu said there was no need for CBN to have waited for directive from the president but to comply with the apex court's order.

It is our desire that doing this will help revive economic activities. The concern here is that most of the old notes that were dispensed in circulation are mutilated notes. In spite of these confirmed statements, some Nigerians are rejecting the old notes for fear of a repeat of what had happened.

We solicit that the regulatory body should come to the aid of the citizens, particularly those at the rural areas and petty traders who have no bank accounts for such transactions by ensuring that the new and old notes are within the reach of everyone.

Nigerians elect 28 governors, 993 state lawmakers yesterday

The governorship and the state houses of assembly elections took place yesterday across Nigeria.

Also, election was held in Esan Central/Esan West/Igbeben Federal Constituency election halted during the 25 February Presidential and National Assembly polls as a result of the omission of the Labour Party logo and that of the Enugu East Senatorial District which was shifted following the killing of Oyibo Chukwu, the party's candidate in the district, on 22 February.

The state elections, the second phase of the 2023 General Elections, was initially scheduled for 11 March but deferred by one week following a Court of Appeal order granting the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) permission to reconfigure the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) for the exercise. This followed the 3 March ex-parte order of the court given to some political parties to inspect materials used for the presidential poll whose results they are challenging.

Unlike last month's elections held in 470 constituencies comprising 109 senatorial districts, 360 federal constituencies and one presidential, yesterday's exercise was held in 1,021 state constituencies - 28 governorship and 993 assembly seats.

The governorship elections was held in 28 out of the 36 states of the federation.

However, elections was not conducted in Anambra, Bayelsa, Edo, Ekiti, Imo, Kogi, Ondo and Osun States where off-cycle polls were held at different times. The electoral calendars of those states were altered due to judicial pronouncements. INEC has already scheduled the elections in Kogi, Bayelsa and Imo for November.

The exercise was not also held in the FCT (Abuja) because it has neither a governor nor an assembly. The territory is administered by the federal government through a ministry and the National Assembly where it is represented by a Senator and two members in the House of

Representatives.

All 18 registered political parties are fielding over 400 governorship candidates in the 28 states in yesterday's contest. The breakdown shows that Abia, Akwa Ibom, Plateau and Taraba States have the highest number of candidates with 18 each followed closely by Delta, Enugu, Kano, Rivers and Sokoto with 17 candidates each. Cross River and Yobe have the least number of candidates with 11 each.

The candidates emerged from the various primary elections of their parties held last year while the court also replaced or confirmed the disputed ones following litigations trailing their primaries. One candidate, Uche Ikonne, the PDP candidate in Abia, who died in January, was replaced.

Some of the governorship candidates are running for their second and final term of four years. The 11 states where incumbent governors are seeking re-election are Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Kwara, Lagos, Nasarawa, Ogun, Oyo, Yobe and Zamfara.

The governors of the other 17 states are rounding off their tenures on 29 May and so new governors must emerge from today's exercise. The states are Abia, Akwa Ibom, Benue, Cross River, Delta, Ebonyi, Enugu, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Niger, Plateau, Rivers, Sokoto, and Taraba states.

Barring any hitches or judicial pronouncements, winners of yesterday's governorship elections, whether old or new, will be inaugurated on 29 May.

A total of 10,231 candidates are vying for 993 seats in the 36 state houses of assembly. Kano and Lagos have the highest number of seats in their legislatures with 40 followed by Katsina with 34, Oyo and Rivers with 32, Bauchi and Kaduna with 31, and Benue, Jigawa, Anambra and Sokoto with 30. Thirteen states have 24 members each. Elected lawmakers, who are usually inaugurated in June in Nigeria have a limitless term.

Unlike in the previous contests where two parties were dominant in

most of the states, yesterday's elections may be different. With the impressive outing and upset created by some parties, notably the LP, SDP and NNPP, in the recent presidential and National Assembly elections, there are indications that they may also grab some seats in the state legislatures. Analysts say the battleground states are Lagos, Oyo, Kano, Adamawa, Nasarawa, Bauchi, Delta and Rivers.

Although INEC registered a total of 93.5 million Nigerians for the 2023 General Elections, only 87 million of them collected their Permanent Voters Cards (PVC). Yet not all of them participated in yesterday's polls because elections were not conducted in the FCT. Also, there are 176,846 polling units (PUs) in the country where the voters exercised their franchise but elections did not hold in FCT's 1,328 PUs.

INEC also accredited a total of 229 observer groups comprising 196 domestic and 33 international observers all of which were deployed 146,913 personnel for the elections. Media organisations and other relevant bodies were also accredited to observe the elections.

The military, police and other security agencies have similarly deployed their personnel in the states to secure the process while the EFCC deployed its operatives to ensure the integrity of the elections.

INEC says it was ready for the polls. It assured that it will avoid the pitfalls identified in the elections held three weeks ago.

"We must work harder to overcome the challenges experienced in the last presidential election. Nothing else will be acceptable to Nigerians," its chairman, Mahmood Yakubu, said.

It is not, however, clear if the electoral body was going to transmit the results of the polls electronically.

PREMIUM TIMES in partnership with the Centre for Journalism Innovation and Development (CJID) has deployed its journalists in all parts of the country to observe the elections and will bring you live updates of the process.

W/African elders urge INEC, to abide by laws

The West Africa Elders Forum (WAEF) has urged the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), security operatives, and other stakeholders to act in accordance with the laws of the land in yesterday's elections.

WAEF made the call in Abuja in a statement jointly signed by its leader of 2023 Election Mission to Nigeria and former President of Ghana, John Mahama; and the Convener of the Forum and former President Goodluck Jonathan.

The forum urged all stakeholders to exercise their constitutional responsibilities in a manner that would promote peace and protect the integrity of the electoral process in the gubernatorial and state assembly elections.

He urged INEC to address the challenges identified by various stakeholders after the Feb. 25 presidential elections, as a means of protecting the integrity of the electoral process.

"This election is another opportunity for INEC to rebuild the trust and confidence of the citizens and show its commitment to credible polls for a better democratic outcome in Nigeria and our sub-region.

There is, therefore, the need for the electoral body to take into account the complaints raised by the different stakeholders, including

local and international observers, during the presidential and national assembly elections and make a commitment to resolving those challenges.

We reiterate our earlier statement made after the Presidential and National Assembly elections that Nigeria is a major stakeholder in the sustainability of democracy in West Africa.

"The responsibility of maintaining the nation's thriving democracy and the general peace of our sub-region rests on all our shoulders, especially on the credibility of INEC and other election management bodies in West Africa, during elections."

WAEF urged Nigerians to be law-abiding and desist from acts that could mar yesterday's elections results and threaten the peace of the country and the sub-region.

"The WAEF Election Mission to Nigeria, 2023, once again commends Nigerians for their calmness and maturity during the last Presidential and National Assembly elections.

The forum praised the presidential candidates in the last elections for heeding the elders' advice to tow the path of peace and follow legal means to address the grievances observed during the last elections.

The mission urged political parties, candidates, and their supporters to carry out their civic responsibilities within the ambit of the law and refrain

from acts that could lead to violence and the breakdown of law and order during and after the polls.

The elders called on security authorities to be alert to their responsibilities and check the unlawful activities of those seeking to disrupt the elections.

"Ahead of this second round of elections, we have observed the untoward actions of some party loyalists in some states meant to induce voter suppression by intimidating the citizens and discouraging them from exercising their civic rights.

"This same trend was noticeable three weeks ago during the presidential and national assembly elections.

"The citizens overcame these challenges and were able to cast their ballots and we are hopeful that, this time also, they have casted their votes in defence of the nation's democracy."

WAEF also commends Nigerians for their peaceful disposition and faith in the nation's democracy, in spite of some of the challenges of the process.

"We wish Nigeria a peaceful poll and urge everyone to be patriotic and law-abiding in their activities and desist from acts that could mar the elections and threaten the peace of the country and the sub-region."(NAN)



With
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On Sunday



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"At the end of yesterday's polls, it cannot be said that we don't need each other. In nation building, there is no tribe that can go it alone. There is no leader who does not need the other tribe to help build a nation. Anything contrary can only spell doom for the nation."

Awon omo onirohin yen da?

BEFORE you start to ask questions, let me give the details of the meaning of the headline before my neck is severed from the head. I must admit, I am not a native speaker of Yoruba. The above simply means: *Where are these press boys?* I decided to use it deliberately as a result of a discussion which came up a couple of years ago on what recently took place between Femi Fani Kayode and Eyo Charles of the Daily Trust some years back and what it has continued to be.

Years ago, while serving as chairman, Nigeria Union of Journalists, Plateau State Council; an incident had taken place in which some of our members were disparaged in the course of carrying out an assignment. That incident didn't go down well with us; as we kicked and told those who cared to listen that we were no body's boys. And still are not.

Reporters get invited to functions often times for various reasons; while it is true that some have ended on happy notes; a number of issues may terminate the briefing. Sadly, the character of whether of the story can be imputed from how a reporter is treated during the briefings.

Those who do not respect journalists have their reasons. The Nigerian journalists are not saints; they have their challenges as well as short comings. If they exhibit them in the course of their duty, they do so because they too can make mistakes. In the course of practice, I have seen reporters go on assignments and are quickly labeled: 'Hungry', 'they have come to eat' and such unprintable names that may reduce their stations to nothing. Reporters don't need to be fed with angles to stories, if the doors are closed to a reporter's probing; there are a hundred ways that a rat could escape from a hole if cornered.

In these parts, whether the reporter is treated shabbily has been as a result of how Nigerians generally perceive their work. If an organizer of any event thinks reporters do not deserve some modicum of respect for what they do, the tendency to come to the event with a blotted ego may not be ruled out.

Some press briefings have ended on a rancorous note, no thanks to the organizers and or how reporters behave at the venue. But above all, how they are treated by the organizers sometimes determines the colour and strength of the story.

If the organizer has respect for the profession and its practitioners, he will be circumspect. Some of the organizers have assumptions already conscripted in their minds; and always assume reporters should be given the prerogative or even suggest how they must think and ask questions; but hardly realizing 'journalists don't have

constituencies' and the minds of their own.

Truth, as has been pointed elsewhere, 'a journalist is always after what is hidden. He doesn't care about all the peripheral points on your paper (that you have jotted or may have wanted to share during the press briefing). And, for him, to get those hidden points, he must cast you down to be modest in speech, away from your predictions'.

Recall the altercations between Femi Fani Kayode, a former minister during Obasanjo's regime and a Reporter with the Daily Trust. It is said that: 'A good lawyer does the' above 'too'. It is surprising Fani Kayode doesn't know that with all his bragging as a lawyer. He was even lucky to meet with that gentle reporter'. He should have been reminded since August 20, 2020 when the incident took place that his 'heavy' knees were on the neck of the Daily Trust reporter which could not allow him breath properly.

Most times, people are not able to accept or even take half of the doses of the pills they give to others. In this circumstance, such people are 'always good advocates for' themselves 'and poor judges of others'. Have we not seen situations in which Femi Fani Kayode has harangued those not on the same page about certain issues?

It got me worried that the reporters sat as he berated their colleague during the briefing. None of them showed any sign that he was insulting all. The condemnations that have come in the wake of the altercations are enough to send a lesson to reporters as well as those who think reporters are toys that can be used to service them. This development cannot be anything but 'repulsive and unacceptable since there was nothing wrong with Journalist Eyo Charles wanting to know if the tour was an independent initiative or a sponsored one'.

Journalists all over the world as we know and are being reminded are 'saddled with the constitutional obligation of monitoring governance and holding the government accountable to the people should not be subjected to harassment in the course of duty. The former Minister had the option of not answering the question and the abuses were totally out of place in the context of the event'.

Now we know better, he has a 'short fuse' and does not suffer to understand others easily. He chose to disrespect the Daily Trust reporter; he didn't expect anyone would probe the tour of facilities he is said to have embarked to Cross River State. In the rollercoaster, we would not be wrong to insist that Kayode deserves to buy 'a long fuse for himself, instead of the present short fuse FFK must remove his big knee from the small



Yilwatda

neck of that Daily Trust journalist as the latter cannot breathe.'

Journalism is everything combined. If there is anyone who has always thought it is job for charlatans, such a person has not been involved in the trade-at best, he could have just started. It is no longer news that journalists the world over have been subjected to all manners of ill-treatments. Unfortunately, a number have had their lives snuffed out. It is true; there is no profession that does not have hazards associated with.

If the statistics are taken, you can be sure that the details will be scary as they could be able to ward off intending candidates who would have made a foray into it to change the society. This basically is the work of the reporter; anything other than this, the person would have ventured into a different vocation. Such a person should be told in the language he understands to look elsewhere; perhaps his livelihood may be somewhere.

Farooq Kperogi in more ways than one summed up the feelings of many reporters: 'Rude question? Well, there's no such thing as a "rude question" in journalism. A Chicago journalist and humorist by the name of Finley Peter Dunne once said, more than a century ago, that, "the job of the newspaper is to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable." In other words, journalists have no obligation to comfort the comfortable. Their duty is to afflict the comfortable or, if you like, to be "rude" to the comfortable.

'Asking questions that get a politician's dander up, that inflame a politician's passions, is a prized skill in journalism. Here's why: Politicians reveal the most headline-worthy information when reporters cause them to lose control of their emotions. Loss of emotional control forces them to

depart from their scripted, predictable, choreographed, and often mendacious and boring performances.

'Journalists who think the Daily Trust reporter's question to Fani-Kayode was "rude" and worthy of censure should go look for another job. They'd do well as publicists.

'Malcolm Muggeridge once said, "News is anything anybody wants to suppress; everything else is public relations." Many Nigerian "journalists" are actually public relations practitioners polluting a noble craft.

'Smart politicians know this. Instead of allowing themselves to be immobilized by impotent anger, they respond to high-pressure, "embarrassing" questions with poise, and disarm adversarial reporters with humility, grace, and gentleness'.

And now Tunde Rahman's view: 'Now, my take on what happened! Our journalists don't stand up for anything again, not even the ethics of their profession or their integrity if they have any. All the guys there should have risen in unison to condemn the bully. The reporter too allowed himself to be cowed to say sorry because he has not done any wrong. We should demand more from our reporters. But the journalism profession is endangered. The values are down. The journalists there must be blaming the Trust guy for spoiling their day because FFK may not drop again. We must all condemn FFK for his show of shame, intolerance and assault. But that's him for you. I congratulate the Trust for standing by their reporter. We must all rise to nail FFK'.

Let's get the election done with

The gubernatorial election held yesterday has come and gone with its troubles. It should have been done and dusted with since March 11, 2023, however for the court

which gave the INEC leave to recalibrate the BVAS machines, by now, governors where elections are meant to be held would have been known and waiting for inauguration.

Since the presidential election, it has been hell controlling the outbursts of youth on the new media. I have always maintained that if there is anything that would bring problem to Nigeria, it must be the usage of propaganda.

Without being controlled, every young man or woman has become uncontrollable. The spew propaganda as if it is going out of fashion. They attack each other with venom, as if there is no tomorrow.

At the end of yesterday's polls, it cannot be said that we don't need each other. In nation building, there is no tribe that can go it alone. There is no leader who does not need the other tribe to help build a nation. Anything contrary can only spell doom for the nation.

Therefore, what we are passing through in Nigeria cannot be isolated. We all need each other. In nation building, there is no place for tribal or religious biases. They kill and destroy initiative that would bring people under one umbrella.

The phase Nigeria is passing through is the most dangerous: Tribalism stifles development and weakens our togetherness as corporate citizens.

The fact that we have succeeded in the past using religion to win election should not be a yardstick to continue. The traditional and new media have helped amplify the development to mean that everything is okay and should be applauded to make that they have sympathy for win.

I have come to understand that if nations must come together, leaders and their followers must deal with their tribal inclinations. They must be told that these sentiments do not build; rather, they kill initiatives and hinder growth; in ways that we may not like.

To understand where we have been hit and are hemorrhaging, it is about time that we paid attention to dealing with tribal and religious tendencies. We can only get these behind us if all get a grasp of the concept of nation building and the contributions which should go with it.

As for me, I am aware of what I should do. My association with Dr. Nentawe Yilwatda Goshwe since 1983 cannot be sacrificed. I am stuck with what he can offer Plateau and its people. I don't begrudge anyone the choice they made yesterday. I wish Plateau State good luck.



Our eurocentric craze

ONE of the worst traits Nigerians possess is that they like copying anything European. It doesn't matter if what they're copying is wrong as far as its root can be traced to anything European. Take for instance, our dressing, we still hold in high esteem the European dress code. That is why formal dressing is nothing African. The only respect accorded African dressing is one day out of the 5 working days, for bankers which is Friday. What a shame!

The copy cats that we are saw prisoners in foreign films doing ass-down and we have joined them. We thought it was fashionable not realising that prisoners pull their trousers down, exposing their boxers because their trousers are usually short for them.

We like answering their names even when we can't pronounce them. A good example is my name which is spelt: Yvonne but in the pronunciation the 'y' is pronounced as 'ee' sound. But because it is alien to us, my name is one of the names that has suffered on the lips of my country men. I have been called Evon, Vonne, Ibon, Weavon, Iwon. This can be very annoying but do you blame them, it is not their language. It is a French name adopted by the English. If one was called Shitnaan, that could have been pronounced easily.

I once overheard a mother calling her daughter Charon instead of Sharon. My dad's name was James but my grandmother, his mother used to call him Zhemis. My sister Helen used to be called Helin, the intonation also very wrong making it sound very different from how the white men pronounce it.

Why go through all these troubles when you can easily name your child in your local dialect and save yourself the tongue twisting. A lot of humiliation can be avoided if we accord our local dialects half the respect we accord English. What is wrong with the name Naanzem, Zemyen, Kemi, Funke, Godiya, Simi, etc. These are beautiful names with beautiful meanings.

It is fashionable for us not to speak our local dialect or even understand it. But it is an offence to our ears for one to use the wrong English tenses when speaking. Meanwhile, we can comfortably murder our local dialect and laugh it off. As far as it is not English, we are ok.

On top of all this, we believe the ultimate achievement is to relocate one's family abroad to USA or Europe. Or to go to these countries and school. We see nothing good in

what is ours. That is why the horrid stories about Nigerians going overseas by crook or by chance still abound. Even their stories of woes in these countries is a disgrace to our claim as the giant of Africa.

One could say that these countries are developed. But when will we ever have the will to develop our country if our best hands are leaving the shores of our land in droves. Our case is so bad because those at the corridors of power think more of oiling their pockets than making the country better for all of us.

Another issue of grave concern is that of medical tourism. Our government and those at the helm of affairs and their family members fly abroad at the slightest hint of headache. This action, more than anything tells us that our government has no confidence in our health institutions. They know what they have deposited in Nigeria and what it translates to. Garbage in, garbage out. You can't give what you don't have.

One would think, since we idolise European way of doing things, we would emulate their way of doing things. For example, they are timely, orderly, keep their streets very neat. They frown at corruption, and expose crime instead of aiding it.

This is not to say the white man's society is without faults.. There are but they fight it collectively. They love their country and can die for it. They are our opposite.

They are not religious but try to do their best. . Nigerians on the other hand, are very religious, but the atrocities we commit in the dark, forgetting that God knows everything. He rewards us according to the cleanness of our hands.

More than ever before, the challenge of security has taken centre stage. Where the countries we are copying fight insecurity collectively, ours is handled with kid gloves. We are yet to prioritise security and spend more on the necessary gadgets. As far as security is concerned, we are sitting on time bomb. Our security outfits are yet to move ahead of our insurgents. Somehow, they beat them at the game.

Their institutions are strengthened but ours are still going in circles because of corruption and lack of political will. Nigerians need to change the way they do things in order to get it right. That also involves changing our mind-sets. The change begins

NEWS

Mutfwang/Piyo Campaign Council alerts supporters of duplicate Result Sheets

From Dorcas Pankyes, Abuja

THE Campaign Council of Mutfwang/ Piyo has confirmed that RESULT SHEETS delivered for the Governorship and House of Assembly election on Saturday, March 18, 2023 in some polling units of Jos North- North and Jos North- West are but duplicates rather than the original copies.

This was revealed in a statement by the Director, Directorate of Media and Publicity Mutfwang-Piyo Campaign Council, Plateau State, Yijab Abraham.

The Council hereby alerts INEC, security agencies, electorate, party faithful and lovers of the PDP to take note of this anomaly.

According to the statement, "It is glaring that the release of duplicates and hiding of original copies is a crude way to fill in fake numbers and frustrate the genuine aspiration of voters who have made up their minds to speak forcefully through the ballot on this election".

The statement explained that



Mutfwang

INEC has already committed itself to a fair, transparent and open conduct of the elections which will be in line with the electoral act and the wishes of the people. Anything less than this will be a threat to the credibility of the election, a dent on the image of INEC and a threat to the peace and

security of Plateau State.

It further explained that the Council will not tolerate the attempts to acquire victory through the backdoor.

We appeal to voters to remain highly vigilant to thwart desperate attempts at undermining the nation's democracy.

Chairman charges residents on peaceful conduct of election

From Dorcas Pankyes, Abuja

THE Executive Chairman of Karu LGA, Hon. James Thomas, has advised the people

of the LGA to conduct themselves peacefully before, during and after the Governorship and State House of Assembly elections

scheduled for Saturday 18th March, 2023.

This was contained in a statement signed by the Senoir Special Assistant on Media and Publicity to Karu LGA Chairman, Comrade Danbaba Uba Magaji Friday.

The Honourable Chairman said, there is no election that is worth the blood of any citizen, while democracy and good governance can only thrive when there is peace and peaceful coexistence.

According to the Chairman, political differences must never cause hate and chaos among the good people of Karu LGA and Nasarawa State. "We remain brothers and sisters in spite of our political differences."

The Hon. Chairman urged politicians and political parties, opinion leaders, traditional rulers and parents to caution their wards and youth, to shun violence and thuggery before, during and after the elections.

The Honourable Chairman also called on our religious leaders and everyone to pray for a peaceful and successful election in the state and Nigeria at large.



Sule

Industrialization is key to development

From Dorcas Pankyes, Abuja

THE Minister of State for Science, Technology and Innovation, Chief Henry Ikechukwu Ikoh has said that industrialization is key to job creation and economic development and growth of any nation.

Henry Ikoh said this during the inauguration of recruitment and selection of committee for the appointment of Directors-General of National Board of Technology Incubation (NBTI), Nigerian Natural Medicine Development Agency (NNMDA) and National Center for

Technology Management (NACETEM) in his office recently.

According to the minister, the selection process will be based on the laid down procedures for the appointment of Directors-General of the agencies, adding that the employment will be strictly on merit.

He further stated that the ministry will ensure that right people are appointed. He then charged the committee members to be committed and diligent in carrying out the assignment in order to move the agencies and the Federal Ministry of Science,

- minister

Technology and Innovation (FMSTI) to greater heights.

In his acceptance speech, the Chairman of the Committee, Engr. Baba Gana Ibrahim assured the Hon Minister that the committee will ensure that the right thing is done by exercising due process in the selection of the Directors-General.

To this end, he commended the minister for giving them the opportunity to serve the nation.

POLITICS

Former Speaker's aides blast detractors for allegations

From **ABBAS GUNGURA, Bauchi**

RELIABLE Aides to the former speaker, Hon. Yakubu Dogara representing Bogoro, Dass and Tafawa Balewa Federal Constituency, led by Hon. Ya'u Soja Dass, has berated former LG Chairman of Bogoro, Mr Iliya Habila, his Tafawa Balewa counterpart, Barr. Kefas Musa Magaji and others over their ungrateful comments against their principal that made headlines in various media.

Addressing journalists at the Bauchi NUJ state Secretariat, recently Hon. Ya'u Soja, said many of the people raising such allegations against the Speaker were the ones he assisted by making them what they are today.

Ya'u debunked the allegations that some of the former aides to Dogara have deserted him because of his political antics which is heating up the polity in the state.

"Those so-called former aides are disgruntled elements, some of whom were hangers-on, who the former Speaker, Rt. Hon. Dogara Yakubu has been helping for almost 20 years", he said.

The former aides were reacting to some allegations levelled against Yakubu Dogara by a former aide to the Bauchi State Governor, Barrister Kefas Musa Magaji and his cohorts during a press conference in Bauchi.

Ya'u who said they wouldn't have ordinary responded to the allegations, noted that it was necessary to address the question they raised in order to put the record straight.

Ya'u while stating that the allegations raised by Kefas Musa Magaji at a press conference on 14th March, 2023 were unfounded, adding that they are lies from the blues coming from someone nursing the pains of losing an election, and that it should not surprise any sensible person.

Ya'u said that the press conference by the so-called concerned Zaar and claimed ethnic groups of Tafawa Balewa and Bogoro Local Government Areas of Bauchi State was informed by the tears of Governor Bala after a series of failed media propaganda for what happened in his hometown, Duguri.

While advising members of the public not to take what he described as monumental lies with a pinch of salt, Hon Ya'u added that it is pertinent for them to ask some questions regarding the where about of Kefas Magaji and others when Governor Bala Mohammed constructed thousands of housing units and refused to allocate a single unit to Tafawa Balewa and Bogoro Local Governments.

"Why didn't they fight for Zaar land to get even a single unit? Where was Kefas Magaji when Bala Mohammed was busy developing Bununu area while no single project was allocated to Tafawa Balewa town and Sahn Gami land? Did he ever fight for any projects anywhere near Zaar land, and if he did, where are the projects? Let them name the projects", they demanded.

Ya'u Dass challenged Barr. Magaji and his co-travelers to tell Zaar people where Bala Mohammed got the billions he



Dogara

used to build the biggest private residence in Nigeria in Bauchi at the time he failed or refused to pay workers' salaries and pension since 2019.

While challenging Magaji and Habila to tell the people where their principal, Governor Bala Mohammed got the money he used in his failed presidential bid, Ya'u Dass also queried how the duo managed Bogoro and Tafawa Balewa funds when they served as chairmen.

"Let them tell Zaarland what happened to LGA funds under their watch as chairmen. Can they, in all honesty, render an account to our people? Are they not driven by fear of Rt. Hon. Dogara's assertion that anyone who has stolen LGA funds or state funds would be made to face the music when Air Marshall Sadiq Abubakar becomes governor? he asked.

"We call our people to ignore these characters that are known serial liars and can do anything to defend the crumbs they pick from Kaura's table against the larger interest of our people which Kaura is busy raping", Dogara's former aides said.

Ya'u who asserted that Kefas Magaji and Iliya Habila have

failed to defend Zaar's interest as highlighted above, lamented that they are busy defending Kaura.

He alleged that the duo "are Kaura's co-drifters having given him unfettered access to our LGA funds and are now dead-scared of any change of government that will expose their crime against our people".

"We have the records of their slyness while serving as Chairmen of Tafawa Balewa and Bogoro LGAs, and thankfully, it is before the EFCC too. We urge our people to ignore these characters who are prepared to sell our rights for a morsel of meal", Ya'u Dass pointed out.

"As a smart people, we must look at the direction Bauchi people are going and join in so that we don't waste our votes.

"As a people, we urge our Zaar brothers and sisters to invest our votes rather than waste them on Kaura whose ambition is already doomed if signals from other LGAs in Bauchi State are anything to go by. Let us invest our votes in Air Marshal Sadiq, the man who brought Air Force University to Bauchi State and more specifically, Tafawa Balewa", Hon Ya'u Dass said.

From **ANENE AIKE, Sokoto**

In order to ensure that the gubernatorial and Sokoto State Assembly are conducted conclusively, free fair and credibly, the Sokoto INEC big boss, Maj Gen Modibbo Alikali (rtd) said The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Sokoto State office has to be re-strategized.

In his remarks following the postponement of 11th March elections to Saturday, 18 March 2023 Modibbo who is the supervisory. National Commissioner of the Sokoto INEC disclosed this while stating that preparations by INEC with regard to the Elections were in top gear.

Modibbo was deployed to Sokoto from the commission's headquarters to assist the Administrative Secretary and Acting Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC) Barr. Hauwa Aliyu Kangiwa in the conduct of the forthcoming Governorship and State Assembly Elections.

Gen Modibbo said part of the preparations for the successful conduct of the elections is the engagement of various key stakeholders such as security agencies, political party leaders, civil society and media organizations in preparation for the elections.

He also stated that such engagements include INEC's conduct of a series of engagement meetings with Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES), party leaders, and media organizations with a view to analyzing the shortcomings as witnessed in that of Presidential and National Assembly Elections with a view to making correction.

He also posited that the National Commissioner and the management team of INEC Sokoto have also engaged the services of National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW), the management of NNPC Mega Station Sokoto, and some Independent Petroleum Marketers to ensure

Sokoto INEC set for governorship, assembly polls

Information and Culture all in order to avoid error repeating itself. The National Commissioner and the Acting Resident Electoral Commissioner, INEC Sokoto along with all stakeholders visited the Central Bank of Nigeria, Sokoto branch to inspect and sort out sensitive Election Materials for early distribution to LGAs.

Our correspondent also reports that ICCES members consisting all heads of the security agencies under the co-chair of the Commissioner of Police, CP Muhammad Usaini Gumel assured that the committee has deployed additional state-of-the-art anti-riot and crowd control equipment to checkmate political thuggery and related electoral offences on the election day.

The sensitization outreach was also organized on Saturday and Sunday the 11th and 12th of March, 2023, by the Department of Voter Education and Publicity, in collaboration with the National Orientation Agency (N.O.A), National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) and Federal Ministry of

Information and Culture all in order to avoid error repeating itself.

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Mahmood

REC warns staff against breach of electoral guide lines

From **TERESE TUHWA, Makurdi**

AHEAD of the Saturday March 18th, 2023 gubernatorial and state Houses of Assembly elections, the Benue State Resident Electoral Commissioner, Prof Samuel Egwu said any electoral officer that goes against provisions in the 2022 Electoral Law will be severely dealt with.

Professor Egwu who spoke during a stakeholders meeting with heads of security outfits, candidates of political parties, heads of political parties as well as civil society organisations at the Precious Event Centre Makurdi, the Benue State capital promised to ensure adequate logistical arrangement for a seamless and hitch-free polls.

The Resident Electoral Commissioner assured stakeholders during the meeting that any electoral officer who fails to comply with the INEC guidelines will be decisively dealt with.

In their contributions, the state Commissioner of Police Wale Abass who spoke on behalf of other security outfits

Presidential and National Assembly elections with a view to improving on areas where breaches were noticed in the forthcoming gubernatorial and House of Assembly polls.



Okoyo

He said, "We want to see how we can go about these elections that will be devoid of any acrimony, violence and rancour. These are the things we want to discuss so that anywhere you feel we should improve on the last elections with the security architecture in place, then, we should be able to do, so that this particular one will be hitch-free".

"On our part, we are going to provide adequate security that will secure everybody coming out to vote without being harassed and abused". Abass said

While appreciating some of the candidates for finding time to attend the meeting, the state police boss also urged political stakeholders to go back and talk to their foot soldiers of the need to maintain peace and allow a crisis free elections.

Earlier in his address, the REC in the state had explained that the delay in the commencement of polls in the last Presidential and National Assembly elections was largely caused by some logistics problems. And promised that the commission

has taken due diligence of the challenges and promised to improve in the coming Gubernatorial and House of Assembly elections.

Prof. Egwu said "We have learnt our lessons in the previous elections and we are going to deliver on the early opening of polls", Egwu assured.

While promising that the commission will strictly follow the electoral guidelines, he advised politicians to cooperate with the commission to deliver a free, fair and credible elections.

Some of the participants including Prof Bem Angwe, a gubernatorial candidate of the NNPP and his counterpart, Rev. Fr. Hyacinth Alia of the All Progressives Congress (APC) and Engr. Roseline Ada Chenge all appreciated INEC and promised to tow the path of peace.

They called on INEC to improve on its logistics so that the elections will commence early to avoid late closure of polls.

POLITICS

The voting process went well, seamless -Botmang

By LUCY CHINDABA

HON. Pam Botmang the deputy governorship candidate for the All Progressive Congress for Plateau State has commended people of the state for a peaceful conduct during the governorship and state assembly elections. Responding to questions by journalists after casting his votes Hon Botmang said, "this is Yingi polling unit of Giring Ward in Jos South Local Government Council of Plateau State, Hon. Pam Botmang Plateau State deputy governorship candidate for the All Progressive Congress (APC)

After casting his vote spoke to newsmen and gave an overview of the exercise, said the voting process was going on smoothly, peacefully at the polling unit, the people re well organized and orderly.

He said the process is going on seamlessly as he was able to do the accreditation and vote within a very short time as the BVAS machine is working very well.

On the turnout he said at the moment it is moderate but that more people are being expected since there is still time for them to come out and exercise their civic responsibility.

He said, "we're still within time so we expect that people will come out and vote and elect their leaders that will govern them in



Botmang

the next four years."

Asked why there was wild jubilation when he arrived the polling unit, Botmang said, "this is my polling unit, my home, they are all my brothers and sisters, my fathers and mothers, we are from the same place, we reside at home, so we know each other. I have been with them, I communicate with them. And so they have decided

that if we go there they will have one of their own there and that is why they are excited."

He added that, as for the state, they have gone round the state and have spoken, presented their manifesto so they believe the people of Plateau will give them their vote because they desire a better Plateau, and we will give them a better Plateau.

Tinubu votes amid orderly arrangement, heavy security

PRESIDENT-ELECT, Sen. Bola Tinubu voted at 9.35 a.m. at Unit 085, Ward 03, Alausa, Ikeja amid tight security in the Governorship/National Assembly elections on Saturday.

Tinubu was accompanied by his wife, Oluremi and the Lagos Market leader, Chief FolashadeOjo.

Mr Dele Alake, his Media Spokesman, told journalists after he voted that the president-elect will not be able to grant interviews till later in the evening.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that barriers were used to demarcate the unit into sections and designated areas for voters, journalists and security

operatives which is different from the previous situation.

NAN recalls that during the Presidential and National Assembly elections on Feb. 25, hundreds of journalists and party supporters struggled to capture Tinubu's arrival and voting.

INEC officials were early and had completely set up before 8 a.m.

At exactly 8.30 a.m, Miss AdebolaAdeniyi, the Assistant Presiding Officer III, made announcement, showed empty ballot boxes and the BVAS Machine and read out the election guidelines.

She said 324 voters registered in the unit.

A combined team of Police, Nigeria Security and Civil

Defence Corps, DSS, FRSC and Nigeria Immigration Service were on ground.

The heads of the various security organisations,

including the commissioner of police inspected and patrolled the area before the arrival and departure of the president-elect.

Youth voter apathy in Rayfield

By YVONNE ISHOLA

A large chunk of the youth population in Rayfield, St George's Primary School Polling Unit were absent for the Governorship and House of Assembly elections that took place yesterday, 19 March 2023.

A few youth interviewed explained that they have no confidence in the electoral process since they sacrificed for the Presidential election and they were disappointed by the turn of events. Olajide Shola pointedly told our reporter to tell the government to choose the governor for them because he believes his vote and that of his contemporaries won't count at the long run.

A young girl who pleads anonymity said the Presidential elections left a bad taste in her mouth. "I spoke up against queue jumping and an elderly woman fought me because she was guilty. It was the grace of God that we didn't fight," she said.

The lady above complained of disorderliness, apart from queue jumping which made them to spend about 4 hours in an exercise that should have been done with in less than one hour. She said she was hungry, thirsty, and very tired at the end of the day. On top of all this, her candidate was denied his win, she alleged.

Sumdi Karmi corroborated the stories of the other 2 youth above. And emphasised that until he is sure his vote will count, he will not vote again.

It was glaring that youth decided to stay off the polling unit as those who came out to vote were middle aged people. Even the aged number dwindled compared to the Presidential election. The women

By JIDAUNA DARING & HOSEA NYAMLONG

INDPENDENT National Electoral Commission (INEC), has been applauded for the recently conducted Governorship and State House of Assembly election for the early distribution of both sensitive and non-sensitive materials to the polling units on time.

Our correspondents who went round the Jos metropolis reported that some of the voters who spoke with the correspondents gave the commendation shortly after casting their vote yesterday in Jos, the Plateau State capital. The electorates said that there was a remarkable improvement, looking at some of the challenges experienced during the recent Presidential and National Assembly elections in the country.

The electorates also called on INEC to sustain this tempo in subsequent elections as the electoral umpire.

They equally called on INEC to always keep whatever promise or assurance given to Nigerians, when it comes to announcing the election results at any given election time.

Our correspondents report that some voters adjudged the voting process as a very peaceful one.

SUNDAY STANDARD reports that the new baby polling units have continued to experience low turnout of electorate who

INEC commended for governorship, state assembly elections



Yakubu

are supposed to vote in such polling units, saying that since it is a new place, some voters experienced difficulty in locating the place to enable them exercise their franchise.

In some polling units visited by our correspondents, the INEC officials lamented the poor turnout of voters, saying that the electorates were coming to cast their votes after 30 to 40 minutes, stressing that despite the delay in the coming out by the voters to cast their vote, it also rests squarely on them to wait till the official closing time of 4 pm.

Our correspondents who went around town, report that the places visited include;

Nassarawa, AngwanRukuba, Fudawa village, Tina Junction, DusteUku, Ukadun, Odus area, Yan Taya, Mai Chibi street, Tafewa Balewa street, Zololo street, Cemetary street, Bauchi Road, AngwanRogo, Government College Jos, Rock Haven, Utan, G.S.S Kabong, RCM Primary School Kabong, St.Luke's Primary School West of Mines Jos and JentaAdamu, among others.

In most of the places visited, only few people were seen around the polling units, although in some cases voting started very early so voters were said to have come and cast their votes already.

had their queue separate from that of the younger women which seemed endless but they joined the same queue during yesterday's elections. Only the male elderly persons formed a separate queue. An elderly man who refused to grant an interview spent his time

complaining about how votes don't count. He said he commits everything to God to deal with whoever plays with our votes. The INEC officials turned deaf ears and allowed him to run with his litany of complaints.

At Sot of Jos South LGC, a

massive turn out of voters was observed. Saratu Gyang Dadereng wife of former Chairman of Jos South, scored INEC officials high for commencing the election on time. She also commented the people and security operatives for a hitch-free election.

Ishaku, Manu, gov'ship candidates describe polls as peaceful

From VICTOR GAI, Jalingo

TARABA State governor Darius Ishaku, his deputy Haruna Manu and governorship candidates if the PDP and APC have described as satisfactory the governorship and House of Assembly elections in Taraba.

Governor Ishaku who voted at his polling unit, Kofar Sarkin Jukun 004 in Takum LGA, said he was satisfied with the process. He also admitted that electoral materials came early and the voting process started early which was a significant improvement from the presidential election.

Also, the deputy governor, Haruna Manu after casting his vote at Kofar Manu polling unit in Gassol LGA, described the election as peaceful and called on the people to be law abiding and politicians to accept the outcome of the elections in good faith.

On his own part, the gubernatorial candidate of the All Progressives Congress in Taraba state, Senator Emmanuel Bwacha, has lauded the INEC on the improvement in the polls.

After casting his votes in Mararaba in Donga LGA, Bwacha

pointed that INEC has adjusted and made laudable improvement as compared to the Presidential and National Assembly elections.

"We can see visible efforts on the part of INEC compared to the last elections. Except for the issues with the House of Assembly ballot which we were told will be worked on. That aside everything is good and the atmosphere is calm," he said.

He also commended the peaceful conduct of the electorate in his polling unit in Yaba Ward and urged them to maintain same spirit even after the polls.

For the PDP governorship candidate, Col. Agbu Kefas, the ongoing electoral process in the state was peaceful and calm.

He commended the Independent National Electoral Commission for meeting the expectations of the electorate.

Kefas disclosed this shortly after casting his vote at his polling unit, at Ebenezer primary school in Wukari Local Government Area.

"I am very grateful to God Almighty and INEC because you can see that it did not take me up to two minutes to be accredited and to vote which shows that INEC prepared very well for this

election.

"So far the exercise is going on very well, you can see that the atmosphere is calm, everybody is going about casting his or her vote and nobody is quarrelling. I thank the Governor, INEC, and Security agencies for that.

"I'm very much impressed, you can see the time is some minutes past 10 am and the voting process is going on smoothly," he stated.

Meanwhile, isolated violence was experienced in southern Taraba senatorial district.

Some hoodlums had in the early hours of today, Saturday, destroyed electoral materials in Akate Ward in Donga Local Government Area of Taraba State thereby putting the entire process in jeopardy in the area.

An eyewitness who narrated the experience to journalists on election coverage, disclosed that the hoodlums raided the ward as early as 6am today, shooting sporadically, destroying election materials and causing voters and election materials to scamper for safety.

He added that it took the intervention of soldiers for calm to be restored in the area.

But elections continued in other parts of the area and was described as generally peaceful.



SUNDAY POLITICS

As Governorship, state assembly elections record low turnout

As the governorship and state assembly elections get underway, Nigerians have come out to exercise their franchise. Although the presidential and national assembly elections have come and gone, the outcome has however left its footprints as observed throughout the country in a very low turnout for the governorship and state assembly elections with complaints from most quarters that what they voted for was not what they were given. SUNDAY STANDARD reporters went out to monitor the election and their report is presented as follows:

FRANCA Adidi in Shendam reports that there was very low turnout of voters, especially the Igbo people who had come out en masse during the recent presidential/national assembly elections. Even when people appealed to them to come out and vote. She said, it is an already known fact that the Igbos don't like coming out for elections, so it was not surprising to see them in their numbers because they had come out to support their own fellow Igbo brother Peter Obi. She explained that even though the election is going on smoothly in Shendam, the turnout is discouraging and pathetically very poor. A lot of people said they were disappointed in the last presidential elections and with the way politics is turning out, the anxiety is no longer there. The voters also complained that they are politically dissatisfied and disappointed as a result of which most of the polling centers are looking dry with just few people coming out to vote.

At the Gold and Base Polling Unit 030, Lucy Chindaba reports that as early as 7:23am the INEC officials had arrived the venue and were putting things in order. The INEC polling officer 3 Mr Bawa Daniel Danlami addressed the electorate and said that even though they were early, voting would only start by 8:30am.

He assured all that all the challenges experienced during the recent Presidential/National Assembly elections have been taken care of. He showed them the 2 ballot boxes, one for the governorship and the other for the state House of Assembly which were both empty. He appealed to them to cooperate and be orderly and to vote with just one finger so as not to make their vote invalid. Speaking with one of the electorates, Rejoice Godfrey ... who came all the way from Eto Baba to cast her vote said she had registered in Gold and Base before she went to live in Eto Baba so had to come to the area and spend the night there so she can cast her vote. Asked why she had to come all the way, she said it is her civic responsibility so she has come exercise it because she has a say in what happens in the future, in what happens to her and her children.

Matthew Bawul in Qua'anPan Local Government Area said materials arrived a bit late at about 9:30 am in some polling units and voting started immediately. The voter turnout was however low unlike that of the Presidential and National



Assembly elections of February 25.

Peter Title who monitored the election in Mangu Local Government Area of Plateau State reports that the turnout was impressive coupled with the fact that all those in the diaspora who registered in their villages returned to ensure they exercise their franchise. He further reports that at Government Secondary school (GSS), Mangu Halle Polling Unit, electorate were seen in their numbers and on the queue going through accreditation while others who had finished the processes were waiting to cast their vote.

At the EKAN Primary School Polling Unit, it was observed that the process was orderly as voters were throwing banter at each other while waiting to do the needful. It was the same story at the AngwanSarki Polling Unit in Mangu town. At Panyam, the turnout was high too at AngwanSarki and Galadima Polling Unit where voters of all ages were seen being accredited and voting as well.

At Pushit, the village of the incumbent deputy governor, all Polling Units were full to the brim with voters doing the business of the day.

A renowned business man, John Tokpe, based in Mangu, gave an overview of the exercise saying the turnout

was impressive but not as high as that of the Presidential and National Assembly elections held on the 25th February, 2023.

According to him, some certain tribes most especially Igbos were lackadaisical in coming out to exercise their rights and attributed that to their usual attitude to elections. Israel Lar reporting from Jos North, Polling Unit 50 (Furaka village) Polling Unit 25 (Ubandoma 1), Polling Unit 52 (Udanda 2), says at this polling unit, apart from recording low turnout of voters, the ballot papers brought were duplicate.

In Angwan Ciroma 1 and 2 (Haske Quarters) voting went as expected but attendance of voters can not be compared to the presidential election held on 25th February, 2023 as people still have their reservations about the election result. Some eligible voters especially the youths were seen playing football with the women washing clothes and doing sanitation or house chores. On the whole, there was voter apathy among the people compared with what transpired during the presidential/national assembly elections held recently.

Palang Kasmi reports that there was Voter Apathy as Photos/Video of Youth Leaders Ringing a bell from house to house to call on people to come out and vote @ Polling unit

UbyelGoro 091, Down Base, Jos North LGA Plateau State, in the March 18, 2023 Governorship/State Houses of elections is trending.

Our correspondent Celestine Atsaar who monitored the election in Shendam and Mikang Local Government Areas reports that the exercise in both governments was peaceful but witnessed a very low turnout of voters which most of those interviewed attributed it to the lack of confidence in the electoral umpire INEC, a fallout of the last presidential and national assembly elections. He reports that in most of the polling units visited, it was confirmed that the electoral materials arrived on time for the election.

Meanwhile, the assistant National Secretary of All Progressives Congress Barr. Festus Fuanter. has commended the electorate for their peaceful conduct during the elections and urged them to continue doing so in subsequent elections. Member representing Shendam constituency in the Plateau State House of Assembly, Hon Livinus Kwapfuan, has also commended the peaceful conduct of the election in which he attributed the peaceful conduct of the elections to an aggressive campaign of awareness on the need for

peace during elections by the Lalong administration in the state. He then applauded the electorate for choosing the path of peace during the election.

In general, the election in the two local governments was peaceful and devoid of discord.

FwenjiGo'ar who monitored the election in Rayfield Jos, said the voter turnout at Old Government House 2, Rayfield, Jos for the gubernatorial and House of Assembly elections was nothing compared to that of the Presidential and National Assembly elections.

As early as 7.30 am, INEC officials, security and other personnel were on ground and ready to commence the process of voting, which they said would be start by 8.30 am. Speaking with a couple of voters, party agents and others present, they bore their minds on what they thought about the elections.

Lilian Yepwi, a voter who assisted in coordination of voters and ensuring a seamless and rancour free process, said voter turnout was quite low. She said the gubernatorial election is equally important, and people should ensure they turn up and vote. That this election is closer to the people. She advised that those who don't turn out victorious this time around should not feel bad. That everything is about times and seasons.

SUNDAY PEOPLE

GOVERNORSHIP/STATES ASSEMBLY ELECTION 2023

The Governorship and State House of Assembly, conducted by INEC in 28 states of the federation took place yesterday in Plateau State as captured by The Nigeria Standard photographer



Plateau State Governor, Rt. Hon. Simon Bako Lalong (CON) voting at his Nyak P. U. Shendam LGA



PDP Candidate for Governorship, Barr. Caleb Mutfwang (right) and his wife after voting at Ampang Polling Unit, Mangu LGA



APC Candidate for Governorship, Prof. Nentawe Yilwatda Goshwe and his wife casting their ballot at Dungung 1 Polling Unit, Kanke LGA



Labour Party, Candidate for Governorship, Dr. Patrick Sunday Dakum voting at his Adeng Ward Jibilik Polling unit, Pankshin LGA



Eligible voters queuing up to exercise their franchise at the Zawan polling Unit of Jos South LGA



House of Reps Member Elect, PKK, Rt. Hon. Yusuf Adamu Gagdi (right) casting his ballot at Bakin Kasuwa, Gum-Gagdi Polling Unit, Kanam LGA



The Nigeria Standard reporters, Mr. Fwenji Goar and Hosea Nyanmlong monitoring the exercise



Candidate of the APC for State Assembly Barkin Ladi Constituency, Hon. Dickson Y. Chollom being captured by INEC BVAS

PHOTOS: DANLADI DUK

The state Executive Governor Simon Bako Lalong has again made history by signing into law the Plateau State Traditional Rulers Renumeration Bill, 2020. Recall that the bill which was passed by the Plateau State House of Assembly some time last year provides for the appointment, salaries and allowances of the traditional rulers while also outlining the categorization of their selection process which must be in line with the native law and custom of the people.

For Governor Lalong, the coming of this law into effect will no doubt put an end to some of the challenges that have hitherto hampered the smooth operation of the traditional institution in Plateau State. Therefore, the law will henceforth ensure that running the traditional institutions will be according to this law. Issues like the payment of salaries, sources of salaries and allowances, payment of death benefits to relatives of deceased traditional ruler etc are now clearly stated in accordance with the law.

We all know that the role of traditional rulers in our society cannot be overemphasized. Some of them include serving as mediators in times of conflict, ensuring that subjects obeyed the law and seeing to the preservation of all customs and traditions etc. No doubt, traditional rulers possess the authority that makes them command so much respect making it easy for them to serve as link between government and the people. Since they are appointed by government in most cases, it is the responsibility of government to cater for some of their welfare and well-being.

It is in line with this that the Plateau State House of Assembly came up with a legislation, titled 'A Bill for a Law to Provide for the Renumeration of Appointed Traditional Rulers in Plateau State and for Other Matters Connected which sought to provide for the remuneration of traditional rulers in the state, as well as recognize other categories of chiefs under such remuneration package. The bill also sought to sustain the payment of remuneration of such traditional rulers pursuant to Section 15 and 16 of the State Chieftaincy Law, 2005.

Following the presentation of the bill before the floor of the House, it was subsequently committed to the Committees on Land, Survey and Town Planning, Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, and that of Agriculture and Natural Resources. The tripartite committee immediately swung into action, setting in motion mechanisms for consideration of the bill, one of which was a public hearing that was conducted on January 26th, 2022. From the public hearing held, several observations and recommendations were drawn up through the submissions and inputs by the various stakeholders involved.

The stakeholders applauded the ninth assembly for involving a good representation of the public, and for availing them the opportunity to contribute to the development of this important bill before its passage. Some of those present include Plateau State Traditional Council of Chiefs and Emirs, the Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, Plateau State ALGON and Nigerian Farmers Association, Plateau State chapter. Others are Plateau Initiative for Development and Advancement of the Natives (PIDAN), Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria, Plateau State chapter and the coalition of Civil Society Groups.

After all said and done, the following observations were presented to the House during

plenary by the Chairman Committee on Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, Hon. Ibrahim Baba Hassan who is also the member representing Jos North North constituency. Firstly, is that the unfavourable economic situation of the country and that of the state could impede the implementation of this bill when eventually passed and assented by His Excellency, giving the funding of the remuneration as x-rayed hinges on the consolidated revenue which could cause friction between potential beneficiaries and its implementation.

An observation was raised on the current law being used to take care of the remuneration of traditional rulers which stipulates a five percent deduction from the statutory revenue



As traditional rulers remuneration bill becomes law



allocation of local government councils, hence should be considered. Also observed is that while initiators of the bill get commended for acknowledging the plight and striving to elevate the revered positions of their traditional rulers, their postulations should be juxtaposed with the availability of funds, hence there is need for a statistical analysis of the total number of beneficiaries of this gesture, as well as its implication on

the consolidated revenue fund of the state in order to weigh its workability. Notably observed is that there are communities which have female rulers. An example was seen in the case of Shiwer village in Amper district of Kanke LGA, where the stool of the Queen (Maran) is said to be as old as the village itself. According to history, the stool has become a preserve of only female descendants of the Maran with the present Maran known as Diriytmwa Napar Joel.

Accordingly, that there was need to have the law to include those communities with female rulers, in order to also promote gender sensitivity and not deny communities that recognize female as their leaders, and also for purpose of legal backings and remunerations. That where in the law there is a king, it should be written as 'Kings and Queens'. Interestingly observed by the committee is the fact that

traditional rulers have in recent times become quick targets for banditry and kidnappings due largely to poor security attention to this class of important personalities whom like women and children, have become most vulnerable in the country. That a new proposal be inserted as 'provision of death benefits to family of deceased traditional ruler' which is five percent of their annual basic salary to cushion the effect of the loss of their bread winner. In addition, all domestic staff to the traditional rulers shall be paid from the five percent allocation to the traditional council.

On the use of sirens and flags by traditional rulers, they shall be restricted to only first class rulers while second and third class rulers will be restricted to the use of flags only. For the others, they shall be restricted to the use of number plates provided by the local government traditional council. Noted also is that each chiefdom is autonomous and as such, no graded traditional ruler should interfere in the affairs of another chiefdom. Lastly, that Clause (10)1 which states that 'an appointed traditional ruler shall not be deprived of his salary and allowances pending the determination of any court proceedings instituted against him', is capable of breeding prolonged litigation and also pave way for the cost implication for services not rendered if not expunged.

Meanwhile, all first class traditional rulers in the state shall be entitled to thirteen domestic staff each as recommended by the committee while second class will have nine and six for third class chiefs and emirs. In the case of district and village heads, they shall be entitled to four and two respectively. Note that appointment of all the domestic staff shall be tenured while the secretariat and financial staff shall be posted from the local government to the traditional council. Parts of the recommendations however, stipulates that as soon as a traditional ruler passes on and after his burial, selection process for his successor must be initiated immediately.

The committee also recommends that in case of any litigation, a person chosen by the kingmakers may be appointed to oversee the affairs of the traditional council and such a person must not belong to the ruling house and shall draw allowance only payable to the traditional ruler. In the case of acting appointment of traditional rulers, the recommendation states that the executive governor of the state must give his approval or designate a representative to the traditional council and shall be for a period of three months only, except in case of a litigation.

SUNDAY MAGAZINE



The road to 2023 gubernatorial elections

The 2023 gubernatorial elections was held on Saturday across 31 out of 36 Nigerian states, concurrent with elections to every state house of assembly, three weeks after the presidential election and National Assembly elections. While in Imo State, Kogi State, and Bayelsa State elections will be held on the 11th November. The last regular gubernatorial elections for all states were in 2019. All states have a two term limit for Governors which makes 18 incumbent governors ineligible for re-election. Writes KENNETH DARENG.

Abia State

Incumbent PDP Governor Okezie Ikpeazu was re-elected to a second term in 2019 with 60.26% of the vote. He will be term-limited in 2023 and cannot seek re-election.

For the APC, two parallel primaries were held with one faction holding an indirect primary at the Chidiebere Arena while the other faction held a direct primary (citing a national APC directive for a direct primary in Abia) that carried on into the next day. After both primaries were peacefully held, the Chidiebere Arena primary ended in economist Ikechi Emenike winning by a wide margin while the direct primary resulted in a victory for former minister Uche Ogah. INEC recognised Emenike as the legitimate nominee in July 2022 after a court ruled in his favour.

In the APGA primary, Gregory Ibe (an academic administrator) defeated his three opponents with around 54% of the delegates' votes. While the party accepted his nomination, second runner-up Ijioma Nwokoro Ijioma rejected the results.

In the PDP primary, Uche Ikonne (an optometrist and academic administrator) emerged victorious after almost all of his opponents withdrew on the day of the primary. Reasons for withdrawal were split between those claimed that Ikpeazu's tacit support for Ikonne along with doctored

delegate lists removed any fairness from the primary and those that dropped out to support Ikonne. Ikonne defeated the two remaining candidates with over 80% of the vote in an indirect primary on 25 May.

Adamawa State

Incumbent PDP Governor Ahmadu Umaru Fintiri was elected to a first term in 2019 with 43.22% of the vote. He contested for re-election.

Ahmadu Umaru Fintiri was elected to a first term in 2019 with 43.22% of the vote to clinch the PDP nomination for the 2023 governorship race.

For the APC, Aishatu Dahiru Banini—Senator for Adamawa Central—won the primary with 42% of delegates' votes. Despite some controversies during the primary, Ahmed was accepted as the nominee and made history as the first woman to be nominated by a major party for the Adamawa governorship and only the second woman ever nominated by a major party for any state governorship.

Akwa Ibom State

Incumbent PDP Governor Udom Gabriel Emmanuel was not on the Ballot in yesterday's governorship election in the state. Rather, Umo Eno (a former Commissioner) was the PDP Candidate seeking to take over from Governor Udom Emmanuel.

For the APC, months of a party crisis between a national party-

recognized faction backed by Godswill Akpabio and an INEC-recognized faction backed by John James Akpan Udo-Edehe culminated in street fights over control of official voting materials. Eventually, the Akpabio faction gained control of the materials and held its primary on 27 May with businessman Akanimo Udofia winning. However, INEC did not recognize Udofia's win, leaving the APC without a gubernatorial nominee. As the APC failed to legitimately nominate a candidate, minor parties' nominees have become major candidates as Udo-Edehe decamped to the NNPP to become its nominee with rumors that losing PDP candidates are also looking at minor parties' tickets.

In the PDP primary, Umo Eno emerged victorious after two of his major opponents—Senator Bassey Albert Akpan and MHR Onofiok Luke—withdrew on the day of the primary as both claimed that a court order prevented the primary from taking place. Eno defeated the remaining candidates with over 97% of the vote in an indirect primary on 25 May, 2022.

Bauchi State

Incumbent PDP Governor Bala Mohammed was elected to a first term in 2019 with 46.35% of the vote. He initially declined to run for re-election, instead running for president. However, after losing the PDP presidential primary in May 2022, Mohammed was renominated for governor in a

rerun primary.

In the APC primary, Sadique Abubakar (former Chief of the Air Staff) defeated Senator Halliru Dauda Jika with 36% of the vote in an indirect primary on 26 May. Jika left for the NNPP a few weeks after the primary.

Bayelsa State

Incumbent PDP Governor Douye Diri was elected to a first term in 2019 after a court decision. He is seeking for re-election, for another four year term under the platform of the PDP.

Benue State

Incumbent PDP Governor Samuel Ortom was re-elected to a second term in 2019 with 52.29% of the vote. He will be term-limited in 2023 and cannot seek re-election for a third term.

The APC on its part is parading a Catholic Priest for the governorship which was earlier contested along with the likes of Barnabas Gemade, a former Senator for Benue North and Representative Hermain Hembe of Vandeikya-Tiev Constituency.

Borno State

Incumbent APC Governor Babagana Umara Zulum was elected to a first term in 2019 with 92.78% of the vote. He is eligible to run and is seeking another four year mandate.

Cross River State

Incumbent PDP-turned-APC Governor Benedict Ayade who was re-elected for a second term in 2019 with 73.04% of the vote. He

will be term-limited in 2023 and cannot seek re-election for a third term. Those who had earlier showed interest to replace Ayade include; A Godswill Edward Osim (Ayade aide and son-in-law of former President Goodluck Jonathan) while potential APC candidates include Chris Agara (businessman), Goddy Jedy Agba (Minister of State for Power), Okonkon Effiom (Commissioner for Rural Transformation), Asuquo Ekpenyong (Commissioner for Finance), John Owan Enoh (former Senator for Cross River Central and 2019 APC gubernatorial nominee), Ntufam Ekpo Okon (former House of Representatives member for Calabar Municipal/Odukpani and 2019 APC deputy gubernatorial nominee), Bassey Otu (former Senator for Cross River South), and Usani Uguru Usani (former Niger Delta Minister).

While PDP candidates were Arthur Archibong (Chancellor of Arthur Javis University), Daniel Effiong Asuquo (House of Representatives member for Akamkpa/Biase), Gershom Bassey (Senator for Cross River South), and Sandy Ojang Onor (Senator for Cross River Central).

Delta State

Incumbent PDP Governor Ifeanyi Okowa now Vice Presidential Candidate of the PDP, was re-elected to a second term in 2019 with 80.17% of the vote. He will be

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NEWS

Lalong casts vote in Ajikamai, laments voter apathy

BY PALANG KASMI

PLATEAU State Governor Simon Bako Lalong has cast his vote in the March 18, 2023 Gubernatorial and States of Assembly elections, at his hometown Nyak- Ajikamai, in Shendam Local Government. The election, which is being conducted by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in 28 states of Nigeria, 3 weeks after the Presidential elections, will not only produce Lalong's successor but House of Assembly members throughout the state. The Governor, alongside his wife Regina and members of his household, were accredited and cleared to vote around 12 noon. Speaking shortly after voting, Lalong said the exercise was seamless as the BVAS machine verified him within 2 minutes to enable him cast his vote. Same went for other members of his family. The Governor however rated the



Lalong

elections as peaceful but lamented the high level of voter apathy that is affecting participation of voters in the very historic electoral process. He told newsmen that security

and various reports reaching him from various parts of the state indicate that the exercise was going on smoothly except for the low turnout reported in some areas, as at the time the polls commenced. He however said the numbers have reportedly continued to appreciate, which indicates that before the close of voting, there is expectations of a larger turnout. On the prospects of a victory for the APC, Lalong said he was optimistic that the people of Plateau State will vote for his party's candidate, Dr. Nentawe Yilwatda in the All Progressives Congress (APC) to succeed him as governor, as well as other candidates of the party to represent various constituencies of the State House of Assembly. He commended the Plateau electorate for their peaceful conduct during the elections, saying what transpired during the Presidential elections should continue to be upheld as Plateau people are known for peaceful and exemplary conduct.

NHRC expresses concern over hate speech

From Dorcas Pankyes, Abuja

THE National Human Rights Commission has expressed concern about the rise in hate speech across the country, fueled by politicians seeking political patronage. This has led to ethnic and religious sentiments being used to create division, fear, and hatred among different groups. Executive Secretary of the Commission, Chief Tony Ojukwu OFR, SAN, stated this in Abuja ahead of the Gubernatorial and State Assembly polls. He lamented that this menace has crept into places of worship where religious leaders have joined the unholy enterprise of spreading hate speeches. He noted that the use and misuse of social media to spread ethnic and religious hate-laced messages is also worrisome, with far-reaching and complex implications. These incidents, according to him, can lead to violence and tension between different religious and ethnic groups, disrupt social, cultural, and religious harmony, and affect

rights to associate, assemble, freedom of movement, and the right to live in any part of the country. He also warned that this situation can lead to a breakdown of law and order, increasing vulnerabilities and risks, including death, internal displacements, kidnapping, drug use, recruitment into terrorist activities, and other forms of human rights and humanitarian concerns. He reiterated that Nigeria is a party to regional and international human rights instruments that reinforce and guarantee everyone's right to association, assembly, residence, expression, freedom of thought, conscience, and religion. "The Commission affirms that Sections 38 and 39 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) protect these rights. In addition, the Nigeria's Cybercrime (Prohibition, Prevention, etc.) Act 2015 criminalizes the use of the internet to send offensive messages or post messages that are intended to cause harm, fear, or distress. Individuals who engage in hate speech online

can face severe consequences," he emphasized. He called on the government to take all steps to reaffirm its commitment to the secular nature of the Nigerian State under section 10 of the constitution. "It should protect all persons from the violation of their right to freedom of residence, association, assembly, political party, or association of choice, freedom of thought, conscience, and religion while also protecting everyone's right to participate in elections and vote for candidates of their choice anywhere in the country," he said. The Chief Human Rights officer of Nigeria urges all persons involved to take urgent steps to stop these divisive tendencies. He said the Commission is concerned about the impact this can have on the 2023 General elections and beyond, "it is therefore imperative that we address this urgently, because disseminating ideas that project the supremacy of one tribe or religion over another or incite violence on one religion or tribe against others constitute a crime and

violate the 2022 Electoral Act," he added. He stated further that the Commission confirms that under Sections 40 and 43 of the constitution, every person shall be entitled to assemble freely and associate with other persons, and in particular, he/she may form or belong to any political party, trade union, or other associations for the protection of his/her interests. "Every citizen of Nigeria shall have the right to acquire and own immovable property, and no movable or immovable property owned by any person in Nigeria can be acquired compulsorily, or such a person dispossessed of such a property without payment of compensation". While affirming its commitment to upholding human rights and protecting everyone's rights to freedom of expression, the Commission expresses grave concerns over the use of hate speech in the country and warns that anyone who engages in it will face severe consequences under the law.

Governor Bello scores INEC high

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

GOVERNOR Yahaya Bello of Kogi on Saturday voted during the Governorship and

the State Assembly Election scoring the performance of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) high. Bello said that INEC had improved on its March 25,

Presidential and National Assembly Elections conduct. The governor who made the remark after casting his vote at Okeneba, Agassa, Upogoro Ward, Polling Unit 11 in Okene LGA Local Government Area of the state said INEC came out early and started the exercise on time. The governor who arrived the polling unit at about 9:01 am joined the long queue in his usual manner and waited patiently on the line till 9:17am when it got to his turn and cast his vote. Speaking with newsmen immediately after, the governor said he expected 100 per cent delivery of all the All Progressives Congress APC candidates to the 25-member Kogi State House of Assembly at the end of the day. He said, "So far, so good, the turnout is massive. It's impressive and INEC has improved on the last exercise, they came out early and the

exercise has commenced. "The securities are doing excellently well so far from the reports I have received. And across the state, things are moving on very well. We expect a very smooth exercise today. "In my polling unit, the people are always enthusiastic over democratic processes and they always turnout en-masse and we are expecting even a more turnout today because this election is local. "It is one of their own that is out to be a member of the House of Assembly in Kogi State and they have turned out en-masse to give him a massive support. "And you can see orderliness, calmness and things are going on very smoothly in this ward and I am expecting same across the state. "From this election, I don't expect anything less, it's going to be 100 per cent."



Yakubu



Banks begin dispensing of old N500, N1,000 note

FOLLOWING a Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) directive on Monday that the old N500 and N1,000 remain legal tender in line with a Supreme Court ruling, banks have started dispensing the currencies over-the counter (OTC) and via Automated Teller Machines (ATMs).

Investigations revealed that business operators were still reluctant to collect and transact with the old notes.

Osinbajo Launches \$600m Programme For Youths.

Vice President Yemi Osinbajo has launched a \$600 million programme for young Nigerians in the technology and creative sectors with a call on African governments and the private sector to do more to support the growth of innovation in the continent.

The vice president spoke at the presidential launch of the Investment in Digital and Creative Enterprises (i-DICE) Programme, held at the State House Banquet Hall, Abuja.

According to a statement by his media aide, Laolu Akande, the programme would support young Nigerians ranging from ages 15-35 who are entrepreneurs and involved in the early stages in creative, innovative and technology-enabled ventures.

CSOs, Lawyers Resume 'Bawa Must Go' Campaign

After a weeklong protest in Lagos last month, major anti-corruption civil society organisations (CSOs) and some constitutional lawyers have renewed their campaign against the continued stay in office of the chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Mr. Abdulrasheed Bawa. The CSOs, which put their number at 130, said they resumed their call for the sack of Bawa because nothing has changed since their first protest, insisting that he has a penchant for disobeying court order, politicising the activities of the anti-graft agency and infringing on the human rights of Nigerians, among others.

Ambrose Alli Varsity Sacks 22 Staff, 90 More May Go

Management of the Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma have sacked 22 staff as part of what it called repositioning the university. One of the sack letters made available to newsmen reads: "In repositioning the university, the management of Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, writes to convey to you the decision of the special intervention team of your disengagement from the services of the university with effect from March 10, 2023.

"You will be paid all your entitlements in line with the provision of the Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma Staff Regulations and Scheme of Service." By a copy of this letter, the Bursary Department is directed to process your entitlements, subject to your clearance of any indebtedness to the university.

837 guber, 10,240 assembly candidates slug it out

Following the outcome of the February 25 Presidential and National Assembly elections that caused many upsets across the country, the 24 women, who are angling to be the first elected female governor in Nigeria, are doing so in 18 states.

Meanwhile, following fears of violence and allegations of plots to rig the polls, the Police have declared their readiness to ensure hitch-free and credible exercises and deployed their men to all parts of the country.

Politicians have urged the Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC, to transmit results of elections in real time in the portal from the polling units.

Abia citizens protest over allege plot to rig guber poll

Heavy protests erupted at the Abia State Headquarters of the Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC, as aggrieved residents numbering about 2000 besieged the entrance gate to the INEC facility on Thursday.

The protesters who came from every part of the state said they came to register their worry over alleged plots to rig the March 18 governorship and the House of Assembly.

Compiled by HOSEA NYAMLONG

SUNDAY FEATURE

Goldmine in Nigeria's Correctional Centres

Like play, like play, I have also joined the league of people who discovered things. So, Mungo park discovered the course of River Niger, Benjamin Franklin discovered electricity, Michael Faraday discovered benzene and Grace Anderson discovered a goldmine in a correctional facility. Hmmm! The ministry is finally moving to the permanent site. Writes GRACE ANDERSON.

OF all the places on earth, it was at the correctional centre, Uyo, that I discovered a massive goldmine, but how did I even get to the correctional centre to discover a goldmine? Perhaps, you may be wondering how.

It was Comrade Grace Udoma, who invited me to the centre. Not that she was a prisoner or a staff there. She used her office as the Chairman of the Atlantic FM Chapel of the Nigeria Union of Journalists to mobilise her members to go show love to inmates there. I was just on my own when she insisted that I should accompany them to the centre. I came up with my objections, but Comrade Udoma isn't the type that takes no for an answer and that was the genesis of how I discovered the goldmine.

The day in question was the 14th day of February, 2023. As is the norm the world over, that particular day is regarded as Valentine's day. Valentine's day is otherwise regarded as lovers' day. Historically, there is a narrative that says that Valentine was a priest, who served during the third century in Rome. Emperor Claudius II ruled over Rome then and he decided that single men made better soldiers than those with wives and families, so he outlawed marriage for young men. Valentine defied Claudius and continued to perform marriages for young lovers in secret. When Valentine's actions were discovered, Claudius ordered that he be put to death.

In this part of the globe, people often do things that are uncalled for to commemorate the day. It is a common sight to see young ladies fighting themselves over a man on Valentine's day. It is also a common sight to see single ladies hanging around people's husbands like pins on a magnet. Many homes have been scattered due to romance gone wrong on Valentine's day. On the contrary, Comrade Udoma and her chapel members chose that particular day to do something unprecedented, they decided to touch the lives of the inmates there, by showing them love.

By 9 am, we were at the premises. We were subsequently addressed by the Assistant Controller of Corrections, Nigerian Correctional Service, Akwa Ibom State Command, ACC E. J Ogueri, he expressed his delight about our visit and invited us into the centre to see things for ourselves.

Folks, inside the correctional centre, I observed that it was another world entirely. I saw prisoners dancing and gyrating. I saw hardened unremorseful criminals and I also saw the innocent amongst them. My hunch kept signaling to me that some people there were actually



innocent. Theirs was the case of Joseph, seeing his undies in the hands of his Oga's wife, but not being able to explain how the underwear got to her. Folks, it was a day of sightseeing. I even saw babies inside the prison. They were all enjoying the moment. The young men there were trying to create fun and entertainment. They recreated their own version of "I wanna flex". The moment was like a heaven-on-earth kind of a thing. I was nodding my head and responding to the rhythm of the music. There and then, I discovered the gold mine. The goldmine I saw was in the inmates. I saw the human capacity and enthusiasm in them as a goldmine.

See the way the inmates were displaying raw talents. Some of them as forthcoming. One or two cottage industries could spring up from the correctional centre. It then dawned on me that Nigeria is still importing so many things from China. The other day, I saw an imported wooden spoon. What is a wooden spoon that the inmates cannot produce? It is certainly not a high-tech thing. Besides, the raw materials are readily available. The inmates can produce it and from there, a trust fund could be opened for them to save a percentage of the money gotten from proceeds from the sales. The savings could eventually be used by them when they finally leave the prison to start a business instead of going back to society to become a

nuisance. As I said, the goldmine I saw there was massive. Given the right training, these prisoners could do exploits. How about Uyo prisoners producing apps, software and even android devices? Some of those inmates were actually hackers and internet fraudsters, but they could be transformed into information technology professionals if little more attention is given to them. Folks, when people are in confinement, that is when the inspiration to do exploits flow. Apostle Paul was inspired to write some books of the bible while he was incarcerated, even Joseph was busy solving problems while in prison, some of those inmates you see there are intellectual giants, but as I said, they were also a product of a failed system. Another thought quickly flashed through my mind. Wig-making by the inmates was another option, with proper training, these people could produce wigs and closures for export. If we do more exports, believe me, the value of the Nigerian naira will appreciate.

What about shoe making, with proper training, these inmates could produce shoes for export too. Imagine foreigners queuing up to buy made-in-Nigerian shoes, that would be a plus. The idea of a garment factory also came to my mind. I saw inmates being trained professionally to sew ready-made wear from prison. I mean wears with designer labels. As the thoughts kept flashing through my mind, the chaplain of the centre

announced that the female officers of the centre were about to play a football match with the female inmates. Chai! I followed them back to back. They were even playing soccer inside the prison. Comrade Udoma was given the opportunity to do the official kick-off of the exercise. Off she went. With a kick from her, the ball flew into the air. She was not kicking as a novice. She was kicking as a professional. This Comrade must be a woman of many parts. So, with the official kick-off from Comrade Udoma, the idea of a football academy within the facility came to bear. With proper training, the inmates could beat all those international football clubs that people brag about. You see those inmates, they will so dribble their opponents because they already have the stamina to do so, just a little orientation, intentional training and encouragement can do the magic.

How about foreigners doing subscriptions to watch the Akwa Ibom league or something similar? It will surely be a plus for the state. But can a prisoner today become a soccer star tomorrow? The answer is yes. We have had cases of people coming out of prison to rule their world. Didn't former President Olusegun Obasanjo leave prison in 1998 to become President in 1999? Did the heavens fall? The answer is no. Meaning that prisoners can also shine. At that point in time, I began to appreciate the brain behind the change of name from the Nigerian Prison to the Correctional Centre. The term, 'Prison' was hard, it portrayed that everyone in prison must have been a criminal, but that is very far from the truth. Those babies I sighted there could not have been criminals. They were just suffering from crimes committed by their mothers, while they were in the womb. Besides, nobody is imprisonable. I have also seen the lowly and those who have no one to speak on their behalf also going to prison too. The term, 'Correctional' is more dignifying and apt.

Having discovered this goldmine, I now officially drop it in this corner for the Government, public-spirited individuals, NGOs, Senators, House of Representative members, house of assembly members and others, to go and mine. When they start cashing out the redesigned new naira notes or dollars from the mine, will they even remember the discoverer in their kingdom? For now, I can't say.

SUNDAY FEATURE

Will machines replace journalists, too?

The profession went through similar bouts of self-doubt and anxiety, after the introduction of the movable type and printing press. This same thing happened following the introduction of the telephone, radio and television. In hindsight, it would seem that journalism's death was slightly exaggerated. AZU ISHIEKWENE, writes.

THE advent of any significant changes in technology has often triggered concerns about the fate of journalism. Even at the infancy of social media, TIME covered one of its editions of February 5, 2009, with concern about the imminent death of journalism. To drive home the point, the graphic was illustrated with a copy of the New York Times wrapping a tilapia.

The profession went through similar bouts of self-doubt and anxiety, after the introduction of the movable type and printing press. This same thing happened following the introduction of the telephone, radio and television. In hindsight, it would seem that journalism's death was slightly exaggerated.

But can the survival of journalism as we know it today be taken for granted in the midst of the extraordinary changes in technology and ICT? In 5, 10 or 20 years, will there be any dots to connect between technology and journalism or would the profession be submerged in a sea change?

In Artificial Intelligence: A Modern Approach, Stuart J Russell and Peter Norvig's groundbreaking, expansive study on AI, first published in 1995 and released in its fourth edition in 2020, the computer scientists and scholars offer a sharp and comprehensive introduction to the foundations of artificial intelligence. The book covers a diverse range of fields from philosophy to mathematics, neuroscience and psychology, and linguistics.

In a particularly memorable passage, the authors said, "We don't want machines that are intelligent in the sense of pursuing their objectives; we want them to pursue our objectives."

The extent to which this goal is achievable, and whether it should be desirable in the first place, has, of course, been a subject of vigorous and prolonged debate.

There are those rightfully concerned that the oncoming waves of automation would exacerbate existing inequalities between workers whose backgrounds have afforded them education and other social privileges that put them at the higher ends of well-paying tech jobs and those who depend on jobs that would most likely be phased out by automated systems.

The stats may not amplify these fears but they do not allay them either. A report from McKinsey studying skill shifts in the workforce in Europe and the United States says that between 2016 and 2030 the demand for technological skills would increase significantly compared with the demand for manual and basic cognitive skills. The prospects may be slower in Africa, but they are creeping up.

Mass media have long ceased to be the sole domain of professional journalists. That is, not only have established assumptions about the authority of the journalist to witness, record and disseminate news been severely undermined, established assumptions about audience's expectations in journalists have also been challenged.

When I joined PUNCH in 1989 the dominant way of collecting the news from offices outside Lagos, the headquarters, was by radio. We had a few telephone lines alright, but they were congested and



Isiguzo

unreliable. Reporters filed in a few copies from the states by telex, but the bulk was by radio. The compugraphic machines, galleys and cow gum did the rest of the prepress job. That was over three decades ago.

We deployed reporters in Sheraton Hotels, Lagos, where they spun war stories from Baghdad by watching the TV at the reception over a bottle of coke taken for hours. Somehow, through improvisation and compelling designs, the paper became a hit.

What happened in PUNCH was emblematic of the crises that the industry faced after the prosperous seventies and eighties. There were significant changes in the operating environment, partly as a result of ownership and politics, but fundamentally as a result of poor economics and the inability of the industry to forecast where changes in technology might lead and to leverage them.

As production costs increased and infrastructure deteriorated, however, the response of the press, in particular, was not necessarily to find smarter, more efficient ways of distributing content. Instead, media owners embarked on a binge of buying fleets of distribution vans and producing multiple editions, with very little returns on inventory.

This massive investment in a blackhole worsened their already precarious financial positions after General Ibrahim Babangida's controversial "structural adjustment programme".

With advertising naira shrinking, advertisers began to insist on data, forcing the opaque newspaper industry to begin to face its own demon. Adoption of new practices and improvements in internal methods to make them more efficient and customer-centric – including deployment of new technologies – became not a matter of choice, but of

survival for the industry.

Today, a number of media houses (print and broadcast) have strong social media platforms and even web-first news policies, while strictly online brands such as Sahara Reporters, Premium Times, The Cable and Peoples Gazette, to name a few, have become significant players, using an extensive degree of new technologies to collect, process and share content and earn revenue.

However, of all these developments, the arrival of citizen journalists on the one hand and the AI-powered robots on the other, are perhaps the most significant occurrences in journalism.

It seemed OK when technology led to mechanized farming, brought changes in the mode and speed of transportation and even transformed the textile and culinary industries. Journalists were happy to herald these changes.

As soon as technological changes arrived at the doorsteps of the profession, however, with the distinct possibilities that non-journalists could use and deploy them in everyday life, the alarm bells were set off, sounding like a tribal call against the invasion of aliens: AI was The Beast!

Yet, by focusing on more routine and menial tasks, it is believed that automation frees journalists up for more comprehensive, in-depth reporting, significantly improving the quality of journalistic work.

Sharing examples of how journalism and robots are connecting and finding common grounds elsewhere raises the natural question: where does that leave the Nigerian journalist?

Incursions by bloggers, influencers and corporates using non-traditional news channels to share valuable content have challenged the mainstream media. Also, the increased entry into the profession of persons with non-formal-media

background has improved the profession both in its diversity and deepened its adoption rate of new technologies.

Through hackathons, collaboration of media and non-media persons, for example, robotics have been deployed in sourcing data that shine the light on community problems on access to healthcare, education and job-creation.

Media organisations either working collaboratively or independently also deploy drones in previously inaccessible communities, to gather content, especially in conflict situations. Although this practice is still not sufficiently widespread because of costs, inertia – and even grey regulatory areas sometimes – an increasing level of training and collaboration might see improvements in the years ahead.

It is true that the role of the journalist is changing, and I believe future developments in the field will give journalists more power and responsibility, not less.

Once, we suffered from not knowing nearly enough. Now, we may be entering an era in which we know too much. Even if we could guarantee responsible use of AI and similar technologies – which we can't – we would still bear the heavy burden of knowledge in a world that has become more predictable but no less dangerous.

But what is also true is that there are more of us now than there have ever been, citizen and career journalists alike, with significant resources at our disposal, to decide not only what the news is, but what it should mean and what responsible actions it should spur.

A number of media houses in Nigeria are currently battling a range of problems from low, irregular pay to poor training, infrastructure and low trust rating as a result of poor ethics. My anecdotal experience does not suggest that displacement by bots is a serious concern in the face of these current existential crises.

The media is still a long way from where AI may be regarded as a clear and present danger to jobs. Yet, globalisation, which has narrowed boundaries, made travels cheaper and increased connections, has also exposed consumers of media content in Nigeria and across the continent to higher standards.

With greater penetration of smartphones and other home devices (embedded with such bots as Siri, Bixby, Alexa) at lower costs and the expansion of Internet services, my guess is that the demand for more AI services amongst Nigeria's media consumers would also increase.

And hopefully journalists who are in this business for the long run would have little or no option but to raise their game. The question is not whether the dots are connecting, but how quickly, responsibly and efficiently journalists can connect them in the service of the craft of storytelling.

The future belongs to man and machines.

This is an abridged version of a paper on "Cybernetics, robotics and journalism: Connecting the dots", by Ishiekwene presented at a seminar at the Department of Mass Communication, Bingham University, Abuja on July 14.

The Government has said that it meant well when it decided to change the currency. One of the reasons given was for checking the insecurity that has become very overwhelming, the second is to give the central bank a hold on the surplus cash in circulation, the third is to help curb inflation and boost economic activities in the countries, the fourth is to stop the use of naira in the political sphere as it concerns the forthcoming election. These are all good intentions. The problem with good intentions is that when they are not carefully thought out and implemented, the counter effect could be created.

Nigerians are traumatized. Our trauma is very connected to Government policies and intentions often thought out for the good of Nigerians. However, the implementation processes of same need to have the prerequisite for effective delivery. The Nigerian trauma. This trauma has been ongoing for a while and there seems to be no respite in sight. This trauma started with the insecurity and economic downturn that has become the norm in Nigeria. The Government has put in a lot of effort to curb these, especially in terms of budgetary provisions.

Protests such as the End-Sars protests traumatized the nations. Spates of violence, purported and random killings associated with the End-SARS agitations and similar protests have all contributed in traumatizing Nigerians, particularly the restive youths. Incessant strikes by the universities have kept young people traumatized and underqualified for the profession for which they spend long years studying. When they graduate, the companies advertise jobs for which their age would not allow them apply for. Nigerians are traumatized.

Next to insecurity and violent extremism is the covid -19 lockdown which required mandatory vaccination for the freedom of movement and access. Something that Nigerians had never experienced. It was so intrusive to the point of taking away our personal choices. If a Nigerian needed to go into his or her office or a public space, he or she would have to produce a mandatory vaccine passport. During the lockdown, getting food to eat for some was a herculean task as many spent their savings to keep their children alive and stay alive, while nothing came in by way of income.

Covid-19 killed many businesses and took away the livelihood of many people, especially the small and medium scale enterprises owners. Many Nigerians lost their jobs and could not fend for their families. Many homes were broken. Many lives were lost. Many had to start from scratch. Many committed suicides and this was blamed on and is still being blamed on mental health imbalance. Question is what is driving Nigerians crazy? I say it is Post Traumatic stress syndrome.

The incessant fuel scarcity in a country where crude oil is produced, adds to the continuous trauma of the Nigerian who is compelled to spend the night in fuel queues. The Bolt and Uber services that offers alternative employment to a lot of young men and women in this country is affected by the fuel scarcity which is still ongoing.

2023, Nigerians woke up to the Government announcing its intention to change the naira and give it a new face with the change of its denominations. The time frame for this change was not sufficient for Nigerians to embrace it and accommodate the challenges that may result from this change. Many Nigerians are left stranded, unable to access their money due to the limit placed on withdrawals, many banks and many POS points did not have cash to give. Worst of all, the POS points that have cash as we speak today, sells the cash like a commodity. If you want to withdraw ten thousand naira, you are going to have to part with N2,000 or N3000. For the low income earner who earns N15,000 to N30,000, this is a chunk of his or her salary. With the introduction of the naira change and its accompanying consequences, the hardship has skyrocketed. Nigerians are traumatized. Nigerians are traumatized. The trauma is sustained and the keg of gun power that we are sitting on is big if some relief is not given.

Trauma comes as a result of emotional and physical injury to the mind and body due to physical and emotional hurt. According to camh: "Trauma is a term used to describe the challenging emotional consequences that living through a distressing event can have for an individual. Traumatic events can be difficult to define because the same event may be more traumatic for some people than for others. However, traumatic events experienced early in life, such as abuse, neglect and disrupted attachment, can often be devastating. Equally challenging can be later life experiences that are out of one's control, such as a serious accident, being the victim of violence, living through a natural disaster or war, or sudden unexpected loss. When thoughts and memories of the traumatic event don't go away or get worse, they may lead to posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) which can seriously disrupt a person's ability to regulate their emotions and maintain healthy relationships.

Trauma does not come without its consequences. Losing one's source of livelihood, for example, can have far reaching consequences that may affect the health of the Nigerian and compel the Nigerian to turn to a life of crime, against his wishes and better judgment. When a man has children to feed and cannot find a job, it not only traumatizes him, it pushes him to less savoury options.

From the forgoing, Nigerians are traumatized because, we have been subjected to many instances of situations that are out of our control. Situations that victimize us and sometimes dehumanize us. Not feeling safe is a trauma. Having to stay locked up during the covid-19 pandemic like convicted felons, without any control of the situation and not knowing the next thing that would happen, is trauma. The fear of getting kidnapped is trauma. Losing one's job and not knowing when the next meal will come

Nigeria: A traumatized people



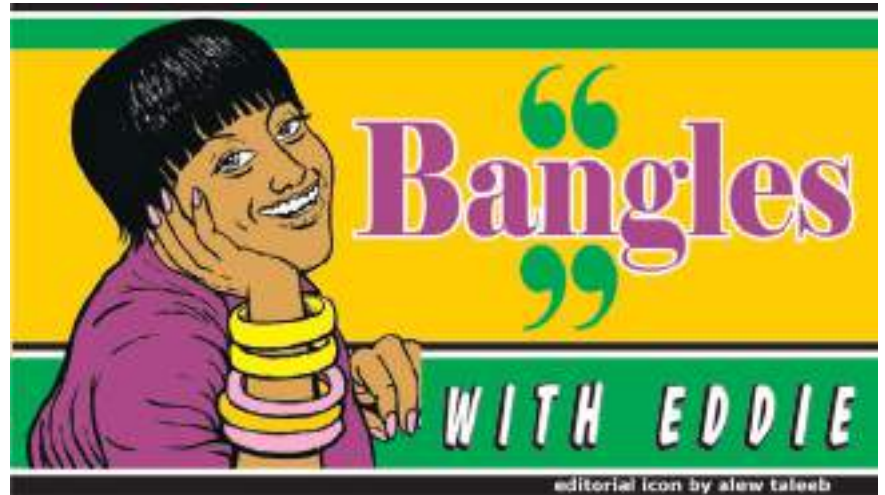
from not to mention school fee for the children is trauma. Losing relations and friends to violence is trauma. Looking upon human suffering without knowing what to do is trauma. And all these have led to post traumatic stress disorder in many Nigerians. It has led to many cases of mental health disorders.

Some people express trauma through violence. The anger and rage that could be a result of sustained trauma could lead to violence. It is no surprise that banks are getting burnt. One of the symptoms of PTSD is hopelessness. In our society today, the first pain is hopelessness, the second is sickness and the third is hunger. Many people have taken their own lives due to this helplessness and hopelessness. The question is when will our society be a better place for Nigerians? Many have sold their property and left because they have given up on this country. Many have vowed never to come back.

Like I said, a man with PTSD is a ticking time bomb. We cannot continue to ignore the consequences of our intentions on Nigerians because if we do, Nigerians will continue to implode or explode. Both should be a cause for concern to everyone. If you are a rich and comfortable man living in a society where people can barely afford one square meal a day, you should be very afraid. Especially when you represent oppression and corruption. It should be your concern that as someone in a position to make a life-changing decision, you are concerned with the consequences of your decision and the processes or strategy that would bring it to bear.

Do we ever sit down to ask ourselves why the country with the greatest potential in Africa is the one struggling to keep its head above water? Why do we create so much suffering in the process of providing solutions? I think that it is in the way we do things. The question I ask myself is who advises government? How much do government advisers know? How much of the people's sanity do they factor into policies that they proffer to the government of today. Let us look at the naira swap. How well did we prepare for this? Did we factor in the common man who is the biggest user of cash?

Let me tell you a little story. My cousin is going to be working during the 2023 elections. She has gone for training in the local government area where we come from. I called her to find out the situation of things in the village as far as cash is concerned and she tells me that it is very pathetic. There is simply no cash in circulation for villagers who do not know a thing about smart phones and bank Apps and how to use them. My question is, did the policy makers take this demography into consideration when



strategy, we have to think of how to carry people along. For example, the lay man on the street with no smart phone will cry the loudest because he has no alternatives. What alternatives have we created? I expect the government to subsidize the cost of smartphones and encourage the less informed to buy them in order to be able to send and receive money virtually. Community leaders and the more opportune can also purchase and distribute these phones to their communities.

Secondly, the less privileged and uneducated should be shown how to use this smart phone for cashless transactions. This would be done long before the old naira is withdrawn from circulation for change. The churches and the mosques should also be involved in this education process.

Time frame: Every change happens in time. Experts can usher in change by setting timelines and calendars. A calendar for the change process should be established, starting with a time frame for executing the communication strategy. The implementation should also be in phases. We could set a time frame for each denomination. For example, we could start the withdrawal of old naira notes with the biggest denomination which is the N1000. This could be done during the first quarter, the N500 in the second quarter of the year, N200 in the third quarter and the smaller denominations in the 5th quarter. As to the use of money in swaying the direction of votes, an electoral law which would disqualify the any perpetrator from running for any of the parties, should be put in place with fines to the tune of 1 trillion for hyperbolic effects.

Crisis Management strategy: A big question that comes to mind is this: Does a cashless society stop politicians from bribing the electorate or buying their votes? It can only take a little creativity. If a politician cannot have access to naira, can he or she make use of other currencies. I was having a conversation with my banker friend and she tells me that the exchange rate of naira to dollar has gone up because Nigerians are buying up dollars which she suspect might still be used during the elections. Add to this the demand for foreign currency by those who are selling their properties and living the country. Surely, they will need to buy dollars or pounds.

The scarcity of these foreign currencies can only drive up the exchange rate in favour of the foreign currency. This is a crisis created by this naira swap. This is an economic crisis. What then is the strategy in place to curb this?

Clearly, the change of the naira to its new look is going to cost our economy if we do not have a strategy for managing this negative outcome. Economic activities are grinding to a halt, particularly the small businesses because the cashless society is not one that has been made desirable to them. A lot of them do not accept cashless payments via banking apps because of what they call fake alert. Considering what covid-lockdowns did to our economy, we need every business to be alive both big and small, in other to rebuild our economy.

The interest rate for loans in commercial banks is 13 percent. Can it be reduced to 8 percent to encourage SMEs to borrow in order to boost economic activities as a way of encouraging production and export, without which we cannot earn foreign exchange? May we not experience the death of more business due to this policy because with the death of any business comes the disappearance of jobs. We already have high levels of unemployment. An idle mind is the devil's workshop. A lot of youths have already turned to a life of crime because of unemployment. Adding to this population is adding to our insecurity. Are we ready for the boomerang effect of the cashless policy?

Nigerians are traumatized. Since change is the only constant and since it is inevitable, change needs to be managed strategically so as to stop the tide of Post-traumatic Stress Syndrome (PTSD) that is assailing our society with its hydra headed consequences.

ONCE again, it is an honour for me to share God's Word with you. We are continuing on the core anointing of Jesus Christ, and how that anointing will benefit anyone that receives it.

Previously, I told you that the first and foremost step to benefiting from Jesus' anointing is to make Him the Lord and Saviour of your life. Now, the second step is to understand that the same way you take that first step and become born again; and become a member of God's family, become reconciled to God's family, is how you enjoy every other benefit and blessing that is in Christ Jesus. Every other aspect of Jesus' saving ministry is tied to His Salvation for the human race, from sin.

You learn that the way to defeat sin, the way to be delivered from sin, and the effects of sin- eternal judgement- is to accept Jesus as your Lord and in Saviour, as your sacrifice for sin. In order words, the very same way we received Jesus as our Lord and Saviour, is the very same way we receive Him as our healer, the very same way we receive Him as our provider, the very same way we receive Him as the Onewho delivers our life from destruction, the very same way we receive Him as every other thing He has been anointed to be for us in Salvation.

Romans 10:6 says: **But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:)** verse 7 says: **Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead).** Now, what Apostle Paul is saying by the anointing of God's Spirit is that it is not necessary for Christ to come and die again, or to be resurrected from the dead again; or to come from Heaven again, and be born into this world again and go through life as a man and take our sins and die again. That had been done! Once and for all!

The Bible has made it clear in Hebrews chapter 9 that the sacrifice for sin has already been made for us in Christ Jesus. So, the one sacrifice Christ made when He came thousands of years ago is sufficient for all of mankind everywhere. What is necessary is for men to believe what He has done, and to declare it with their mouth. That is where the power encounter begins.

You want the power of God to visit you, to bring to pass anything that Jesus died and made available to you, you must believe what He did for you on the cross, you must believe it vigorously, and must declare it with your mouth. Romans 10:8 says: **But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach.** That is where the encounter with power begins; that is where the visitation is, that is where the Word is necessary. You must believe what He has done, and you must declare it with your mouth. That is what causes the power of God, the saving auction to work in our lives. That is what is required for sickness to be turned to health! That is all that is required for lack to be turned into abundance! That is all that is required for your life to be redeemed from destruction! That is what is required for every curse to be broken over your life!

The Bible says the Word is near

you, and that all the things that the Lord Jesus Christ, in His saving ministry has secured for mankind, in His death, in His resurrection from the dead, is all now kept in the Word of God. That means that your healing is hidden in the Word of God. Your deliverance is hidden in the Word of God! Your prosperity, your money, is hidden in the Word of God! Your miracle babies are hidden in the Word of God! Your dream husband, wife is

consistently, not just once in a while. Day after day, believe what Christ has done for you and declare it in every area of your life, and you will see healing break forth in your body. You will see the impossible becoming possible in your life. You will see mind bugging opportunities will start to be administered to you; you will start seeing mind bugging favours.

The Word of God is the carrier of the blessings of God. The blessing



Say not in your heart, who shall ascend into Heaven.

“

The Word of God is the carrier of the blessings of God. The blessing you seek is not far away from you. It is near you. And so I boldly declare to you that your dream husband, your dream wife, your miracle babies are all near you in the name of Jesus! Your healing is near you; your money is near you, Glory to God! Your breakthroughs are near you! Your financial miracles are near you! Your deliverance is near you in the name of Jesus!

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hidden in the Word of God! Every question you are asking about life is answered in the Word of God! It says the Word is near you. That means the healing that you so desperately seek is not far away. May I tell you this- it is not in the hospital, neither is it in the Doctor's hands...Thank God for medicine, I'm not against it. In fact I take advantage of it when I need it, but I tell you the truth, my confidence is not in medicine or in the Doctor; my ultimate confidence is in what Christ did for me on 'that' cross.

He is the One who elongates my life; He is the preserver of my days; He is the One who has swallowed up Satan's intention to cut off my life from the face of the earth. He is the One that redeems my life from destruction; He is the One that provides for me; He is the One that creates opportunities for me to prosper. He is the one that lifts up my head above the enemy, that exalts my horn like the horn of the unicorn. He is the one that anoints me with fresh oil. He is the one that removes me from shame. He is the one that disappoints all those that are waiting for my shame and downfall. Glory to God forevermore! My confidence is in what He has done on the cross!

Friends, I tell you the truth- the Word of God is the carrier of these things. Whatever you find in the Word of God that Christ has done for you, it is your job to believe it, and to begin to declare it



you seek is not far away from you. It is near you. And so I boldly declare to you that your dream husband, your dream wife, your miracle babies are all near you in the name of Jesus! Your healing is near you; your money is near you, Glory to God! Your breakthroughs are near you! Your financial miracles are near you! Your deliverance is near you in the name of Jesus!

The same way you believe the Gospel to be saved, believe the Gospel to be healed! The Gospel is simply what Christ has done for you! Believe that God put your sickness and disease on Jesus. Believe that God has put your poverty on Him; believe that His life was cut short so that yours will be elongated; believe that He was drawn into the gates of Hell so that you will be kept out of Hell; believe

that He took upon Himself, the judgment that should have come upon you, so that you will live a life free from judgment and condemnation in this life, and that you will walk in the blessings of God; believe that He has become curse for you, that the blessing of Abraham, the anointing of Christ, will rest upon your life, that you will prosper and flourish in every way.

Believing is the way we come into the blessings of God. Isaiah 53:1 says: **Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?** Who has believed our report? Who has believed this great message that Jesus has become our substitute? That is the one that the power of God will be revealed to.

I command you to believe God's Word today. And the things you

are looking for right now will come to you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. You may have a troubled marriage, you have children that are on drugs, you may not even know where they are, they may have left home or they may have run away, everything in your life may be in a mess or upheaval, all you need to do is to accept Jesus Christ to be your Lord and Saviour, and then in the same way, believe the Gospel- which is all that Christ has done for you.

The answers you seek are in the Word of God. What are you to do with the Word of God? Believe the Word of God with your heart. In your innermost being, agree that what Christ did for you is a reality. Declare it with your mouth.

I declare over you in the name of the Lord Jesus, wherever you need that saving ministry today, I declare that the anointing and power of God will find you; locate you where you are; let the dominion of the Devil be broken over your life now, in the name of Jesus. I command sickness to go in the name of the Lord Jesus; you foul Devil of darkness, lose them and let them go in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. I command lack to go in the name of the Lord Jesus. Let opportunities to prosper visit you right now; Let joy, peace, be restored to you and your heart, to your home, to your family; I say "PEACE! BE STILL! To every turbulence in your life in the name of Jesus. Receive the saving ministry of Jesus today! Be healed! Be whole! Prosper! Succeed! Go forth and do well in life in the precious name of Jesus!

"The same way you believe the Gospel to be saved, believe the Gospel to be healed! The Gospel is simply what Christ has done for you! Believe that God put your sickness and disease on Jesus. Believe that God has put your poverty on Him; believe that His life was cut short so that yours will be elongated; believe that He was drawn into the gates of Hell so that you will be kept out of Hell; believe that He took upon Himself, the judgment that should have come upon you, so that you will live a life free from judgment and condemnation in this life, and that you will walk in the blessings of God; believe that He has become curse for you, that the blessing of Abraham, the anointing of Christ, will rest upon your life, that you will prosper and flourish in every way."

INTERNATIONAL

'Ukraine will remember who backed them'

The choice every nation made following Russia's full-scale invasion will be "taken into account in building future relations". JAMES LANDALE writes.

HE also warned delays of Western weapon deliveries would cost Ukrainian lives.

"If one delivery is postponed for one day, it means that someone is going to die on the frontline," he said.

In a wide-ranging interview, Mr Kuleba also discussed how he believes the war will end, the role of China in the war, and his disappointment that Pope Francis has yet to visit his country in war time.

Mr Kuleba spoke to the BBC in Ukraine's imposing, Soviet-era foreign ministry at the heart of Kyiv, now protected by sandbags and armed guards.

Western nations have shown strong unity in backing Ukraine so far

Although Ukraine has received military and economic support from Western powers since Russia's invasion, many countries in Africa, Asia and South America have stayed on the sidelines.

Some are historically sympathetic to Russia, some are concerned about the economic costs of the war, and others believe the West is prolonging the fighting unnecessarily.

But Mr Kuleba made clear that countries which failed to support Ukraine now - those, he said, which had "misbehaved in the course of this war and mistreated Ukraine", would pay a price in the future.

Ukraine may well be dependent on Western aid and military support in the medium to long term and so its diplomatic disapproval may not worry some countries. But in peacetime Ukraine's huge grain exports give it substantial economic leverage, particularly in parts of the developing world.

"If anyone in the world thinks that the way this or that country behaved - or treated Ukraine at the darkest moment of its history - will not be taken into account in building future relations, these people just don't know how diplomacy works," he said.

"War is a time when you have to make a choice. And every choice has been recorded."

Ukraine is using vast amounts of shells and ammunition to defend itself - and needs even more

Mr Kuleba said Western allies were not giving Ukraine military support fast enough because they had not been ready for a conflict on the same scale as World War One. And what he needed was



Zelenskyy



Guterres

going to die on the front line. "It means that someone who could have been still alive is going to die." Nowhere has the demand for ammunition been greater than

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky, even though Beijing confirmed on Friday that China's leader is to visit Moscow next week.

Mr Kuleba said his president was ready for a telephone conversation with Mr Xi and added: "I don't think China has reached the moment now... when it's ready to arm Russia."

As for the United States, some analysts have speculated support for Ukraine might reduce after next year's presidential elections. But Mr Kuleba said: "I think we can survive any Republican voice", and insisted "the biggest luxury that Ukraine enjoys in the United States is the bipartisan support in both Democratic and Republican camps".

As his country's top diplomat, Dmytro Kuleba remains quietly confident Ukraine can maintain the backing of the allies that count: the ones which provide tangible support.

And, he says, Ukraine has one crucial factor on its side: "Historically, Ukraine was unfairly under-appreciated, and I regret it took a bloodshed and a devastating war for the world to realise how cool we are."

"And we will always be cool. But it just took you too much time to realise that."

Source: BBC.

China, too, has thus far resisted Ukraine's lobbying for a meeting between China's President Xi Jinping and

INTERNATIONAL

China's Xi meets Putin in Moscow



Putin and China Xi discussing

CHINA'S President Xi Jinping will travel to Moscow next week to hold talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin, officials say.

The Kremlin said they would discuss a "comprehensive partnership and strategic co-operation".

The visit comes as Beijing, an ally of Russia, has offered proposals to end the war in Ukraine, to which the West has given a lukewarm reception.

Western countries have warned Beijing against supplying Moscow with weapons.

Beijing's foreign ministry said Mr Xi will be in Russia from 20 to 22 March at the invitation of Mr Putin.

China's foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said China would uphold "an objective and fair position" on the war in Ukraine and "play a constructive role in promoting talks for peace".

China's peace proposals called for peace negotiations and respect for national sovereignty. But the 12-point document did not specifically say that Russia must withdraw its troops from Ukraine.

In February Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said he wanted to meet Mr Xi - "I really want to believe that China will not supply weapons to Russia," he said.

Some US media have reported that Mr Xi and Mr Zelensky will speak by phone after the Chinese leader's visit to Moscow, but this is yet to be confirmed.

Kyiv has been pushing hard for some kind of engagement. Ukraine believes President Xi is making the visit to send a signal to the world that Russia has at least some allies.

In an interview with the BBC before President Xi's visit was announced, Mr Kuleba said: "I don't think China has reached the moment now when it wants to, when it's ready to arm Russia. Nor do I think that this visit will result in peace... The visit to Moscow in itself is a message but I don't think it will have any immediate consequences."

The message, Mr Kuleba said, was "that China and Russia are very close, close enough for the Chinese leader to visit his Russian counterpart, who is not doing very well."

"And I think this is the message to the entire world, to the West but also most importantly, to the non-West, that Russia is not alone, that China is talking to them."

The US is keen for Mr Xi and Mr Zelensky to be in contact. US National Security Council spokesman said it would be "a very good thing if the two of them talk".

Meanwhile, China's foreign minister on Thursday urged Kyiv and Moscow to restart peace talks as soon as possible during a phone call with Mr Kuleba, who in turn said the two had discussed the "significance of the principle of territorial integrity".

Health experts have been dispatched to diagnose the disease. Image caption: Health experts have been dispatched to diagnose the disease.

At least five people have died in north-west Tanzania

from an unidentified illness, officials say.

Seven cases have so far been reported in Kagera region and the authorities have dispatched a team of doctors to diagnose the disease.

Health authorities in the East African country have described the illness as strange.

Its symptoms include fever, headaches, fatigue and nosebleeds, according to the government's chief medical officer Tumaini Nagu.

"The government formed a regional team of professionals under the Rapid Response Team who are investigating this unknown disease," Prof Nagu said on Thursday evening.

She asked residents in the area to remain calm and avoid contact with infected people.

In July last year, more than 20 cases with similar symptoms were reported in the southern Lindi region. Three people died from the outbreak.

Investigations later identified the disease as leptospirosis, also known as Weil's disease.

SECRETARY of State Antony Blinken has said the United States and its Western allies must show they "can deliver results" in the Sahel region of Africa, amid the growing influence of the Russian Wagner mercenary group.

Speaking during a historic trip to Niger, Blinken said Washington has pursued a "comprehensive" approach that focuses on security but also "on good governance, on development, upon creating opportunity on being responsive to the needs of people".

"I think that is exactly the difference maker," Blinken said during a joint press conference with Nigerien Foreign Minister Hassoumi Massaoudou, striking a contrast with what the Wagner Group could offer



Biden

US must show results to Sahel

the region.

"We've already seen it end badly in a number of places," Blinken said of the group's interventions. "Where Wagner has been present, bad things have been inevitable."

The trip marks the first time a US secretary of state has visited the country. Earlier in the day, Blinken met with Niger's President Mohamed Bazoum and announced a raft of regional initiatives, including \$150m in new humanitarian assistance for the Sahel, bringing the total to \$233m for the fiscal year, according to the US Department of State.

Blinken's trip to Niger follows his visit, earlier this week, to

the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa and is part of a wider pledge by US President Joe Biden's administration to better engage with Africa.

It also comes as widespread disillusionment over European involvement in the region has grown, stoked in part by successive military coups in neighbouring Mali and Burkina Faso.

When asked about that disillusionment on Thursday, Blinken said: "It is incumbent upon us to demonstrate — through this much more comprehensive approach that we're taking towards insecurity — that we can actually deliver results."

In 2022, French troops and a French-led European Union force withdrew from Mali, where France first intervened following a rebel movement in the country's north in 2012. French troops also withdrew from Burkina Faso in February.

The Malian government has increasingly relied on the Russian Wagner Group as it has sought to stem the violence in its vast central region, which borders Niger and Burkina Faso.

North Korea confirms firing 'monster missile'

NORTH Korea has confirmed it fired an intercontinental ballistic missile and that it was the Hwasong-17, known as the country's "monster missile".

The launch of the banned missile was detected by neighbours South Korea and Japan on Thursday, hours before South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol was due to fly to Tokyo for a summit with Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida.

It was the latest in a series of weapons tests that have coincided with Freedom Shield — the large-scale joint military exercises between the United States and South Korea that began on Monday and that Pyongyang regards as a rehearsal for invasion.

Confirming the ICBM test on Friday, North Korea's state media said it was intended to demonstrate a "tough response posture" and was a response to the "provocative and aggressive" military drills.

Pyongyang said the missile travelled at a maximum altitude of some 6,000 km (3,700 miles) and flew some 1,000 km (620 miles) "before

accurately landing on the preset area in the open waters

Photos accompanying the reports in state media showed North Korean leader Kim Jong Un watching the launch with his daughter and included pictures from space apparently shot by a camera mounted on the missile.

"The launching drill of the strategic weapon serves as an

occasion to give a stronger warning to the enemies intentionally escalating the tension in the Korean peninsula while persistently resorting to irresponsible and reckless military threats," state news agency KCNA said.

Seoul and Washington have ramped up defence cooperation in the face of growing military and nuclear

threats from North Korea, which conducted a record number of weapons tests in 2022 as it stepped up its military modernisation campaign.

This week it has tested short-range ballistic missiles and strategic cruise missiles from a submarine.

On Friday, the US and South

Korea announced they would begin the Ssangyong large scale amphibious landing exercises from March 20, with 40 British Marines also taking part. Like Freedom Shield, the amphibious exercises have been suspended since 2018 as part of the attempt to make progress on North Korean denuclearisation.

Cyclone Freddy-Malawi's president appeals for aid

PRESIDENT Lazarus Chakwera of Malawi has appealed to the international community to send urgent help to the southern African nation, which has been ravaged by storms that have killed more than 300 people and displaced hundreds of thousands more.

"We need immediate help," he told Al Jazeera on Thursday from outside a camp in Blantyre, Malawi's commercial capital and one of the areas hardest hit. "We need helicopters now that [the storms have] cleared off somewhat so that we can airlift some foodstuffs and other equipment."

Tropical Cyclone Freddy hit

the coast of southern Africa for a second time over the weekend, causing devastation in Malawi and its neighbour Mozambique. At least 326 people have been confirmed dead in Malawi, bringing the overall number of fatalities across the region to more than 400 since February.

Chakwera, who declared 14 days of mourning and pledged \$1.5m in assistance, has now called for more aid, saying the country's capacity to provide relief is limited.

"Climate change is real, and what we are having to see is devastation," the president said. "Thirteen months, three devastating cyclones. We are trying to do the best we can to pull ourselves by [our] bootstraps."

As climate change causes warmer oceans, heat energy from the water's surface is fuelling stronger storms. Freddy broke the world record for most accumulated cyclone energy, a measure based on a storm's wind strength over its lifetime. Meteorologists say it might break two more records.

Chakwera said recovering from such a storm cannot happen without international help. "What is happening to us can happen to anyone, anywhere," he said. "Let the



Chakwera

world come in and help Malawi because we cannot afford to be going backwards instead of forward in terms of all the provisions that Malawians need."

Rasmane Kabore, emergency coordinator for Doctors Without Borders in Blantyre, said the most pressing issue was the lack of clean water, which could cause a cholera outbreak like the aftermath of Cyclone Anna in the country's south last year.

In his interview with Al Jazeera, Chakwera

concurred, calling for shelter, blankets and amenities that will help with water and sanitation provision to the people because we do not want another outbreak of waterborne diseases".

Earlier on Thursday, Yusuf Nthenda, member of parliament for Mulanje West, told Al Jazeera correspondent Fahmida Miller that the community had yet to receive any aid and some of his constituents had no food to eat.



Kim Jong



Black musicians who changed the world

Naomi Cowan is an international singer and songwriter who has performed in Jamaica, Trinidad, New York, Toronto, and Miami. She was raised by reggae music producer, songwriter, and former road manager for Bob Marley, Tommy Cowan and reggae artist Dr. Carlene Davis-Cowan, OD. In 2019, her hit "Paradise Plum" brought her to the top of reggae charts and Naomi was awarded Breakthrough Reggae Artist of 2018. Her other achievements include the 2019 Brand Ambassador for the Bob Marley Foundation, opening for Grammy-award winning R&B artist Estelle, gracing the cover of Buzz Magazine's April issue, performing on the 2018 Reggae Sumfest, and collaborating with UK-based Fashion brand Coconautical on a Topshop promotion. As a former Miss Teen Jamaica, Naomi works to empower high school girls in Toronto and Jamaica as a speaker on the We Inspire Girls to be Strong Women tour, an island-wide initiative endorsed by the Ministry of Education.



Tell us about your background. How did you get started in the entertainment industry?

Really hard to say when I got started in entertainment because I feel like I was born into it and I've been on the road and in-studio with my mom ever since I can remember. However, I would say – perhaps when I started doing commercial & TV modelling was when I started to actually 'work' in the industry for myself... and earn money.

Also, tell us about the Jump from Miss Teen Jamaica to modeling to singing.

Wouldn't call it a jump, just a transition. I consider myself a 'multi-potentialite' (Google it. Lol.) and I've found that it's most fulfilling for me to spend my life exercising all of my gifts and talents – ensuring that I give each one an opportunity to shine, also deep down knowing that there are a few primary gifts that will be used the most... my journey has brought me to being a



full-time artist and singer and I couldn't be happier.

So funny, every time I wear my hair out in an Afro – people ask me if I'm a model... then when I crack jokes, others ask me if I'm an actress and then, of course, there are those who know that I'm a singer because of the rasp in my voice... the way I see it I'm a voice... and I like it that way.

How would you describe your sound?
Sweet and fresh.

Tell us about your song "Paradise Plum"? Did you write the song? What was your inspiration to write the song?

Paradise Plum describes an organic connection between two people. I call it when you've got that 'click' with someone – without trying too hard (hence the line 'You never put up a fight no').

It was inspired by a yute I met overseas a few years ago, we never ended up properly dating or anything, but I felt so inspired by our connection. It was very easy for us to be around each other, we never had to do much small talk – we could just chill... and it was so refreshing. I thought about him for a few months. Lol... Very rare to come across those kinds of connections.

I then co-wrote the song with Sarah Couch, a member of the DejaVilla band, produced by Teflon Zinfence.

What is the best compliment you have gotten about the "Paradise Plum" song?

That it's stuck in people's heads and they can't stop singing it.

You have a few singles out there. When can we expect your album to be released?

Look out for an EP in March 2020! My new single comes out November 2019.

Do you remember the first time you ever got on a stage to perform? Where was it and what did it feel like?

Hmm... my earliest memory wasn't the most positive one to be honest. I remember being about 5 or 6 singing at a school concert. I was

Continued on page 26

Most influential black musicians of all time



This week at MI, we're celebrating Black History Month in the only way we know how—with some awesome music. Music is a rich part of black history in this country and the priceless records speak for themselves. From jazz to soul, from Bob Marley to James Brown, these artists have touched the hearts of many. So let's celebrate this Black History Month by remembering five of the most epic black musicians of all time. Will your favorite be on the list?

Muddy Waters: The Godfather of Modern Blues



Muddy Waters, originally McKinley Morganfield, was a major player in the post-war blues scene and has become famed as the godfather of the modern Chicago blues. After growing up on Mississippi's Stovall Plantation, he moved to Chicago and recorded his first record for Columbia and Aristocrat records in 1946.

Muddy Waters and his band were to become a rudimentary influence on British music after visiting England in 1958.

Fun Fact: Did you know that the Rolling Stones named themselves after Muddy Waters' 1950 song, Rolling Stone?

Nat King Cole: The King of Jazz Piano



Nat King Cole is a true great in the world of jazz piano. Cole's influential career is a testament to his talents as a pianist and performer par excellence. By the age of 12, Cole was playing the

Continued on page 26

EVIE'S WORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Health

TINNITUS, or ringing in the ears, can be caused by many things. But it isn't a disease. It's a symptom of another health problem.

Why you have Tinnitus

What causes the ringing? Usually it's from damage to tiny hairs in your inner ear. That changes the signals they send to your brain that control how you hear sound. You might get tinnitus as a normal part of aging, but there are other causes. It could be temporary, or it might last for the rest of your life.

Tinnitus Triggers
Age-related hearing loss: For many people, hearing gets worse as you age. This usually begins around 60. It usually affects both ears. You'll probably notice a problem with high-frequency sounds.

Loud noises: Loud noises are a leading cause. It could be something you hear every day for years, or something that only happens once. That includes everything from concerts and sporting events to loud machinery and backfiring engines. They can affect one or both ears, and they may cause hearing loss and pain. The damage can be permanent or temporary.



Too much earwax: Your body makes this gunky stuff to trap dirt and protect your ears. But if it doesn't wash

away on its own and too much piles up, it could lead to ringing or hearing loss. Your doctor can remove the buildup gently. Don't grab a cotton swab and try to do it yourself.

Certain medicines: Prescription and over-the-counter drugs can trigger ringing or make it louder. This includes aspirin, diuretics, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), quinine-based medication, and certain antibiotics, antidepressants, and cancer drugs. Usually the stronger the dose, the greater your chance of problems. Often if you stop the drug, your symptoms will go away. See your doctor if you think a drug may be to blame. But don't stop taking any medication without talking to your doctor first.

Ear and sinus infections: You might notice tinnitus when

better after a week or so, see your doctor.

TMJ: Problems with your jaw or temporomandibular joint (TMJ) can cause tinnitus. You might notice popping or pain in the joint when you chew or talk. The joint shares some nerves and ligaments with your middle ear. A dentist can treat TMJ disorders and help keep ear ringing from getting worse.

Blood pressure issues: This can include high blood pressure and things that raise it in the short term, like stress, alcohol, and caffeine. Hardening of the arteries can also play a role. Blood vessels close to your middle and inner ear become less stretchy, so your blood flow is stronger and seems louder. This is what is known as a pulsatile tinnitus.

Other medical problems: These include changes in your inner ear bones, an inner ear disorder called Meniere's disease, or head and neck injuries. Conditions like fibromyalgia and Lyme disease also can trigger ear ringing. Your doctor will help you figure out the cause and ease the sounds.

Source: HealthNews.com



THE SOW WORLD

With *Henrietta Gonzuk*

Living

Natural hair do's and don'ts for children

GENTLE and damage-free scalp and hair care is important for your child's natural hair health. Here is our list of Natural Hair Do's & Don'ts For Children, starting with the Do's.

Moisturize your child's natural hair daily

Your child's hair just like the rest of their body, needs water. When the body doesn't get enough water it gets dehydrated and this affects its ability to function properly. Similarly, the hair gets thirsty if it doesn't get water, and this leads to hair breakage. Unlike the scalp, hair doesn't get water internally through drinking it, it has to be sprayed onto the hair. It's important to moisturize it daily. A moisturizer must have water as the main ingredient.

Sleep with satin bonnet/pillowcase

Cotton dehydrates your child's natural hair leaving it dry and brittle and prone to breakage. While satin helps maintain your hair's moisture because it prevents friction and frizz. During colder months choose satin-lined hair accessories (hats, beanies,



be handled differently from adults, with less handling and manipulation to protect their tender scalps and hair. Alternating between plaits (that take longer, with more cornrows) and quick, light styles is recommended to give

damaging natural hair habits as it is to do the correct ones. Here's our list of 5 Don'ts of Child Natural Hair Care.

Don't undo and plait on the same day

Your child's scalp needs gentle

health. Thin plaits put excessive tension on your child's tender scalp and may result in damaged hair follicles, thinning hair, and poor hair growth. Choose child appropriate hairstyles and avoid thin plaits.

strip the hair of its natural oils making it dry and brittle. While parabens are preservatives known to disrupt hormone function. Applying mineral oil to your child's hair may reduce the amount of water their hair absorbs, resulting in dryness



etc).

Wash your child's hair every 2 weeks

You should wash their natural hair once every two weeks to remove impurities, dirt and hair lint. During active seasons (like swimming season at school), you might want to wash their hair once a week or more often. Include a detox treatment at the salon once in two months to remove product buildup from your child's hair.

Alternate between plaits and light styles

Children's natural hair must

the scalp some breathing time.

Detangle

Keeping your child's hairstyle for long periods of time will result in their natural hair getting more tangled - as natural hair grows it knots and tangles more. This makes detangling harder and more painful. You must detangle their hair every two weeks. Hair left unwashed and not detangled for long periods of time gets more hair lint, which takes long and is stubbornly difficult to remove.

It's as important to stop doing

care, this means giving it some room to breath in between handling it. Removing plaits and immediately plaiting again puts strain on the hair follicles making the scalp very tender which may result in inflammation and traction folliculitis (bumps on the scalp from pulling the hair). To protect your child's scalp, undo plaits a day before plaiting.

Don't do thin plaits

As a busy mum, you may want to do hairstyles that will last long, but it should not be at the cost of your child's scalp

Don't comb your child's hair

Combing is a mechanical action that causes friction and puts your child's fragile hair under tension to break and fall off ... it's also painful. Use only your fingers to comb their hair when it is moisturized. Read more on why you should not comb your child's hair 4. Don't use products with harsh ingredients Products used on your child's hair should be sulphate-free, paraben-free, and mineral oil-free. Sulphates, used in soaps and shampoos,

and breakage. 5. Don't add extensions and use wool There is an alarming increase of traction alopecia (hair loss from long term hair pulling) in children from the use of extensions. Extensions put weight and strain on your child's tender scalp. Plaiting should be done free hand (using their own hair). Wool can absorb up to 30% of its weight in water and still feel dry to the touch. As wool absorbs water molecules it pulls moisture away from the hair, leaving it dry and prone to breakage.



Reality Bites

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Are you taking care of your mental health?

Many people are getting affected with mental health challenges these days.

On the news and social media handles, trending stories and videos of suicide related deaths, physical and mental abuse, and depression is common.

In Nigeria, harsh economic and living conditions, Climate Change, natural disasters especially flooding of many communities that has rendered many homeless including bandits attacks, kidnappings of loved ones, payments of huge ransome, increased insecurity, and incessant strikes, bad road networks, traffic hold-ups, and poor working conditions has affected the normal mental health of citizens.

Global bodies like the United Nations say some mental health challenges like Depression is one of the leading causes of disability, while Suicide is the fourth leading cause of death among 15-29-year-olds.

It states that People with severe mental health conditions die prematurely – as much as two decades early – due to preventable physical conditions.

"Despite progress in some countries, people with mental health conditions often experience severe human rights violations, discrimination, and stigma, but many mental health conditions can be effectively treated at relatively low cost, yet the gap between people needing care and those with access to care remains substantial, and effective treatment coverage remains extremely low".

"However increased investment is required on all fronts, for mental health awareness to increase understanding and reduce stigma; for efforts to increase access to quality mental health



care and effective treatments; and for research to identify new treatments and improve existing treatments for all mental disorders".

Staying strong and refusing to let life's daunting challenges to weigh you down is better than allowing depression to set in, or opting for suicide. Here are ten things you can do for your mental health adapted from the National mental Health Association and the National Council for Community Behavioural Healthcare to keep your balance, or re-balance yourself.

1. Value yourself

Treat yourself with kindness and respect, and avoid self-criticism. Make time for your hobbies and favorite projects, or broaden your horizons. Do a daily crossword puzzle, plant a garden, take dance lessons, learn to play an instrument or become fluent in another language.

2. Take care of your body

Taking care of yourself physically can improve your mental health. Be sure to eat nutritious meals, avoid smoking and vaping, drink plenty of water, exercise, which helps

decrease depression and anxiety and improve moods, get enough sleep. Researchers believe that lack of sleep contributes to a high rate of depression in college students.

3. Surround yourself with good people

People with strong family or social connections are generally healthier than those who lack a support network. Make plans with supportive family members and friends, or seek out activities where you can meet new people, such as a club, class or support group.

4. Give yourself

Volunteer your time and energy to help someone else. You'll feel good about doing something tangible to help someone in need – and it's a great way to meet new people.

5. Learn how to deal with stress

Like it or not, stress is a part of life. Practice good coping skills: Try One-Minute Stress Strategies, do Tai Chi, exercise, take a nature walk, play with your pet or try journal writing as a stress reducer. Also, remember to smile and see the humor in life. Research shows that laughter can boost your immune system, ease pain, relax your body and reduce stress.

6. Quiet your mind

Try meditating, Mindfulness and/or prayer. Relaxation exercises and prayer can improve your state of mind and outlook on life. In fact, research

shows that meditation may help you feel calm and enhance the effects of therapy.

7. Set realistic goals

Decide what you want to achieve academically, professionally and personally, and write down the steps you need to realize your goals. Aim high, but be realistic and don't over-schedule. You'll enjoy a tremendous sense of accomplishment and self-worth as you progress toward your goal.

8. Break up the monotony

Although our routines make us more efficient and enhance our feelings of security and safety, a little change of pace can perk up a tedious schedule. Alter your jogging route, plan a road-trip, take a walk in a different park, hang some new pictures or try a new restaurant.

9. Avoid alcohol and other drugs

Keep alcohol use to a minimum and avoid other drugs. Sometimes people use alcohol and other drugs to "self-medicate" but in reality, alcohol and other drugs only aggravate problems.

10. Get help when you need it

Seeking help is a sign of strength – not a weakness. And it is important to remember that treatment is effective. People who get appropriate care can recover from mental illness and addiction and lead full, rewarding lives.



THE SOW WORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Relationship

How to build lasting relationships

AN essential component of implementation efforts is partners effectively working together. This is easier said than done. The relationships that we have are a direct reflection of learned experiences over periods of time. These relationships are cultivated through live experiences. Partners must build and maintain relationships to continue successful implementation efforts. So how do you build these relationships that are critical to the success of implementation efforts? We have to consider the building blocks of relationships. The three pillars of relationship building are clearly communicated expectations, mutual respect, and trust. If done properly, partners can build healthy and positive relationships, which are a major key to achieving desired outcomes that are mutually agreed upon.

Clear Expectations

The way to guarantee this is to clarify each person's role and responsibilities and clearly define expectations. These expectations must be mutually agreed-upon and communicated. Whether it's a Terms of Reference or a memorandum of understanding, partners must come to a consensus on their ways of work. It is not enough to just set these expectations; it is also important to meet them. Meeting the expectation demonstrates that parties are communicating, which is foundational to building a relationship. Protocols can be used to establish this bi-directional communication. The goal is to ensure that partners understand what is expected and the steps they must take to achieve the agreed-upon outcomes.



Have you ever considered the relationship between people and household plants? People plant seeds, water them and place them in areas to receive sunlight to grow. Humans nurture plants, but how frequently do we consider how plants nurture us? We have photosynthesis which is extremely important. Air purification, stress relief, and improved focus are also benefits of houseplants. This relationship is mutually beneficial to both parties. We have to respect the needs of our plants for them to survive and provide benefits to us. Respect goes a long way in a relationship. Once partners demonstrate that they will hold true to their word and follow through with their responsibilities, mutual respect is earned. Earning respect is extremely difficult, but meeting expectations is a strong lever towards earning that respect. Demonstrating reliability, consistently following through, and meeting expectations

communicates to partners that individuals are upholding their commitment and want to reach outcomes. This approach to reaching the goal communicates to each partner that we respect each other's work and are in this situation together.

Trust

Trust in working relationships takes time and is based on previous experiences. Continually meeting expectations leads to trust. Members of teams have relationships that are extremely important. You have to count on teammates to uphold their roles for the team to be successful. Imagine a spotter on a cheer team has a lapse in focus during a stunt. This could be extremely problematic. These relationships require everyone to focus on the task to achieve a goal. Trust demonstrates that partners have a comfort level of working with one another, that they value each other's work, and believe that

they each will continue to perform their assigned tasks at a high level. As a relationship grows, partners have more opportunities to show that they have the willingness to take the necessary steps required to get to the desired outcome, which over time, leads to and maintains trust. This communicates that partners not only value their own work but the work of the whole, which by design will lead to positive outcomes.

Closing

Relationships matter and are the key to successful implementation. Practitioners must understand that relationship building is not an easy task, but that it takes time to build. Much like building a home, it requires a strong foundation and the belief that relationships are the foundation of implementation

efforts. It is not enough just to build the relationship, it must be maintained and sustained. Building and sustaining relationships is an extremely important component of successful implementation efforts. The work can only happen with clearly defined and communicated expectations, mutual respect, and trust. Whether you are a pet parent, a plant owner, or on a cheer team, we know that meeting agreed-upon expectations leads to respect, and respect leads to trust. Combined, these three pillars are the foundational components to build positive relationships that last and lead to achieving outcomes. **Source: Relationships.org.**



BUSINESS WORLD

NASENI: Pathway to Nigeria's industrialisation?

The National Agency for Science and Engineering Infrastructure (NASENI) was established in 1992 by the federal government with specific mandates in the areas of capital goods, research, production and reverse engineering. In this piece examines how far it has gone in achieving the set objectives. ABDULLAHI M. GULLOMA writes.

NASENI, by its mandate and scope of operation, is the country's only agency established to conduct development works in the areas of manufacturing.

It's capable of coordinating the proliferation of technologies developed either within or outside of its centres, including patents obtained. Technologies developed in the areas of spares, components and systems engineering are to be transferred to entrepreneurs for the production of goods and services.

Thus, the country can have the benefit of a rapid technological development by strengthening NASENI since the mission of NASENI is to establish and nurture appropriate and dynamic science and engineering infrastructure base for achieving locally based and sustained industrialisation through the development of relevant processes, capital goods and equipment necessary for job creation, national economic well-being and progress.

Initiatives

In a bid to fulfill its mandate, NASENI established various development institutes in order to standardise made in Nigerian products and make them globally competitive. In this light, therefore, people from the six geo-political zones of the country will receive training in modern farming techniques.

The programme is part of President Muhammadu Buhari's directive to NASENI to introduce modern techniques in farming with 100 youths from each of the six geo-political zones of the country as participants.

At the occasion of the launch of the empowerment training programme in Kebbi state, the chief executive of NASENI, Prof. Haruna Sani, said the programme was introduced to aid agriculture and the economic diversification plan of the country. "The exercise was a mission accomplished and a sign of the seriousness of the administration to empower the youths and also to lift Nigeria's agriculture away from mere subsistence," he said.

Haruna stressed the importance of agriculture to nations' development, saying that the developed countries initially prioritised agriculture using modern techniques, science and innovations to become industrialised.

The chairman of the Occasion, the Attorney General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Mr. Abubakar Malami, said the President is determined to tackle the high rate of youth unemployment, poverty and especially food insecurity and also industrially transform the country.

The target of 100 youths per geo-political zone of the country, he said, is intended to take the youths off the streets, address youth restiveness and increase food security through the introduction of modern farming practices to attract young people.

"Seventy percent of Nigerian youths and workforce live in the rural areas and, therefore, targeting them with new farm implements and techniques by NASENI is like putting a round peg in a round hole," the minister said.

Of course, the aim of this programme is none other than the need to make farming in the country an all-year activity, not seasonal anymore, and increase yields.

Nigeria, China partnership



Sani

Again, it is in line with the industrialisation and economic diversification agenda of the federal government that NASENI, in partnership with the China Great Wall Industry Corporation (CGWIC) will, in September this year, carry out the ground-breaking and foundation laying ceremony for the establishment of a first class transformer production plant in Nigeria. If established, the plant will be the first of its kind in Nigeria and second in Africa.

The management of the Chinese team has met with the Executive Vice Chairman of NASENI to finalise arrangements for the September 2022 ceremony, directed by President Muhammadu Buhari, who doubles as the Chairman of the Governing Board of NASENI.

The leader of the Chinese delegation and chairman, Liaoning Huaye Group Development Limited, Anshan, Ma Liming, said during the working visit to NASENI that Nigeria and China had a long lasting relationship which led to the signing of the agreement on building of the first transformer manufacturing plant in the country.

He said the partnership also resulted in the training of 60 NASENI engineers on the transformer production line and high voltage testing laboratory plant.

There is no doubt that this development comes at the apt moment for no nation can develop without being independent as far as the issues of its power generation and supply are concerned. Thankfully, the upcoming programme will lead to the establishment, also, of a solar cell manufacturing plant in Nigeria aimed at popularising renewable energy in

the country.

Hopefully, NASENI and China would continue to work together to ensure the attainment of the realisation of the power needs of the country without which Nigeria cannot industrialise.

Thankfully, too, more than 50% of the 15% counterpart fund to be paid by the federal government on the establishment of a transformer plant in Nigeria has been paid and the ground-breaking and foundation laying ceremony of the project will be done by the President.

No doubt, for any nation to offer permanent solutions to the issue of power supply, it must have its own high voltage testing laboratory, which is what this project is also expected to achieve for Nigeria and when the plant effectively takes-off, it will be run by trained Nigerian engineers and scientists.

Indeed, NASENI is driving the project in line with its mandate to provide capital goods and equipment, including machinery, to offer a solid foundation for the industrial development of the country.

NASENI boss' assurances
Little or no wonder, Prof. Haruna said: "We are in this for the purpose of ensuring that Nigeria becomes one of the countries in the world with steady power supply which is an essential ingredient for industrialisation."

The executive vice-chairman of NASENI said due to the importance which the agency placed on solar energy, 98 NASENI engineers will be trained on solar cell modular production in China with local engineers expected to go to the Asian country in September to commence training.

research and innovation of manufacturing companies and innovative institutions, with Nigeria becoming one of the new beneficiaries of the programme.

Speaking at the programme launch, the NASENI boss said the Call for Public Proposal for the Delta-2 programme is one of the projects to be implemented under the bilateral agreement between the two countries.

According to him, the priority areas of the MoU which include biotechnology and pharmaceutical research, agriculture and food technology, mining industrial development, among others, were unable to take-off earlier due to bureaucracy until the Presidential Implementation Committee (PICTT) on Technology Transfer/Information Exchange between Nigeria and Czech Republic was inaugurated by President Muhammed Buhari in November 2020.

He said: "The PICTT would be sourcing technologies from the Czech Republic's manufacturing companies; tertiary; research; and development institutions. The sum of CZK 250 million (250 million Czech Koruna, approximately US\$10.5 million) has been allocated as research fund by the government of the Czech Republic, through the TA CR and will be supplemented by NASENI on behalf of the Federal Government of Nigeria to the sum of 2,000,000,000 or US\$5.7 million."

Already, 284 public proposals for Delta-2 programme have been submitted for screening. It is, therefore, hoped that the committee members would ensure that the important projects leading to Made-in-Nigeria technologies and products are selected from the companies to transform the country and to kick-start the country's industrial revolution.

According to the PIC's terms of reference, the committee is expected to work collaboratively with relevant stakeholders and partners to ignite a process of fostering growth and expansion of infrastructure, manufacturing and innovation in Nigeria.

Of course, the roles the government is expected to play in the bid to industrialise Nigeria cannot be underestimated. After all, Dr. Osita Ogbu, the erstwhile economic adviser to ex-president Olusegun Obasanjo, once said, "There exists incontrovertible evidence that development is not driven by savings but by inventiveness, innovation and ideas generated through science and technology and the principal anchor and leader of this process must be the government."

This adage fitted well with the recent active roles being played by the government and, in particular, President Buhari, who gives crucial directives to NASENI regarding his administration's promise of providing millions of jobs to Nigerians, especially the youth, and developing the country.

New dawn

Thus, with the current goings on in NASENI, it can be said that, indeed a new dawn has emerged to redesign Nigeria's economic transformation pathway and strategies for the nation's economic development while science, engineering, technology and innovation sector provides the new direction.

Source: Blueprint.

Undoubtedly, the benefits of having a local solar cell manufacturing plant in the country are enormous. Of course, getting electricity from multiple sources is essential for a populous country like Nigeria and if the country can have the solar cell production plant on its shores, have steady light and even transmit to other African countries, all the merrier.

MoU

Boosted by the performance of NASENI and the imperative for infrastructure development, as part of the economic diversification initiatives of the Buhari-led administration, the federal government and the Czech Republic launched a Call for Public Proposals on Delta-2 Programme worth \$16.2 million co-funding research and development projects.

The intended programme to be birthed by the MoU, known as the Delta-2 Project, is to be assessed by the committee with inputs from Nigerian companies. Hopefully, this initiative will lead to building and expansion of infrastructure, manufacturing programmes and innovations in Nigeria and, ultimately, what will come to be known as the "Made-in-Nigeria" technologies and products.

According to the chairman of the Presidential Implementation Committee of Transfer of Technology between Nigeria and Czech Republic (PICTT), Dr. Mohammed Dahiru, more than 200 Nigerian companies have applied to take part in the Delta-2 project.

The Delta-2 programme is the cooperation model of the Technology Agency of Czech Republic, TA CR, running from 2020-2025, through which the TA CR sponsors applied

BUSINESS WORLD

Why I signed Business Facilitation Bill into law – Buhari

PRESIDENT Muhammadu Buhari has declared that for any economy to grow and create jobs, an equally vibrant and successful small and medium enterprise sector was also needed, adding that it was for this reason that he recently signed the Business Facilitation Bill into law.

President Buhari spoke at State House, Abuja, on Thursday as he received the Governing Council and members of the Institute of Directors led by its President and Chairman, Dr. Mrs Ije Jidenma.

"I was particularly interested to learn that you not only cater to large corporates, but are aware that for any economy to grow and create jobs, we need an equally vibrant and successful small and medium enterprise sector.

"This administration has, despite the difficult times brought upon us by a variety of external shocks, done much to ensure survival and development of SMEs.

"It is also my pleasure to share with you that your visit comes just a month after I signed into law the Business Facilitation Bill which eases various constraints for micro, small and medium sized enterprises. I am confident that this act will go some way in improving our business environment especially for the MSMEs," said the President.

President Buhari while congratulating the Institute on attaining the milestone of 40 years, noted its commitment to nation building, stressing the values of transparency and good business ethics. He urged all stakeholders to recognise the noble roles that the Institute can play in the provision of the support base for the development of the economy.

"Let me congratulate the Institute on attaining this very important milestone of 40 years in existence. This is certainly a proud moment not just for the Institute, but for the nation as it signifies your commitment towards the objective of improved corporate governance, ethical business practices, improved corporate governance and transparency.

"These values are not just important pillars in the private sphere. They are also the keys to success in governance in the public sector, where the people have handed to us in trust, the responsibility to lead, guide and protect them.

"As our economy and conversely our private sector continues to grow and evolve, it behooves all stakeholders to recognize that such a resourceful institution not only exists, but is equipped and capable of providing the necessary support and development for the country."

In her remarks, Dr. Jidenma noted that the reforms executed in various sectors of the Nigerian economy in the past eight years have increased expectations on the performance of business leaders and boards of public sector organisations.

This, the President of the Council noted, has made the Institute poised to sustain its leadership role in the orientation and capacity development for



Buhari

these Directors so that they can deliver on the mandates given to them.

Dr Jidenma stated that the Institute had gained insights on areas that needed further action towards being

'Chartered,' and having interfaced with the National Assembly and relevant stakeholders, requested for the President's kind consideration and assent when the Bill gets transmitted to him.

Dr Jidenma stated that the Institute had gained insights on areas that needed further action towards being

market size is estimated to reach \$8.09 billion dollars in 2028.

"Nigeria is ranked as the largest charcoal producer in Africa and second largest in the world, and as of 2020, Brazil, Nigeria and Ethiopia, produced 6.3 million tonnes, 4.8 million tonnes and 4.7 million tonnes respectively, and shared 29 per cent of the global production.

"The global review of economic indicator by the World Bank in 2020, noted that, Indonesia, China, Poland, Nigeria and Ukraine were the world's largest exporters of charcoal with export earnings of \$289 million, \$153 million, \$90.8 million, \$75.7 million and \$74.7 million, respectively.

"The rating is good for the nation's economic growth provided the nation sustains it, through the establishment of more private forest estates and aggressive afforestation programmes sustainability," Edu said.

He said the association was passionate and committed to afforestation and reforestation noting they were the keys to sustainable forestry and charcoal business.

"The United States of America and China are developing and promoting wood charcoal sub-sector due to its economic uses in medicine, cosmetics, industry and household, and Nigeria cannot be an exception.

"The focus of NACPDEAN is to fully embark on agrisilviculture (integration of trees and crops), establishment of more private indigenous plantations and creation of industrial alternative charcoal that will not come from wood but shafts and waste for the economic growth and development of Nigeria", he said.

The president added that the purpose of the event was to engage the stakeholders on the need for Charcoal National Association's Compliance Requirement for all charcoal stakeholders along the value chain.

This, he said, was to enable the private stakeholders to replace the trees that were cut for exportation by ensuring aggressive afforestation and reforestation projects, since only the government cannot handle afforestation in the country.

Other government agencies represented at the event include Nigerian Shippers' Council, National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency, Nigeria Customs Service, Raw Materials Research and Development

THE Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) said Africa's economy could experience positive growth if its multiple shocks were adequately addressed.

In a statement, Mr Adam Elhiraika, ECA Director, Macroeconomics and Governance Division, said this at the ongoing experts meeting in Ethiopia.

Elhiraika said an overview of the recent economic and social developments in Africa by ECA centred on the complex economic and financial picture on the confluence of shocks that slowed down the global economy.

He said these shocks included the COVID-19 pandemic impact, the rise in prices fueled by Ukraine's conflict, and extreme weather patterns.

"The result is that Africa currently accounts for the largest share of the world's poor, with 149 million previously non-poor Africans now facing the risk of falling into poverty.

"The global picture is different. In 2022, Africa saw the fastest expansion among developing world countries after East and South Asia.

"This is due to improvements in East, North and West African sub-regions, which drove Africa's overall growth.

Addressing multiple shocks will grow Africa's economy-ECA



Ahmed

"We can project, based on our analysis, that East African countries will continue to show improvements, driven by the rebound of service and industrial activity.

He said North Africa's growth

was expected to accelerate from 3.9 per cent in 2022 to 4.8 per cent in 2023 because of increased import demands in the Eurozone.

According to the director, this will increase demand for exports from North African countries, adding that the number of tourist arrivals and remittance inflows will also rise.

Elhiraika explained that Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia were expected to experience positive effects as they conducted higher levels of trade with the Eurozone.

He said that in Central Africa, strong domestic production in Cameroon and Gabon contributed to Africa's growth in the push to respond to the global increase in oil prices.

He said Senegal, in West Africa, was expected to continue experiencing remarkable improvements in its growth rate in 2023.

The director said this was due to the commencement of hydrocarbon exports, coinciding with rising natural gas prices.

He said West Africa's growth would rise slightly to 3.8 per cent in 2023, while Southern Africa, led by South Africa, would have slow growth with a 2.8 per cent average.

"Ultimately, governments need effective coordination between monetary and fiscal policy; this is critical for reducing inflation while shielding the most vulnerable households.

"Moreover, to make inroads in meeting the SDGs, governments need to improve macroeconomic fundamentals and deepen structural transformation.

"They also need to enhance domestic resource mobilisation, reduce illicit financial flows and integrate innovative mechanisms and instruments such as green financing and carbon markets to spur and stimulate investments.

Elhiraika said change needed to go beyond the national level.

According to him, reforming the global financial architecture is key to accessing the much-needed affordable long-term financing with better lending terms by multilateral development banks.

"Liquidity and Sustainability Facility and the Common Framework for Debt Treatments beyond the Debt Service Suspension Initiative could grant access to lower borrowing costs and allow African Governments to meet the SDGs."(NAN.)

Stakeholders back afforestation for charcoal trade, export

THE National Association of Charcoal Producers, Dealers, Exporters and Afforestation of Nigeria (NACPDEAN) and stakeholders have stressed the need for aggressive afforestation and reforestation in sustaining the charcoal sub-sector.

They made the call at a stakeholders consultative meeting with government agencies organised by NACPDEAN, on Thursday in Lagos.

The event had the theme: "Sustainable Afforestation and Reforestation for Nigeria's Posterity."

The stakeholders said the call became necessary to increase the contribution of the charcoal sub-sector to the diversification drive of the economy, from oil to non-oil exports.

Afforestation is the process of planting trees in new areas not previously covered by trees, thereby creating new forest. Reforestation is the process of planting trees in forests that have experienced decrease in the number of trees.

The National President, NACPDEAN, Mr Babatunde Edu, said the event was designed to reposition the charcoal sub-sector as one of the drivers of the economy.

Edu added that it was organised to facilitate the aggressive planting of trees and conversion of wastes to domestic and industrial charcoals.

He said the discussions would go a long way in opening the economy to local and foreign investors in the afforestation and reforestation programmes, while encouraging entrepreneurial development and self-reliance.

"Charcoal is an exportable commodity, and its global market in 2021 was valued at \$6.05 billion dollars, \$5.98 billion in 2020, and the



Adebayo

ENTREPRENEUR WATCH

WITH CELESTINE D. ATTSAR

Key features of a successful family enterprise

Family enterprises form the majority of businesses large and small in every country in the world, but relatively few are able to sustain multigenerational success. DENNIS JAFFE Writes

THOSE that do, however, evolving to meet the challenges they face while holding on to the narratives that tie them together, share some common features – practices and policies that have helped them navigate the last century and more.

Through our multi-year project interviewing centenarian family enterprises around the globe, we've gained insight into the mechanisms that sustain them. Even if these features are constantly evolving and expressed in a variety of ways, these families have all defined their values and purpose, innovated across generations, expressed their social vision in philanthropy and sustainable initiatives, created family learning activities and a family council and passed their values, capabilities and commitment to the next generation.

We call the 100-year families interviewed "generative" because they continue to create further wealth, both financial and non-financial, over generations. The seven key features of their success are:

1. Build a great family tribe

After creating great wealth, the family made a decision to invest in building a "great family" to use their wealth to develop capability and responsible behaviour in succeeding generations. They can be seen as tribes, or clans, with members dispersing but sharing common values and purpose as business and financial partners. Their definition of family is inclusive and expansive and often extends to include their employees, key advisors and even their home community.

2. Culture change to transparency and collaboration

The family originates with a paternalistic orientation, taking care of family members, but by



the second or third generation, the culture shifts to become more transparent, open and collaborative. This entails having clear policies, practices and organisation to set goals, define leadership, make decisions and hold people accountable. The family culture shifts from family to business first, a more professional orientation to business and investment and also toward transparency and collaboration.

3. Resilience

These families are continually changing and adapting as their internal and external circumstances change. They evolve from a single legacy business, often to sell it and become a family office including multiple assets and a foundation.

4. Values-based

New generations turn attention to implementing the family's values and its social commitment. It links its values

to its business and investment practices and becomes involved in philanthropic ventures. These build the identity and commitment of the family to remain together.

5. Family and business governance

They separate family from business affairs. They organise and make decisions about family activities such as shared education, family gatherings, use of family assets and special places, celebrating their legacy and getting to know each other deeply. There is consensus that families should form family councils and boards with independent members, family constitutions and that highly specific trust ownership are all best practices for families.

The development of family governance is parallel and interconnected with their business governance. It engages new family leaders and adds to the shared "capital" of the family.

6. Generative stakeholder alliance

Three groups of stakeholders are essential to resiliency:

- Elders: hold the legacy, wisdom and core values.
- Advisors: professionals who help the family develop business discipline and professionalism.
- Rising Generation:

young people who are the future, with their own values and global experience.

The successful generative family enables each group to have a voice and develop structures and processes where all these voices are balanced, something that we call the "generative alliance".

7. Develop the rising generation

The family invests in teaching, guiding and engaging members of their rising generations, seeking to recruit the most talented to roles within the family enterprise. They train them to become stewards and add value to the enterprise.

This article is based on *Borrowed from Your Grandchildren: The Evolution of 100-Year Family Enterprises* (Wiley, Feb. 26, 2020). The book presents the findings of a multiyear project of interviews with 100 business families around the globe that have succeeded for 100 years or more.

The families see their values as the key to their success, but each generation has to put the values into action by creating governance, communication and family education and development. Their stories help advisors and families make choices in their first and second-generation that can set them on a long-term path to success.

"New generations turn attention to implementing the family's values and its social commitment. It links its values to its business and investment practices and becomes involved in philanthropic ventures. These build the identity and commitment of the family to remain together. They separate family from business affairs. They organise and make decisions about family activities such as shared education, family gatherings, use of family assets and special places, celebrating their legacy and getting to know each other deeply. There is consensus that families should form family councils and boards with independent members, family constitutions and that highly specific trust ownership are all best practices for families. The development of family governance is parallel and interconnected with their business governance. It engages new family leaders and adds to the shared "capital" of the family."



With **BULUS GAMBO**



Black musicians who changed the world

Continued from page 18



singing 'Lord I Lift Your Name on High' – and I couldn't hit the high notes in the part that says 'you came from heaven to earth to show the way'... and my brother was laughing at me. I felt really bad! Lol. However, I've seen videos of my mom performing with me in her belly, so it's all good – I touch di stage from long time.

What projects are you working on right now?

Narrowing down the songs to be added to my EP – I'm constantly recording... Always looking for more music, new sounds, new vibes. I'm also going to be travelling the Caribbean for all of September as an on-air host for a major broadcaster here in the UK. Looking forward to that.

If you were stuck on a deserted island and given the choice of 5 songs to put on your music player which artists would it be?

That is really not a fair question! so I'm going to give you 6...
'No One' by Alicia Keys 'I Only Have Eyes for You' by The Flamingos 'Flawless' by Beyoncé 'After Tonight' by Justin Nozuka 'Pimpers Paradise' by Bob Marley 'First Word in Memory' by Carlene



Davis.

My favorite guilty pleasure is?

I don't feel guilt! Hahaha. I honestly don't know if I have a guilty pleasure. Anytime I do something that I genuinely enjoy – I just do it and feel NO WAYs about it. Hahaha... life's too short to worry about feeling guilt or regret.

Growing up my hero was...

Alicia Keys

The book, movie or song that changed your life?

I haven't read, watched or listened to it yet.

I feel happiest for the day when I...

Spend the morning stretching, praying and drink a really great cup of coffee; not cheap instant weak kinda ting... proper coffee. I LOVE COFFEE. Let me repeat. I LOVE GOOD COFFEE.

A song I can hear a billion times and never get sick of...

Once again, not a fair question! I love music too much. There are so many songs like that in my head.

A movie I can watch a thousand times and never get sick of...

Ace Ventura Pet Detective: When Nature Calls

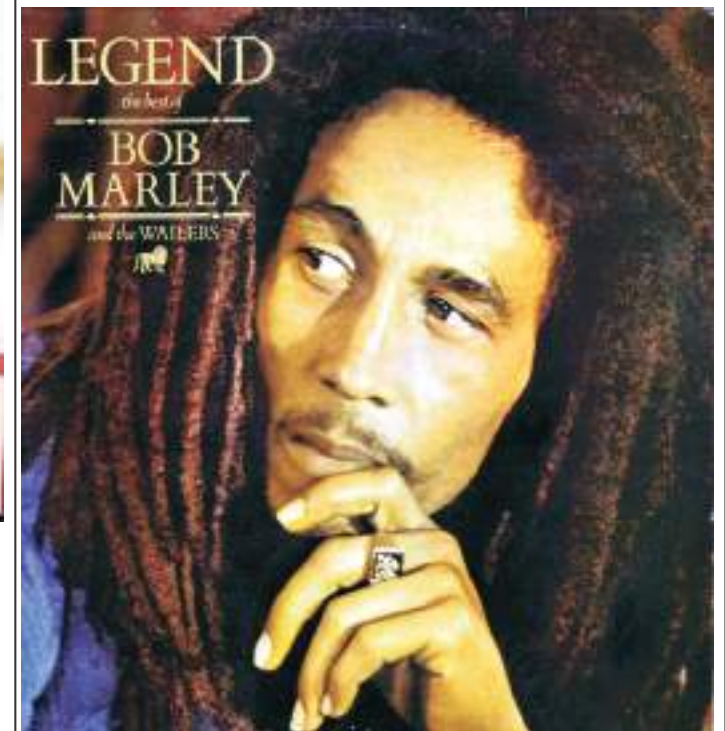
Most influential black musicians of all time

Continued from page 18

organ in his father's church. He would later form the King Cole Trio whose iconic singles are known the world over.

Such was Cole's popularity, that he was offered his own network variety program on NBC in 1956. The Nat King Cole Show was the first network variety program to be hosted by an African American. Though this was a huge success, Cole's show would end after one season—the result of bigotry from sponsors reluctant to be associated with a black entertainer.

Bob Marley: The Reggae Icon



Bob Marley is arguably the undisputed king of reggae. Born Robert Nesta Marley, the Jamaican musician brought reggae into global popularity. Marley expertly blended reggae elements with ska and rocksteady to create his distinctive sound. Bob Marley's popularity soared and he has the hits to prove it.

Think No Woman No Cry, Buffalo Soldier, I Shot the Sheriff...the list goes on and on. Though Marley died at the young age of 36 after a cancer diagnosis, his influence has been truly out of this world. Marley is not only a music hero but lives on as an important symbol of spirituality and Rastafarian culture through music.

Aretha Franklin: The Queen of Soul



Aretha Franklin started off as a church singer during the Civil Rights era in Detroit and became known as the Queen of Soul. Her songs are undisputed hits all over the world.

Who could ever forget the powerful lyricism of Respect, Natural Woman, or I Say A Little Prayer?

But Aretha's impact reaches far beyond records and she has used her voice as a powerful tool for activism. She performed two presidential inaugurations and released critically acclaimed albums supporting young, black artists. This woman is certainly deserving of her title as the Queen of Soul.

SUNDAY FEATURE

Musings on new Naira's therapeutic powers

THE announcement by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) about its decision to redesign Nigeria's currency, the Naira, startled the entire polity and precipitated a barrage of criticisms, a wide assortment of comments and opinions across all sectors of the economy. The criticisms were oscillating between decidedly partisan fixation and ignorance of how economic reforms work in the developing world. Some of the critics are not even aware that the CBN Governor, Godwin Emefiele also doubles as the Chief Economic Adviser of President Muhammadu Buhari and a section of the media surprisingly didn't bother to even run a check on this truism.

One heard and read countless conspiracy theories that were as startling as they were perplexing to the polity on the true intent of the decision, its timing and the activities leading to the final cessation of the legality of the old notes.

The decision to redesign the Naira, which stood as firm and solid as the iconic Zuma Rock of Nigeria's Federal Capital Territory, cruised through stages of implementation, unstopably, crushing all threatening obstacles strategically placed on its way, by a section of the political class, who disagree with any policy stemming from the Buhari administration.

The realization of the broad implications of the decision opened the floodgates of criticisms, skepticisms and dispassionate comments and opinions, majority inclining towards severe condemnation due to partisanship.

All these outrages were fired at the CBN and the Presidency for what some myopic critics think amounted to frightening Nigerians with an 'extremely mischievous, treacherous and ill-timed' monetary policy.

Politicians, critics and skeptics in their know-all-posture assume the redesignation of bank notes was slammed on the polity to truncate the political process smoothly gliding towards the next round of general elections just months away.

Expectedly, politicians, who had raked over 80 percent of the cash of the commercial banks and warehoused it in several obscure locations, their cronies across other sectors of the economy and the traditional and new media were up in arms, waging a fierce battle against government and the CBN.

Their criticisms and condemnations were so massive that they blighted the sight of the majority of Nigerians to the huge and umpteen advantages of the decision.

One needs not rehash their devastatingly unpalatable media outputs against the decision here. Every Nigerian is a witness to all these.

Nigerians deserve to know the truth about the umpteen advantages of redesigning the Naira at the time it was decided. This knowledge will cure Nigerians of the blindness they have been infected with through the massive disparagement of the decision by fraudulent politicians and their cronies across all sectors of the economy. This is one task that the Corporate Communications Department of the apex bank has been doing long before take-off of the policy.

The redesigned Naira notes indeed possess high therapeutic powers on ailments contracted by the economy in the present unhygienic circumstances of the country.

"Good management is the art of making problems so interesting and their solutions so constructive that everyone wants to get to work and deal with them". NASIR DAMBATTa writes.



Buhari

The new Naira notes are highly efficacious for the cure of counterfeiting and terror financing. These are twin ailments akin to diabetes and hypertension threatening the very existence of the country as one indivisible Nation.

They are a mixture fascinatingly efficacious on cash liquidity ailments. The keeping of over 80 percent of cash outside the commercial banks has been a severe ailment the economy has been suffering in the class of Malaria in sub-Saharan Africa.

From President Muhammadu Buhari came the affirmation that the new bank notes would help control liquidity in an economy where the higher percentage of cash is held outside the banks.

The new bank notes, according to CBN Governor, Godwin Emefiele, are a tonic manufactured to boost financial inclusion and economic growth in a country ailed by chronic corruption for decades, with government officials and public office holders regularly being arrested for looting public funds, plunging majority of the citizens deeper into the abyss of hardship and debilitating poverty.

A reflection: Delightingly, just within a week after the announcement of the decision, huge amounts of cash flowed out of the warehouses and obscure locations into the commercial banks, crashing the US Dollar, which, hitherto rose to over 800 Naira, to 500 Naira, and substantially reducing inflation.

What a marvellous quick-fix!

Within just a couple of weeks, the new bank notes also proved to be a very effective panacea for the severe hardship of majority of Nigerians. To beat the deadline given for the legality of the old notes, those who stashed them in billions in different locations, have had to cart them out for so many ventures, including electioneering campaigns. This way, the cash they had never intended to give Nigerians now indeed go round in billions among the poor citizens.

Indeed, the new bank notes are to cleanse the economy, flush all toxins and other impurities out of it and boost its immune system, especially

with regard to such killer-ailments as fraud by public office holders and politicians. The signs of positive gains, I dare say, are already here.

Dambatta, a veteran journalist, writes from Kaduna via editor@politicstoday.ng

"Good management is the art of making problems so interesting and their solutions so constructive that everyone wants to get to work and deal with them" – Paul Hawken

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SUNDAY FEATURE

Modernization as fallacy

The current world order which has been characterised by Great Power Competition has reignited the so-called new scramble for Africa. With various superpower states intensifying their long-held interests in the African continent to meet their needs, little attention has been given to the needs of the supposed benevolent giver – the African continent itself. ADEBAYO ADELEKE, writes.

GIVEN the ever-increasing energy needs of the industrial world, sourcing for alternative energy supply in Africa has made the continent an attractive destination. African leaders also welcome this given that the majority of the states on the continent remain poor and continue to struggle in their quest for industrialisation considering their desire for the ultimate desire to become modernised.

Plagued by issues bothering insecurity because of the nefarious activities of violent extremist groups, to the recent spate of democratic backsliding which has swept across some states on the continent, particularly in West Africa, one can only imagine the prospects of attaining true modernisation amidst these lingering challenges.

Potential investors are also likely to establish manufacturing plants in countries where they are guaranteed the availability of electricity to power these factories

The dangers of the current situation have far-reaching consequences across various sectors of the continent. One of such is in the supply chain. Africa suffers from critical infrastructure deficits and requires significant amounts of financial resources to remedy its plight in this regard.

One report notes that a total of N36trn (\$81bn) is required over a period of 30 years to close Nigeria's – Africa's largest economy, critical infrastructure gaps.

The availability of energy is a crucial element in fostering manufacturing and production, both of which are essential to



Africa's economic growth and development. Potential investors are also likely to establish manufacturing plants in countries where they are guaranteed the availability of electricity to power these factories and more importantly a secure environment devoid of worries over the fear of their workers being kidnapped for ransom by violent extremists and insurgents.

During the recently concluded COP27 talks on climate change, world leaders reiterated their pledge and commitment to ensuring a habitable world amidst the threat posed by climate risks. In the past, such

pledges appear to have been marred by political intrigues leaving the most vulnerable and affected nations in Africa at the mercy of those who ought to be responsible and accountable for climate action.

The need to take decisive action in this regard has been recognised and acknowledged with countries such as the United States of America willing to provide African states with 300MW of nuclear energy to meet its growing industrialisation needs. While this has the potential of not only significantly addressing the energy shortages that have been associated with most African

states, it could also potentially aid the supply chain by improving and reducing the cost of production of goods, especially in a continent that is heavily reliant on the sale and export of primary communities.

However, a major stumbling block remains the threat posed by the activities of violent non-state actors as earlier alluded to. The implications for global peace and security of terrorist groups on the African continent laying their hands on nuclear materials and converting the same into weaponised dirty bombs could only at best be imagined.

African states must recognise that to get from where they are to where they desire to be in their journey to modernisation and industrialisation, certain critical steps must first be taken. The first of which is exerting the much-needed political will to act. Various studies have established that the rise and prevalence of violent extremism could be attributed to issues such as poor governance, endemic corruption, weak institutions, political marginalization, and fragile state-society relations, which breed distrust. There is a need for a conscious and deliberate effort by African leaders to address these underlying root causes of violent extremism which are mostly

within the realm of politics, in reversing the proliferation of insecurity across several parts of the continent.

Secondly, African states must also recognise and come to terms with the urgency of the need to diversify their economies. Where they have solely depended on a monolithic commodity such as oil, taking decisive steps towards ensuring that the overreliance on such products becomes a thing of the past is not only central to mitigating the effects of global shocks but also to reduce the prospects of vulnerability. As with the first point, this also requires a demonstration of political will in attaining the quest for modernisation and industrialisation.

As a third step, African states must be deliberate about investing heavily in science and technology in such a way that guarantees optimal returns. Having an edge in an increasingly competitive world requires that Africa must transition from indigenous solutions to technologically driven ones even as it seeks to close the gaps in its energy needs. Doing all of these sooner rather than later might be what determines whether or not its quest for modernization and industrialisation remains a dream or a reality.

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NEWS

NUJ Sokoto charge members on election

From **ANENE AIKE, Sokoto**

THE Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) Sokoto State Council has charged its members to exhibit high sense of professionalism and good moral conduct in reporting the upcoming Saturday 18th Gubernatorial and State House of Assembly elections.

A statement signed jointly by the Council Chairman, Dalhatu Abdullahi Safiyar Magori and the Secretary, Muhd Nasir Bello added that the council is not unaware of the frequent activities of fake journalists parading themselves to politicians during elections and warned that anyone caught in the act would be dealt with accordingly.

It also cautioned social media users and influencers to restrain from spreading fake news before, during and after the elections.

NUJ called on the public to rely on conventional media for accurate information, as they report only authentic and verified news for public good.



Isiguzo

The union reiterated the need for politicians to play the game by the rules and

call on their supporters to be law-abiding and promote peaceful coexistence at all times.

In a bid to ensure timely delivery of sensitive and non sensitive electoral materials to designated registration areas ahead of tomorrow's governorship and state House of Assembly election in the state, Benue State Secretary of National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW), comrade Stephen Akintola said the union is fully set to ensure a seamless transportation process.

Comrade Akintola gave this indication during an interview with **SUNDAY STANDARD** in reaction to late commencement of voting in most polling units across the state by INEC adhoc staff who blamed it on logistical lapses experienced during the February 25th, 2023 Presidential and National Assembly elections, stated that the transport union has maintained the synergy between it and the commission.

According to the state NURTW chief scribe, the late commencement of polling in most polling units across the state was largely due to inability of some of the INEC ad-hoc staff to round up sorting of electoral materials from the local government INEC offices where materials are usually collected.

BTU promises timely delivery of electoral materials

From **TERESE TUHWA, Makurdi**

On allegations that the Presidential and National Assembly elections were marred by rigging and other forms of electoral irregularities, comrade Akintola urged politicians to learn to accept defeat, stressing that in any electoral contest, there will always be winners and losers.

He explained that the outcome of the last Presidential and National Assembly elections was a clear case of a paradigm shift from the days of primitive rigging with ballot box and papers stuffing.

On his expectations from the incoming administration, the road transport union state scribe said Chief Bola Tinubu should prioritise provision of public infrastructure such as good

access roads, hospitals, schools and a host of others.

He said the incoming administration should make concerted efforts at revamping the health sector with quality health personnel.

While charging the electorate not to allow themselves to be used as agents of electoral violence, pointing out that the key political actors should first bear in mind before the die is cast that there will be winners and losers and imbibe the spirit of sportsmanship at the end of the day.

He advised those who will be aggrieved at the end of the exercise to approach the right channel to express their grievance rather than ways that are capable of igniting unrest in the already frayed nerves.



Mahmood

Elections: IGP restricts movements, bans VIP aides

BY **EZEKIEL DONTINNA**

SQUEL to the forthcoming Gubernatorial and State Houses of Assembly elections scheduled to hold on the of March 18, 2023, the Inspector-General of Police, IGP Usman Alkali Baba, CFR, has ordered the restriction of all forms of vehicular movement on roads, waterways and other forms of transportation, from 12am to 6pm in all states where elections would be conducted.

This according to the statement signed by the Force Public Relations Officer, Force Headquarters, Abuja, CSP Olumuyiwa Ade Jobi, mbipr, mipra, and available to **SUNDAY STANDARD** in Jos, the Plateau State capital said, the restrictions would be with the exception of those on essential services such as INEC officials, electoral

observers, accredited media and observers, ambulances responding to medical emergencies, firefighters, etc. But the Federal Capital Territory would have no election to be conducted therein.

The IGP reiterated that the ban on all security aides to all forms of vehicular movement on roads, waterways and other forms of transportation, from 12am to 6pm in all states where elections would be conducted. This according to the statement signed by the Force Public Relations Officer, Force Headquarters, Abuja, CSP Olumuyiwa Ade Jobi, mbipr, mipra, and available to **SUNDAY STANDARD** in Jos, the Plateau State capital said, the restrictions would be with the exception of those on essential services such as INEC officials, electoral

Baba, therefore, urged all citizens to be law abiding during and after the elections even as he assured that all necessary security

arrangements have been emplaced to ensure they exercise their franchise unhindered. He said, "I also urge the general public to contact the Nigeria Police Force Headquarters via 08033440189 (DIG Operations), 08033027731 (AIG FEDOPS), and 08034040439 (CP Elections), the 'NPF Rescue Me App' on Android and ios and via the

NPF Rescue Me Emergency Toll-free line on 08031230631 to request emergency security response.

"Similarly, other election situation room numbers which have been shared on Nigeria Police social media platforms will be repeatedly released by concerned state Police Commands for necessary emergency contact", he enthused.

Judges trained on administration of Child Rights Law

From **AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja**

A non-governmental organization Non-Governmental Organization, Centre for Women, Youth and Community Action (NACWYCA) in partnership with Teens Educational Development and Information Initiative (TEDiiN), has held a two -day training session with Magistrates and High Court Judges in Kogi State, North Central Nigeria, on the practice direction for child rights arbitration at the family court designated for trial of Child Rights Offenders in the state.

According to the President and Chief Executive Officer of TEDiiN, the implementing partner of the USAID-sponsored Sponored SCALE project, Elder Titus Alonge, the workshop aimed at reviewing the Child Rights Law rules and order of procedures in the CRL practice direction Practice Direction to ensure effectiveness of the law, operational in the state to avoid procedural violation in the course of its implementation.

Alonge, said the legal document had been adjusted during the review meeting on the Child Rights Law (CRL) Practice Direction to ensure effectiveness in the legal application of the law at the family courts both at Magistrate

and High Court level.

Hon. Justice Angelina Salihu, of Kogi State High Court, who stood in for Chief Judge of Kogi State, Justice Josiah Majebi, said the criminal cases in child rights litigation in Kogi State, were majority rape cases.

According to the state Chief Judge, lack of remand homes for children in conflict with the law, is a setback to the implementation of the Child Rights Law in the state and criminal justice administration with regards to child rights violation.

Justice Majebi, who made a surprise appearance at the meeting in spite of his earlier representation at the event said, "I still have to be here in person even though my representative had already spoken on my behalf. I feel obliged to be part of the meeting, which is why I had to cut short my engagement to briefly interact with you participants in view of the propelling urge to safeguard the rights of our children, and that makes this event compelling to me and Kogi State Judiciary under my leadership.

"I will give all necessary support and assistance to this cause as appropriate. I'm happy and

proud to be part of this auspicious event that would promote the course of justice for the juveniles as i urge everyone of us to susta in the tempo."

Kogi State Attorney -General and Commissioner of Justice represented by Mr. Oyetunji Oyekaye, of the state Ministry of Justice, said the Child Rights Act is an encompassing legal document concerned with child's vulnerability and protection, accommodated under the administration of criminal Justice Law.

The state Attorney General said despite all progress attained in human rights protection in Nigeria, the country still lags behind in the implementation of international conventions on human rights, and stressed the need for greater commitment to international conventions on human rights.

Kogi State has 9 Family Courts in 7 zones in the state while the stakeholders agitate for creation of additional Family Courts to complement the existing special courts for the juveniles; even as the contentious issue of appropriate ministry where the state Child Rights Act ought to be domiciled remains unresolved as the Justice Ministry seemingly evaded the

matter at the event.

According to the officials of the state Ministry of Women Affairs at the workshop, the state Child Rights Lawchild rights law is presently domiciled with the state Ministry of Justice instead of the Ministry of Women Affairs as done in other s t a t e s .

According to the rules and order of procedures encapsulated in the legal document, "In every criminal proceeding in which a child is involved, the court shall ensure that words like "Conviction" and "Sentence" or other words offensive to the child are not used in the proceedings."

High point of the workshop was the review of the procedure for child adoption and fostering, where applicant's for child adoption in the state, now must apply to the Family Court rather than the Ministry of Women Affairs which previously received the application for child adoption. It was emphasized that, where as a child of Kogi State origin cannot be taken out of Kogi State for purposes of adoption without the consent of the Family Court family court, and an adopter of a child must reside in the state.



Alkali

NEWS

Lalong signs Renumeration Bill, upgrades 3 Chiefs

By PALANG KASMI

IN continuation of his policies for strengthening the traditional institution in Plateau State, Governor Simon BakoLalong has on Wednesday signed into law the Bill for the remuneration of traditional rulers.

The Governor also on Thursday performed the coronation and presentation of Staff of Office to 3 upgraded Chiefs in Langtang North Local Government Area (LGA).

The chiefs upgraded were their Royal Highnesses PonzhiBwarat, Compt. Ponfa R. BahalRtd (3rd Class); PonzhiTimmwat, Hon. Nicholas S. Musa (3rd Class); and PonzhiGani, Col. Dauda N. Nimyel, Rtd. (3rd Class).

Performing the coronation ceremony on March 16, 2023, at the palace of the PonzhiTaroh, the Governor said the presentation of Staff of Office to the traditional rulers is in fulfillment of his campaign promise and goes to show that the APC keeps its words.

"You will agree with me that the focus we have given the traditional institution and the honour we have accorded our royal fathers have steered them to work hard for maintaining peace and security in their domains," he said.

According to him, prioritising attention to the traditional institution has also promoted harmony within the diverse ethnic groups who now feel a sense of justice, equity, and fairness unlike in the past where they felt neglected, marginalised and oppressed.

He stated that to further strengthen the traditional institution, he had on Wednesday, signed into law the Plateau State Traditional Rulers Remuneration Bill 2020 which provides for the appointment, salaries, allowances and other related matters. Among other things, the bill outlines the categorization of traditional rulers in the state and their selection process which must be in line with the native law and custom of the people.

"It also stipulates the payment of basic salaries of traditional rulers; sources of salaries and allowances; payment for traditional rulers on acting capacity; effect of court proceedings on remuneration; exclusion from remuneration; as well as payment of death benefits among others".

"On the whole, the bill ensures that running the traditional institution must be within law and without unnecessary challenges particularly related to funding. I am optimistic that with the coming of this law into effect, challenges experienced in the past will no longer surface especially concerning court proceedings and selection of new traditional rulers".

"We hope that vacant stools will no longer remain empty as such situation does not



Lalong

augur well for efficiency and effectiveness," he said.

He pointed out that his respect for the traditional institution has made his Rescue Administration to restore those stools that the PDP Government of Jonah Jangannulled.

Commissioner for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, Hon. Sylvanus Tagun said Governor Lalong's passion for the peace, stability and progress of the state is clearly seen in the respect and dignity he has accorded the traditional institution in Plateau State.

The Vice Chairman of the Plateau State Council of Traditional Rulers and Emirs and Long Gamai of Gamailand, HRH Miskoom Martin Shaldas III also appreciated the governor for being consistent in his efforts to elevate the traditional institution based on the yearnings of the people.

The Acting President, Langtang Joint Traditional Council and PonzhiZinni HRH NimnanLangnim said the council remains indebted to the governor for approving the upgrade of the new chiefdoms as well as creating new districts.

Meanwhile, the governor had on Wednesday 15th March 2023 signed into law the Bill for the Renumeration of

Traditional Rulers which is aimed at enhancing their salaries and allowances.

He signed the bill at Plateau Government House stating that the bill passed by the State House of Assembly was intended to make the traditional rulers more effective in the discharge of their duties for the good of the people.

The signing was attended by the Attorney General of the state and Commissioner of Justice, Hon. ChrisanctusAhmadu, key government officials, and traditional rulers from across the state.

Lalong was hopeful that the new bill, made up of 17 clauses and two schedules, sponsored by Mr. Wallok Goma and the Plateau House of Assembly will give the traditional rulers a better status and robust welfare package including payments of salaries, of death benefits, entitlements of domestic staff according to different ranks and use of flags and sirens.

The Governor said the new bill captures that all traditional rulers categorised into 1st, 2nd, 3rd class status up to the last category which are the Village and Hamlet Heads will enjoy these improved salaries and benefits according to their status.

COCIN debunks rumours that it endorsed Nentawe

By DORCAS PANKYES

THE attention of the Church of Christ in Nations (COCIN) has been drawn to a malicious publication tagged "COCIN endorsed Dr. Nentawe", purported to have been issued by the COCIN Executive Council and COCIN Board of Trustees.

This was contained in a statement signed by Rev. Assoc. Prof. Benjamin J. Pokol, COCIN General Secretary.

The statement reads in part: "We wish to state categorically that: COCIN has come a long way as an evangelical denomination with a respected pedigree that cannot be easily

dragged into the mud of breath-taking politics of divide and rule just as a means of scoring cheap political points.

"COCIN wishes to state that she has almost 100% of the current political flag bearers on the Plateau as her members, so only an enemy of COCIN and this privilege, would have sat down, out of sheer death-dealing jealousy, to fabricate this baseless publication to make COCIN ready for the kill.

"Even common sense would not allow the leadership of COCIN to think of this divisive position, let alone publishing a position that is nothing but shooting herself in the leg.

TO save poultry farmers businesses from collapsing, Plateau State government has promised to support poultry farmers affected by Central Bank of Nigeria's (CBN) Naira redesign policy and cash crunch.

The government disclosed this in a statement on March 15, 2023 and noted with concern that there is a significant glut of eggs in the state which is affecting most families particularly poultry farmers.

T H E N I G E R I A STANDARD newspapers reports that recent CBN Naira re-design policy has caused scarcity of cash making many businesses to suffer.

The Secretary to the Government of the State, Prof.

CBN's cash crunch: PLSG promises to mop eggs

By PALANG KASMI

DanladiAbokAtu in the statement assured that government is aware that the egg business is a thriving enterprise in the state and a source of income for sustaining a large number of families.

"Government will do its best to address the situation", Atu assured.

"Consequently, the Executive Governor, Simon BakoLalong has directed that such excess eggs be immediately mopped up and distributed to orphanages, prisons, schools and hospitals.

"Accordingly, the Commissioner of Agriculture and Natural Resources has been mandated to liaise with officials of the Poultry Farmers Association and relevant bodies to work out modalities for implementing the policy with immediate effect in order to save the industry from further decline.

"Members of the public and relevant organisations are urged to cooperate with the government and its relevant agencies towards implementing this policy", said the statement.

IGP donates protective gadgets, anti-riot equipment

By EZEKIEL DONTINNA

THE Inspector-General of Police, IGP Usman Alkali Baba, NPM, NEAPS, fdc, CFR, has, in a bid to enhance operational capacity of the Command to provide adequate security throughout the Governorship election and beyond, graciously approved and allocated Personnel Protective Gadgets and Anti-riot equipment to the Command.

The Plateau State Commissioner, Elections Monitoring, CP MammamDauda, disclosed this Friday while addressing journalists at the press briefing held at state headquarters State Headquarters Jos, the state capital ahead of the Governorship and State Houses of Assembly Elections.

He said, "Asas we speak, we have received the first batch of the equipments while the second batch is being conveyed from the Force Headquarters, Abuja to the Command. I have directed the Command Operations Officer to immediately deploy and distribute the first batch of the gadgets to Area Commands, Divisional Police Headquarters, and other Tactical Squads for effective use, and to do same upon the arrival and inspection of the second batch. The gadgets are here for your inspection.

"The Nigeria Police Force along with other security



Alkali

agencies have made adequate arrangements to provide the citizens with the needed security and safe enabling environment to exercise their franchise. Adequate deployment of over 10,500 security personnel drawn from the Nigeria Police, the Military, NSCDC, NIS, NCS, NDLEA, Federal Fire Service, to the 4,989 polling units have been made.

"While the military will cordon the entire state, in compliance with the restriction of movement on Election Day. They will as well be seen strategically within the towns to enhance security of lives and property. I will like to use this medium to warn all political actors to warn their members/followers to desist from any act that is capable of inciting the general public to cause violence in any part of the state, as the Command will do anything within the ambit of the law to stop their activities from coming to fruition", he warned.

The CP, therefore, called on all religious leaders, most especially our pastors and imams to desist from making inciting statements to their congregants that would be capable of disrupting the peace currently enjoyed by the good people of Plateau State. "They saying, "they should be informed that measures have

already been put in place by the Command to ensure that their activities will be curtailed before, during and after the electioneering period.

"To our traditional rulers, parents/guardians, I urge you to speak with your subjects, children and wards to avoid any form of utterance or behavior that has a tendency of causing a bridge of the peace. I warn you to ensure that your followers and wards are well behaved throughout the electioneering period and stay away from any form of thuggery as the Plateau State Police Command under my watch, will not condone any form of misconduct", he advised.

Mammam, however, warned all police personnel and other security agencies in the state, against being partisan in the election process and that, they should strictly be neutral and apolitical in the discharge of their duty, as any officer found wanting would be dealt with severely according to the Police Act and Regulations.

"I warn you to carry out your duties diligently in accordance with the set guidelines. You must be at your duty post during the election and accompany all materials to the rack and collation centers. You must not leave your duty posts until you have received a stand down order.

SUNDAY MAGAZINE

The road to 2023 gubernatorial elections



replaced on the PDP's ballot by Sheriff Oborevwori House of Assembly member for Okpe and Speaker of the House of Assembly.

Ebonyi State

Incumbent PDP-turned-APC Governor Dave Umahi was re-elected to a second term in 2019 with 81.54% of the vote. He will be term-limited in 2023 and has just been elected Senator under the APC platform.

The PDP candidate is Ifeanyi Chukwu Odii which was confirmed by a court ruling while other aspirants candidates include Joseph Ogba (Senator for Ebonyi Central), Edwin Anayo (House of Representatives member for Ezza North/Ishielu), Fidelis Nwankwo (former Minister of State for Health), Francis Ogonna Nwifuru (House of Assembly member for Izzi West and Speaker of the House of Assembly), Sylvester Ogbaga (House of Representatives member for Abakaliki/Izzi), and Chris Usulor (House of Assembly member for Ezza South and son of former Senator for Ebonyi Central Vincent Obasi Usulor)

Enugu State

PDP Governor Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi was re-elected to a second term in 2019 with 95.54% of the vote. He will be term-limited in 2023 and cannot seek re-election for a third term.

Gombe State

Incumbent APC Governor Muhammad Inuwa Yahaya was elected to a first term in 2019 with 59.88% of the vote. He is running against formidable opposition led by Usman Bayero Nafada of the PDP.

IMO

The **2023 Imo State gubernatorial election** will take place on 11 November 2023 due to the belated inauguration of incumbent Governor Hope

Uzodinma, to elect the Governor of Imo State. Incumbent APC Governor Hope Uzodinma is eligible to run for re-election, but has not yet stated whether he will do so. The primaries are scheduled for between 27 March and 17 April 2023.

The Governor of Imo State is elected using a modified two-round system. To be elected in the first round, a candidate must receive the plurality of the vote and over 25% of the vote in at least two-thirds of state local government areas. If no candidate passes this threshold, a second round will be held between the top candidate and the next candidate to have received a plurality of votes in the highest number of local government areas.

The primaries, along with any potential challenges to primary results, will take place between 27 March and 17 April 2023.

Potential candidates apart from the incumbent governor are the likes of Ifeanyi Ararume: former Senator for Imo North, Jude Ejiogu: former Secretary to Imo State Government David Mbamara: entrepreneur, : former Minister of State for Education (2019–2022) and former House of Representatives member for E h i m e M b a n o / I h i t t e Uboma/Obowo, Uche Nwosu: 2019 APC gubernatorial candidate and AA gubernatorial nominee, Governor Okorocho administration official, and son-in-law of former Governor Okorocho, Hope Uzodinma: Governor and former Senator for Imo West

Jigawa State

Incumbent APC Governor Mohammed Badaru Abubakar was re-elected to a second term in 2019 with 73.51% of the vote. He

will be term-limited in 2023 and will not be returning to the government House after yesterday's polls.

Kaduna State

Incumbent APC Governor Nasir Ahmad el-Rufai was re-elected to a second term in 2019 with 55.32% of the vote. He will be term-limited in 2023 and cannot seek re-election for a third term. The APC candidate Senator Uba Sani who is slugging it out with Isa Ashiru.

Kano State

Incumbent APC Governor Abdullahi Umar Ganduje was re-elected to a second term in 2019 with 50.23% of the vote. He will be term-limited in 2023 and cannot seek re-election for a third term. He is being replaced on the ballot by Nasir Yusuf Gawuna the present Deputy Governor.

The PDP, candidate is Abba Kabir Yusuf (2019 PDP gubernatorial nominee and former Commissioner of Works, Housing, and Transport).

Katsina State

Incumbent APC Governor Aminu Bello Masari was re-elected to a second term in 2019 with 70.04% of the vote. He will be term-limited in 2023 and cannot seek re-election for a third term. Thereby opening the race between the APC and the PDP including the NNPP.

Kebbi State

Incumbent APC Governor Abubakar Atiku Bagudu was re-elected to a second term in 2019 with 84.92% of the vote. He will be term-limited in 2023 and cannot seek re-election for a third term. It was a string to battle between the APC and the PDP in the Saturday's polls.

Kogi State

Incumbent APC Governor Yahaya Bello was elected to a second term

in 2019 with 66.51% of the vote. He will be term-limited in 2023 the race for the Lugard House stood between the ruling APC and the PDP.

Kwara State

Incumbent APC Governor AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq was elected to a first term in 2019 with 73.12% of the vote. He is eligible to run for re-election. He went into the race with a strong opposition with the strong support of the Saraki political dynasty who are aiming to reclaim the state for the PDP.

Lagos State

Incumbent APC Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu was elected to a first term in 2019 with 75.65% of the vote. He is eligible to run for re-election, He is not keeping any stone unturned to ride to victory despite the in road in the just concluded presidential election recorded by the Labour Party in the state.

Nasarawa State

Incumbent APC Governor Abdullahi Sule was elected to a first term in 2019 with 48.78% of the vote. He is running against a formidable force in the PDP, David OM Bugadu.

Niger State

Incumbent APC Governor Abubakar Sani Bello was re-elected to a second term in 2019 with 58.43% of the vote. He will be term-limited in 2023 and cannot seek re-election for a third term. He is being replaced on the ballot by Bago Umaru Mohammed Bago (House of Representatives member for Chanchaga).

Ogun State

Incumbent APC Governor Dapo Abiodun was elected to a first term in 2019 with 35.49% of the vote. He is contested under the banner of the APC after beating other candidates in the primaries such as; Abiodun include Solomon Olamilekan Adeola (Senator for Lagos West, former House of Representatives member for Alimosho, and former Lagos State House of Assembly member for Alimosho II), Adekunle Akinlade (former House of Representatives member for Egbado South/Ipokia (2015–2019) and 2019 APC gubernatorial candidate and APM

gubernatorial nominee), Gboyega Nasir Isiaka (2019 ADC gubernatorial nominee, 2015 PDP gubernatorial nominee, and former Governor Gbenga Daniel administration aide), and Ramoni Olalekan Mustapha (Senator for Ogun East).

He is also facing a formidable challenge from the PDP, candidate Segun Sowunmi (Atiku Abubakar 2019 presidential campaign spokesman).

Oyo State

Incumbent PDP Governor Seyi Makinde was elected to a first term in 2019 with 56.24% of the vote. He is facing a strong challenge from APC's candidate, Senator Teslim Folarin.

Plateau State

Incumbent APC Governor Simon Along who was re-elected to a second term in 2019 with 51.35% of the vote. He will be term-limited in 2023 and cannot seek re-election. He is being replaced on the ballot by Nentawe Yiltwada to face PDP's Caleb Mutfwang.

Rivers State

Incumbent PDP Governor Ezenwo Nyesom Wike was re-elected to a second term in 2019 with 83.28% of the vote. He will be term-limited in 2023 and cannot seek re-election for a third term. His party's candidate will have to battle it out with the APC Candidate Tonye Cole and other parties.

Sokoto State

Incumbent PDP Governor Aminu Tambuwal was re-elected to a second term in 2019 with 49.41% of the vote. He will be term-limited in 2023 and cannot seek re-election for a third term.

Taraba State

Incumbent PDP Governor Darius Ishaku who was re-elected to a second term in 2019 with 57.21% of the vote. He will be term-limited in 2023 and cannot seek re-election for a third term.

Yobe State

Incumbent APC Governor Mai Mala Buni was elected to a first term in 2019 with 81.26% of the vote. He is eligible to run for re-election and he ran for election in yesterday's gubernatorial election under the ticket of the APC.

Zamfara State

Incumbent PDP-turned-APC Governor Bello Matawalle was elected to a first term in 2019 after a court decision. He is eligible to run for re-election. He also, is seeking to return to the Government House for another four years under the platform of the APC.

Meanwhile, as the declaration of results of the governorship and State Houses of Assembly elections are being awaited, there seem to be an atmosphere of anxiety as to who are the likely winners after a long journey and a hard-fought battle across the states of the Federation.

However, Nigerians are also watching with keen expectations that the challenges and controversies that greeted the just concluded presidential election will not rear its ugly head and that this time around, the Independent Electoral Commission (INEC) is expected to also get its acts together by letting all casted votes will count and be adjudged as being won clear and square by the candidate

METRO-FOCUS

Braid business witnessing low patronage

By HOSEA NYAMLONG & MICHAEL SHANE MANCHA

BRAIDING has been in the black culture for generations. For many black women, getting their hair braided serves as their pride and enhances their beauty.

Many young girls can testify to the grueling days in their younger days when Saturdays and Sundays were days dreaded because they used to spend it nestled between their mother's legs, or that of that of a hair stylist as their hair would be transformed into beautiful braids. And we all know how crucial finding a great braider is for all of our exquisite braiding, twists, and lock styles. While braids may have gained more popularity and visibility in recent years, the style has a rich history spanning generations and continents.

Over the years many braiding techniques have metamorphosized over the years from simple to complicated plaits. The most fascinating facts about braids is that they are perfect for almost every occasion. Most of the beautiful styles we see stem from various styles of old but the use of extensions (wig), make it more stylish and give a better sense of glamour.

METRO FOCUS reports that with numerous hair brands entering the market, the global market for hair attachments is rapidly expanding. Nigeria is now one of the preferred investment destinations for international hair companies seeking to enter the beauty and personal care market.

According to the 2022 population estimate by the National Population Commission (NPC), Nigeria, the most populous African country, now has over 215 million people and because of the strong population growth, particularly among the young, urban, and female populations, the beauty and personal care industry in Nigeria has plenty of room for expansion, particularly in the business of braiding.

Recently, METRO FOCUS observed that women nowadays prefer to wear weavon caps, low haircuts and dreadlocks which are cheaper compared to braiding with attachment, commonly known as wig that used to be the fashion of the day for most women.

It was gathered that the present state of the Nigerian economy has led to high cost of braiding items such as attachment/wig etc. The attachment that used to go for three hundred naira now attracts N900 to N1200.

To a large extent, to braid, is time consuming for many women, because they can't afford to spend much time sitting to have their hair braided.

In search for answers, METRO FOCUS correspondents sought the opinion of some women within the Jos metropolis. Among them were Elizabeth Wilfred, who said that African women are versatile with their hair styles, depending on the kind of choices. Women would like to rock a good bob, a perm, twists, afros, "didi", Ghana weaving, dreadlocks, long and short weaves and of course braids. We love to look good; it boosts self-confidence and generally makes us feel great about ourselves.

"As a matter of fact, most women would agree with me that fixing a weave-on is a lot less tedious than getting hair braided. It takes a lot of patience to sit for four hours (at least!) with people pulling and



tugging at your head all to get your hair done. While braids are not that easy to maintain, sometimes it takes from three to six months to keep, if properly maintained," she said"

In another chat with an owner of salon, Rose Alkali said that ladies prefer to buy more weavon caps than wearing braids hair style. She said she makes more sales of weavon caps than braiding.

"Attachments (wigs) are expensive now, while weavon caps are more convenient, easy and less time consuming. Caps are preferred compared to braids. The hours for braiding could take like eight hours and above. In some cases, it takes two days to complete braiding. It all depends on how many stylists are working per time. Braids in many instances last for months. Also, that is dependent on how well they were made."

Moreover, it was not surprising that what the saloonist was wearing was a weavon cap, to further confirm that women prefer caps to braids.

Needless to say that hair braiding trends have come full circle with the re-emergence of various styles

popular to various tribes in Nigeria depending on the region. Braids are pointers to identity and showcasing the pride and beauty of the black women.

In spite of the history black people have endured, braids have consistently been an inseparable part of their history. They have carried on from Africa, to southern plantations, to the inner-cities of the North, and beyond until today where black women continue to proudly wear and reclaim the hairstyle of their ancestors.

A post graduate student of University of Jos, by name Nkechi Mary Udolum, said that she prefers weave-on cap to braids. Wigs are getting beyond the reach of an average woman in Nigeria and one wig is not enough for braid, you need more than one wig, depending on the hair style.

"For decades, Nigerian women have relied on X-expression hair as their go-to hair attachment. People who wanted to braid or weave their hair never specified a brand, only the colour they required, because X-expression was the accepted brand in all salons."



SUNDAY PEOPLE

GOVERNORSHIP/STATES ASSEMBLY ELECTION 2023

The Governorship and State House of Assembly, conducted by INEC in 28 states of the federation took place yesterday in Plateau State as captured by The Nigeria Standard photographer



Convoy of Security personnel monitoring the exercise within Jos North LGA



Agents of different political party waiting for voters to come and cast their ballot



Cross section of elderly people waiting at the Arin Izang Ward, Jos North LGA



Executive Chairman, Jos North LGC, Hon. Shehu Bala Usman answering questions from newsmen after voting at his P.U



Large turn out of voters at the Sot-Gyel Polling Unit of Jos South LGA



Cross section of INEC Officials waiting patiently for eligible voters



Village Head of Arin Izang, Ada Arin Itse Voda (middle) with some people of the community



INEC staff and security waiting for eligible voters at Chorbe Polling Unit of Jos North LGA

Photos: DANLADI DUK

How to maintain your car brake system

THE braking system is a vehicle's most important safety item. It is therefore important to know how it works and how to maintain it in order to prevent road crashes. A quick guide will help you understand the working of your car brake system and maintenance tips for your brakes.

How your car brake system works

Cars have brakes on all four wheels that are operated by a hydraulic system. The brakes are either a disc type or drum type. Many cars have four-wheel disc brakes although some have discs for the front wheels and drums for the rear. Since the lion's share of stopping a car's forward momentum relies more on the front brakes, the more effective disc brakes are deployed on the front wheels. Less expensive drum set up provides adequate but more cost-effective assistance in halting a car's motion.

The car brake system works specifically in this manner:

- ♦ Your foot pushes the brake pedal and the force generated is amplified several times by mechanical leverage. It is then amplified further by the action of the brake booster.

A piston moves into the cylinder and squeezes hydraulic fluid out of the end.

Hydraulic brake fluid is then forced around the entire braking system within a network of brake lines and hoses.

Pressure is transmitted equally to all four brakes.

The force creates friction between brake pads and disc brake rotors which is what stops your vehicle eventually.

How to maintain your car brake system

Routine and preventive maintenance can help you save money. You do not have to wait until something goes wrong before visiting professional mechanics for routine checks. When your vehicle undergoes the annual state inspection, your brakes are reviewed for roadworthiness. Here are some steps in maintaining your car brake system that will enhance its performance and longevity:

Monitor your brake fluid levels and carry out a check once in every three months. Brake fluids should be replaced every two years or after every thirty thousand (30,000) to forty thousand (40,000) miles.

Brake discs should be changed when necessary depending on your driving style and environmental conditions. Change your brake discs at similar intervals for a normal car. Sports car brakes should be changed after every twenty thousand (20,000) miles.

Bleed your brake lines to get any air out of your system. This means that your brakes will be pumped while someone watches the bleeder valve and closes the valve when brake fluid begins to flow through.

Have your brake pads and rotors inspected to ensure that they are in optimum

working condition. If your brake is worn down badly, it is time to replace the brake pad without delay.

Testing your brakes

Every time you use your vehicle, you should check that your brakes are working. Check them when the vehicle is stationary before you move off and check them again when the vehicle is moving.

The stationary test: Check that the brake pedal moves freely and gives a firm positive pressure. Check that the handbrake fully secures the wheels.

The mobile test: make sure that the brake system is working under running conditions. Test the foot brake as soon as you move off. You only need to do this test once if you are in the same vehicle all day, provided you have no reason to suspect the performance of the brakes. Always consider the safety and convenience of other road users before doing a mobile test

Normal braking

Braking should normally be progressive and increased steadily: Gently take up the initial free movement of the pedal. Increase the pressure progressively as required.

Relax pedal pressure as unwanted road speed is lost.

Release the pedal just before stopping to avoid a jerking halt.

Note. A vehicle with a faulty braking system is a crash looking for where to happen. A stitch in time saves nine.



NEWS

I will accept result which ever way

-Fr. Alia

From TERESE TUHWA, Makurdi

GOVERNORSHIP candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Saturday's March 18th, 2023 governorship and state houses of assembly election in Benue state Rev Fr. Dr. Hyacinth Iormem Alia has said he will accept the outcome of the result which ever way it goes at the end of the day.

Fr. Alia who made his position known at his country home Mbadede in Vandeikya local government area in an interview with news men shortly after casting his vote said the electoral umpire, the Independent National Electoral Commission has shown tremendous improvement in the conduct of the election compare to what happens yester years and assured that as victor and vanquish is one of the tenets of democracy, he will willingly accept the outcome of the polls which ever way it goes at the end of the day.

He said as democracy provides a level playing field for everyone to test their popularity, there was no basis for one to have reservations in accepting the outcome of a process that displays high level of fairness and transparency.

The APC governorship candidate maintained that as a servant leader who is coming in fully prepared to salvage a dysfunctional state, if elected, he will put the state on the right pedestal as an agrarian state to increase farmers' yields which the state has a comparative



Adamu

advantage.

Father Alia asserted that in addition to prioritizing provision of social amenities such as roads, portable water, good hospitals, social welfare programmes will be put in place to improve the living started of people of the state.

On the near collapse local government councils in the state, Fr. Alia said when a system is being operated by people who do not have the people's interest, a lot of things abound to happen but stated that as one who has been in the trenches with people for over thirty two years, he will not take good will of the people shown him for granted.

As one who is for the people, by the people and with the people, his administration will ensure full implementation of local government autonomy in order to revamp local government system in the state.

He promised that the state civil servants will be rescued from the current dungeon that the state is currently plugged into since civil servants are the engine room of any government.

He lamented the total collapse of state civil service due to none payment of workers' salaries but assured that fortunes of state workers will be brought back if elected governor of the state.

Earlier, the governorship candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Rt. Hon. Titus Uba who also granted a brief media chat to journalists said he was satisfied with the process and will accept the outcome of the result.

He said the electoral umpire INEC has shown improvement in the conduct of the election and will accept the will of God who gives leadership to whoever chooses.

We will change situation for future elections

- Ogunleye

APC Chieftain, Prince Abiodun Ogunleye, while casting his vote during Governorship/House of Assembly Election at PU 012, Solomade, Ikorodu, Lagos.

By Oluwafunke Ishola/Adepote Arowojobe

A former Deputy Governor of Lagos State, Prince Abiodun Ogunleye, says the All Progressive Congress (APC) will ensure Nigerians enjoy more dividend of democracy that will change the narrative for future elections.

Ogunleye, Chieftain of APC and member of the state Governors Advisory Committee, disclosed this in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on Saturday in Lagos.

The APC chieftain said this after casting his vote during the Governorship and House of Assembly Election at PU 012, Solomade, Ikorodu.

Ogunleye, who said that though voters' turnout was low compared to the presidential election, noted that the electoral process was peaceful.

"The job we have to do now, not only in Lagos, is to make sure we energise and

encourage voters to come out and vote.

"Things were different during the times of Chief Obafemi Awolowo and the early days of Mr Babatunde Fashola.

"I'm a party man and I know some reasons I can't be saying in the public.

"We have the blueprint, my colleagues and I will sit down and work with it to change the situation in future election," he said.

Ogunleye said that he believed in a free, fair and transparent electoral process, noting that the

deployment of BVAS had reduced electoral malpractice.

He advised the citizens to vote for a competent leader who had the interest of the people in mind and could also drive development.

He also urged the youth to shun violence and inciting statements that could lead to chaos and disruption of electoral process.

According to him, when you have violence, you are enthroning mediocrity and those who aren't qualified to rule will be put in the position to lead.

He noted that even if a leader was a PhD holder but don't take care of people at the grassroots, citizens would suffer.

"I believe that development should start at the grassroots, and for this kind of country, Nigeria, we shouldn't be suffering.

"What has been missing is a leader that has strong-will, ready and courageous to take decisions.

"I know that the president-elect, Sen. Bola Tinubu, is a courageous person and have strong-will. We will continue to pray for him and for his success," he said.



Sanwo Olu

SUNDAY FEATURE

2023 elections: How has the media fared?

The role of the media at every election, especially the 2023 general elections, as an agenda-setting organ in the society, is hereby explored in this piece by ELEJO IDACHABA.

IN the run up to the 2023 Presidential and National Assembly elections held on February 25 and the governorship/state assembly elections to be held today, the media had no doubt played a significant role so far not only in the area of awareness creation and education, but also in shaping the agenda for the political class.

Bearing this in mind, the media of information in the country, especially conventional print and electronic media houses, stuck to the ethics of their calling by being apolitical while at the same time spearheading the call for the enthronement of good governance in the country.

IPC, NBC's charges

While reminding the media about its crucial role in the election, the International Press Centre as at October 2022 noted that, "The overall goal of the media component is to support the consolidation of democracy in Nigeria with the media (broadcast, print and online media) helping to facilitate the key ingredient of credible elections through engagement and professionalism in coverage and reportage of the electoral processes."

It noted further that the specific objective is to ensure that the media, including New and Social Media, provides fair, accurate, ethical and inclusive coverage of the electoral process.

On its part, the Nigerian Guild of Editors (NGE) also charged the media on compliance to the Electoral Act. Its president, Isah Mustapha, said, "We should ensure that political leaders have the capacity and would not divide us with religion and ethnicity. The media should strive to set the agenda rather than allow politicians to set the agenda," he noted.

At this point, it became crucial about the role of the media as the fourth estate of the realm and watchdog of the society.

Isah said further that, "The media, therefore, needs to recommit itself to upholding the tenets of democracy by following all laid down rules and regulations guiding the conduct of the media on electoral process in their reportage of the elections."

According to him, this caution is important because immediately after the conduct of the general elections, the entire processes would be taken over by the information sector as Nigerians and the rest of the world would recede to the background to await the outcome of their efforts at the polls.

Regulatory authorities

The two regulatory authorities in charge of the media: the Nigeria Press Council (NPC), and the



National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), had outlined guidelines for election reportage that would ensure the defence of the rights of every citizen and discourage the assumption of fighting for the rights of other people without recourse to the rule of law and constitutional provisions.

A joint statement by the two bodies noted that, "The media must play the game by the rules. Before and after the 2023 elections, just like other previous elections in the country, the media are in the spotlight to exhibit their professionalism and skills in national development through dispassionate reporting of events, actions, reactions and activities of Nigerians in order to safeguard our commonwealth."

"The media must not allow itself to fall into the categories of those that work against the rule of law, since this is the first step towards sanity and continuous development of any nation. It must be seen at this critical time in the life of the nation as a sole holder of public peace and stability."

"The profession does not allow the media to play to the gallery or fall into the manipulation of some unscrupulous elements in the society who are known for fomenting trouble when their selfish interests are not pampered during elections."

"This is the time for the Nigerian media to rise up to their calling and show that it is truly the watchdog of the society in whom every citizen irrespective of political, religious or ethnic affiliation can depend on for credible, balanced and objective news."

The chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Prof. Mahmood Yakubu, while speaking at a Broadcasting Organisation of Nigeria (BON) stakeholders' conference in Lagos, said media houses are not just the cornerstone of democracy; they also play an indispensable role in the proper functioning of a democracy.

He had said, "The vital role of the media as a watchdog of the democratic process and in influencing political discourse, especially during elections, is essential to democratic consolidation."

"Universally, the role of the media in information dissemination and public enlightenment through the provision of platforms for electoral campaigns, public debate and voter education is a pre-condition for free and fair elections. Without the media, safeguarding the credibility and transparency of the electoral process would be a difficult task."

"While a free and objective media can foster transparency by

disseminating important electoral information, a stifled or compromised media is capable of undermining the electoral process, ultimately weakening democracy."

Media compliance

Investigation has therefore shown that all over the country, media houses were not found to have gone foul of the law regarding the Electoral Act.

Lois Eteme, the station manager of a private radio station in Abuja, said, "For us, it is not just about upholding the ethics of the profession, but largely about ensuring that we promote democratic ideals by educating the public about the political calendar."

"Our station designed different programmes that are geared towards educating the masses about what role they need to play, their rights and responsibilities while at the same time mindful of a likely sanction from NBC. For the presidential election, we gave our best. No election in the FCT on March 18, but we still remain apolitical in the coverage of state elections without being biased."

El Effzy, the head of Corporate Affairs Unit, Nigeria Info, said compliance to electoral act is something that is spelt out in black and white for everyone to follow in their station as the management, he said, frowns seriously upon any infringement of the act.

"In Nigeria Info Abuja, we follow the rule to the letter. That is why in all our programmes, there are strict guidelines regarding what should be allowed to go on air and otherwise in order not to fall foul of BBC act."

So far, investigations have revealed that the election which was held across the country on February 25 witnessed massive preparations and advocacies by media organisations. Not only were the media houses professional in the way they handled pre-election and ongoing post election brouhaha, they also upheld the rules governing the conduct of the election.

It would be recalled that days to the epic election, many electronic media houses in particular dedicated a proportionable air time to election

issues in which they educate the voters and remind everyone about the dos and don'ts of the election.

"So far, there are no allegation of conspiracy levelled against any media organisation either by the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), political parties and (or) their candidates. Though there are few hitches here and there for which INEC magnanimously extended voting in some locations, the results of those areas with fewer hitches are being counted at the moment. No media houses have conducted itself foul against the law."

SERAP's admonition

In the meantime, the Social Economic Right and Accountability Project (SERAP) has cautioned the federal government against its plan to shut down some broadcast stations over what the government considers a breach of electoral acts.

The government through the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) had threatened to shut down broadcast stations found culpable of using their platforms to undermine the peaceful coexistence of Nigeria towards the presidential election. This followed a meeting between NBC's director-general, Balarabe Irelah, and broadcast stations.

In a statement, SERAP urged President Muhammadu Buhari to direct information minister, Lai Mohammed, and NBC to withdraw the threat to revoke the licences of broadcast stations and shut them down over their coverage of elections and post-election matters.

SERAP noted, through its deputy director, Kolawole Oluwadare, that, "The 'last warning' and threat by the NBC if not immediately withdrawn would limit freedom of expression and the ability of broadcast stations to cover important issues around the 2023 general elections."

"Political expression is a fundamental right. The threat by the NBC creates a significant risk that legitimate expression may be prohibited. Such unlawful prohibition may prevent transparency and dissemination of information on legitimate issues of public interest around the 2023 general elections."

"The media must not allow itself to fall into the categories of those that work against the rule of law, since this is the first step towards sanity and continuous development of any nation. It must be seen at this critical time in the life of the nation as a sole holder of public peace and stability.

"The profession does not allow the media to play to the gallery or fall into the manipulation of some unscrupulous elements in the society who are known for fomenting trouble when their selfish interests are not pampered during elections.

SUNDAY FEATURE

Madrid remind Reds how far they've fallen

NO miracle. No comeback. In the end, not even a goal for the travelling Liverpool supporters to get excited about. The Reds had descended on the Spanish capital dreaming of the most unlikely of escape acts, but all they got was another harsh lesson from Real Madrid, their Champions League bete noir. By Neil Jones Thomas. **writes.**

FOR the fourth time in six seasons, Liverpool's European dreams were dashed by the kings of this competition, with Karim Benzema's late strike securing a 6-2 aggregate win and sending Carlo Ancelotti's men into the quarter-finals.

A sobering reality check for Reds fans, many of whom made an early exit as the game, and indeed the tie, petered out in the dying stages.

Their side had a few opportunities, mostly in the first half, but in truth never looked likely to make any inroads into that 5-2 first-leg deficit.

The damage, most certainly, was done at Anfield, when a two-goal lead became a three-goal problem in little more than 45 minutes, but for Jurgen Klopp and his players, this was a galling reminder of just how far they have fallen since losing to Real narrowly in last season's final.

The winger was electric from the outset, running rings around Liverpool's right-back. He could have perhaps grabbed a goal in the first half after turning Ibrahima Konate inside out, but his shot was tame.

He inevitably made an impact, though, setting up Benzema for Madrid's only goal on the night. It wasn't the prettiest assist, more a simple stab to a wide-open player.

Still, it was another goal involvement against his favourite European opponent.

He may have blundered in the first leg, gifting a crucial goal to Vinicius Junior, but nobody could fault Liverpool's goalkeeper here.

What a performance the Brazilian turned in. His first-half save from Vinicius, an instinctive block with his forearm from point blank range, was superb.

His next, from Eduardo Camavinga, was even better: a touch onto the crossbar at full stretch.

There was another after the break, one-on-one against Fede Valverde, and only some slapstick defending and a lucky ricochet denied him a deserved clean sheet.

With less than 10 minutes remaining, and the game descending into nothing, Liverpool's centre-backs and forwards prepared to receive an Alexander-Arnold delivery from the right.

It didn't arrive, the ball instead sent miles beyond the far post, allowing Madrid to break. Alexander-Arnold's shoulders slumped as he launched into yet another recovery run back towards his own goal.

He's made a few of those over the course of this tie. He won't want to see Vinicius Junior again in a hurry, that's for sure.

The Brazilian was too slick and too skilful for the Englishman, who did make one good challenge to deny Benzema a goal, but otherwise looked like a broken man, with even his famous passing radar going awry.

It has been clear for quite some time now that Modric is among the best midfielders to ever do it. And Wednesday night's showing was another impressive cut for his extensive highlight reel.

The Croatian neither scored nor assisted, but took the sting out of Liverpool's game early.

The visitors were predictably adventurous from the first whistle, but Modric's composed passing and ability to play between the lines ensured Madrid had time to breathe in the early stages.

He contributed going forward, too, sending a shot just over the crossbar in the first half and



setting up Valverde for a narrow miss in the second.

Unsurprisingly, when Modric left the field, he did so to a standing ovation from the Santiago Bernabeu. The man's a living legend.

Madrid are used to fighting on all fronts. With this squad, this coach, and, in all honesty, their heritage, they should be pushing for the league, cup, and continental success.

But this hasn't been the easiest season for Ancelotti. Madrid are facing a deficit in the Copa del Rey, and need to beat a surging Barcelona on Sunday to stand any chance of staying in the Liga title race.

Ancelotti needed this one, then. And fortunately for the Blancos boss, he drew a top performance out of his side.

This was vintage Madrid, every year of their European experience oozing through their play. Los Blancos never really looked concerned, and they partially have their manager to thank.

Some coaches win big games with tactical nous and constant energy. Ancelotti wins them by giving the impression that everything will eventually work out.

The away end was half-empty well before the final blast of referee Felix Zwayer's whistle, and could you blame them?

They'd arrived with hope, those 1800 lucky enough to get tickets in a scandalously-reduced allocation, but after an okay first 45 minutes, the belief on the pitch and in the stands faded quickly.

Liverpool had their chance in this tie, 2-0 up and purring inside 20 minutes in the first leg, but what happened thereafter emphasised the drop-off in Klopp's side this season.

Real scored five in no time at Anfield, and though they didn't put them to the sword here, the feeling for the most part was of a good team holding an average one at arm's length.

That will hurt the hardcore amongst the Reds support. The worry now is that this might be their last Champions League away trip for some time.



SUNDAY SPORTS

Rybakina beats Swiatek in semi-finals



Rybakina

WIMBLEDON champion Elena Rybakina defeated world number one Iga Swiatek in straight sets to reach the Indian Wells final.

Kazakh 10th seed Rybakina was dominant against defending champion Swiatek, needing just one hour 17 minutes to beat the Pole 6-2 6-2.

It is the second time Rybakina, 23, has beaten Swiatek this season after defeating her at the Australian Open.

She will face Aryna Sabalenka in a repeat of the Australian Open final.

"Today in some moments I played at my highest level," Rybakina said.

"There are moments you feel, 'OK, I can beat anyone if I always play like this'. It's the goal, but you never feel amazing and perfect every match. Today it was really good from me."

Rybakina took the first set against Swiatek in 36 minutes and raced to a 4-0 lead in the second before completing victory.

"I gave it all but Elena was a better player," said Swiatek, the defending champion at the Miami Open, which starts on Tuesday.

"Unfortunately I'm feeling discomfort and pain in my ribs and it was challenging for me to compete at my highest level. I will consult with my team and I will definitely use these next days to recover."

Belarusian Sabalenka, who won her maiden major singles title in Melbourne, beat Greece's world number seven Maria Sakkari 6-2 6-3 in the other semi-final.

Britain's Neal Skupski and the Netherlands' Wesley Koolhof are through to the men's doubles final.

They claimed a 6-3 4-6 10-5 win over Mexico's Santiago Gonzalez and France's Edouard Roger-Vasselin.

Skupski and Koolhof will play India's Rohan Bopanna and Australia's Matthew Ebden in Sunday's final.

Former world number three Elina Svitolina will return to the WTA Tour following her maternity leave at the Charleston Open in South Carolina in April.

WORLD number one Iga Swiatek continued her pursuit of back-to-back Indian Wells titles as she cruised past Romania's Sorana Cirstea in straight sets to reach the semi-finals.

The 21-year-old beat Cirstea, ranked 83 in the world, 6-2 6-3.

The defending champion won eight consecutive games en route to a comprehensive victory in California.

In the men's event, Carlos Alcaraz beat Felix Auger-Aliassime as he seeks to return to the world number one spot.

The Spanish top seed, who must win his first Indian Wells title to replace Novak Djokovic at the top of the rankings, won 6-4 6-4.

"Today, the goal was to stay there," Alcaraz said. "I knew that I was going to have my chances. Probably I played one of my best matches this season. I'm really happy and [I want to] keep going."

Alcaraz will face Italy's Jannik Sinner for a place in the final, after the Italian overcame American defending champion Taylor

Swiatek and Carlos Alcaraz reach semi-finals

Fritz 6-4 4-6 6-4.

In the men's doubles, Britain's Neal Skupski and Dutch partner Wesley Koolhof beat Jamie Murray and Michael Venus 6-3 6-3 to reach the semi-finals.

They will meet Edouard Roger-Vasselin and Santiago Gonzalez in the last four after their 2-6 6-2 10-7 victory over Briton Lloyd Glasspool and partner Harri Heliövaara.

The winner of the French and US Opens last year, Swiatek will play Wimbledon champion Elena Rybakina on Friday.

Kazakhstan's Rybakina, who beat the Czech Republic's Karolina Muchova 7-6 (7-4) 2-6 6-4 in her quarter-final, knocked Swiatek out of the Australian Open in January.

Swiatek, who beat Briton Emma Raducanu in the fourth round, is looking to become just the second woman, after Martina Navratilova in 1990 and 1991, to win back-to-back titles at this tournament.

Cirstea recovered an early break and batted off a break point to level the opening set at 2-2 before Swiatek steamed through the next eight games on the way to a comfortable victory in one hour and 22 minutes.

Meanwhile, Greece's Maria Sakkari rallied from a set and a break down to beat Petra Kvitova 4-6 7-5 6-1 to secure a second consecutive Indian Wells semi-final spot.

Kvitova started well - having secured a dramatic match-point saving win over Jessica Pegula a day earlier - to take the first set and immediately break Sakkari in the second.

But Sakkari came from 40-0 down in the final game to force a deciding set, which she won in dominant fashion.

The 27-year-old will now face Australian Open champion Aryna Sabalenka, who moved into the semi-finals with a 6-4 6-0 victory over American Coco Gauff on Wednesday.



Great Britain name squad for France qualifier

GREAT Britain have named an unchanged squad to face France in their Billie Jean King Cup qualifier, with Emma Raducanu unavailable for selection.

Anne Keothavong's team lost to Australia in the semi-finals of the competition in Glasgow in November.

GB's Harriet Dart, Heather Watson, Katie Boulter, Alicia Barnett and Olivia Nicholls will aim to qualify again in Coventry from 14-15 April.

Raducanu has committed to playing in an event in Stuttgart the following week.

"I'm pleased to name the same team as the one we had four months ago in Glasgow where we gelled so well, and the team spirit was electric," Keothavong said.

"There were some memorable performances across the week to help us reach the semi-finals."

She added: "While Emma is unavailable for this tie, we look forward to seeing her back on the team in the near future."

British number one Raducanu, who missed last year's Finals because of a wrist injury, reached the fourth round at Indian Wells this week where she lost to world number one Iga Swiatek.

The indoor match at the Coventry Building Society Arena will be played as a best-of-five rubbers.

Switzerland are the defending champions in the women's team competition - which was formerly known as the Fed Cup - and both they and Australia have qualified automatically for this year's Finals.

They will be joined by the winners of the nine qualifiers

and the host nation - although a venue for the Finals has not yet been confirmed.

This qualifying tie in Coventry will be played on a hard court, with the following week's tournament in Stuttgart the first of Emma Raducanu's clay court season.

With a clay court training block scheduled after next week's Miami Open, it is far from ideal for anyone then to switch back to a hard court for a week before beginning the clay season in earnest.

Raducanu's representatives also point to her ongoing wrist issue, which is limiting practice and could be put under further strain by regularly switching surfaces.

But this will be the third time in a row Raducanu has been missing from the British team. She was also absent because of the wrist injury from last November's Billie Jean King Cup Finals, and then chose a tour event in Auckland over the United Cup at the beginning of this year.

And there is no escaping the fact that Raducanu's presence in Stuttgart is expected by sponsors Porsche, as the 20-year-old is a brand ambassador for the car maker.

World number one will not play at Miami

WORLD number one Novak Djokovic has failed in his bid to play at next week's Miami Open after being denied entry to the United States.

The 22-time Grand Slam winner, 35, had applied for special permission to enter the US because he is not vaccinated against Covid-19.

The US requires international visitors to be vaccinated and proof will be required until at least 10 April.

Djokovic withdrew from the ongoing Indian Wells event for the same reason.

"Obviously, we're one of the premier tournaments in the world, we'd like to have the best players that can play," said Miami Open tournament director James Blake.

Speaking to the Tennis Channel, he added: "We did all that we could. We tried to talk to the government, but that's out of our hands. We tried, and he wasn't able to play."

"Same result that he had in Indian Wells, where I know [fellow tournament director] Tommy Haas did as much as he could. We tried to get Novak Djokovic to be

allowed to get an exemption, but that wasn't able to happen.

"We'd love to have him, and he's our greatest champion, he's won six times here. Unfortunately, that's way above my pay grade."

Serbia's Djokovic missed last year's US Open because of his vaccination status.

Djokovic, who also missed last year's Australian Open and was deported from the country because of his vaccination status, has said he would skip Grand Slams rather than have a Covid-19

vaccination.

He was permitted to travel to Melbourne in January and won a record-extending 10th Australian Open title, tying Rafael Nadal's men's record of 22 Grand Slam wins.

Djokovic suffered his first defeat of the season last week when he was beaten in straight sets by Daniil Medvedev in the semi-finals of the Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championships.

He is next set to play on the clay of the Monte Carlo Masters from 9 April.



SUNDAY SPORTS

Thomas criticises plans to restrict golf fly



Two-time major winner Justin Thomas is the current world number 10

US PGA champion Justin Thomas has heavily criticised plans by the R&A and United States Golf Association to restrict how far golf balls fly at future elite tournaments.

Former US Open champion Bryson DeChambeau and the manufacturers of Titleist golf balls have also been critical.

The rule-makers want top professional and elite amateur golf to be played using a "tournament ball" that would not fly as far as those currently in use across the game.

"You're trying to create a solution for a problem that doesn't exist," said Thomas. "To me, it's just so bad for the game of golf."

Recreational amateur golf would not be covered by the "Model Local Rule" that the R&A and USGA are recommending for elite golf use. Both organisations say they plan to implement the move at their majors - the Open and US Open in 2026.

"The great thing to me is the fact that you can play the exact same golf ball that I play," Thomas added. "That's cool."

"For an every day amateur golfer, it's very unique that we are able to play the exact same equipment."

The new rule means a ball struck by a driver swung at 127 mph in laboratory conditions should not be capable of flying further than 320 yards. With tour clubhead speeds averaging around 114 mph, this would lead to a substantial reduction in driving distances at top events.

"If you can swing 127 miles an hour, like, power to you," Thomas said.

"I mean, people are running faster, so, what, are they just going to make the length of a mile longer so that the fastest mile time doesn't change, or are they going to put the NBA hoop at 13 feet because people can jump higher now?"

"Like, no. It's evolution. We're athletes now. Like, we're training to hit the ball further and faster and if you can do it, so good for you. So yeah, as you can tell, I'm clearly against it."

DeChambeau, who is among the longest hitters in the

game, told the LIV Golf website: "I think it is the most atrocious thing you could do to the game of golf."

"It's not about rolling golf balls back; it's about making golf courses more difficult."

DeChambeau won his only major title at the 2020 US Open at Winged Foot, where narrow fairways and thick rough were expected to create one of the most difficult course set ups in major history.

But Brandon Matthews, who has the PGA Tour's fastest average swing speed (126.6mph) told the Golf Channel he welcomes the proposals.

"I'm really looking forward to seeing shot shapes again like you used to see," said Matthews.

"Like a rising ball flight. You don't see that anymore because of the ball technology. So, you're going to see a little more of that come back, which is really cool."

"I don't know how far they're going to go with this, but it's going to be a really exciting change and I think it's going to make the game a little bit better."

Meanwhile, the boss of Acushnet, who manufacture Titleist balls that are most

popular on tour, attacked the "bifurcation" of splitting rules between the elite and recreational forms of the game.

"Golf is an aspirational sport and we believe at its very best when equipment and playing regulations are unified," said David Maher, the company's president and chief executive.

"During the past two decades, PGA Tour average playing length has increased by less than 100 yards and scoring average has remained virtually flat."

The R&A and USGA believe the game has "crossed a rubicon" and that it would be irresponsible not to restrict driving distances going forward.

Next month's Masters in Augusta will see the famous 13th hole lengthened by 35 yards to cope with modern hitting.

There were fears that the Old Course at St Andrews would prove too short for the world's best players at last year's Open.

The rules makers have given the golf industry six months to provide feedback on proposals that would come into force in 2026.

It is clear they will face considerable opposition from certain quarters.

Norrie's run ended by Tiafoe in quarter-finals

BBC SPORT said that, Norrie, who won the event in 2021, was well below his best and beaten 6-4 6-4 by the 25-year-old 14th seed.

Norrie, 27, the 10th seed, looked unusually flat at times and made 28 unforced errors.

"I'm disappointed," Norrie said. "It was a big opportunity for me looking at the names left in the draw."

He added: "I felt I had a really good chance to win another Indian Wells but on the day today Frances was better than me, and that's the sport."

Tiafoe will play Russian fifth seed Daniil Medvedev in the semi-final.

He reached the semi-final of the US Open last year but this is the first time he has reached the last four of a Masters 1000 event.

British number one Cameron Norrie's run in Indian Wells ended with an error-strewn defeat against American Frances Tiafoe in the quarter-finals.

"It is big," he said. "I'm super happy about today."

"I have been playing really well all week. I am happy being here."

The opening stages of the

Raducanu beaten by Swiatek in fourth round



Emma Raducanu playing in her first tournament

Britain's Emma Raducanu is out of Indian Wells after a straight-set defeat by world number one Iga Swiatek in the fourth round.

BBC SPORT said that, the defending champion won 6-3 6-1 to reach the quarter-finals.

The second set was one-sided, but Raducanu's three wins in California represent her best tournament since winning the 2021 US Open.

"I think that Iga played a very good level and showed why she is number one in the world," Raducanu told BBC Sport.

"She was very ruthless with the way that she played. I think I was able to stay competitive for the beginning of the match but ultimately she ground me down and by the end of it I was just taking way too long to recover from one rally."

The first four games of the match gave Raducanu plenty of encouragement - both players had two break points as the games were shared.

The solitary break of the first set came in the sixth game, allowing Swiatek to take the opener 6-3 as she began striking the ball superbly.

The world number one's defence was as watertight as ever and the winners started to flow.

Raducanu managed to save four break points at 1-1 in the second set, but could not save a fifth and did not win another game after that.

In her fourth match in six days, at her first tournament since January's Australian Open, the Briton's energy levels dropped significantly and the last few games were a procession.

"I can take a positive week," said the 20-year-old, who nearly withdrew from the tournament because of a wrist injury and the after-effects of tonsillitis.

"I think I had a few good wins earlier against some great opponents. I did two good training weeks in London. They paid off to an extent but ultimately two weeks of training isn't going to cut it against the world number one right now."

"I'm looking forward to playing her after I've got more time under my belt."

"Physically I feel like that's going to be one of my biggest assets. I think that I'm going to be one of the best athletes on the tour, and that's going to be a big part of my game."

"I would say there is a very long way to go, but I'm definitely starting the right work now."

Meanwhile, Swiatek has called on the WTA to offer more support to Ukrainian players as their country continues to defend itself against the invasion by Russia.

Ukrainian Lesia Tsurenko withdrew from Indian Wells before her third-round match with Belarusian Aryna Sabalenka on Sunday for personal reasons linked with the war.

Russian and Belarusian players have been allowed to compete on the WTA tour, but not under their national flags.

"There is a lot of tension in the locker room. Obviously it's going to be there, because there is a war," said Poland's Swiatek, who criticised Russian player Anastasia Potapova for wearing a Spartak Moscow football shirt before her defeat by Jessica Pegula on Sunday.

"But maybe it would be a little bit less if WTA put some action at the beginning of kind of explain to everybody what is right and what is not."

"I totally understand why she [Tsurenko] withdrew. I respect the Ukrainian girls so much, because if a bomb landed in my country or if my home was destroyed, I don't know if I could handle that."

"I feel there should be done a little bit more to help Ukrainian players, because I feel like everything we discuss in tennis is more about Belarusian and Russian players and if they should be allowed."

"I don't think that's right, because we should focus more on helping Ukrainian players and providing them everything that they need, because they basically have to take care of like all their families, and there's a lot of baggage on their

match were interrupted by drizzle in the desert but afterwards Tiafoe was comfortably the better player in windy conditions.

He broke serve at 3-3 in the

first set before closing out the set and soon took a 5-2 lead in the second.

Norrie won the next two games but Tiafoe closed out the match on his serve on the second attempt.

"I think Frances dealt with the wind better than me," Norrie said,

"Usually I'm really good in the wind but I felt I didn't really play smart."

"I could have been a bit more aggressive against the wind and a bit more controlled with the wind and tried to keep the rallies a bit longer. He was really good in big moments."

The defeat ends the British singles interest in Indian Wells, one of the most high-profile tournaments outside of the Grand Slams, after Jack Draper and Emma Raducanu were beaten on Tuesday.



Norrie won the Rio Open two weeks ago and was on an eight-match winning run

SUNDAY SPORTS

No need to be afraid of Haaland

- Matthauss



Haaland

BAYERN Munich have been told that they 'do not need to be afraid' of Erling Haaland in their Champions League quarter-final clash.

Following the draw on Friday afternoon, the Bundesliga champions will take on Pep Guardiola's Manchester City in the next round of the competition.

They'll be faced with the tough task of keeping Norwegian star Haaland - who has scored 39 goals in 36 appearances this campaign - quiet for 180 minutes of football.

Haaland will be no stranger with the Bavarian side, having faced them many times during his Borussia Dortmund days, and will be hopeful of scoring against them again.

However, as Munich fans may be fearful of the impact Haaland may have against them, German football legend Matthauss has eased concerns about the striker.

Speaking to Sky Germany, Matthauss claimed that 'Manchester City is in a very good mood' coming into the tie.

He then reflected on the potential danger that the Norwegian could cause and said: 'Haaland played against Bayern more often and scored less. You don't need to be afraid of him.'

When looking at his numbers in Dortmund, the striker faced Bayern Munich seven times and managed to score five goals in those matches.

However, the statistics show that Haaland has never won a match against the Bundesliga giants, out of the seven clashes he's been involved in.

Things may be different for the Norwegian this time round, as he'll come into the match full of confidence given his performances of late.

In his most recent match in the competition, Haaland became just the second player in Champions League history to score five goals in a single match.

Bayern, on the other hand, will also back themselves to progress to the semi-finals after beating PSG 3-0 on aggregate in the last-16.

It has been a far from

straight-forward season for Julian Nagelsmann's side, who are in a title race of their own with Union Berlin, Borussia Dortmund and RB Leipzig, and the two sides share a very even history.

Three wins apiece, with City winning the most recent meeting, back in 2014-15, to draw level in the match-up as both sides have three victories

Havertz debate following intense Chelsea storm

KAI Havertz has impressed for Chelsea in a more withdrawn role against Borussia Dortmund and Leicester City

Chelsea head coach Graham Potter will not put limits on what Kai Havertz can achieve in his career, as he believes the German star has the mentality and talent "to do anything" in the European game.

Havertz has celebrated huge successes since arriving at Stamford Bridge in the summer of 2020 from Bayer Leverkusen. It was his goal in Porto against Manchester City that clinched the 2021 Champions League, and last season he netted the winner in the Club World Cup final against Palermias.

Those moments have guaranteed Havertz a place in Chelsea's history; they can never be taken away from the 23-year-old. However, a recurring theme during his two-and-a-half seasons at the club has been inconsistency. It has resulted in frustration among Chelsea supporters.

Yet in the past two matches, Havertz has been used in a



Havertz

to their name.

It also represents a reunion for Pep Guardiola at the club where he famously failed to win the competition, but had widespread success in all other competitions in his three-year stay in Bavaria.

City will now face two German sides in successive rounds of the competition, after defeating RB Leipzig in the previous round.

more withdrawn role by Potter. It's a decision that has paid off with the German international scoring against both Borussia Dortmund and Leicester City and producing some of his best football of the campaign.

And when asked whether Havertz's best role in the Chelsea side has been found, Potter replied: "That's the thing, Kai is still young and can play in lots of positions. He is probably not quite leading the line now, he's behind the line, and that's probably his best position. Although I would not rule anything out with Kai because

Hodgson being considered as Vieira replacement

Former Crystal Palace boss Roy Hodgson is being considered as an option to take over as manager at Selhurst Park after the sacking of Patrick Vieira.

Frenchman Vieira, 46, was sacked on Friday after a 12-match winless run in all competitions.

It would be a remarkable return for former England boss Hodgson, who was replaced by Vieira in July 2021.

Under-21s boss Paddy McCarthy is taking charge of the Eagles against league leaders Arsenal on Sunday.

He will be supported by former Palace player Darren Powell, and BBC Sport understands that the situation will be reviewed heading into the international break.

But Hodgson, 75, is an option for the club he

MANCHESTER United manager Erik ten Hag will reportedly earn a new contract regardless of who becomes the new club owner.

Talks of a potential takeover at the club have been ongoing for months and have had significant developments this week as both Sir Jim Ratcliffe and a high-level team of representatives of Sheikh Jassim Bin Hamad Al Thani toured Old Trafford.

The club's current owners, the Glazer family, have ensured that they remain focused on a delivering a positive outcome this season and will not let the takeover talks distract them.

As part of this, one issue that has already been outlined is the desire to extend ten Hag's deal as head coach of the Red Devils.

And, according to the Mirror, both bidding parties are on-board with the idea of offering the Dutch manager a contract renewal, despite him only signing a three-year deal in summer.

Ten Hag has helped transform the Red Devils in his first season at the club and has delivered a Carabao Cup trophy whilst maintaining a position in the top four.

Because of this, there is a sense of urgency around the club to provide him with a new and even longer contract to ensure he commits his future

the mentality is there and he has got all the attributes to do anything.

"I think he is a confident player, but he is also someone who you need to help. I can't speak highly enough of him, to be honest. He has given everything all the time, does his absolute best, takes responsibility, and is an absolute dream to work with as a coach.

"He wants to learn, wants to improve, and gives his best to the team. He deals with adversity in a sensible, mature way, and rides out the storm. Then, because of the quality he has, he gets his rewards."

Hag to earn new contract at Man United

at United.

Ten Hag revealed, earlier this week, that he met Sir Jim Ratcliffe ahead of the Brit's potential takeover of Manchester United.

The UK's richest man was pictured at Old Trafford after touching down in the City to discuss his potential takeover with club officials as he rivals a group of Qatari bidders - led by Sheikh Jassim Bin Hamad Al Thani - who gave their presentation on Thursday.

The 70-year-old was later seen beaming outside United's famous ground after initial talks inside as he prepared to make his way to Carrington.

Ten Hag, speaking on Friday before United's FA Cup clash with Fulham, revealed that he met the billionaire during his visit to the club.

"I just met them and shook hands but I am focused on the game," the Dutchman said. "We play a big game on Sunday and all our focus is on that. Others in the club are dealing with potential investors."

"My job is focus on the game so let's talk about the game

Fulham, it is a big tie so let's get ready for that.'

Meanwhile, a high-level team of representatives of Sheikh Jassim Bin Hamad Al Thani toured Old Trafford before being sitting down for presentations at United's Carrington training complex on Thursday afternoon.

Sheikh Jassim was not present for the talks, which concluded at around 7.20pm. United manager Erik ten Hag was in Seville, where his side defeated Real Betis 1-0 in the second leg of their Europa League tie to progress 5-1 on aggregate.

It is understood that the talks - which lasted around 10 hours - were cordial, extensive and very positive. Sheikh Jassim now has around 10 days to make a second bid as he seeks total control of United.

It remains unclear whether the Raine Group, the US bank overseeing the process, will then choose a party to go exclusive with or seek further rounds of offers.



Hag

"Going back to Roy Hodgson is a backwards step because Palace wanted the team to evolve and they did evolve under Patrick Vieira, you know what it would be like under Hodgson," former Palace striker Clinton Morrison told BBC Radio 5 Live.

"Do I think Hodgson could

go in there and keep Palace up? I do - he obviously knows the players and, while it wasn't the best football under Hodgson, it was effective, it got results.

"It would be a big call but I could understand it being for until the end of the season because maybe other options aren't available."



Vieira and Hodgson



Barcelona includes 15-year-old in squad

BARCELONA have warmed up for their huge Clasico clash with Real Madrid at the weekend by including a 15-year-old in their squad.

Real continued to prove their tag as the best team in Europe, when they beat Liverpool 1-0 on Wednesday night to continue the defence of their Champions League crown.

Carlo Ancelotti's side finished 6-2 winners on aggregate, having gone 2-0 down in the tie initially, leaving the manager to claim there was a new best player in the world.

They will next face Chelsea, for the third year in-a-row, and either Manchester City or Bayern Munich in the semifinals, meaning they'll have had to do it the hard way if they're going to defend their title.

However, whilst they might be impressing in European competition, Los Blancos are well off the pace in La Liga and currently sit nine points below fierce rivals Barcelona.

The two sides face each other on Sunday, with a win for Xavi's team taking them 12 points clear with only 12 games of the league campaign to go.

There will be extra bite to the game, with Real threatening legal action against Barca following charges relating to corruption, which could even see them relegated.

All that didn't stop Xavi naming a teenager in first team training on Saturday, as



15-year-old goalkeeper Eder Aller joined the seniors, as per SPORT.

The keeper who 'breathes football' joined the club in 2021, with his dad explaining the choice of Barcelona, saying, "No other campus

offered us 35 hours of training per week."

The player himself said a few months ago, "When Cultural Leonesa signed me, it was very big, and the goal was very small. "That's why I stopped a lot, and everything

went well for me. It was at that moment when I began to think that I could become someone in football."

He trained alongside Marc andre ter Stegen with the first team, as the Germany goalkeeper eyes up a 20th

clean sheet of the league season.

Barca will be much happier returning to the Nou Camp this weekend, after Xavi was shocked at the reception they got away from home last week.

The league leaders faced

Athletic Club and fans of the hosts were not particularly happy with the news of the charges at Barcelona.

Those boos would have been a lot louder if the Clasico was at the Bernabeu this weekend, instead they have the chance to end the title race at home.

Alli meets Kardashian in the weirdest moment

KIM Kardashian has continued her north London football connection, by meeting up with Dele Alli, a day after taking in an Arsenal game.

Writers on this website would never have expected to write about Kardashian quite so much, but she was one of the main attractions as Arsenal were knocked out of

the Europa League on Thursday night.

Sure, Pedro Goncalves may have scored the Puskas Award winner for 2023 but who amongst us can't say that the most famous of the Kardashian family being present at the Emirates wasn't the most important part of the evening.

It's all down to her second child, Saint, aged seven, who is a huge fan of the Gunners and, in a lovely addition, was wearing an Arsenal shirt with Arsenal Women's striker Katie McCabe's name and number on the back, whilst his friend wore Vivien Miedema on his shirt.

The social media influencer, and billionaire, has been on a tour of London, as spotted by her Instagram story, taking in a West End musical and enjoying St Patrick's Day with some Guinness.

She was also seen on FaceTime with Arsenal star Bukayo Saka, just to continue the very Arsenal heavy nature of her trip to England's capital.

But they're not the only north London club she has a connection with, as the 42-year-old shared a picture of her son, and his friends, with former Tottenham Hotspur star Dele Alli.

Seeing some adoring fans might have just been the pick me up that the 26-year-old needed, after the latest in a long line of tough weeks in his career.

Having wowed people as a young player, the midfielder's form has fallen off a cliff in recent years and he first found himself at Everton, having dropped from the Spurs first team, before heading out on loan to Besiktas this season.

Things have not gone well in Turkey for him and this week he was banished from

the Super Lig's first team and told to train with the reserves.

He is now expected to have his contract ripped up by Everton when he returns to Goodison Park at the end of the campaign, with his loan club highly unlikely to make his move permanent.

The England international, who hasn't played for Gareth Southgate's side since 2019,

would cost the Toffees money if he were to make too many more appearances for them, and if he has no long term future there then they wouldn't want that to happen.

There could be some good news for him, with two Italian teams reportedly interested in signing him in the summer, once he is a free agent.

Mo Salah could opt for move to Spain

THE Egypt international has scored 178 times for the club and in the current campaign, has netted 22 times.

Salah's preference, as per the report, would be LaLiga if he did end up leaving the Premier League.

Having moved to Liverpool in 2017 from Roma, the 30-year-old has gone on to win the Champions League and Premier League under Jurgen Klopp, and he could opt for one more big career move elsewhere in Europe.

The Egypt international has scored 178 times for the club, becoming a Liverpool legend along the way, and in the current campaign, he has netted 22 times

Liverpool were knocked out of the Champions

League by Real Madrid on Wednesday and his contract with the Merseyside club runs until 30 June 2025.

Foot Mercato report that major changes are coming at the Reds, something

that will have been accelerated due to their poor performances in all competitions this season.

Real Madrid would be the only club in La Liga capable of meeting Salah's high salary



Salah

WORLD SEARCH Answer the clue and search for the word

B	U	H	J	I	N	I	K	E	Y	F	B	C
K	I	T	G	O	K	H	G	P	H	Q	I	I
B	A	R	S	H	I	M	W	D	E	H	R	D
L	L	F	F	R	Y	B	X	R	A	M	D	S
G	I	E	N	D	E	C	B	O	L	T	I	A
J	U	S	D	S	C	R	V	G	O	U	E	E
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U	L	P	T	Q	J	M	T	I	N	B	R	O
Z	S	X	U	R	P	E	O	I	V	W	A	B

- Mutaz Essu.....(7) Qatar high jumper
- Deji.....(4) former Nigerian sprinter
- Patrice.....(6)Crystal Palace Manager
- David.....(5) West Ham Manager
- Usein.....(4) Fomer Jamaican sprinter
- Didier.....(6)Former Chelsea striker
- George.....(4)The only world best footballer from Africa
- Anthony....(6)Nigerian/British boxer
- Golf Peg (3)
- Rashidi.....(6) Nigeria's first world cup scorer
-Jo (8) Former Super Eagle handler
- Two under Par in golf (6)
- San Antonion basketball team (5)

By IBRAHIM T. LOT