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Nigeria's polls, challenges and way forward

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Though the 2023 general elections on the world's most populous black nation, Nigeria has come and gone, both the political class which comprised of the elitists as well as the vulnerable citizenry have learnt bitter lessons which will linger in their memory for decades to come. While the elections eventually ended the political affluence of many political juggernauts, it also opened doors for many members of the downtrodden to come into the arena to salvage what is left of the present unimpressive developmental status of the nation.



Our expectations for Plateau Governor-elect

The 2023 general elections to vote in a new president and members of the National Assembly as well as that of the governorship and State Houses of Assembly have come and gone and winners as well as losers have emerged. What is left now is to hit the ground running to deliver the dividends of democracy to over 200 million Nigerians who have been yearning for it in the last eight years.

After the March 18, 2023 governorship elections, Barrister Caleb Mutfwang of the opposition Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in Plateau State was declared winner and is to take over the helm of affairs of the state on May 29, 2023.

Now that elections are over and his emergence as the governor elect, it's time to hit the ground running for governance and an all inclusive administration devoid of tribal and ethno-religious dichotomies.

As the Governor-elect prepares to take charge, it is worthy of note that it's time to re-invent the Plateau trajectory of peace, tourism and hospitality, to re-engage and re-integrate the people into entrepreneurial productive ventures. It is hoped he will formulate strategic policies aimed at empowering the citizenry by taking them out of poverty and despondency, It's time to re-invent

There are quite a lot of expectations from the people of Plateau State ranging the issue of insecurity and others such as health, education, socio economic concerns, amongst others.

It is quite worrisome the situation in the past where the winner takes it all. There is a need to put a stop to it and put in competent people who can take the state to higher heights with their expertise, irrespective of political or religious leanings. Such people should be appointed into sensitive positions so that they add value to the system, bring results, and not political patronage as is the usual practice where family and friends are appointed. These needs to stop if we're to move the state forward.

However, basic needs of man are: food (including water), shelter and clothing. Other modern lists emphasize transportation (as proposed in the Third talk of Livelihood section of Three Principles of the People) sanitation, education, and healthcare. It is expected the new government to prioritize these.

We call on the government to provide security of lives and property, maintain law and order, defend government and the state, of its territorial integrity, maintenance of international relations, ensuring the general well-being of citizens and the social and economic development of the people.

Unfortunately, over the years Nigerians have not really enjoyed these benefits from successive governments. It is in the light of these that the people of Plateau have expressed hope that the new government will take a critical look at some of the ills that have bedeviled the state thus far and address these issues.

Notably amongst which is the issue of insecurity which has been recurring for years with people driven from their ancestral homes and made refugees in their own state. The Barrister Caleb Mutfwang led administration must tackle this problem headlong so that the people so displaced can come back to their home.

We advise that despite the fact that the elections are over, a lot of people were hurt and relationships were affected. The incoming administration has a lot of work to do in reconciling the people of Plateau State who were divided along religious and ethnic lines.

As is being said in many quarters, Nigerians are not asking for a lot, just the few basic things that will make life much easier for them, such as good roads, employment opportunities for the youth, improvement in electricity supply to help particularly small businesses, good educational infrastructure, healthcare development, to mention a few.

Buhari not reluctant to hand over to Tinubu - Presidency

The Presidency yesterday declared as "unfounded" insinuations in some quarters that President Muhammadu Buhari who campaigned vigorously for the emergence of Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu, of the All Progressives Congress (APC), as the presidential-elect, has vowed not to hand over to him. Rather, it said the Buhari-led government, which is currently at transition stage, had constituted different committees to midwife a new administration come May 29, 2023.

The Presidency in a statement entitled, "The President Never Said He Won't Hand Over To Elected Tinubu", issued by presidential spokesperson, Mallam Garba Shehu,

also added that the hometown of President Buhari in Daura, Katsina State is agog with arrangements for the return of their son after his eight-year tenure as Nigerian President.

Shehu, in the statement said: "The Presidency wishes to denounce as outrageous and fake, and condemns the fake news brigade for attributing a false quote to President Muhammadu Buhari and circulating it.

"How can you vigorously campaign for somebody, vote for him and then say you won't hand over to him? This beggars belief." He described the alleged report published by an online newspaper as "pretty pathetic", adding: "Since their ownership is politically partisan in today's politics, in fact a loser in the presidential election. Instead of talking about issues, they repeatedly sell lies in the

hope that people believe them as truth.

The government is already in the transition phase. The Transition Committee, made up of representatives of the outgoing administration and the incoming one is meeting on an almost daily basis planning the handover to the Tinubu/Shehetti administration. "Thirteen committees as offshoots of the main committee, some to arrange military drills and pulling out of President Buhari, are either all at work or soon to be. So far, everything is going very well and there is no indication of any hitches.

"As for the President, the Daura community has begun their preparations to receive their son back after the successful administration of the country for two terms of eight years. He, on his part, is eager to return home to enjoy his retirement."

Archbishop Martins condemns ethnic profiling

The Catholic Church has warned that the ethnic profiling and violence that marred the just-concluded elections in Lagos State, if not promptly checked, could truncate the peaceful coexistence of residents is the state. Archbishop of Lagos, Most Rev. Alfred Adewale Martins, in a statement issued in Lagos condemned in very strong terms all forms of ethnic profiling, provocative utterances, and incidents of violence witnessed in some parts of Lagos State, before, during and after the recent elections in the state.

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The Archbishop, in a statement signed by the Director of Social Communications, Rev. Fr. Anthony Godonu, described as unfortunate and unacceptable, the tension, hate speech and violence, especially before and after the recent gubernatorial and House of Assembly elections in some parts of the state.

The prelate urged the state government, as a matter of urgency, to call all parties to order and to put in place a machinery for the quick restoration of peace and normalcy. In the same vein, he implored the law enforcement agencies to safeguard the lives and property of all residents irrespective of tribe, religion, or ethnic groups.

Archbishop Martins also urged the residents of Lagos to remain calm and not allow themselves to be divided against their neighbours.

According to him, "the ethnic and discriminatory comments making the rounds particularly on social media, are not a reflection of the true nature of Lagosians, who are known to be peace-loving, accommodating and cosmopolitan, including by promoting inter-tribal marriages for many decades

"I call on everyone to put a stop to the spread of hate speech and fake news and to shun all forms of rancor. The divisive comments and behaviours, particularly along ethnic or tribal lines, is not conducive to good neighbourliness and peaceful coexistence. The people of Lagos must not allow the political class to whip up such divisive sentiments to disrupt their lives and livelihood.

We are all equal before God and the only man-made distinction among people is between the poor and the rich, the privileged and the under-privileged. We are all Nigerians and have lived and interacted together as one people for decades in Lagos and other parts of our country.

"With the elections over, we hope that all those who have been fanning the embers of ethnic division will be

more circumspect and desist from further heating up the polity. We must be law-abiding citizens and not take the law into our hands in any guise," he added.

While commiserating with families that lost their loved ones and persons

NDLEA applauds lawmakers for rejecting Cannabis Bill

Chairman/Chief Executive of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, NDLEA, Brig. General Mohamed Buba Marwa (Retd) has commended members and leaders of the House of Representatives for rejecting yet another attempt to push through a bill to decriminalise cannabis cultivation, sale and use in Nigeria on the floor of the Green Chamber of the National Assembly on Thursday March 23.

Responding to the development on Friday March 24, the NDLEA boss said the decision by a majority of the lawmakers to reject the bill will further strengthen the gains so far made in the renewed war against drug abuse and trafficking in the country.

He said the 2018 drug survey figure of 10.6million Nigerians abusing cannabis alone is enough to sound the alarm bell, adding that the strong nexus between drug abuse and the security challenges across the country is incontrovertible.

According to him, "Insecurity is today a full-blown malady with many manifestations such as insurgency, banditry, kidnapping, murder, robbery, reprisal killing, name it. Yet there has never been a government that is more committed to ending this spate of insecurity than the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari. The President has matched political willpower with resources, but the scope and frequency of these acts of destabilisation and the audacity displayed by the perpetrators call for a second, critical look at the malaise.

The persistence of the problem has forced on us the necessity to start to look at likely extraneous factors that might be sustaining the resistance from the criminal elements and in doing so, try to connect the dots. The permutations will lead to a list of probable causes, which will not exclude the use and abuse of illicit substances. In the final analysis, drug abuse is indeed one of the factors fueling insecurity. As such, Nigeria cannot afford to permit the cultivation, sale and use of the most abused illicit drug under whatever guise.

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whose properties were destroyed in the violence in the state and across the country, Archbishop Martins also urged law enforcement agencies to do the needful where offences have been committed, as part of efforts to facilitate a national healing process.

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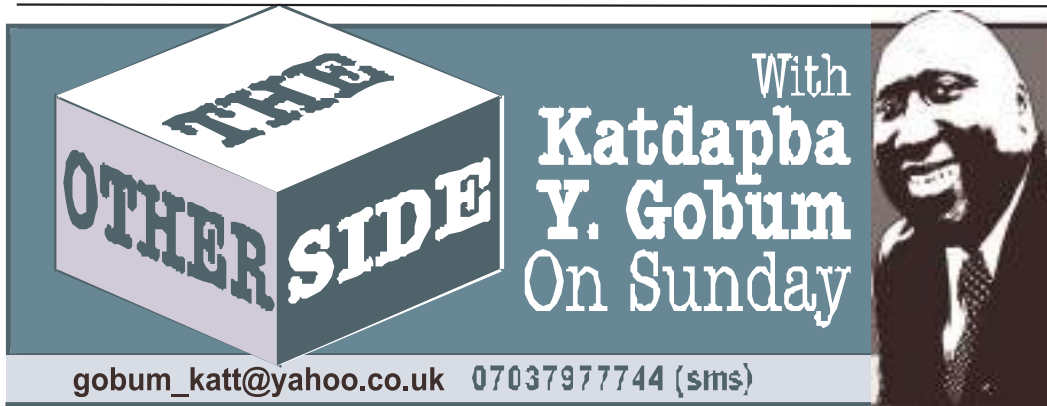
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"This is why the decision by the honorable members of the House of Representatives to reject the reintroduction of the cannabis bill is a welcome and cheering news to us in NDLEA and the Nigerian public especially parents who daily and silently contend with the pains of seeing millions of their kids and wards go down under the devastating effects of cannabis abuse."

Marwa said history will never forget those who stand with parents to protect them and their children from any legislation, under any shape or form, that will turn Nigeria to a nation of junkies and criminals, which will amount to taking a step forward and ten steps backward in the prevailing circumstance.



With
**Katdapba
Y. Gobum**
On Sunday

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"As a matter of fact, most of the parties hardly gave the women any room to operate and express themselves. But it was not reason enough to get that decimal outing they got. Several of them made their marks without the men's support. That is what the men wouldn't want to hear about."

Let's fight for the Nigerian women

LET me make a confession right from the onset, and I won't hide under any guise: women the world over have come of age. They are everywhere proving their mettle. They have done a lot to be appreciated by the men. Those who think otherwise may not discard such views for a long time to come. The views are purely held on the basis of gender and for us, mark it; it is dangerous to our development as a people.

Like it or hate it, we can't deny the fact that women have changed the face of how things are done. We have examples to show; in fact even those who do not want to hear about the exploits of women, are quick to point to the fact that women have tremendously made their marks in Nigeria's development.

I have chosen a topic that several of Nigerians would prefer not to talk about. Each person you meet has a different version to the issue. Some of the reasons are spurious as they are laughable in content. The reasons don't reflect logic but are in the main chauvinistic in reason. Well, that is what the women don't want to hear, so also are some men.

Even as it is explosive, I would rather talk about it as perhaps just gloss over the issue. For how long would we ignore the issue? For how long would the men think that the women do not matter, so long as we think we are in a man's world? Who says that the women do not matter in these issues that we have always excluded them?

Several statistics have been provided on the level of acceptance of the quality of work and representation in the last couple of years. This is not to run away from the realities that in years pass, women were not considered to be 'good' enough to give quality representation. This is no doubt chauvinistic in orientation and thinking.

We know that the balance of power is tipped heavily greatly against the women. They don't just need appointment; they need to slug it out with the men during elections. The truth is that the women don't have the financial muscle to wrestle power from the men; hence they have to depend on the men for tickets to contest elective positions.

The women may be more in number, but it is always the men that are in command. One woman wrote: "sometimes I think that men are afraid of the speed with which we will achieve development if they gave power to women and so they hold on to it." We shall soon come to this point.

Below it has been considered why there are impediments in the way of women. I have reproduced the views so as to make a point in the area that even the men and women have continued to ignore. We need as a people to study what other countries have achieved in the area of balancing the negative stats against women. It is a different story altogether today. Consider this, and let me warn;



Tallen

these views are expressed by some Nigerians. Let us consider these:

In August 2003, women won 48.8% of the parliamentary seats. In the 2008 elections, women won 45 out of the 80 parliamentary seats, amounting to about 53.25% of the votes. Rwanda's post-genocide 2003 constitution reserves 30% of parliamentary seats for women. Perhaps as a result of genocide, the population of men in Rwanda today is 45% while that of women is 55%, so you could argue that the current representation in parliament is a fair reflection of current demographics. These women voted a new law granting women land inheritance rights, a thing which almost a heresy in our traditional African setting.

Within Africa, the average for women representation is 18.5%. Uganda and South Africa have an average of 44%. The post-Apartheid Constitution of South Africa has outlawed all forms of discrimination on the basis of race, gender or sexual orientation. And they enforce those rights with great relish.

The Nordic countries have traditionally had the best tradition of gender balance in parliamentary government. The average representation of women is 44%. Norway and Finland have produced remarkable women prime ministers. The average for North America is 23.1%, while that of Europe is 19.9% (not that far ahead of Africa)! The Arabs, predictably score the lowest world-wide (11.7%).

Nigeria is extremely far behind in women representation. The problem exists throughout the 3 tiers of government. So far, no woman has made to Governor's position. Of the 700+ local

governments, there until last year only 4 LG women Chairmen (funny, that one)! Obasanjo in his second coming did bring in a good number of women into the cabinet (although the murmurs of the 'Obasanjo women' being literally his were all the rage. And it was said that he dislodged the remarkable Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala because she did not understand what it meant to be "an Obasanjo woman". I am sure there were some who were totally above board, but one of them so ferociously defending his right to be philanderer got me rather suspicious of her and in fact of most of the "Obasanjo women".

Unfortunately, I have to also say that the type of women who make it in Nigerian politics are the types that none of us would like to identify with. Most are considered fair game for the after midnight dark complots by wheeler-dealer politicians. These women are seen as part of the national cake (excuse my French, ladies)! In Hausa land, all the women politicians were viewed as being only slightly better than whores (Gambo Sawaba and Laila Dogonyaro who passed away recently). I am sorry to say, one of them did not have an enviable reputation in Aso Villa when she was in the Cabinet. One of those types has made it to the Senate in my own Southern Kaduna. No decent woman would be prepared to do what some of these people are prepared to do to get where they are.

Where does that leave us? Politics is a murky business, but it is also a calling demanding the highest ideals in moral character. It is about our very lives and destiny -- and the life chances of millions of our citizens. Women must be part of it, because they are the bedrock of our society. We need to create a political culture that allows the right sort of women to make it into

politics and to be a pride not only to the womenfolk but to our society and nation. We need great women, noble women -- and I am sure they are there in our country, our communities and even in this Forum of ours. We must encourage them not only through progressive laws but through positive affirmation.

Patricia Etteh was removed for allegedly misusing 600 million naira. Her successor Bankole is in trouble for allegedly diverting a staggering 35 billion naira. Women, clearly, are better, if you truly look at it. Professor Adenike Grange was handcuffed for taking 10 million naira. Some of our men politicians are walking away literally with murder. Hassan Lawal, formerly of Works, had 25 billion in one account along. Let's allow the women to take over this country. Women are most reluctant to fight wars. They may be corrupt, but they seem more compassionate at the end of the day.

Again whether we like it or not out there, 'women are still struggling to be heard, of the 13 women that contested the governorship elections (in Nigeria), none was successful. 59 women contested as deputies, mainly in inconsequential parties except in Lagos State. 22 women contested the House of Representatives poll and only 15 were elected into the 360-member lower chamber. 7 women were elected into the 109 member senate out of the 97 that contested the election. In the 36 States Houses of Assembly, 517 women contested for seats and only 42 were elected. More so, only 1 contested the presidential election-Ebiti Ndok of UNPD, she did not win'.

Well I didn't expect her to make any impact. Even as a reporter I never read about her candidacy or given as much publicity as the others. Perhaps it could be attributed to her lack of financial muscles as the men who contested alongside with her. Nigerians are quick to point to the foray of Sarah Jubril, who since time immemorial has contested elections with the men. While it is a fact that she was not the only female delegate, she got only a vote during the presidential primaries at Eagle Square, Abuja.

While it was apparent, she may have voted for herself, the other female delegates chose to go

with the men. We do not know of any reason, but we do know that the women may have always stood against themselves and victory. She, like other women may have lost because they were not supported by the womenfolk. It has always been like that; as a result they hardly go far in such political contest.

We can count so many women who attempted or rather competed with the men but got wounded in the process. You don't need to go too far, remember, former NAFDAC and Minister of Information and Communication, Dora Akunyili. She resigned to contest for a Senatorial seat in Anambra. She almost (yes almost, that word again) got it, but got burnt on the way. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala also got burnt because the men wouldn't want the women to create any impact.

There was no doubt she put up a spirited fight like most women are wont to do. She no doubt lost gallantly. There are several women such as her. They got consumed by the political 'fire work' of their men counterparts. That does not mean they are inferior. They are not; it is only the imagination of the man; and indeed some the women who do not believe in their ability to conquer the world. This is the category that has stood between women and the realization of their enormous potentials.

As a matter of fact, most of the parties hardly gave the women any room to operate and express themselves. But it was not reason enough to get that decimal outing they got. Several of them made their marks without the men's support. That is what the men wouldn't want to hear about.

There is a national shortage of women politicians just as there is a shortage as engineers. But we know that some women have come out tops of the men in certain areas of human endeavour. There is so much to reap from the women. Their capacity for insisting of why things should be done rightly is awesome and can be appreciated in the final analysis.

That is what the country wants now. We have gone through so much and for negative reasons indeed. The time has come for the women to change the country's orientation in good governance and accountability. We are lacking in such regards, my instincts continuously tell me, and the women can provide that platform.

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Vultures that pensioners contend with

ONE of the most hated birds is the vulture because of its penchant of eating the corpse of dead animals. Wherever vultures are seen, death is hovering around the corner.

These birds feed on the dead, so it won't be wrong to say that they celebrate when people or animals die or are dying. Somehow, they are drawn to such an environment and pray for their food to be ready in no distant time.

From every indication, one's pain or agony does not matter to them. Rather, it is the promise of a meal. At any animal's point of death, one of the hated faces one sees is that of the bald headed bird, smiling in happiness. More like saying: 'Food is ready'.

'One man's meat is another man's poison', a popular saying insinuates. All the negativity related to death seem only to add to the excitement of the vultures. Yes, such decay, pain add a spring to the steps of the vultures.

If you have ever lost a loved one and your name is put up as the person's next of kin, you will understand the vultures in the system. By the time you start running around from one office to the other, to get the persons entitlements, you will meet a lot of vultures. It does not matter if you are still mourning for your loved one, to these people, business is business.

A widow of a police man told us how some colleagues of her husband promised to help her. When she arrived the office, they led her to a man who had been pacing up and down in front of an office. The man sympathized with her for her lost and how life has become difficult for her and the children. But shocked her when he said, his part is to give hope to widows by cutting short their waiting/suffering period. In that regard, he proposed a sharing formula which she thought was ridiculous. And she walked away in anger.

However, after months of frustration, hitting the rocks as far as pursuing her husband's entitlements was concern that is apart from lack, she found herself calling her husband's colleagues, asking them to arrange for another meeting with the man she walked off from.

She was given half of her husband's entitlement by the man who claimed he was a business man. He said he was patient enough to painstakingly pursue the entitlement with her husband's office. The business man explained that he loved to help distressed vulnerable people and usually helps them at his detriment.

Smooth talker. I believe he knows which button to press for his money and the more than 300 per cent profit to come out. This is a business without stress and the profit margin is something else. But a cursed business, from every indication, stealing from the dead and the bereaved.

A young man whose father was working with Qua'an Pan LGC serving as a principal in Kwande but passed on 2 years ago is having a bad experience pursuing his late father's entitlements. Every step of the way, he is advised to oil palms. So far, he said he has spent a lot of money but he is yet to receive any payment. Instead, more names have been rolled out for him to oil their palms.

These youngsters are orphans. And apart from the 2 elder ones who are working, all their younger ones (4 in number) are dependent on them. It has reached a point that they are handing the case over to God to do with the workers at Pension Board as he pleases.

A lady said, the frustration people face when pursuing one's entitlements can be traced from the office. In her own case, after her retirement, it took the grace of God to locate her file. That carelessness delayed the payment of her pension and entitlements.

There was a popular case here in Plateau State of a mean officer who retired from service but could not start enjoying his pension for 2 years. His file was nowhere to be found because a messenger hid it that action

elicited a lot of joy from the other colleagues because the officer was very wicked and it seemed nobody escaped his wrath. It was not until his former colleagues made sure he had suffered enough that his file miraculously reappeared.

One was lucky in the 90s when one's mother joined one's father in the life beyond. As the next of kin, after fruitless efforts in pursuing one's mother's entitlement, one was directed to the Accountant-General of the state. He was such a nice fellow. This man was leaving for a meeting, so he came to the Waiting Room and addressed all of us there. He informed us there that anyone who could tell him his or her problem there, is to do so. But anyone who could not would have to come back the next day.

To cut a long story short, I approached him and narrated my problem to him. He was touched seeing how young I was. He immediately gave me a note which I took to Government House, Rayfield to a government official. He in turn gave me a note which I took to First Bank along Steel Rolling Mills. I could not believe it when I was directed to their Bulk Room. Within the hour, I came out richer than I have ever been.

That was when people had heart of flesh. Today we give credence to the saying that the heart of man is desperately wicked. We are becoming more individualistic by the day. It does not matter whose horse is gored as far as it suits my purpose.

Until we start operating by the Golden rule-'do unto others what you want others to do to you' and until we become our brother's keeper, our society will continue to be deprived.

Plateau State government has to strengthen the laws that guide payment of pension and entitlements. Orphans, widows

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NEWS

Qua'an Pan Chairman facilitates with Muslim Ummah

By HOSEA NYAMLONG

THE Council Chairman of Qua'an-Pan Local Government Council, Hon. Ernest Abner Da'a has sent best wishes to Muslims as they commence 30 days of Ramadan fasting.

This was contained in a press release signed by Mathias Yengoet Dajan SSA Media, Publicity and Protocol to the Executive Chairman. Qua'an-Pan LGC and made available to SUNDAY STANDARD recently in Jos.

The statement added that he urged them to use the season to put into practice the best teachings of Islam, such as sacrifice, kindness, and the love of humanity.

In a goodwill message to mark the beginning of the Holy month of Ramadan, issued by his Media Adviser, Hon. Stephen Sarki Musa, he said "as we begin the 30 days of fasting, let us not forget that Ramadan is not only about abstention from eating and drinking, but a reminder to us to refrain from all kinds of evils and transgressions that harm humanity."

Da'a maintained that Ramadan is characterized by abstention from food and drinks from dawn to



Da'a

dusk, which brings both the rich and poor to share the experience of hunger, thereby strengthening the bonds between the haves and have-nots.

"I appeal to wealthy individuals and organizations to always share food and drinks with the less fortunate

members of society.

"Because by sharing our blessings with others, God would multiply our rewards for good deeds," Daa' pointed.

He prayed to God to strengthen them throughout the Holy Month of Ramadan.

Niger Governor- elect poised to move Madalla Market

From Mathew Jwantu, Minna

THE Madalla Market situated along the Zuba - Kaduna Road near Zuma Rock in Suleja Local Government of Niger State will soon be moved because it has consistently endangered lives and properties of citizens, the Governor- elect of Niger state, Honourable Umar Mohammed Bago has said.

Bago stated this during congratulatory visit by members of the Correspondents Chapel of the Nigeria Union of Journalists, NUJ Niger State Council, held at Presidential Lodge in Minna recently.

He said, "you are welcomed to a new Niger State. I want to thank you the media for doing your best in your support. I want to assure you that we will partner with the Correspondents Chapel".

He explained that his administration will operate open door policy, adding that, "we would welcome constructive criticism. Our doors would be open to all, so please keep us abreast of issues and happenings in the state. Do not be judgmental but also listen to us".

Speaking on the imperative of moving Madalla Market from the present site, the Governor- elect explained that it has constituted a lot of danger and hazard to residents of the city and motorists plying the Kaduna - Abuja Road.

He said, "the media especially the Correspondents Chapel of NUJ will come with us the day we will move the market. We will however not impede on fundamental human rights during the exercise".

Speaking earlier, the Chairman of Correspondents Chapel of the Nigeria Union of Journalists NUJ, Niger State Council, Comrade Mustapha Bina said the Chapel is ready to partner with the new administration for the development of the state.

While congratulating the Governor- elect for the well deserved victory, Comrade Binna

assured of objective reportage of government activities. He added that, "we are ready to

work in partnership with you in ensuring the peace and rapid development of the state".

EFCC re-arraigns former PDP chairman's son

THE Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) on Friday re-arraigned Mamman Ali, son of a former National Chairman of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Ahmadu Ali, for alleged N2.2 billion oil subsidy fraud.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that Ali was re-arraigned alongside one Christian Taylor and a company, Nasaman Oil Services Ltd, before an Ikeja Special Offences Court.

The defendants were arraigned on an amended 49-count charge bordering on conspiracy to obtain money by false pretences, obtaining money by false pretences, forgery and use of false documents.

They, however, pleaded not guilty to all the counts.

Following their plea, EFCC counsel, Mr Samuel Atteh, prayed the court for a trial date to enable prosecution to call its witnesses and tender necessary documents to prove the case.

Defence counsel, Mr Kolade Obafemi prayed the court to allow the defendants to continue on the bail earlier granted them.

"We crave your lordship's indulgence that the bail granted to the defendants be allowed to continue," he said.

The EFCC counsel, however, submitted that the most paramount for prosecution was defendants' attendance in court to face trial.

"Our interest is that the defendants attend trial; so, we leave the decision about bail to the discretion of this honourable court," Atteh said.

The defence counsel could not immediately present the defendants' bail papers to the court.

The judge consequently

POLITICS

Group calls on APC to adopt consensus candidate

From AMEDU JOSEPH,
Lokoja

A group under the auspices of the Igala National Youth Council of Nigeria (INYCN) on Thursday, sought for the consideration of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Kogi State to adopt Professor Stephen Ikani Ocheni as a consensus candidate for the party in the upcoming gubernatorial election in the state. The group maintained that the consensus agreement has become imperative in order to reduce unnecessary friction among gladiators of the game and to sustain the good works of the administration of Gov. Yahaya Bello.

The President of INYCN, Comrade Sam Attah Idoko made the call at a press conference held in Lokoja, the Kogi State capital on Thursday.

The youth president asserted that the government of Yahaya Bello has done much for the state and needed a successor that has the capacity, competence and inner workings of government in order to continue with the spirit of the present administration.

He said having studied the antecedents of all the aspirants, the group came to the conclusion that only Professor Ocheni possessed the needed wherewithal to sustain the developmental strides of Governor Yahaya Bello.

"We have watched with keen interest the developmental strides of the present administration of Kogi State and have the strong belief that this momentum can only be sustained by a man of knowledge, integrity, capacity and wisdom."

"Following the footprints and template of Gov. Bello in the governance of the state so far, we need a successor who has the credibility, expertise and experience to take over from Governor Bello. "And from our research, Professor Stephen Ikani Ocheni aptly fits into the kind of leader the people deserve as the next governor of Kogi State."

"We want to state in unequivocal terms that the forthcoming All Progressives Congress APC Governorship primary elections scheduled for 14th April, 2023 should adopt Professor Stephen Ikani Ocheni as a consensus candidate of the party."

"We therefore call on the APC delegates to vote for Prof. Ocheni, a former Minister of State for Labour and Productivity for his outstanding performance but in the civil, public and political offices," the youth council leader asserts. According to him, Professor Stephen Ocheni is a man of many credentials who has demonstrated uncommon leadership traits while in the civil public services and in the academia. He charged all



Ocheni

party faithful to support him to emerge standard bearer of the party. He added that the INYCN is in collaboration with many youths organisations across the country and will work assiduously to mobilise youths, women and eligible voters to

cast their votes for him. He disclosed that Professor Ocheni has won numerous awards and chieftaincy titles and he is ready to deploy these wealth of experience for the overall development of the state if elected governor of Kogi in the November

A group of women led by high class ladies on Thursday also converged in the Kaduna State Secretariat of the Nigeria Union of Journalists, NUJ to outrightly condemn the results of the 2023 gubernatorial election on February 18.

This is coming less than 24hrs behind protests in Sokoto against the results of the gubernatorial election in the state.

The protesters were led by the trio of former Minister of Environment, Mrs Laurentia Laruba Mallam, former Commissioner for Women Affairs in the State, Mrs Maria Dogo, former National Women Leader of the People's Democratic Party, Madinat Abdullahi.

Consequently, the protesters are calling for the restoration of the "Stolen mandate" of their candidate, Isah Ashiru of the People's Democratic Party, PDP.

The candidate of the ruling party in the state,

Women protest result of Kaduna State governorship election

From JOHN FWAH KADUNA



Yakubu

APC, Sen. Uba Sani was declared winner of the election by the Independent National Electoral Commission after several postponements.

The all women protesters who appeared in black to depict their agony and disappointment, accused the Independent National Electoral Commission of manipulations allegedly orchestrated by the Returning Officer and Vice Chancellor of the Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto, Prof. Lawal Bilbis.

The protesters in their dozens carried various placards which read

"Kaduna People Elected, INEC Selected", 'No to Result Manipulations, No to Election Rigging', 'A Stolen Mandate Not Acceptable'.

On why the protest was not carried out beyond the NUJ Secretariat, they said as law abiding citizens, they didn't want hoodlums to hijack the process that could possibly lead to a breakdown of law and order."

PDP in the state rejected the outcome of the gubernatorial election and gave a strong indication of challenging the results in court.

'I won't take my win for granted'

By DORCAS PANKYES, Jos

THE newly elected governor of Plateau state Bar. Caleb Mutfwang has said that it is a privilege that God has given him to be part of the history and by God's grace he will not take it for granted.

Mutfwang said this when some members of the Mwagavul Traditional Council paid him a courtesy visit at the JD Jang Lodge Government House, Rayfield Jos.

According to him, "We are not in any way better than those who contested alongside with us but God destined it so for us to work for the people of Plateau State."

"The kind of jubilation and joy we saw on the faces of Plateau people, marveled us. It then shows that, there is hope in the heart of men. The hope that with our strengths and skills, we cannot fulfil it, except with the help of God. That is why your coming gives us joy and strengthens us."

"This is because when a person starts a journey of this kind and you know that you have fathers behind you. It gives you strength to go far. Therefore, we thank you, Your Royal Highness, the Mishkaghams Mwaghavul and the President, Mangu Traditional Council for this good thought of coming to encourage us before we start the journey."

The Governor-elect urged the traditional rulers to pray for him as he planned the transition into government. We need your

prayers, counsel and support so that we will not disappoint the people of Plateau State.

He stated that it is his desire to make Plateau a state that people can be proud of.

Mutfwang further assured the traditional rulers that he will remain committed, not only to make Plateau greater, but particularly the traditional institution.

"Let me say this, the traditional institution was one institution that was used during the campaigns to blackmail me. That when I become governor, I will downgrade some chiefs. I will bastardize the institution. But let me reinstate this in the presence of my own father, that I have no thoughts other than how to improve the traditional institution."

"We will be looking for ways and means of how to make sure that our traditional rulers have a

better working environment and better motivations to be able to serve their people."

In his part, the Mishkaghams Mwagavul, John Hirse congratulated the newly elected governor for his victory at the gubernatorial poll.

According to him, "We believe that God will show His power through you to bring peace in Plateau. God gives power to those that he will use it to bring peace to his people."

"I want you to know that this mandate is from God and not your own making, it is a victory for Plateau State, because they have made you to rule them."

The Mishkaghams Mwagavul urged the newly elected governor to thank the people of Plateau State for electing him as their governor.

We pray that God Almighty will guide and direct you, that your reign



Mutfwang

Group celebrates with Plateau Governor-elect

By DORCAS PANKYES, Jos

A social cultural group from the Pengana Chiefdom in Bassa Local Government Area, (LGA) of Plateau State has celebrated with the Governor-elect, Barr Caleb Mutfwang following his victory at the March 18 gubernatorial election where he defeated other opponents to emerge winner.

The locals registered their felicitation during a courtesy visit to the Plateau State Governor-elect, Barr Caleb Mutfwang recently at the Government House Rayfield, Jos.

Leader of the various ethnic nationalities in Pengana, Bassa Local

Government Area, Stanley Agargo said Barr Mutfwang is well celebrated in Pengana and they received the news of his victory with happiness, said Akawu.

Speaking, Mutfwang promised to deliver on his mandate and appreciated them for their massive support, cooperation and collaboration.

"Look at the bigger picture. Once there is unity, nothing is insurmountable," he said.

Mutfwang acknowledged that he has been given a trust by Plateau people and he is not taking it for granted.

He encouraged them to hold strong the bond of unity for a better Plateau.

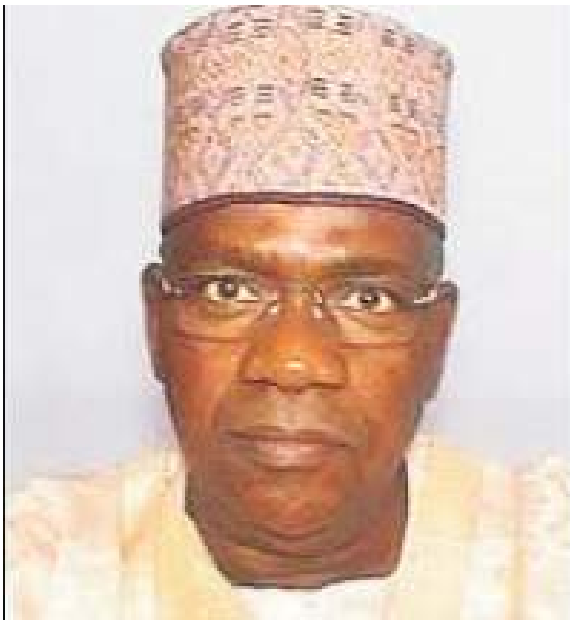
POLITICS

Senator Goje may face suspension for antiparty

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

Willie Attah, Gombe

A five man investigative committee has been inaugurated by the leadership of the All Progressive Congress (APC) in Kashere Ward of Akko Local Government Area of Gombe State to investigate the involvement former Governor of the state and Senator representing Gombe Central, Muhammad Danjuma Goje over antiparty activities during the last Governorship and State Assembly election.



Goje

The Kashere APC Ward Chairman, Tanimu Abdullahi, in a press conference in Kashere told journalists recently that they were witnesses to Senator Goje's antiparty activities where he was directing some party members to vote a different party other than the APC.

He also alleged that Senator Goje gave out money to influence votes against the party during the election, an action that was totally against the APC and aimed at making the party to lose in the election.

He said, "It is unfortunate that Goje who is supposed to play exemplary role in the party having benefited so much from it, is the one trying to destroy the party".

The committee, under the chairmanship of the ward party secretary, Ishaku Ahmed Isa, was

given two weeks to present a report for necessary action to be taken against Goje if found guilty.

Tanimu Abdullahi explained earlier that though the APC won the

Governor-elect charges lawmakers

By Dorcas Pankyes, Jos

THE Plateau State governor-elect, Barr. Caleb Mutfwang has urged the federal and state lawmakers representing the state to ensure good governance by leaving lasting legacies in the heart of the people thereby setting up an inclusive administration with a clear vision of developing the entire state.

Mutfwang gave the charge when some lawmakers representing federal and state constituencies paid him a courtesy visit on Wednesday in Jos.

"I sincerely want to thank you individually and collectively because if you were not fighters, we will not be here today. You fought a good fight. I am proud that I could count on any of you in your locations. Today, what we are celebrating is a collective effort. We have an opportunity to make history,



Mutfwang

Barr Mutfwang said. Speaking at the event, Hon. Simon Mwakwun said that we came here to show you appreciation, to show you that

A governorship aspirant under the platform of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Kogi State, Hon. Murtala Yakubu has been suspended over his alleged involvement in anti-party activities. The executive members of the party in Ajaka Ward 1, Igalamela/Odolu Local Government Area of Kogi State, according to Ajaka, who is the current Deputy National Secretary of (APC), 27 members of the party executive in the ward, including the ex-officio members appended their signatures to his suspension letter dated March 20, 2023.

In the letter, the Chairman of Ajaka Ward 1, Omale Danladi and Secretary, Suleiman Abubakar, disclosed that the decision to suspend

Kogi APC suspends gubernatorial aspirant



Kolawole

Yakubu was arrived at during a meeting of the whole executive team, which held on March 17 in Ajaka.

They accused Yakubu of insubordination, gross misconduct, unguided statement, running parallel party structure and encouraging factionalism in the party, among other allegations,

while noting that the suspension was with immediate effect. While addressing the suspended NWC member in the letter, the ward executive members said, "Following the resolution of Ajaka Ward 1 Exco members held on 17th March in Ajaka, Ajaka-Igalamela/Odolu Local Government Area, you (Yakubu) are hereby suspended from the membership of party in the ward on the ground of insubordination, gross misconduct, unguided statement demeaning the personalities of the founder of the party, Late Prince Abubakar Audu and the leader of the party in the state, His Excellency, Alh. Yahaya Bello at different occasions;

that you need as members of the National Assembly and the state Assembly."

"Be rest assured that we are together and we want to believe strongly there is going to be strictly team work so that Plateau State can succeed, so that Plateau State can progress. Thank God that he has brought us at this very important time in the history of Plateau State. We want to assure you that we are going to put in our best but we will need your advise as well as we will also advise you on how Plateau will move."

"Plateau has gone through a lot. It's time for healing and time for a new era. Plateau is for all of us irrespective of your religious and cultural differences. You have told us how you are going to have an inclusive government," he said.

On his part, member Representing Barkin Ladi/Riyom Federal Constituency, Peter I Gyengdeng congratulated the Governor-elect, Barr Caleb Mutfwang for his victory at the guber poll.

He thanked God for the mandate and prayed for the governor for wisdom to pilot the affairs of the state and to change the extant negative narratives.

Also speaking, Hon. Beni Lar, representing Langtang North and South Federal Constituency expressed delight, saying the people of Plateau have spoken by electing Barr Mutfwang to rule them.

She stated that the role of the legislators is to give the governor-elect all necessary support that he needs to succeed.

"Without the legislature, the executive will not succeed," Hon. Beni Kar stated.

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android

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"Running parallel party structure and encouraging factionalism capable of creating division and racour among party loyalists since 2020; anti-party activities too numerous to be mentioned, particularly, on the 23rd day of February, 2023 that you organised a parallel rally against the Presidential Campaign Council directive in Ajaka Ward 1 which embarrassed and demeaned the party.

"The suspension is with immediate effect while we urge the state secretariat and National Secretariat to endorse our resolution with the necessary action." In the letter, the APC National Chairman, North Central Vice Chairman, Kogi State Chairman, Kogi

East Zonal Chairman and the Party Chairman Igalamela/Odolu Local Government Area of the state were copied and urged to endorse

PDP Adamawa accuses REC of being bias

From Gyang Pan, Yola

THE Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has alleged that the Resident Electoral Commission for Adamawa State, Barrister HuduYunusa compromised his position by colluding with the All Progressive Congress (APC) in order to support the candidate of Senator Aishatu Binani as governor of the state.

Addressing a press conference recently, a spokesman of the PDP, Chief Felix Tangwami says the REC colluded

with the APC in their attempt to ridicule democracy.

According to Tangwami, one of the things was that after earlier announcing that the re-run would take place in 60 polling units, he later wrote to INEC headquarters in Abuja claiming that it would hold in 77 polling units.

He explained that the PDP, "after the results in 20 of the 21 local government areas of the state were collated and to which its candidate and Governor AhaduFintiri was leading with a wide margin, the

REC allegedly directed the Returning Officer for Fufore, Dr. Bashir Danejo to ensure that he changes the figure of the two candidates in order to favour the APC candidate".

Tangwanu declared that it was then at this juncture that the figure of the APC candidate was raised to above 37,000 while that of the PDP was reduced to only 7,000.

"It was therefore this increase and decrease that brought about the issue of inconclusiveness so as to settle the election," he explained.

The PDP then asked

why the Adamawa REC cannot be remanded for electoral offences like that of his counterpart in Sokoto State.

The PDP equally queried who gave the instructions to Hudu from above which he passed to the Returning Officer of Fufore to ensure that the APC candidate emerges Governor of Adamawa State.

However, says the PDP, they have put in place a team of its lawyers to challenge the anomalies by HuduYunusa and the state Returning Officer, Professor Mohammed Male.

POLITICS

2023: Is Nigeria's INEC incompetent?

For most of its existence, INEC, the electoral body, has shown itself to be neither credible nor independent. And after the elections on February 25, the "I" in INEC stands for an anomaly: incompetent. JOSHUA NWACHUKWU writes.

INEC's incompetence goes beyond election day and results aggregation; it is logistics based and starts with the pre-election day process. Its major logistical problem begins with the registration and distribution of Permanent Voters' Cards (PVCs). At the registration and distribution stations, there were unreasonably long lines, which caused chaos and delays.

Inconclusive voting, no voting in various locations, disenfranchisement of voters, untrained and few INEC staff, late arrival of INEC staff and voting materials, insufficient voting materials, delayed opening of polls, collation errors, etc. are only a few of INEC's anomalies.

The difficulties facing INEC have remained the same from its first election as INEC in 1999 to its most recent election on February 25 and its delay of the March 11 elections. They proclaim that they are prepared for the election months in advance, and this time they even said that they were ready for a rerun if required. Unfortunately, they don't follow through with their promises because there are numerous anomalies in every election they hold.

On election day, logistics snags caused delays; in some areas, election materials arrived five hours after voting was set to start. The issue of the poor welfare of the ad-hoc employees is another one. In every election, the ad-hoc personnel, who are mostly members of the youth corps, voice complaints about their poor pay and late payments.

In 2019, we saw on social media images of corps members sleeping inside vehicles, under trees, in classrooms, and in open fields under unsavoury conditions. Service is not servitude, so young people should not be subjected to such indignity because they are participating in the mandatory youth service programme.

The unexpected postponement of the March 11 election is another illustration of INEC's incompetence. INEC's argument that it needed additional time to reconfigure the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) is unreasonable. Did they not take into account the possibility of candidates requesting court orders to examine INEC materials when they were planning? If that's the case, how did they plan to manage it while also setting up for the governorship elections in a week? Would they have configured BVAS before a rerun and how did they intend to execute it if it reached that point?

INEC failed to walk the walk, so can't talk the talk

It wouldn't be wrong to state that INEC did not learn from his past elections. "INEC's performance and controversies over these results mean that the electoral reforms and lessons declared to have been learned were not fully applied and, as an electoral body, it was significantly less prepared than it claimed," Dr. Leena Hoffmann of Chatham House said.

Nearly all international and local observers, as well as voters, have come to this conclusion. It is therefore surprising that INEC stubbornly believes it has conducted a free and fair election.

In the run-up to the 2023



elections, Prof. Mahmood Yakubu, the INEC chairman, and Festus Okoye, the chairman of the INEC information and voter education committee, bombarded us with press releases, tweets, and interviews reassuring us of their readiness for the polls, and their confidence in the BVAS and INEC's Results Viewing Portal (iReV) as "guarantors of enhanced transparency and accessibility of election results and an end to electoral fraud".

On election day, they abandoned their technology on the pretext of "technical glitches" and turned to manual collation of results, which has always been the foundation of manipulated elections in the country. It's like FIFA changing the rules of the World Cup final midway through the match.

It appears we underestimated INEC's incompetence. Lest we forget, on the eve of the 2019 elections, there were rumours of a postponement of the election, which Festus Okoye dismissed as fake news. However, in the early hours of election day, at around 2:30am, the same Festus Okoye and his chairman announced that the election had been postponed due to "logistics and operational plans," which invariably boils down to lack of preparation. They simply stated it and indirectly told us to live with it. There was no apology to Nigerians who had travelled and changed plans in order to vote, and there was no acknowledgement of inefficiency or responsibility.

None of those who oversaw the 2019 elections resigned, nor were they asked to. Hence, INEC's mediocrity and incompetence have grown bolder since they can get away with anything. It is not surprising that they are still following the same strategy.

A civilised society would not have allowed Prof. Mahmood Yakubu and his 2019 team to oversee the 2023 elections. Kenya and several other

countries have seen electoral officials resign from the Electoral Commission due to several reasons, ranging from allegations of bias, corruption, and incompetence.

Until we start holding people responsible in Nigeria for their actions, we will keep sinking in the pit of mediocrity and incompetence.

Why INEC is never prepared is a true mystery. Large-scale elections are INEC's primary responsibility; however, they are unable to carry it out. Every year, it maintains staff and offices for the sole purpose of holding elections, and they're terrible at it.

This can't be a volume problem because they consistently perform horribly and experience a wide range of logistical and operational issues even when they are simply required to organise elections in a single state, like in Osun, Anambra, and Ekiti. Elections in these states witnessed similar logistical issues and faulty BVAS machines.

In order to save our democracy, we must address INEC's shortcomings going forward as a nation. We must not allow INEC's propensity for electoral malpractice, lack of transparency, and selective adherence to its laws and guidelines, to push people down the drain of voter apathy and frustration.

What is a democracy if voters are unsure of their votes? The situation in which the people who count the votes decide everything while the people who cast the votes decide nothing is not democracy. As it is, Nigeria's brand of democracy is dependent on how well INEC does its job, and we need them to do an excellent job. One way to guarantee INEC does a good job is to review how its chairman is chosen.

INEC's chairmen, all professionals in their fields, have failed to organise a free and fair election for the country. Apart from having their integrity questioned, they have not managed to handle the same

logistical inadequacies. They have been accused of being induced to alter the electoral process one way or another.

More recently, the current chairman's failure to explain the technical glitches on the 25th of February and why it only affected the transmission of results for the presidential election has put his integrity on the line.

INEC has had lots of professors as its chairman. It frequently uses professors and academics as returning officers, but these professionals have not truly given a good image to the academia, several are being prosecuted for electoral fraud.

INEC's chairperson should be one of unquestionable character and integrity, like Tirunellai Narayana Iyer Seshan of India.

As we've seen, apart from integrity, elections essentially come down to logistics, event planning, and technology adaptation. How can professors, who may not have managed a university or poorly managed one, organise an election in over 30 states? Indeed, what skills does a professor of literature or political history bring to a job profile best suited to a logistics/supply chain professional or party planner?

Going forward, companies that specialise in event planning and implementation, such as logistics companies, should have a significant role in the operation of INEC at both the Federal and State levels, even if they don't lead the commission.

While acknowledging the excellence of professors, as a nation we must understand that the cowl does not make the monk and avoid falling for the fallacy that just because someone is a professor or a retired judge, they are endowed with administrative skills. This is false, especially if they have no prior experience.

The unfortunate conduct of INEC chairmen makes it understandable

why Dr. Reuben Abati claimed that serving as an INEC chairman has "become a graveyard of reputation." The search for chairpersons who can provide leadership and expertise should be our next focus.

From PVC registration through voting, our electoral process shouldn't be tense or challenging. Everything in Nigeria can't be that difficult. India, the world's largest democracy, has a more organised and less fraudulent election.

In the future, INEC must expand the number of polling units and evenly divide voters among them. Three polling units near mine had fewer than 100 registered voters on February 25, whereas mine had almost 900. This discrepancy is why we voted till late at night.

INEC should also extend the voting period because 8:30am-2:30pm is impractical, especially when there are many voters. Kenya, for example, which has a smaller voting population, has a 12-hour voting time.

Moving forward, it is important to clarify the role of PVCs in our elections. Nigerians should be allowed to cast their votes using the various forms of identification, particularly the NIN, which the government is working to mainstream. Lack of PVC should not be a ground for disenfranchisement.

Lastly, INEC needs to explain the alleged discovery of thousands of PVCs at various locations, including Ago Palace Road Okota, Olodi-Apapa, and a forest in Nnewi North. There needs to be a root and branch audit of the entire 2023 process, and its best if INEC invites credible CSOs as third parties in the audit.

For INEC to shed the misnomer of incompetence, they must conduct credible elections by following the Electoral Act 2022 and its 2022 guidelines. That's the least Nigerians expect.

Nwachukwu is a legal practitioner and writer (nwachukwujo@gmail.com)

SUNDAY PEOPLE

FUNERAL MASS FOR LATE EUNICE AGABUS

The funeral mass for late Mrs. Eunice Zong Pwanagba Agabus of PRTVC News and Current Affairs Directorate took place on Thursday at Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic Church, Gold and Base, Rayfield, Jos



Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic Church, Parish Priest, Rev. Fr. Joseph Agbazi (left) flanked by Pwanagba Agabus, (deceased husband) Pwamori, daughter and Pwanidi son during the funeral



Representative of the General Manager, PRTVC, Mr. Yakubu Taddy, Director of News and Current Affairs (right) with brother of the deceased, Barr. Gregory Fulus Zi



Barr. Pwanedo Agabus making remarks on behalf of the family



Parish Priest of Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic Church, Rev. Fr. Joseph Agbazi (left) consoling Mr. Pwanagba Agabus, his children and her mother Inlaw, Mrs. Raliyatu



from left are, NUJ State Chairman, Mr. Paul Jatau, Mr. Joe Choji, Mr. George Pam and Mr. Katdapba Gobum at the burial site



Nigerian Union of Women Journalists (NAWOJ) State Vice Chairperson, Grace Akwe-Gotip (right) State Secretary of the association, Muese Ndem and immediate past NAWOJ Chairperson, Jennifer Yarima at the mortuary to pay last respect



Uncle of the deceased, Mr. Patrick Kataiko (with cap) and others at the burial site around JIB Village, Jos



Mr. Agabus and children paying last respect to their wife and mum (late Eunice)

WITH results of the just concluded House of Assembly election out, it has become clear that new faces will dominate the Plateau State House of Assembly. What is even clearer is the dynamics already playing out between the two major political parties, these are the All Peoples Congress (APC) and the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). It will interest you to know that the Ninth Assembly which is about coming to an end was dominated by the APC, making it the majority with the PDP being the minority. However, it is going to be a new ball game altogether as the Tenth Assembly will be dominated by the PDP, thus making the APC the minority this time around. Another interesting thing that played out is the fact that perceived experienced members, especially the most ranking and principal officers of the House who sought re-election were disappointed, as they lost out to perceived inexperienced candidates said to be new in the game. For example, the incumbent Speaker Rt. Hon. Yakubu Yackson Sanda and the Majority Leader, Hon. Naalong Daniel Gapyil both of the APC lost their seats to the PDP. The speaker, who represents Pengana constituency was defeated by Happiness Akawu who polled a total of 9,926 votes as announced while Sanda got only 7,936 votes. Interestingly, Happiness Akawu is the wife of the deceased PDP flag bearer for Pengana constituency Matthew Akawu. In the same vein, Hon. Naalong who is a two term member representing Mikang constituency also lost his re-election bid to Moses Sule of the PDP. According to results, Sule scored 12,880 votes to defeat the majority leader who got 9,848 votes. For the Deputy Speaker, Rt. Hon. Saleh Shehu Yipmong representing Dengi constituency and the Deputy Majority Leader, Hon. Wallok Philip Goma representing Kanke constituency, they were knocked out at the primaries. Yipmong contested the Plateau Central Senatorial seat but lost to a former member of the state assembly, Hon. Diket Plang from Pankshin North. For the deputy majority leader, he contested Pankshin/Kanke/Kanam federal constituency on the platform of the APC but lost to the incumbent Yusuf Gagdi. The case of the Minority Leader, Hon. Peter Ibrahim Gyendeng representing Barkin Ladi constituency was different as he contested and won the PDP seat for Barkin Ladi/Riyom constituency. As it is now, the composition of the next assembly will be made up of seven APC members, sixteen PDP and one Ypp member. In Pankshin North constituency, Dewan Kudangbenna of the YPP will be replacing Hon. Philip Peter Dasun of the APC. Kudangbenna is said to be among the youngest of the newly elected lawmakers that will make up the tenth assembly. The young man initially contested under a different party and lost. This did not deter his political ambition as he later moved on to the YPP and won. Meanwhile in Kanke, Joseph Gokum of the APC will be replacing Wallok Goma who also served on the platform of the APC while Agalak Ibrahim who won under the PDP to represent Rukuba/Irigwe

constituency is to replace Hon. Musa Agah Avia who is the winner of Rukuba/Irigwe federal constituency. It is not surprising that the PDP won because the constituency has always been a stronghold of the PDP just as Jos South is. In the case of Jos South, the incumbent Hon. Dalyop Fom Gwottson is returning for a second term having served as member in the ninth assembly. Also known as 'Banga by Nature' for his blunt, no nonsense and outspoken nature, Gwottson is one intellectually sound member who contributed immensely to debates during the ninth assembly. Another second term returnee under the PDP is Hon. Timothy Dantong,



PLHA: As new faces prepare to take over



Aki



Akawu



Bukar



Kudangbenna

representing Riyom constituency. Just like Rukuba/Irigwe, Jos South and Barkin Ladi, Riyom is another known stronghold of the PDP in Plateau State. Dantong was often described as a 'controversial' lawmaker due to his controversial ways of tackling issues before the floor of the House. He always likes standing on the view point of an opposition. One may look at this composition as newbees or first timers who may

likely not have the experience nor capacity to cope with the gruesome task of legislative business, until maybe after spending sometime learning the ropes. Truth is we have seen first timers, especially during the ninth assembly who came out strong from the first day and have left indelible marks as lawmakers. They have represented their constituents well in all aspects. As we await the inauguration of the

tenth assembly, we expect to see a House made up of young, vibrant, intelligent, articulate and serious minded legislators who will not be afraid of taking the bull by the horn in the business of legislation. In as much as it is going to be rigorously tasking, the PDP lawmakers who won in Pengana, Jos South, Riyom, Barkin Ladi, Mangu South, Langtang North, Langtang South, Langtang North Central, Qua'pan

North, Pankshin South, Rukuba/Irigwe, Jos North West, Bokkos and Mangu North. With the APC lawmakers who won in Dengi, Kantana, Kanke, Shendam, Wase, Jos North North, Jos East and the YPP who won in Pankshin North must all be ready to work together for the good of Plateau State while also aspiring to give their constituents the much desired dividends of democracy.

SUNDAY MAGAZINE



Tinubu



Mahmood



Mutwang

Nigeria's polls, challenges and way forward

Though the 2023 general elections in the world's most populous black nation, Nigeria has come and gone, both the political class which comprised of the elitists as well as the vulnerable citizenry have learnt bitter lessons which will linger in their memory for decades to come. While the elections eventually ended the political affluence of many political juggernauts, it also opened doors for many members of the downtrodden to come into the arena to salvage what is left of the present unimpressive developmental status of the nation. BULUS GAMBO, writes.

MANY outgoing political leaders of the nation were able to write their names in gold in the annals of the nation's history upholding the fundamental elements of good governance and re-strategizing workable policies for the socio-economic and political integration of the nation, but quite a few others had a lot to grapple with.

In its entirety however, the campaign segment of the 2023 elections to the disappointment of many citizens of this great nation was shrouded in divisionary and unimaginable regional, ethnic and religious sentiments far from the way it used to be. Interestingly, it was also observed that lack of internal democracy by various political party processes that eventually produced the candidates of the major parties had a direct bearing on the conduct of the general elections itself. This was hinged on the technicalities that facilitated the procurement of these party candidates during primaries through obvious acts of vote-buying amongst other questionable means.

Most significant was the great expectations by Nigerians that the National Independent Electoral Commission, INEC was going to usher in a much

improved digitalized electoral process in the country after receiving the whopping sum of 355 billion naira for the polls. Despite receiving this outrageous amount of funds however, INEC did not live up to the expectations of many Nigerians. Therefore, the electoral body failed to deliver on its promises when it mattered most.

There were also glaring evidences of political mobilization around ethnic and religious identities including other grudges which also had a significant impact on the polls. According to the Transition Monitoring Group which deployed 774 observers across the 774 local government areas across the country, "the general conduct of elections across the country was peaceful in most parts, as voting occurred without recourse to violence. Notably, this was also largely occasioned by the deployment of security personnel across the country.

Despite these gains, TMG in some cases observed incidences of voter intimidation and suppression particularly in Lagos and Rivers States. In Lagos for instance, voters were threatened by thugs to vote for a certain party or candidate or stay away from voting. Voter

intimidation and suppression were also evident in the violent conduct and disruption of polls as recorded in these two states where political thugs carted away, burnt and destroyed election materials.

Likewise the gubernatorial and state assembly elections also witnessed the unleashing of intrigues and strategies by various contesters who were anticipated to overwhelm one another and emerge victorious at the end. In more definite terms, it became a do or die affair in some states in the likes of Rivers, Lagos, Kaduna, Kano, Abia, Enugu, Delta and Adamawa where incumbents fought hard to remain relevant and keep control of their states. The Center for Democracy in its report on the conduct of governorship elections said, vote buying was more in the South East than in any other geopolitical zone, while violence marred elections in the North West region during the 18th March 2023 elections.

According to CDD, voters were more focused on what they would get than the ideology of the candidates adding that the vote-buying trade was made possible due to the prevailing economic hardship amid the current cash crunch.

The United States reacting

over the outcome of the general elections was quick to lament over the issues of voter intimidation and violence which marred both the gubernatorial and state houses of assembly elections. In a statement issued, the country noted with great concern the increased violence and intimidation of voters in the 28 states when compared with that of the presidential elections held on 25th February 2023.

In the midst of these controversies however, many political commentators are still strongly of the opinion that Nigeria would still for decades to come remain the continent's player as a result of its adverse economic potentials and strength. So far, the country accounts for half of the population of the West African region with about 202 million people and one of the largest population of the youth in the world.

But again, its statistical profile also indicates that it has the highest GDP in Africa, standing at \$514.05 billion in 2021 including the abundance of both human and natural resources. The country also remains the largest exporter of oil in the continent. But if the most recent harsh economic realities are anything to go by, it certainly means that the nation has been

unable to get it right in art of governance.

Aside this unspeakable traumatizing degree of hardship ever experienced in the annals of the nation's political existence, the citizens have inherently lost hope of a much better tomorrow. More than seven years ago, Nigerians came out in their large number and kicked out President Goodluck Jonathan claiming that he was unable to reasonably affect a more convincing positive change for the people of the country. Just less than two months to the expiration of the incumbent administration, the nation is still seriously bedeviled with unending acts of banditry, kidnappings for ransom including other various acts of criminality proliferating in the country. Soaring inflation rate has in most recent times also affected various families who hardly get three square meals a day.

According to Osayaba Giwa-Osayaba, a senior partner at Giwa-Osagie and Co, Nigeria, after the government launched its 2021-2025 plan, its development plan was intended to address many of such challenges adding that "The broad objectives of the plan are

Continued on page 31

NEWS

Bus kills 25, injures 10, FRSC confirms

From Abbas Gungura,
Bauchi

THE Sector Commander of the Bauchi State Federal Road Safety Corps, Yusuf Abdullahi, has confirmed the death of 25 people and 10 injured in a fatal accident which occurred recently.

According to him, the incident happened at Udubo village along Hadeja-Potiskum road in Gamawa Local Government Area of Bauchi State at about 4.30pm on Thursday.

Yusuf explained that 35 people comprising 19 male adults, 11 female adults, two male children and three female children were involved in the incident.

He said the cause of the accident was a loss of control by a driver of Hummer Bus who ran into 11 people taking shelter under a tree close to a car wash.

"The lone crash occurred on Thursday, 23rd March, 2023 at Udubo, along Hadeja-Potiskum route in Gamawa Local Government Area of Bauchi State, involving an Ash Commercial Toyota Hummer Bus with registration number: JMA



Northern Bauchi Hummer Accident that killed 25 people injured 10.

59XA.

"The crash was caused by overloading, speed violation which led to a tyre burst and loss of control. The driver lost control and ran into some people taking shelter under a tree. You know because the weather is hot, so they were under the tree when some of them were killed.

"Twenty-four people were inside the Hummer Bus while the remaining 11

people were taking shelter under the tree close to a car wash as stated by men of the Nigeria Police Force.

"Immediately we got the information, our men rushed to the scene for a rescue operation and evacuated the victims to the Federal Medical Center, Azare for treatment and confirmation.

"It was there at the hospital that a medical doctor confirmed 25

people-nine male adults, 11 female adults, two male children and three female children dead. Ten others sustained various degrees of bruises," he said.

The FRSC boss said that the corpses were deposited at the FMC, Azare where they would be released for burial while the injured are being treated accordingly.

Plateau govt. debunks accusations from PDP

By PalangKasmi

Plateau government has responded to allegations contained in a press statement issued by the factional Publicity Secretary of the PDP Plateau State John T. Akans purporting a "looting, and conversion of public assets under the directives of the Governor, Simon BakoLalong.

The government described the press release as "propaganda aimed at intimidating civil servants/appointees and castigating the Government with a view to pitching it against the citizens".

The statement signed by Commissioner for Information and Communications, Hon. Dan Manjang said the Lalong led rescue administration has nothing to hide and has conducted the business of governance with prudence, accountability, transparency, and diligence.

It read in part: "It is important to put the records straight so as to save right thinking citizens and members of the public from being brainwashed by the fictional contraption"

"Let it be on record that the Rescue Administration of Governor Simon BakoLalong has nothing to hide or fear and can never be involved in any looting, conversion of public assets or any criminal conduct in contract awards as alleged".

"If anything, the APC Rescue Administration has in the last 8 years conducted the business of governance with the utmost prudence, accountability, transparency

and diligence. During his tenure, Governor Lalong set up the Efficiency Unit (EU); Implemented the Treasury Single Account (TSA); Liquidity Management Committee (LMC); and the Project Monitoring and Result Delivery Office (PMRDO) among others to ensure that the business of governance is done according to established rules."

"The PDP may wish to note that the Lalong Rescue Administration applied and was admitted into the Open Government Partnership (OGP) where it got the global Award for Transparency and Accountability in 2021 in Seoul South Korea. Under the same Administration, Plateau State was adjudged the second least corrupt State in Nigeria in the 2nd Corruption Survey Report released by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS)".

"We also take the opportunity to strongly advise civil servants and appointees to continue to carry out their normal duties without fear or intimidation as they have done over the years".

"Civil servants and appointees are cautioned to note that anyone who fails to carry out lawful directives of Government whether out of fear, collusion or treachery will be treated as a saboteur and subjected to extant disciplinary procedures of the service with immediate effect. Indolence, disloyalty, and all unwholesome conducts such as leaking of Government documents will be severely punished".

"Contractors, banks and

other entities doing business with Government are also encouraged to ignore the threats of the PDP whom we understand has issued letters and verbal warnings for them to cease doing business with Government", Manjang said.

According to him: "Our Government will not be held liable for any consequences of obeying such unlawful orders which have no validity in law and are tantamount to breach of the ethics governing contractual engagements".

Finally, we call on all the partners, clients and patrons

of Government in both public and private sectors to ignore any act of harassment from the PDP or its agents as there is only one Government in Plateau State at the moment led by Rt. Hon. Simon BakoLalong".

"By the laws of Nigeria and the Constitution, there cannot be 2 captains in the seat of the Governor of Plateau State until May 29th 2023 when Simon BakoLalong hands over to his successor which will be decided by the Tribunal and the Courts of the land", said the statement.



Lalong



JAMB: Sets new guidelines as registration resumes

The Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) has resumed the suspended 2023 Direct Entry (DE) registration exercise.

The board has also released a new guideline for the DE registration to checkmate the alleged use of fake A-Level certificates by candidates to secure admission to universities.

Registrar of JAMB, Professor Is-haq Oloyede, who made this known at a news conference on Monday in Abuja, said the DE registration would be closed on April 28, 2023.

He decried the high level of forgery of A-Level certificates use for the registration, disclosing that out of 148 candidates verified by Bayero University Kano (BUK), only six were found to be genuine." By implication, 142 of the results were forged,".

CBN: Confirms evacuation of banknotes

The Central Bank of Nigeria, CBN has confirmed the evacuation of banknotes from its vaults to commercial banks across the country as part of a coordinated effort to ease the circulation of banknotes of various denominations.

The apex bank has also directed all commercial banks to open for operation on Saturdays and Sundays.

The Acting Director, of the Corporate Communications Department of the CBN, Dr. Isa AbdulMumin, disclosed this in Abuja, on Friday, stating that a substantial amount of money, in various denominations, had been received by the commercial banks for onward circulation to their respective customers.

According to him, the CBN had directed all banks to load their Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) as well as conduct physical operations in the banking halls through the weekends.

"Branches of commercial banks will operate on Saturdays and Sundays to attend to customers' cash needs," he noted, adding that the Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, Mr. Godwin Emefiele, would personally lead teams to monitor the level of compliance by the banks in various locations across the country.

Appeal Court affirms Adeleke's election as Osun governor.

The Court of Appeal in Abuja on Friday affirmed the election of Ademola Adeleke of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) as the governor of Osun State.

A three-member panel of the appellate court led by Mohammed Shuaibu unanimously overturned the earlier decision of the election petition tribunal which nullified the governor's victory in January.

The immediate-past governor of the state, Adegboyega Oyetola, who came second in the 16 July 2022 election, had filed a petition challenging Mr. Adeleke's victory.

The Osun State Governorship Election Petition Tribunal in Osogbo, which upheld the allegation of over-voting in the areas won by Mr. Adeleke, had declared Mr. Oyetola of the All Progressives Congress (APC) the winner of the poll after deducting "unlawful votes" from the PDP's scores.

But Mr. Adeleke appealed against the lower court's decision, urging the appellate court to set it aside and reaffirm his victory.

Upholding Mr. Adeleke's victory on Friday, the Court of Appeal held that the tribunal was "wrong to conclude that there was over-voting during the state governorship election held on 16 July 2022.

Ramadan fasting commence

The Sultan of Sokoto and President of the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, NSCIA, Mohammed Abubakar, has announced the commencement of Ramadan fasting.

Abubakar said the crescent for the commencement of the Ramadan fasting has been sighted on

Wednesday night, the sultan said Muslims in the country should commence fasting on Thursday, March 23.

The Sultan of Sokoto said the moonsighting was duly "authenticated and verified" by the states and national committees.

Sanwo-Olu orders a 20% increase in workers' salaries

The Lagos State Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu has approved the implementation of the 20per cent increase in the salaries of civil servants in the state.

The workers include those in the mainstream public service, Local Government Areas, and Local Council Development Areas, as well as the State Universal Basic Education Board, SUBEB.

The new salary structure takes effect from January 1, 2023. Also, the arrears for January 2023, would be paid along with salaries for March 2023, while the arrears for February 2023 would be paid together with the salaries of April 2023.

Compiled by HOSEA NYAMLONG

SUNDAY FEATURE

Obligation to protect endangered species

"A drive-through of these parks a few years ago left me amazed at the wonders of nature and the brilliant concept of this park. Asides from the excitement presented by the park, the state of the Parks is nothing to write home. The bushes are overgrown and poorly maintained. The facilities are in varying states of disrepair, while the administrative blocks need renovation. Years after their establishment, some of these parks have retained the only thing they started with, enormous expanses of virgin land." MATTHEW MA writes

THE world is full of amazing creatures from every possible medium. From the birds of the sky to the majestic whales of the sea, animals continue to exist in the most unusual and unexpected places. Wild animals have benefited us in many ways, but we have long forgotten. So, what is World Wildlife Day? Why should we take care of wildlife? Are animals worthy of our celebration? World Wildlife Day (WWD) is a day to remind us of our collective responsibilities to our world and the life we share with other species.

Although we might like to think otherwise, humans are not the only living things on earth. We are far outnumbered by other living things, from animals and plants to fungi and bacteria. World Wildlife Day (WWD) is an opportunity to celebrate the many beautiful and various forms of wild fauna and flora and to raise awareness of the multitude of benefits that their conservation provides to people.

The day reminds us of the urgent need to fight against wildlife crime and the human-induced reduction of species, which have wide-ranging economic, environmental, and social impacts. On March 3rd, 2023, the universal world celebrated World Wildlife Day (WWD). On that day, we acknowledged the significant contribution the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) made to wildlife and biodiversity and how this contribution has enhanced the bridge-building and partnership within the CITES framework.

During the celebration, we recognize how CITES has partnered and cooperated with other conventions, UN agencies, and other organizations to serve the broader UN goals, such as the Sustainable Development Goals and the Post-2020 Framework on Biodiversity. This year, the theme for WWD was Partnerships for Wildlife Conservation. It helps us to celebrate all conservation efforts, from intergovernmental to local scale. It allows us to appreciate all wildlife, from the smallest insect to blue whales. No matter what we love about wild animals, we can spend the day taking action to help protect them. Whether we love animals, passionate about plants, or are concerned about climate change, it was a day to educate ourselves about the need to change our relationship with nature.

From the mighty tiger to the humble bee, animals contribute to our lives and well-being in more ways than we think. From offering a wealth of natural medicines to safeguarding us from the climate crisis and improving soil fertility, we need wildlife to survive, to get enough food to eat, and to make a living. However, how we live and relate to animals – from the food we eat to how we build our infrastructure – is causing a steep decline in their numbers. In the past 40 years alone, we have seen, on average, a decrease of 60 percent in populations of species.

This decline caused the United Nations General Assembly to take a stand on how to protect endangered species worldwide. Hence, on December 20th, 2013, the UN took a bold step to initiate a campaign against the fragility of endangered species worldwide. At its 68th session, the UN declared that we should dedicate every year to keeping people abreast of the changing nature of our world and the treasures we stand to lose from the animals and plants if we fail to take



care of them.

This year's event is the most significant in raising awareness about threatened and endangered plants and animals. As a planet, we now face the issue of overexploiting our marine species. Through global mass consumption, human impact has not only generated pollution and destroyed coastal habitats but caused irreversible damage. World Wildlife Day creates opportunities to highlight the solutions we have built for a more sustainable future. It is also our chance to focus on the accomplishments of countless people who devote their lives to bringing our vision of a healthy planet to fruition.

When we discuss countries with good environmental conservation strategies, East Africa has the world's most memorable and celebrated hotspots. If there's one thing East Africa is known for, it's its exotic natural landscape stretching from rivers to lakes across the Great Rift Valley. Hence, without a doubt, tourism is one of East Africa's forex earners and contributors to the economy. Tourism is also one of the major employers in East Africa, holding nearly 7 percent of employment in the region according to information from the East African Community consisting of Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, and South Sudan. Arguably, East Africa has some of the most iconic and the world celebrated attractions.

From the dense forests in Volcanoes National Park to the magical and outstanding work of nature in the Ngorongoro Conservation area in Tanzania, the region is endowed with scenic and exotic wonders of nature – wildlife and waterfalls, lakes, and mountains. Wildlife conservation strategies and efforts to improve the community's livelihood have been on a collision course in Kenya and Tanzania for many decades.

In the mid-20th century, Kenya and Tanzania reorganized their National Parks to protect and prohibit all human use of animals for consumption except for research and tourism. The move stifles access to natural resources making communities hostile or indifferent to wildlife conservation. While the decision affected many communities in different ways, the pastoralists such as the Maasai bore the brunt of the consequences to natural resources and the disruption of seasonal migration – a long-established adaptive mechanism that deals with changing weather patterns.

It will interest us to note that the Kenyan and Tanzanian borderlands

region supports some of the wealthiest wildlife populations on earth through a network of national parks and reserves and the pastoral lands that connect them. For example, about 65% of the wildlife lives inside Kenya National Parks and Reserves. The wild animals of Kenya refer to its fauna. The diversity of Kenya's wildlife has garnered international fame, especially for its populations of large mammals. Mammal species include lion, cheetah, hippopotamus, African buffalo, wildebeest, African bush elephant, zebra, giraffe, and rhinoceros. Kenya has a very diverse population of birds, including flamingos and common ostrich.

Tanzania has 20 percent of the species of African mammal population, found across its reserves, conservation areas, marine parks, and 17 national parks, spread over more than 42,000 square kilometers (16,000 sq mi) and forming about 38 percent of its territory. Tanzania's wildlife resources are major wildlife-viewing sites. Serengeti National Park, the second-largest National Park area at 14,763 square kilometers (5,700 sq mi), is located in northern Tanzania and is famous for its extensive migratory herds of wildebeests and zebra while also having the reputation as one of the great natural wonders of the world. The Ngorongoro Conservation Area, established in 1959, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site inhabited by the Maasai people. Its Ngorongoro Crater is the largest intact caldera in the world. The National Parks are also a part of the wetlands of Tanzania.

The wild animals tend to be closer to the wetlands, particularly the water-loving species such as the hippopotamus, waterbuck, common warthog, elephant, crocodile, sitatunga, and water birds such as flamingos and ducks. Community lands across southern Kenya and northern Tanzania are rich in biodiversity and provide vital movement routes known as wildlife corridors that allow animals to travel long distances between protected areas. These community areas contain unique forests, savannahs, and freshwater systems, where nature provides vital services like drinking water, pasture for livestock, and forest products like timber and medicine. The environment in these communities is also a habitat for the most endangered and threatened wildlife species, such as big cats and African lions. Similarly, omnivores such as elephants, rhinos, giraffes, and primates face critical danger. Several conservation models have been adopted over decades to

preserve wildlife and their communities.

In 2010, while studying theology in Kenya, I visited some Maasai communities in Kenya and Tanzania for an East African adventure. While on the trip, I experienced the Great Migration from the Serengeti in Tanzania to the Masai Mara in Kenya. During migration season in Tanzania, the massive herds tend to position themselves in the southern plains, where the grasses are tastier, more nutritious, and plentiful. Because these grasses are short, the animals can be easier to see.

In Kenya, meanwhile, the draw is the Mara River. While the river flows through both Tanzania and Kenya, the wildebeest tend to cross it in Kenya in the summertime to escape the dusty plains in search of grasses. Watching them cross is a breathtaking spectacle – the hesitancy to enter the water, unsure whether crocodiles or hippos are waiting under the surface, unable to judge how deep the water is. But once a few bold zebras head across, hundreds of zebras and wildebeest will join, often following one another with a torrent of splashes, barks, and calls. In both countries, there is no shortage of The Big Five—lions, elephants, buffalo, leopards, black rhinos—and dozens of other species.

Travelers get more than their fill of scintillating wildlife sightings on safaris in either country. It was a delightful moment to see young Maasai leaders from the Kenya and Tanzania Wildlife Service passionate about the natural resources surrounding them. The Maasai people have lived alongside wildlife in southern Kenya and northern Tanzania for centuries. But the surrounding land is changing – under pressure from privatization, expanding agriculture, poorly planned development, and habitat loss. This notion threatens their source of livelihood, culture, and nature in this unique landscape. While in these communities, I noticed that the dedicated efforts by these local communities have seen poaching levels reduce and wildlife populations recover. Poachers and wildlife traffickers who camouflage as pastoralists to prey on wildlife have often exploited the critical route for animal migration, placing wildlife and communities living adjacent to the area at the risk of instability stemming from wildlife crime.

Wildlife criminals are now using more advanced technology and equipment to commit illegal hunting and poaching of animals, pushing many of the most iconic species to the brink of extinction. Tanzania has experienced upsurges of poaching in

different periods with detrimental consequences on its charismatic species, such as elephants and rhinos. The most recent rise in criminality was noted in 2009 when the elephant population declined from 130,000 in 2002 to 109,000 in 2009.

The 2015 elephant census revealed a further drop in the elephant population to 43,521 (about 60% in five years). This massive killing of elephants made Tanzania one of the worst offenders in the ivory trade. Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Malaysia, Vietnam, the Philippines, Thailand, and China, were singled out as The GANG OF EIGHT for failing to tackle the illegal ivory trade. In many community conservation areas, including those I visited, I noticed that although the prospects are dire, some progressive community partners were successful in slowing and stopping the slaughter of wild animals in parts of Kenya and Tanzania. In collaboration with NGOs and government anti-poaching forces, they work to increase community conservation capacity, train new scouts, build new scout stations, identify emerging crises, and develop rapid response units to activate game scouts and Kenya Wildlife Service staff. These collaborative efforts have resulted in a significant reduction in elephant poaching. Meanwhile, lions have reappeared in areas where they were not in the last ten years.

The African continent is considered by many to be the cradle of wildlife. From the most beautiful sunsets to the fiercest storms, this continent is a perfect combination of jungles, rivers, beaches, wet coasts, and a series of forest and animal tours. The popular images of Africa are the ones of prancing wildebeests, roaring lions, and galloping hyenas. Africa has some of the most fertile uncultivated lands in the world, yet, Nigeria, the giant of Africa, is short of wildlife conservation.

The reason behind this is official apathy during the colonial times, the low priority rating of wildlife as reflected in inadequate funding and administrative arrangements, weak enforcement of, and inadequacies in, existing wildlife laws, excessive demand for land, bushmeat, and firewood by a rapidly expanding human population, and a traditional lack of concern for the welfare of wild animals. Various animals, including endangered apes and pangolins, are hunted to feed the household and visitors as bushmeat. With the pressure on the country's biodiversity so high, easing up on conservation measures can be costly.

SUNDAY FEATURE

'Elected leaders' and legitimacy crisis

That INEC had deliberately or inadvertently made a mess of the February 25th and March 18th, 2023 elections is no longer a matter for public debate. What would have been a source of pride for our nation and indeed the black race turned out to be a signpost of infamy. OBOLI AUGUSTINE, writes.

DEMOCRACY was defined as the government of the people by the people and for the people. What this means fundamentally is that ultimate power resides with the people (citizens) and they shall choose those to rule over them. But where were the people of Nigeria on 25th February and 18th March 2023? Were they tamed? What exactly happened to them, their voices and power to choose? Before their very eyes, darkness fell on the day when it was noon. Unable to fathom what was befuddling them, the fragile democracy was disrobed, raped, and abused. Intimidation, voter suppression, violence instigated by gladiators, snatching and destruction of ballot boxes, underage voting, and overvoting were the order of the day. In some places, elections were not conducted. Yet leaders were announced elected and declared returned. Thus, we were presented with a fait accompli.

The legendary Fela in his heydays would have described the 2023 elections as 'babanla nonsense' because it was stripped of any veneer of peoples' choice. Those who purportedly won elections were elected by less than ten percent of the registered voters. If the elections of 25th February were a bad dream, that of 18th March was largely ludicrous. The entire election was melodramatic and represent the worst of us as a people.

But beyond the facade of my scrutiny, the elections left more than a sour taste in the mouth. It threw up a lot of troubling concerns, chief of which is the legitimacy crisis for the beneficiaries of the flawed and bastardized exercise. And that is my interest in this piece.

The direct linkage between democracy and legitimacy is profound. While the power to freely choose leaders is a product of democracy, rational-legal legitimacy on the other hand is inextricably tied to liberal democracy, that is the power of the people to choose. We can therefore see that the people are critical to democracy. The people are the hub on which the wheel of democracy revolves: no people, no democracy, no democracy, no legal legitimacy. So, what in clear terms is legitimacy and why is it important?

Let me admit that for a long time, I have heard people bandy the word legitimacy or legitimate government, but never taken the pains to find out the real meaning. Interestingly, knowing the actual meaning happened during my university days in Jos at a lecture by the inimitable Prof. of Political Science, Isawa Elaigwu. He had thrown a challenge to the class thus: 'what is legitimacy in politics?' Most of us were just newcomers or rookies if you like and we were just staring at him. I guess he was quick to notice that we were helpless ignoramuses and decided to bail us out.

Legitimacy he said is simply the right to rule, hence there must be elements of lawfulness, rightfulness, and legality. A government is legitimate if it has the right to rule. Military governments he continued are considered illegitimate because the military has no right to rule. Rulership is the sole right and preserve of the civil authorities. He added a proviso all the same that a civil authority may lose legitimacy if it is not ruling well and the government is unable to fulfill its promise, causing frustration and unrest among the



people that resulted in waning support for the government, while a military authority may gain legitimacy by the mere fact of good leadership.

This right to rule has many components and we shall be granular here.

Political legitimacy concerns why a government has a right to coercively impose and enforce the law. This right enjoyed by the government is related to why individuals must abide by the laws of a particular government.

Legitimacy is important for the achievement of development in a legitimate government, in that legitimacy is public acceptance and recognition of the moral rights of leaders to govern, create and implement political decisions.

Available literature in the works of Max Weber, Gaetano Mosca, etc has shown that the legitimacy of government leaders will bring political stability and possibilities for social change.

Legal-rational authority as exemplified in a democracy is essentially based on the agreement of members of the public against a set of rules officially enacted. This is embedded in the electoral process. The world over, the electoral process is sacrosanct and followed to the letter because its proper observance itself confers legitimacy to the outcome. But ours as witnessed in the last two exercises were far cry from a credible process. They were poorly organized and challenging, and therefore not in a good place to confer any form of legitimacy. In saner climes, where they are concerns and issues with the process, the law courts are approached for remedy and sanction. Sadly, we cannot boast of such opportunities here because the toga of the last hope of the oppressed has long taken flight from our judicial system.

Little wonder, the negative perception, and build-up of illegitimate leaders. So legitimacy in its broadest sense means society should support the political system and government authority that is

rightly constituted.

When there is no support for the political institutions because the process that threw it up is questionable and generally unacceptable, there will be an institutional crisis. Leadership crisis will occur in people who gained from the contested outcome.

This is my worst fear with the outcomes of the just concluded elections, the

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Political legitimacy concerns why a government has a right to coercively impose and enforce the law. This right enjoyed by the government is related to why individuals must abide by the laws of a particular government. Legitimacy is important for the achievement of development in a legitimate government, in that legitimacy is public acceptance and recognition of the moral rights of leaders to govern, create and implement political decisions.

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legitimacy crisis that INEC has unwittingly planted as landmines for the new leaders come May 29th. The elections were marred by many irregularities such that they did not meet the lowest global acceptable standards, the pervasive rejection of most of the results declared was organic, and people generally believed that they were deceived and mocked into make-belief elections that were no elections after all. How come the two sets of elections outcome were quite perverse? As such we hear people say that they have their elected leaders while INEC declared INEC own leaders. This scenario does not engender progress non bodes well for anybody because it smacks of misfortune for the country.

Leadership that lacks recognition and support from its wider populace cannot effectively govern nor initiate policies that will excite the skeptical citizenry no matter how good they seem. Getting the buy-in of the mass of people is a catalyst for a successful policy drive and implementation.

With a legitimacy crisis, it should not be lost on anybody that all good intentions would be efforts in futility. So it is a tall call for the so-called elected leaders. I don't envy them one bit. Theirs it seems is the toughest job yet. How they will navigate this remains to be seen because Nigerians are angry, bitter, and making plaintive cries.

It will soon dawn on them that their pyrrhic victory and the smiles that came with the collection of certificates of return will dissipate because the roads ahead will be rough. They will realize quickly that Nigerians are roughened, but that the Nigerian of 2023 is different from any other Nigerian they knew hitherto. This Nigerian is highly educated, mobilized, internationally connected, politically savvy, and will fight back at the system.

At the moment, it is the silence of the graveyard but the legitimacy issue possess a clear and present danger.

THE aftermath of our recent elections is living with us. The violence, conducts and misconducts that trailed the elections and the struggle for the heart and soul of Nigeria have left us all physically and psychologically wounded. This struggle is what happens every four years and each time it comes around, it is plagued with a plethora of problems ranging from disenfranchisement, violence, religious and ethnic arrogance and hatred.

The President elect has been declared but the elections are still steeped in arguments and counter argument and the adage "go to court" saddles the Judiciary with the duty of unravelling the political complications that have elicited another plethora of varying emotions in all Nigerians. The courts will decide the fate of this country because the phrase "go to court" has become a political mantra in Nigeria. I wonder if the judiciary will do its job according to its books or if we will all lose respect for the wig and the gown at the end of this exercise. The measure of respect we will have for the judiciary at the end of the day, will be tied to their ability or inability to align with the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the electoral act or their ability or inability to reinvent the wheel.

In my opinion, the reason why winning the presidential election has become a struggle for the heart and soul of Nigeria is because of our hesitation to try out Federalism in its purest form. We say that Nigeria is a Unity in Diversity. However, we have to interrogate this belief. Are we truly united in diversity? Some time ago, I wrote about cultural literacy and sensitivity and a friend who read the piece told me that he did not understand what I was saying. He said that he did not understand my English. I understood his perspective. It is a subject matter that is alien to a lot of us. As a result, our ethnic and religious arrogance is destroying our supposed unity because in displaying our disrespect for each other's differences, we disregard our diversity. How then can we be united in disrespect?

The glue that binds people from different cultures and orientations together lies in our ability to understand and respect each other's different ways of life and become more nationalistic than ethnic or religious. To agree or disagree where we cannot find a common ground. To be more tolerant and respectful of other people's beliefs and disbelief, for therein lies the spirit of democracy which stipulates the freedom of association. This is a herculean task for the average Nigeria. We do not only hold on to our differences, but we also perpetrate ethnic and religious arrogance in the polity. The NYSC has done a lot to teach us other cultures across the country but most of the time, our religious and ethnic bias is so powerful that it makes up turn to self-referencing in our intercultural relationships.

Notwithstanding our cultural illiteracy and insensitivity, we have the constitution to fall back on for equity and justice. However, the constitution is not perfect. As such, we are still looking for solutions to the many problems that characterise our democracy and federalism. We look away from the idea of having pure federalism. We believe that power should be concentrated in the centre. This means that the centre has become the heart and soul of Nigeria. This is why our Presidential elections have become a do or die affair. Whoever is elected to the centre takes the centre spread of our lives and determine what region the power will shift to. This has given birth to calls for secession, underhanded political tactics, abracadabra politics " the more you see

the less you understand". Can we rethink our stance on federalism and federal character for the sake of our unity in diversity? Can we try federalism in its purest form?.

Right now, we are all praying for Nigeria. We pray for peace and unity. We pray that come May 29th, all will be well. This is what happens every four years. Our hearts always in our mouths. Is this necessary? If we decentralize and allow for a level of autonomy in the states, the battle for the heart and soul of Nigeria will become more civil and the states will absorb some of this power tussle because the explosive power tussle will be

Rethinking federal character and federalism (I)



diffused.

Decentralizing means that our diversity is recognized. One size will not fit all since we are a diverse people who fiercely hold on to our cultures. Understanding our different cultural orientation under true federalism will do more in salvaging the unity of our nation by ensuring that people of the same stock are governed in groups, within our unity. This fosters deeper understanding and productivity. Therein lies our unity in diversity.

Recently, I was discussing politics with my Igbo friend, and he says to me that he is tired of the way Igbos are being treated in Nigeria. He says and I quote, "Nigeria! they don't want us and yet they will not let us go". I tried to dissuade him from this line of thought but I doubt if I succeeded. If we give pure federalism a chance, every voice will count and every culture and religion will be recognized. Having a federalism can also help us in dealing with the thorny prickly issues. If we cannot agree, we can at least agree to disagree, respectfully. The first prerequisite for chaos is the disrespect, the disdain, the cultural illiteracy, and insensitivity with which we treat each other as individuals, ethnic group, regions, and religions. Let us look at true federalism and how and why we need to apply it to the governance and administration of our country. The forgoing is an excerpt from britanica.com:

Federalism, mode of political organization that unites separate states or other polities within an overarching political system in a way that allows each to maintain its own integrity. Federal systems do this by requiring that basic policies be made and implemented through negotiation in some form, so that all the members can share in making and



executing decisions. The political principles that animate federal systems emphasize the primacy of bargaining and negotiated coordination among several power centres; they stress the virtues of dispersed power centres as a means for safeguarding individual and local liberties.

The various political systems that call themselves federal differ in many ways. Certain characteristics and principles, however, are common to all truly federal systems. First, the federal relationship must be established or confirmed through a perpetual covenant of union, usually embodied in a written constitution that outlines the terms by which power is divided or shared; the constitution can be altered only by extraordinary procedures. These constitutions are distinctive in being not simply compacts between rulers and ruled but involving the people, the general government, and the states constituting the federal union. The constituent states, moreover, often retain constitution-making rights of their own.

Noncentralization
Second, the political system itself must reflect the constitution by actually diffusing power among a number of substantially self-sustaining centres. Such a diffusion of power may be termed noncentralization. Noncentralization is a way of ensuring in practice that the authority to participate in exercising political power cannot be taken away from the general or the state governments without common consent.

Areal division of power—A third element of any federal system is what has been called in the United States territorial democracy. This has two faces: the use of areal divisions to ensure neutrality and equality in the representation of the

various groups and interests in the polity and the use of such divisions to secure local autonomy and representation for diverse groups within the same civil society. Territorial neutrality has proved highly useful in societies that are changing, allowing for the representation of new interests in proportion to their strength simply by allowing their supporters to vote in relatively equal territorial units. At the same time, the accommodation of very diverse groups whose differences are fundamental rather than transient by giving them territorial power bases of their own has enhanced the ability of federal systems to function as vehicles of political integration while preserving democratic government. One example of this system may be seen in Canada, which includes a population of French descent, centred in the province of Quebec.

Elements maintaining union: Modern federal systems generally provide direct lines of communication between the citizenry and all the governments that serve them. The people may and usually do elect representatives to all the governments, and all of them may and usually do administer programs that directly serve the individual citizen.

The existence of those direct lines of communication is one of the features distinguishing federations from leagues or confederations. It is usually based on a sense of common nationality binding the constituent polities and people together. In some countries this sense of nationality has been inherited, as in Germany, while in the United States, Argentina, and Australia it had to be at least partly invented. Canada and Switzerland have had to evolve this sense in order to hold together strongly divergent nationality

To continue next week

GOD'S first instinct is not to rebuke you neither is it to condemn you. God's first instinct is to save. This is what we left off taking about last week as we saw from the actions of Jesus when he reached out to save Peter from drowning in Matthew 14:31. We all must recognize in our own lives that the mission of the Lord Jesus Christ is to save. There is absolutely no limit to God's ability to save through Jesus Christ.

Whether you need Salvation for healing, or in your marriage or may be you need to capture a vision for your life; perhaps it may be it that your life is not heading anywhere; whatever area of life - there is no aspect or area of human life and endeavor that Jesus' saving ministry does not affect. I want you to see His willingness to save.

Bible says when Peter began to notice that he was sinking in Mathew 14:30, when he saw the winds boisterous, he became afraid. And beginning to sink, he cried Lord save me. Immediately, Jesus stretched forth His hand and caught him and said unto **him o thou of little faith, wherefore dost thou doubt?** It said,

"Immediately"! Jesus couldn't help himself. The master Jesus could not help himself. His default setting as Saviour kicked in immediately. His DNA and spiritual structure and make up kicked in and immediately He stretched forth His hand and got hold of Peter and pulled him out of danger. It was only after He had saved Peter that He said to him, **wherefore did thou doubt?**

It is very important to notice the order of the rebuke. The rebuke did not come while Peter was sinking and desperately fighting for his life. The rebuke came after Jesus had saved him and was sure he was sound and okay. Then He began to instruct him and to correct him and hand-in-hand, the two walked together on the water back to the boat. O! what a beautiful story. Hand in hand together, they walked on the water and entered boat. And as soon as they entered, the Bible tells us that the winds and the waves ceased. Glory to God

So I want you to keep this thought in your heart and know that right now, wherever you are, Jesus' first instinct is to save you. If you do not know Jesus as Lord and Saviour, the first thing that needs to happen in your life is that you need to settle your eternal destiny.

Do not gamble about whether or not Jesus is the way. Listen. I dare you to study scriptures - I dare you to study history. I dare you to read any religious book you can find and see if you will find anybody who has ever been as definite as the Lord Jesus Christ in the statements that He has made.

When He makes statements like, **I am the way the truth and the light. No one cometh to the father except through me. Or I am the light of the World or I am the bread of life,**

He speaks in all certainty and boldness. These are definite statements not ones of uncertainty.

I want you to understand right now, that if you do not know Jesus as your Lord and Saviour you are making the worst gamble of your life. When it comes to eternity you do not gamble. The moment you leave this earth, the moment you cease breathing,

be broken. Eternal life will come into your Spirit. The Spirit of God will rest upon you and empower you to forge forward in this new life and to fulfill your God ordained destiny in this life. This time you will also have a 100% certainty that when your time on earth is done, when you step into eternity, you will be stepping into your reward and spending



It is in God's DNA to save you



there is no longer opportunity for you to make amends. That would not be a good time for you to discover that Jesus is the Saviour and that you missed your opportunity, and that hell is real and that hell is hot.

So I want you to think about this right now. If you do not know Jesus as your Lord and Saviour or if you have confessed Him as Saviour at one point in time in your life, but you have been fooling around with one leg in the world and one leg in Christ, today is the time for you to become all in for Jesus.

These last days we are living in are not times for you to be fooling around with your decision for Christ. If you have not known Him as your Lord and Saviour, make Christ your Lord and Saviour today. If you have known Him as your Lord and Saviour but have been fooling around recommit to Him today. Settle eternity once and for all.

I tell you the truth, the Bible says that **the wages of sin is death. But the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord** (Romans 6:23). So today, if you have never made Jesus your Lord and Saviour or if you want to recommit to Him, I want you to pray this prayer with me from the depth of your heart. Pray with me and know that this time, something is going to happen.

This time there is going to be an anointing that will come upon you. The power of sin is going to

eternity with Christ in heaven.

Now, pray this prayer after me if you are in either of those cases. *Say, Dear Lord Jesus, I come before you today. I believe you are the Saviour of the world and I receive you today as my Saviour. Wash me clean of my sins. Establish me in the Book of Life. From this day forward, I declare you are my own father, my Lord, my God forever.*

Satan, I renounce you. I renounce anything and everything that has to do with you. I declare that from this day I will live and serve the Lord Jesus Christ and the Almighty God all the days of my life.

If you prayed that prayer after me, I congratulate you. You have just become a child of God,

according to the word of God.

I want to encourage you to get in touch with us. It would be our privilege and delight to hear from you and to know about the decisions you have made for Christ and to assist you in any way we can. We would also like to pray along with you in this your new found journey of faith, that you would be a success in it. I tell you the truth; the best days of your life have come upon you.

Now remember this, and never forget, dear reader, that Jesus' first instinct is to save. Whatever situation you are in now just call upon Him like Peter called upon Him. If you are sick in your body we curse that sickness in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. We command the power of the

devil to be broken off of your body in the name of Jesus. We ask in the name of Jesus that as you call upon the Lord Jesus today, that His saving help and health will come in every area of your need and give you the testimony that your heart desires in Jesus name.

Once again, it has been an honor and a privilege sharing the word of God with you today. Have a blessed week ahead.

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"Now remember this, and never forget, dear reader, that Jesus' first instinct is to save. Whatever situation you are in now just call upon Him like Peter called upon Him. If you are sick in your body we curse that sickness in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. We command the power of the devil to be broken off of your body in the name of Jesus. We ask in the name of Jesus that as you call upon the Lord Jesus today, that His saving help and health will come in every area of your need and give you the testimony that your heart desires in Jesus name".

INTERNATIONAL

AU must move to protect African unity

Members of rights groups carry banners during a protest after Tunisian President Kais Saied ordered security forces to stop all illegal migration and expel all undocumented migrants, in Tunis, Tunisia on February 25, 2023. On February 21, while addressing a National Security Council meeting in Tunis, Tunisia's President Kais Saied condemned irregular migration from sub-Saharan Africa and described it as a conspiracy to erase Tunisia's identity. **TAFI MHAKA** writes.

THE undeclared goal of the successive waves of illegal immigration is to consider Tunisia a purely African country that has no affiliation to the Arab and Islamic nations," he said. "Hordes of illegal immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa are still arriving, with all the violence, crime and unacceptable practices that entails."

Two days later, as he called on Tunisia's interior minister to crack down on irregular migration, the 65-year-old leader denied accusations from human rights groups that his hateful comments were racist, and claimed those accusing him of racism "want division and discord and seek to damage our relations with our brothers".

He, however, did not renounce his unsubstantiated claim that migrants from sub-Saharan Africa are arriving in Tunisia as part of a plot to alter its demographics.

The estimated number of Black African migrants in Tunisia today, including those without proper documentation, is just 21,000. Given the country's 12 million-strong population, they don't have anywhere near the numbers necessary to alter Tunisia's demographic composition. The elaborate plot to end Tunisia's "affiliation to the Arab and Islamic nations" is clearly just a figment of Saied's imagination.

Nevertheless, the president's provocative remarks unleashed a wave of discrimination and violence against sub-Saharan Africans in Tunisia.

Hundreds were arbitrarily arrested, dismissed from work, evicted from their homes and violently assaulted.

According to Amnesty International, a 22-year-old Cameroonian asylum seeker was hospitalised after she was stabbed in the chest and left for dead by six Tunisian men, who yelled "go back home, you gang of Blacks, we don't want you here". Another woman, a student from Burkina Faso, was arbitrarily detained and physically assaulted by the police, despite producing her school papers.

"In my neighbourhood, Black people were sought out, chased, raped, and their homes looted by Tunisians," a university student who was voluntarily repatriated to Guinea told the AFP news agency.

In Tunis, scores of migrant families who were left homeless as a result of Saied's crackdown set up camp outside the headquarters of the International Organization for Migration.

The president's racist rabble-rousing also sparked widespread condemnation.

On February 25, Tunisian protesters, holding Black Lives Matter placards, took to the streets to denounce racism and declare that they are Africans.

On the same day, the African Union Commission Chair, Moussa Faki Mahamat, strongly condemned the "shocking statement issued by Tunisian authorities targeting fellow



Faki

Africans", and urged Tunis "to refrain from racialised hate speech".

Later, the World Bank placed its Country Partnership Framework with Tunisia on hold, while the Tunisian General Labour Union said it will defend "the rights of migrants, regardless of their nationality or the colour of their skin".

In the face of growing criticism, Saied attempted to "clarify" his remarks during a meeting with Guinea-Bissau's President Umaro Sissoco Embalo on March 8.

He claimed there was a "malicious interpretation" of his comments, and issued a "blatant denial" that he is racist. "I am African, and proud to be so." But, of course, while meeting with Embalo, who is also the current chairman of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), he would claim to be one of us.

While Saied's "clarification" about his comments failed to convince most in the international community, he had already managed to secure enthusiastic support for his racist anti-migration agenda from one European politician.

Eric Zemmour, a far-right politician from France widely known for his anti-immigration and anti-Islam views, shared a news story about Saied's comments on Twitter and wrote: "The Maghreb countries themselves are starting to sound the alarm in the face of the surge in migration. Here, it is Tunisia that wants to take urgent measures to protect its people. What are we waiting for to fight against the Great Replacement?"

Zemmour's mention of the "great replacement" in relation to Saied's comments was understandable, as Saied's claims about African migrants'

alleged ambition to alter Tunisia's demographic composition indeed fits in well with the popular white supremacist conspiracy theory which falsely asserts that white people are being replaced and losing their standing in society as a result of a plot to increase non-white immigration.

In this context, it can be argued that Saied is borrowing his right-wing populist rhetoric from the Western far right and by doing so reintroducing to the African continent the race-based ideologies and false hierarchies of the colonial era.

As a Black African, who lives in Africa, I have always felt extremely blessed to be fairly insulated from the white supremacist hatred and violence that is pervasive in Europe and the US.

I would have never imagined that an African president would employ a white nationalist conspiracy theory that originated in Europe to target Black Africans to score cheap political points in Tunisia, an African country.

I remember with immense fondness how, last December, Africans of all shades, socioeconomic backgrounds and nationalities supported Morocco at the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar.

When the Atlas Lions became the first Arab and African team to reach the semifinals of a FIFA World Cup tournament, millions of sub-Saharan Africans wholeheartedly celebrated their amazing and unprecedented accomplishment as their Arab neighbours.

After it lost to France in the semi-finals, Morocco's coach, Walid Regragui, paid homage to Africa declaring, "We were representing our country and our continent."



Saied

His sincere and admirable words confirmed what everyone knew: The Atlas Lions did it not only for Morocco and the Arab world but the whole of Africa.

Africans across the continent felt proud and that feeling of pride, it must be said, transcended the football pitch.

For possibly the first time in history, a post-colonial and post-racial Africa stood united and celebrated together like one big, diverse family.

Barely three months after Qatar 2022, Saied is now attempting to destroy that unity to divert the world's attention away from the extensive failings of his authoritarian regime.

In July 2021, he suspended parliament, dismissed the prime minister, seized executive control of the country and dismantled independent institutions. He cracked down on the political opposition and his other critics with incredible force, receiving condemnation from many of Tunisia's international partners. Since assuming near absolute power, he not only destroyed Tunisia's young democracy and international standing, but also failed to revitalise its economy and resolve the myriad socioeconomic problems facing its people.

Now, it seems, he is trying to scapegoat undocumented Black African migrants for all his failures and sacrificing African unity and solidarity in the process.

The African Union swiftly and firmly rebuked Saied's divisive comments and, in response to the consequent government crackdown and racist attacks against sub-Saharan nationals, indefinitely postponed a conference it was due to hold in Tunis in March.

However timely and

commendable these actions were, they might not be enough to deter Saied from continuing to incite racial violence and sow divisions with Tunisia's sub-Saharan neighbours under the guise of addressing irregular migration.

Xenophobic violence with racial undertones is not new to Africa or unique to Tunisia. Just last year the United Nations warned that South Africa is "on the precipice of explosive xenophobic violence". But Tunisia is currently the only country on the continent where the president is blatantly flaming violence with racist dog whistles and conspiracy theories. Sure, Saied said he is "not racist" and "a proud African", but he is yet to denounce the sinister Great Replacement conspiracy. This calculated silence demonstrates enormous contempt for Africa's collective wellbeing and unity.

Like Mahamat pointed out in his initial condemnation of Saied's remarks on irregular migrants, Tunisia has certainly flouted "the letter and spirit" of the AU's founding values.

So, it must be reprimanded accordingly and suspended from the organisation, at least until Saied publicly disowns the "great replacement" theory and ends his anti-migrant and anti-Black African fearmongering.

The AU must not allow Tunisian Saied to harm African unity from the populist nationalism and racism of the likes of Saied. Without unity, the 2063 Pan-African agenda is doomed to fail. It's high time the AU demonstrates its authority and brings in line African leaders who attempt to divide us along racial lines.

Source: Aljazeera.

INTERNATIONAL

China, US fights over South China Sea navigation

CHINA'S defence ministry has said that it had – for a second time – monitored and driven away the US Navy guided missile destroyer USS Milius after it entered what Beijing claims as its territorial waters in the South China Sea near the Paracel Islands.

Friday marked the second straight day of a standoff – and heated words – between the two superpowers amid growing tensions in the South China Sea.

"We sternly demand the US to immediately stop such provocative acts, otherwise it will bear the serious consequences of the unforeseen incidents," a spokesperson for China's defence ministry said in a statement on Friday.

"The act of the US military seriously violated China's sovereignty and security, severely breached international laws, and is more ironclad evidence of the US pursuing navigation hegemony and militarizing the South China Sea," ministry spokesman Tan Kefei said.

He said that China would take "all necessary measures" to ensure its territorial security but did not elaborate.

The Southern Theatre Command of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) said in a statement on Thursday that the USS Milius had been found intruding in waters around the Paracel Islands and that China's navy and air force were mobilised to



Jinping

"warn" the ship which had then departed the area.

The US Navy disputed China's version of events, saying the destroyer left the area on conclusion of a "routine operation".

As China issued its second protest and warnings on Friday, the US Navy issued a lengthy statement specifying that the USS Milius had engaged in asserting "navigational rights and freedoms in the South China Sea near the Paracel Islands,

consistent with international law".

The USS Milius' freedom of navigation operation was a lawful use of the sea and challenged "restrictions on innocent passage imposed by the People's Republic of China (PRC)", and also Taiwan, and Vietnam – who also have territorial claims in the disputed South China Sea – the US Navy said. Zaporizhzhia has seen repeated shelling, which Ukraine and Russia accuse each other of carrying out.

Netanyahu warns on conflict of interest

ISRAEL'S attorney general on Friday warned Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that he has violated the Supreme Court's conflict of interest ruling, which barred him from direct involvement in his government's divisive plans for a judicial overhaul.

Netanyahu's far-right government has barreled ahead with plans to weaken the Supreme Court and grant politicians less judicial oversight in their policymaking despite massive protests from across Israeli society – including an uproar among business leaders, top legal officials and military reservists.

On Thursday, just hours after his coalition passed a law that would protect the Israeli leader from being deemed unfit to rule because of his corruption trial and claims of a conflict of interest, Netanyahu defiantly

pledged to proceed with the overhaul.

Netanyahu contended that stripping the attorney general of the power to remove him from office was necessary to clear the way for him to participate in the negotiations on the judicial overhaul in spite of her instructions, and try to "mend the rift" in the polarized nation.

"Until today my hands were tied," Netanyahu said in a prime-time TV address Thursday, referring to the change in the law on removing a prime minister. Attorney General Gali Baharav-Miara thoroughly disagreed, sharply criticizing him in a letter Friday for violating a conflict of interest agreement that had allowed him to continue leading the country while charged with corruption, bribery and breach of trust. The deal Netanyahu

was pressed to sign in 2020 prevented him from being involved in legislative issues or key judicial appointments that could affect his ongoing trial.

"Your statement last night and any further actions by you that violate that agreement are completely illegal and in conflict of interest," Baharav-Miara wrote in Friday's letter. "The legal situation is clear – you must avoid any involvement in measures to change the judicial system."

The contentious law that makes it harder to remove Netanyahu from office, passed late Wednesday by a slim majority of 61 in the 120-seat parliament, does not undo the court's earlier conflict of interest ruling, Baharav-Miara said. The consequences of Netanyahu's violations of the agreement were not immediately clear.

Netanyahu, on an official visit to Britain, did not immediately respond to her letter. The Movement for Quality Government in Israel, a good governance organization, warned of a constitutional crisis. It pledged to file a petition urging that Netanyahu be held in contempt of court. "A prime minister who does not obey the court and its orders is an anarchist," the group said.

Supporters of the judicial overhaul say it will restore power to elected legislators and make the courts less interventionist. Critics say the move upends Israel's system of checks and balances and pushes it toward autocracy.



Netanyahu

Aparliament notice said that Mr Gandhi "stands disqualified from the membership of Lok Sabha", alluding to the lower house of parliament.

He was convicted by the court for 2019 comments about PM Narendra Modi's surname at a election rally.

Mr Gandhi was a Congress party MP from Wayanad in the state of Kerala.

He remains on bail for 30 days and has said he will appeal the verdict given by a court in Gujarat state.

Mr Gandhi's party had termed the verdict "erroneous and unsustainable" and pledged to fight the disqualification "both legally and politically".

On Friday, the Congress led opposition leaders in a protest march in the capital Delhi.

Visuals showed heavy security in the Vijay Chowk area outside the parliament as the opposition leaders stepped out carrying a large banner that read "democracy in danger".

A few lawmakers were detained as security personnel stopped them from leaving the area.

The protesting MPs had planned to march to Rashtrapati Bhavan, the official residence of President Droupadi

Murmu. The IAEA's Grossi said he did not think a North Korea test was immediately imminent.

US accuses Paraguay politicians of corruption, spurring probe

PARAGUAY'S attorney general has launched a criminal investigation into the United States government's allegations that the country's former president and the current vice president were involved in corruption and had ties to a violent group.

Attorney General Emiliano Rolón Fernández said on Thursday that a team would look into the allegations that former President Horacio Cartes and Vice President Hugo Velázquez engaged "in systemic corruption that has undermined democratic institutions in Paraguay".

Cartes and Velázquez have previously denied the allegations. The US, meanwhile, added three people to a list of Paraguayan officials it suspects of "significant corruption" and who would be barred from entry into the US, along with their family members. That list, started in 2019, now numbers nine officials.

In January, the US issued explosive allegations that Cartes and Velázquez had ties to the group Hezbollah, which Washington has designated a "terrorist" organisation.

The US has long said the porous tri-border region that connects Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay is a hub for financing "terrorism" through money laundering and illicit activity. The US has identified what it has described as

Gandhi disqualified as MP after conviction

Murmu.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge alleged that the action against Mr Gandhi was a consequence of his demand for investigation by a joint parliamentary committee to probe allegations against the Adani Group.

The conglomerate was accused of decades of "brazen" stock manipulation and accounting fraud by US-based short-seller Hindenburg Research earlier this year. The Adani Group has denied allegations of financial fraud.

Protesting MPs had planned to march to the official residence of President Droupadi Murmu

"They don't want to keep those who are speaking the truth," Mr Kharge said. "But we will continue to speak the truth."

The Congress says it plans more protests against the government in the coming days.

A 2013 Supreme Court order says that a lawmaker convicted in a crime and sentenced to two or more years in jail stand disqualified from the parliament with immediate effect.

Mr Gandhi will not be allowed to contest elections until his sentence is suspended or he is acquitted in the case.

National elections are due in India next year.

Jairam Ramesh, a Congress party leader, called the Gujarat court verdict a "very serious political issue" that could affect "the future of our democracy".

"This is a great example of Modi government's politics of vengeance, politics of threats, politics of intimidation and politics of harassment," he said after a party meeting on Thursday.

Ministers of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), however, criticized Mr Gandhi and his party for questioning the verdict.

Federal labour minister Bhupender Yadav said Mr Gandhi had insulted members of the caste grouping known as Other Backward Classes (OBC) under which the name "Modi" falls.

"Insulting any surname is not freedom of speech," he said.

But India's former law minister Kapil Sibal, who quit the Congress party last year, called the court's decision "bizarre".

He also said Mr Gandhi's comments were directed at "an individual" and not a community.

In his reaction to the verdict, Mr Gandhi tweeted a quote by Mahatma Gandhi, "My religion is based on truth and non-violence. Truth is my God, non-violence the means to get it."



Abdo

members of Hezbollah who use front companies in the region to finance violence in the Middle East.

The US also accused Cartes, who it has described as one of Paraguay's wealthiest men, of widespread bribery of government officials and legislators.

The latest officials added to the US corruption list were court clerk Vicente Ferreira and Edgar Melgarejo – the former director of the Paraguayan Civil Aviation Authority – as well as Jorge Bogarín, a member of a panel that

disciplines judges and prosecutors.

The designations came after the US State Department "received credible information" that Melgarejo "misappropriated public funds for personal gain during his tenure", according to US Ambassador to Paraguay Marc Ostfield.

He also said there was evidence Bogarín and Ferreira "interfered in judicial proceedings for their own personal benefit".



'It's time to step aside from your struggles'

K-Anthony had his earliest musical experiences in the church he grew up in, in Falmouth, Jamaica. Not happy just singing old hymns, he spent time reworking them to make them sound more like the music he heard around him. Influenced by the island music, you can hear his love of Reggae, R&B, and the sounds of his teenage years of bands such as Boys II Men. His strong musicality shows his classical training gained through his Bachelor of Arts degree in music. K-Anthony's songs are well crafted with lyrics front and center with a decidedly optimistic tone, but the underlying theme of his music is his love for God and hope for the future in his return. K-Anthony has a strong desire to bring people who feel lost and don't know where to turn using his music as the medium for his message.



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

I'm a Jamaican by nationality. I grew up in a quiet, picturesque, seaside town with my parents and one younger brother. I have always loved music but had my mindset on a track career. But my love for music won out and I really got interested in pursuing a career at the end of high school. I decided to pursue a music degree which I completed in 2007.

How would you describe your sound?

I have an urban contemporary/Christian Contemporary sound flavored with a reggae island beat.

Tell us about your song "I'm Alive?" Did you write the song? What was your inspiration to write the song?

This song was a joint effort between myself and Chevaugh produced by Barbwiya Music and Sean Hill. I got the idea to write a song that had a fun sound and when I heard the beat the lyrics seemed to match right with the rhythm. I call it a celebration for this moment that God has blessed us with. It's a time to step aside from your struggles, as we all have our struggles, but we can step aside for a moment and just be grateful for the gift of life.

You have a few singles out



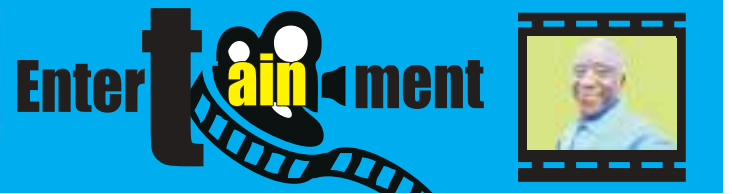
there. When can we expect your album to be released?

We are in the final stage of compiling songs towards the album. I don't have an exact release date, but hopefully, it will be this year.

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

Yeah, the first time performing was a real

Continued on page 26



Influential black musicians of all time



This week at MI, we're celebrating Back 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

EYE'S WORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Health

Surprising ways Trauma contributes to marital conflict

TRAUMATIC experiences affect every aspect of life and all of our relationships— perhaps most notably our marriage.

It's not a question of *if* you or your spouse have experienced trauma. It's more a question of *to what degree* and *have the two of you ever considered how past trauma might be affecting your marriage today.*

The aftereffects of trauma can present itself in a lot of different ways in marriage. Some common manifestations include:

- Nightmares or trouble sleeping
- Panic attacks
- Angry outbursts and/or a rapid escalation of emotions during arguments
- Severe depression
- Disinterest in sexual intimacy, or PTSD responses in the middle of sexual intimacy
- Disconnection and emotional withdrawal

What is trauma?

For us to discern how trauma might be affecting our marriage, we need to fully understand what it is. Trauma is an emotional or physical injury that has long-lasting consequences. The effects might be evident—such as a broken leg due to a car crash—or invisible to everyone except the survivor and their spouse.

If you've ever gone through something traumatic, such as childhood abuse or neglect, a natural disaster, a violent assault, a hate crime, or a pandemic, you know that you don't just shake it off and move on. Trauma has a way of sticking in your brain, seeping into your unconscious mind, and sparking your nervous system. Adverse childhood experiences or traumatic events in adulthood can have a lasting negative impact on your life and can lead to the development of



internal "Wounded Dragons." Relationship Challenges Due to Past Trauma

No matter what type of trauma you have experienced, it can affect your ability to develop and maintain a loving relationship. And if trauma occurs during adulthood, it can negatively impact your marriage. Three of the most common relationship challenges facing people who have lived through trauma include the following.

Trust issues

People who have lived through traumatic events often lose their

sense of security and safety. It's common to feel like danger is lurking around every corner, which can make it difficult to trust people, even those you previously trusted. This may cause you to create walls in relationships in an effort to protect yourself from getting hurt. But this can backfire. Shying away from emotional or physical intimacy can make your partner feel left out or unfulfilled and can create a source of tension.

2. Triggered reactions

Anything that remotely reminds you of the past trauma—such as

to scents, sights, or sounds—can dredge up painful memories and cause involuntary reactions. Something as seemingly innocuous as hearing a song can trigger a trauma survivor to react with anger, sadness, or anxiousness. You may lash out at your spouse, retreat from them, or tune out mentally. For your romantic partner, this may seem to come out of nowhere. In fact, the reaction may be unconscious and automatic, meaning you may not even realize why you're behaving this way.

Fight, flight, or freeze response

When you have unprocessed trauma or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), reminders of past trauma may trigger your brain's stress response. This internal survival mechanism kickstarts whenever you encounter a real or imagined threat. It is due largely to the amygdala, a region deep in the brain that is responsible for our "fight, flight, or freeze" response. This can be a lifesaver if you're ever chased by an angry bear, but it can be counterproductive if it occurs in everyday situations that your brain erroneously interprets as dangerous.

Ways to Heal Past Trauma and Improve Relationships

Past trauma doesn't have to get in the way of a happy marriage. Working through the emotional pain of traumatic events can be helpful in preventing or overcoming relationship problems. Some of the most helpful therapies include:

This therapy aims to help trauma survivors overcome anxiety, depression, guilt, anger, powerlessness, self-abuse, and acting out. When you gain greater control over your emotions, it can help you cope more effectively with the normal ups and downs of married life.

Stop ignoring past trauma.

It's normal to experience painful emotions related to past trauma, but many people attempt to block out those emotions. This is counterproductive, as scientific research shows that avoidance increases the risk of psychological issues, such as PTSD, depression, anxiety disorders, and more. When you are struggling, try talking to your significant other rather than shutting them out.

This helpful form of psychotherapy can minimize the emotional pain associated with trauma. EMDR, which involves moving the eyes from side to side while bringing up traumatic memories, helps remove the emotional charges connected to those memories. Processing traumatic memories with this therapy aids in rewiring and calming the brain, which can help you react in healthier ways to everyday stresses.

When you address past trauma and learn to process it in a healthy way, it provides a path to less stress with your partner and a deeper, more intimate, and more fulfilling relationship.

Source: Verywellmind.com



THE SOW WORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Living

Dealing with spending habits of your spouse

By **RACHAEL PACE**

NEARLY all relationships encounter issues, and one of the most common differences that relationships might face is money or spending habits. Financial issues occur when one person in the relationship often spends more than the other person or doesn't have a plan to save money.

Financial management is essential to any healthy relationship as it helps avoid conflicts and maintain trust in your marriage. If you want to learn more about spending habits and make sure you and your spouse are on the same page, keep reading this article for pertinent details.

. Share your views

Perhaps the first thing you should do when you are concerned about spending or trying to make financial decisions is talk about your views on money. **Financial communication** includes discussing how you were raised to feel about money and your financial status.

Discuss your options

Discussing your options means things like talking about bills and how much each of you will contribute. If one of you has an outstanding debt or something else that could impact both of you, it is a good idea to decide how to handle paying these things off.

. Make a plan



After you determine together what bills you need to keep on top of and know what each person will be able to add to the equation, you should decide how to handle these payments. Specific bills may be assigned to one person, while the other person is responsible for others.

Be sure that both parties are satisfied with the plan you decide on and that it is manageable. When you are wondering how to control spending habits, this is one of the steps to do this. Understand

that there will be unanticipated expenses too, so prepare for the unexpected too.

Start a budget

Once you get the hang of paying the bills and your plan is working, you should take this a step further and start budgeting. Budgeting is key in how to change spending habits. It also leaves your household some room to start saving money, in some instances.

Keep communication open

While you are in the process of



working towards your goal and incorporating your budget, it is necessary to keep the lines of **communication open**, especially in terms of money and financial decisions.

If one person slips up, you need to be honest with your partner about this. This way, you can be sure to work through small things that might come up together.

Separate bank accounts

If both you and your spouse are used to having separate bank accounts, you may want to consider making this work for you. You can decide together if you want to obtain a joint bank account and for what purposes you would use this account.

You can also ascertain what purposes your personal bank accounts will cover. For example, if one person in a relationship feels like I don't like spending money, this may be an excellent way to save money for future goals or per the budget put in place.

7. Come to an agreement

You need to make sure that you and your spouse agree about what the finances should look like, what you are saving for, and anything else that may happen unexpectedly. Be candid about your opinions and keep an open mind when your spouse tells you about theirs.

Stay on the same page

It can be an arduous process to talk about your spending habits, especially if you are used to being able to buy what you want without being questioned. But you don't have to be scared to spend money either.

There should be a bit of wiggle room in any budget, so you can both get some of the things you want without neglecting the household expenses. Getting

your spending habits in line with your spouse's can take time, but it is possible.

Consider counseling

When you cannot come together to adjust your spending habits, you may need to attend counseling to address the problem. It may not be as easy as watching what you spend, where you may need to work out more significant issues instead.

Talking to a therapist may also offer you a safe space to say that you have a spending problem when you can't say it to your spouse. A counselor can help you avoid financial infidelity by helping you communicate better with your spouse.

Financial infidelity is secretly indulging in financial behavior that your partner disapproves of. Hiding the details of financial infidelity involves lying and breaking the trust that your partner has placed in you. **Research** reveals that this can cause significant problems in the relationship.

Moreover, you can work with a financial counselor, who may be able to assist you when it comes to looking at the big picture of your finances and explaining how to make the little things work for your purposes.

. Keep at it

Don't stop working at keeping your household finances where they need to be. Make sure you are following your budget and the plans you put in place with your spouse.

Celebrate with your spouse once you meet these goals. It can get tedious and draining when you and your partner are controlling your spending instincts. Celebrating will add a bit of fun and motivation to your financial journey with your partner.





Reality Bites

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Supporting persons with Down Syndrome

WORLD Down Syndrome Day is annually observed on March 21 to raise public awareness on Down syndrome, a congenital disorder caused by having an extra 21st chromosome.

According to the UN, about 1 in 800 people are born with Down syndrome. Syndrome Day is observed in more than 60 countries worldwide. Many organizations and communities, including the United Nations (UN) and Down Syndrome International, promote World Down Syndrome Day to raise people's awareness and understanding of Down syndrome.

Activities and events that take place on March 21 showcase the abilities and accomplishments of people with Down syndrome. These events also focus on encouraging independence, self-advocacy and freedom of choices for people with Down syndrome. World Down Syndrome Day is an official UN observance and not a public holiday.

According to Medical Experts, Down syndrome is a naturally occurring chromosomal arrangement that has always been a part of the human condition, being universally present across racial, gender and socio-economic lines. The UN says it affects about 1 in 800 births worldwide, causing intellectual disability and associated medical issues.

Children and young people with Down's syndrome have some level of learning disability, this means they may need help with daily life. However what they need help with is different for each person. And this can change as they get older.

NHS A-Z online suggest that if you can try these things, it can help with their development:

Do praise them when they



learn something new, speak clearly and calmly so they can learn from you, play, sing songs and read books together to help with sounds and words and also try showing them how to do something instead of just giving instructions – this can be easier to follow.

You can try ways to help them communicate such as Signalong, Makaton or PECS, try to set routines so they feel more settled – for example, for getting up and at mealtimes, encourage them to be healthy and active – find activities on the Down's Syndrome Association DSAActive website and look out for changes in mood or behaviour – they may not be able to tell you if something's wrong or they're unwell.

Other things you can do to support children and persons with Down Syndrome is to take them for regular hearing, eyesight and health checks, but do not talk down to people with

Down's syndrome – treat them like anyone their age.

Also, do not just talk to parents or carers, talk directly to people with Down's syndrome, do not use outdated and offensive language when talking to people with Down's syndrome – see the Down's Syndrome Association language guide and concerning their medical support, children with Down's syndrome should have regular check-ups with a children's doctor (paediatrician) or a GP.

This is because there are conditions they may be more likely to have. It could help for them to see: a speech and language therapist – for help with speaking, a physiotherapist – for help walking if they have low muscle tone

an optometrist or hearing specialist – for help with vision and hearing

an occupational therapist – for help with their development

Speak to a GP, health visitor or your local council to find out how your child can get these services.

You should support them with education. Choosing a school or college is good.

Lots of children with Down's syndrome go to mainstream schools. There are also special schools and colleges for children and young people who might need more help.

But you should realise that where your child goes depends on many things. The help your child needs

that's available where you live, and you can visit schools and colleges in your area and ask the staff how they can meet your child's needs.

Special educational needs support is also important.

Children with Down's syndrome will get special

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Special educational needs support is also important. Children with Down's syndrome will get special educational needs support at their school or college.

Special educational needs support might include things like: extra support from a teacher or assistant help taking part in lessons



EYE'S WORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Health



Health and nutrition benefits of Sesame Seeds

SESAME seeds have many potential health benefits. For instance, they may protect against heart disease, diabetes, and arthritis. But you may need to eat significant amounts — a small handful per day — to gain health benefits. Fiber is well known for supporting digestive health. Additionally, growing evidence suggests that fiber may play a role in reducing your risk of heart disease, certain cancers, obesity, and type 2 diabetes (4Trusted Source).

Sesame seeds consist of 15% saturated fat, 41% polyunsaturated fat, and 39% monounsaturated fat (3Trusted Source).

Research indicates that eating more polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fat relative to saturated fat may help lower your cholesterol and reduce heart disease risk.

What's more, sesame seeds contain two types of plant compounds — lignans and phytosterols — that may also have cholesterol-lowering effects.

Protein is essential for your health, as it helps build everything from muscles to hormones.

Notably, sesame seeds are low in lysine, an essential amino acid more abundant in animal products.

However, vegans and vegetarians can compensate by consuming high-lysine plant proteins — particularly legumes, such as kidney beans and chickpeas (14, 17Trusted Source, 18Trusted Source).

On the other hand, sesame seeds are high in methionine and cysteine, two amino acids that legumes don't provide in large amounts. Sesame seeds — par

May Help Lower Blood Pressure
High blood pressure is a major risk factor for heart disease and stroke (19Trusted Source).

Sesame seeds are high in magnesium, which may help lower blood pressure (20Trusted Source).

Additionally, lignans, vitamin E, and other antioxidants in sesame seeds may help prevent plaque buildup in your arteries, potentially maintaining healthy blood pressure (21Trusted Source, 22Trusted Source).

In one study, people with high blood pressure consumed 2.5 grams of powdered, black sesame seeds — a less common variety — in capsule form every day.

At the end of one month, they experienced a 6% decrease in systolic blood pressure — the top number of a blood pressure reading — compared to the placebo group (23Trusted Source).

Summary
Sesame seeds are high in magnesium, which may help lower blood pressure. Additionally, their antioxidants may help prevent plaque buildup.

5. May Support Healthy Bones
Sesame seeds — both unhulled and hulled — are rich in several nutrients that boost bone health, though the calcium is mainly in the hull.

May Reduce Inflammation
Sesame seeds may fight inflammation.

Long-term, low-level inflammation may play a role in many chronic conditions, including obesity and cancer, as well as heart and kidney disease. Preliminary research suggests that sesame seeds and their oil may have anti-inflammatory properties.

Good Source of B Vitamins
Sesame seeds are a good source of certain B vitamins, which are distributed both in the hull and seed (15).

B vitamins are essential for many bodily processes, including proper cell function and metabolism. Sesame seeds are a good source of thiamine, niacin, and vitamin B6, which are necessary for proper cellular function and metabolism.

May Aid Blood Cell Formation
To make red blood cells, your body needs several nutrients — including ones found in sesame seeds. Sesame seeds supply iron, copper, and vitamin B6, which are needed for blood cell formation and function.

May Aid Blood Sugar Control
Sesame seeds are low in carbs while high in protein and healthy fats — all of which may support blood sugar control. Sesame seeds may aid blood sugar control because they're low in carbs and high in quality protein and healthy fats. What's more, they contain a plant compound that may help in this regard.

Rich in Antioxidants
Animal and human studies suggest that consuming sesame seeds may increase the overall amount of antioxidant activity.

Plant compounds and vitamin E in sesame seeds function as antioxidants, which combat

oxidative stress in your body.

May Support Your Immune System
Sesame seeds are a good source of several nutrients crucial for your immune system, including zinc, selenium, copper, iron, vitamin B6, and vitamin E.

For example, your body needs zinc to develop and activate certain white blood cells that recognize and attack invading microbes.

Keep in mind that even mild to moderate zinc deficiency can impair immune system activity. Sesame seeds are a good source of several nutrients that are important for immune system function, including zinc, selenium, copper, iron, vitamin B6, and vitamin E.

May Soothe Arthritic Knee Pain
Osteoarthritis is the most common cause of joint pain and frequently affects the knees.

Several factors may play a role in arthritis, including inflammation and oxidative damage to the cartilage that cushions joints. Sesame seeds are a good source of several nutrients that are important for immune system function, including zinc, selenium, copper, iron, vitamin B6, and vitamin E.

They experienced a 63% decrease in knee pain compared to only a 22% decrease for Sesamin, a compound in sesame seeds, may help reduce joint pain and support mobility in arthritis of the knee.

May Support Thyroid Health
Sesame seeds are a good source of selenium, supplying 18% of the

RDI in both unhulled and hulled seeds.

Your thyroid gland contains the highest concentration of selenium of any organ in your body. This mineral plays a vital role in making thyroid hormones. Sesame seeds are good sources of nutrients — such as selenium, iron, copper, zinc, and vitamin B6 — that support thyroid health.

May Aid Hormone Balance During Menopause
Sesame seeds contain phytoestrogens, plant compounds that are similar to the hormone estrogen (58Trusted Source, 59Trusted Source).

Therefore, sesame seeds might be beneficial for women when estrogen levels drop during menopause. For example, phytoestrogens may help counteract hot flashes and other symptoms of low estrogen.

What's more, these compounds may decrease your risk of certain diseases — such as breast cancer — during menopause. However, further research is needed. Phytoestrogens are compounds found in sesame seeds that may benefit women who are undergoing menopause.

Easy to Add to Your Diet
Sesame seeds can give a nutty flavor and subtle crunch to many dishes.

To enhance the flavor and nutrient availability of sesame seeds, roast them.

Sosource: Healthnews.com



BUSINESS WORLD

Improving Nigeria's border management for free trade

Borders are central to the smooth conduct of international trade because goods cannot move between countries unless they legally pass through their borders. writes ADEBAYO ADELEKE.

IT has been found that there is a strong correlation between trade and national economic prosperity. But to have an efficient cross-border, we must have easier procedures and make border processes smooth. In a study conducted by the World Bank, which used data from 118 countries over nearly 50 years (1950-1998), it was found that countries that opened up their economies to international trade through well-balanced border management procedures experienced a boost of about 1.5% in their average annual GDP growth rates.

The importance of an efficient border management system couldn't be more emphasised for Nigeria. Not only can a well-manned border significantly improve Nigeria's international trade position, it can increase the country's average annual GDP by 1.5% annually, and improve its export trade, thereby enabling the country to earn scarce foreign exchange.

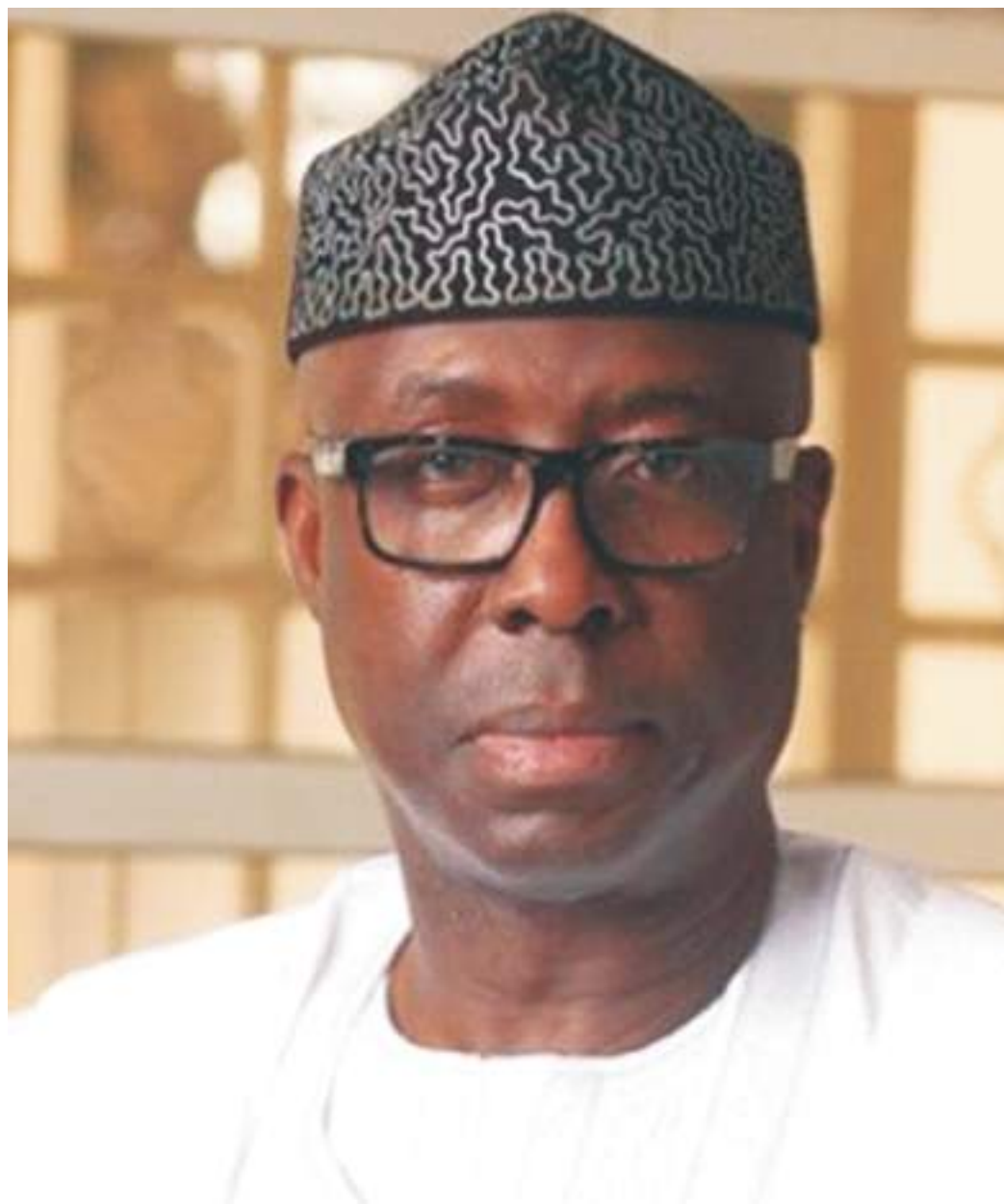
Nigeria has about 86 official land borders and 14 seaport borders; and it must strengthen all its border posts if it wants to improve its international trade standing. The Nigerian Bureau of Statistics (NBS) recently reported that Nigeria's foreign trade rose to #52.4 trillion in 2022, indicating an increase of 31.8% compared to the #39.75 trillion in foreign trade figures recorded in 2021. A more detailed breakdown of the total trade data shows that Nigeria's export surged 41.7% to #26.8 trillion in the reviewed trade year compared to imports, which surged from 22.5% to #25.5 trillion. This is a remarkable feat as this is the first time Nigeria crosses the #20 trillion thresholds in total exports.

However, much work still needs to be done on Nigeria's export base if the country is to reach the export levels of some of the world's biggest exporting countries like China—with an export trade of more than \$2.3 billion, United States—with an export trade of more than \$1.6 trillion; Germany—with an export trade of more than \$1.5 trillion, Japan—with an export trade of more than \$683 billion and The Netherlands—with an export trade of more than \$672 billion.

Now, let us explore how Nigeria can better enhance its border management procedures to ensure free trade:

1. Improve border security through massive technological deployment

Nigeria is bordered to the North by the Republic of Niger, to the East by Chad and Cameroon, to the South by the Gulf of Guinea of the Atlantic Ocean, and to the West by the Benin Republic. Nonetheless, Nigeria is still besieged by poor border security



Adebayo

even though its neighbours are clearly delineated.

It is estimated that 137 Nigerian border posts to the North are unmanned, and the 1,400 kilometres of border distance between Nigeria and Niger remains poorly supervised. Doubtless, this porous border situation has led to a great many cases of smuggling, terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, and many other untoward security situations that are currently bedevilling the country, as the porous borders allow the incursion of undocumented marauders into the country.

Nigeria can improve its border checkpoints by deploying cross-cutting infrastructure across its border checkpoints. This can be done through the deployment of contraband-detection technologies, ramping up of the use of CCTV coverage with a live feed to monitors, implementation of anti-drone technologies, employment of remote technologies like virtual reality (VR) and instant messenger (IM) tools, thermal imagers, infra-red and laser alarms, aerostats, ground sensors, sonar systems, fibre-optic sensors, amongst many other up-to-date technological security apparatus.

The argument for the importance of modern security software across national borders has been canvassed by many security experts worldwide, not least by Vanda Ms. Felbab-Brown before the US Congress.

The Nigerian Immigration System (NIS) has implemented the Mandated Identity Authentication System (MIDAS) across six Nigerian land border posts, two seaport border control posts, and three NIS State Commands. The MIDAS system allows for collecting, processing, storing, and analysing traveller information in Nigeria in real-time across the global border network. The NIS is advised to deploy the

system in more border posts

"To scale up border infrastructure and improve cross-border connectivity across Nigeria and its neighbouring countries, the government of Nigeria will have to invest heavily in crucial cross-border infrastructure like highways, bridges, inland waterways, railroads, electricity lines, and fuel pipelines. Other initiatives that can improve cross-border creating necessary facelifts like border village infrastructure, housing and tourist centres, road connectivity structures, decentralised renewable energy, and many more. Some of these border infrastructures have already been set up in many border hotspots across the world, like the border region between China and Pakistan."

According to him, poor road infrastructure, lack of cold chain logistics, and dishevelled ICT and eCommerce infrastructure across many border hotspots in Nigeria, especially in the rural areas, all play a significant role in Nigeria's disadvantaged position in cross-border trade. We can conclude that poor border infrastructure and bottlenecks at Nigeria's seaports would significantly hinder the country's capacity to take full advantage of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA)—the largest free trade agreement by participating countries.

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Conclusion

Nigeria's border health is fundamental to the country's economic prosperity. Therefore, for it to steadily improve its trade position in Africa and on the global scale, it needs safer, well-built, and well-manned border systems. Consequently, this can improve its GDP growth by an average of at least 1.5% annually, lifting many Nigerians out of poverty.

This should be top-priority for policymakers in the 10th national assembly – to implement a significant portion of the suggestions adduced above as they will, in no small way, help to improve Nigeria's border situation massively—and by extension, Nigeria's relevance in global trade and economy.

BUSINESS WORLD

Despite acceptance of old notes, crowd overwhelm banks

THE CBN had earlier instructed commercial banks to immediately collect the old naira notes, deposited at the apex bank, promising that before the end of the week, the nation would be awash with more naira notes, according to a reliable source.

Our reporter in Abuja disclosed that Unity Bank and a couple of other banks in Utako were paying out the old notes as customers were seen taking N20,000 apiece.

Branches in Kwara have no cash. Bank managers in Ilorin, the Kwara State capital, said that contrary to the CBN "instruction," nothing was released to them by the apex bank.

Some staff in Jaiz and UBA who also confirmed the development, said they did not receive the old notes from the CBN which worsened the situation for many customers.

A POS operator, Abdulazeez Abdullateef, told our correspondent that "the present situation is worse than where we were coming from, as bad as we had thought.

"I have gone to Lotus Bank, several First Bank branches in Ilorin among others, but I couldn't get a kobo, whether old or new notes, as the banks said they got nothing from CBN. Some of the banks even closed earlier because of the situation.

It was also gathered that there are still long queues within and outside bank premises across Lagos, with residents complaining about the difficulty in withdrawing both new and old notes even after waiting for many hours.

Checks at GTB, UBA, First Bank, and Zenith Bank at Fagba, Lagos, recorded crowd outside the banks, waiting to withdraw. Likewise Stanbic IBTC and Access Bank at Ogba.

One of the customers of Stanbic IBTC at Ogba, Asuquo Martins, who claimed to have arrived at the bank as early as 8am, said he left the bank after 2pm still unable to withdraw any cash.

However, Rita Nzediegwu who visited Zenith Bank at Adeyemo Alakija in Victoria Island, said she got there at about 8am and was able to withdraw after a short while.

"I went there yesterday to withdraw and I was given N5,000. They were only attending to Zenith bank customers inside the banking hall because the ATM was not working. Today they gave N10,000, only to Zenith customers still.

"I didn't wait for long because there were two people issuing the cash, which made the process swift. By the time I was leaving, they had locked the gate and only admitted people who had early taken numbers because they said they didn't have enough cash."



Emefiele

In Kano, our correspondent gathered from some of the commercial banks that the CBN was yet to "release" the old notes to them in the volume expected.

A staff of Access Bank, who asked not to be named, said they were also told that the CBN would release the old notes on Thursday, however, as at closing time, the bank was yet to receive delivery of the money from the apex bank.

"We were also expecting today, we are just hoping because what we had left in the vault is what we were still rationing to our customers and if we don't get more money soon, we may have another problem similar to

Reps urge CBN to revamp e-banking Platforms

THE House of Representatives has urged the Central Bank of Nigeria to direct banks to immediately revamp their electronic transaction platforms.

According to the House, the move has become necessary in the aftermath of the recent CBN policies, which have put pressure on online and electronic banking.

The CBN had set lower limits for cash withdrawal and redesigned the N1,000, N500 and N200 notes, policies that caused chaos in the country.

A member of the House, Sergius Ogun, at the plenary on Thursday moved a motion demanding reinforcement and upgrade of banking systems, especially those of the Deposit Money Banks also known as commercial banks.

The motion was titled 'Call on the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) to Direct All Commercial Banks to Overhaul their Online Banking Service Platforms to Ease Electronic Banking Operations.'

Moving the motion, Ogun noted that Section 88 (1) and (2) of the 1999 Constitution

empowers the National Assembly to conduct investigations into the activities of any authority executing or administering laws made by the National Assembly, like the CBN.

The lawmaker also noted that the CBN was established under Section 1 of the Central Bank of Nigeria Act, Cap. C4, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004 to issue legal tender currencies in Nigeria. He added that Section 2 of the CBN Act saddles the bank with the duty of promoting a sound financial system in Nigeria.

He said, "The House acknowledges that in the wake of the recent naira redesign and cash withdrawal limit policy of the Central Bank of Nigeria, there has been an increase in the use of online and electronic banking services to carry out monetary transactions across the country.

"The House also acknowledges that the use of online or internet banking services by Nigerians in the past three months or thereabout has been characterised by varying degrees of hitches, ranging from unsuccessful electronic bank transfers, Point of Sale

service failure and a host of others.

"The House is disturbed that the ineffectiveness or difficulty in using internet banking services across the online banking platforms of most commercial banks in Nigeria has brought untold hardship, suffering and difficulties on Nigerians in the past three months."

Ogun added, "The House is worried that if nothing is done by the Central Bank of Nigeria and the commercial banks to address these difficulties or ineffectiveness, Nigerians will continue to suffer untold hardships and loss of monies to unsuccessful electronic bank transactions."

Adopting the motion, the House resolved to urge the CBN to "direct all commercial banks in the country to immediately overhaul their existing online/electronic banking platforms for efficiency and ease of conducting electronic banking operations."

The House further mandated its Committee on Banking and Currency to ensure compliance with the resolutions and report back within four weeks for further legislative action.

PARTICIPANTS at a joint National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS)/Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) sensitisation workshop on the NNPC Operations.

The Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL) on Thursday said that Nigerians have missed enormous infrastructure development due to the protracted fuel subsidy regime in the country.

The NNPCL disclosed that the amount spent on fuel subsidy payment could provide 7,500km of road network at N400 million per kilometre and 37 well-equipped 120 Beds Tertiary Health Centres at N32 billion per hospital annually.

Mr Lawal Musa, Senior Business Advisor to the GCEO, NNPCL disclosed this in Abuja at a joint National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS)/Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) sensitisation workshop on the NNPC Operations.

Musa, in a presentation entitled "Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) and the Nigerian Economy" said the Federal Government spent as much as N4.8 trillion annually on fuel subsidy at the expense of the wellbeing of Nigerians.

In an analysis of the opportunity cost of the subsidy spending, he said deregulation could deliver 500,000 new houses and education and skill up of two million Nigerian students, among others.

He said it could deliver N12 trillion in four years to Nigeria while annual Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) under recovery would escalate to N3 trillion.

Fuel subsidy: Nigeria loses enormous — NNPCL



Kyari

He said the cost of fuel subsidy outweighed the direct benefits particularly to the masses.

He further said that deregulation could provide additional 27,000 megawatts of electricity to Nigerians and build and equip 2,400 hospitals in 774 LGAs.

"Nigeria is the largest producer of crude oil in Africa, possessing 28 per cent of Africa's reserve, with petroleum contributing significantly to the country's economy.

"The benefits derived have over the years been eroded due to the amount paid on subsidy, a regime has been fuelling the vicious circle of poverty in the country," he said.

Musa explained that the PMS (fuel) was sold lowest price in Nigeria among most West African countries in spite of the average cost of \$2.7 per litre globally, which amounted to up N570 per litre.

According to him, verifiable PMS demand data is critical to National planning and energy security.

In an overview of the PIA and New NNPC structure, Mrs Oritsemeyiwa Eyesan, the Chief Strategy and Sustainability Officer, NNPC, said the new entity was incorporated as a commercial company to be run like any other private company in the country, following the provision of the PIA 2021.

Eyesan, represented by Mr Vincent Ogbu, her Business Advisor said NNPC's activities were guided by three core values namely integrity, excellence and sustainability.

She explained that the signing of PIA into law overhauled the institutional, regulatory and fiscal framework for the Nigerian petroleum industry and

provided structured approach for managing host community development and investments.

She further said that significantly, the PIA mandated incorporation of old NNPC and established NNPC as a fully commercial entity.

"Under the Act, NNPC is to conduct affairs without recourse to government fund. The new NNPC is being owned by 200 million Nigerians with Ministries of Finance and Petroleum Resources as major shareholders," she said.

Earlier, the NNPC Group Chief Communications Officer, Garbadeen Muhammad, said the NNPC was engaging with students as critical stakeholders in the new organisation which belonged to over 200 million Nigerians including the Nigerian students.

Muhammad said the engagement which would be done annually, was aimed to enlighten the students and CSOs on the NNPC as a new entity registered by the Corporate Affairs Commission under the Company and Allied Matters Act.

Also speaking, the National President of NANS, Usman Barambu, thanked the NNPC for the enlightenment workshop which had exposed the students on the new structure and operations of the oil company.

Barambu urged the company to ensure availability of fuel and tackle fuel scarcity in the country as well as opening of opportunities for ordinary Nigerian graduates to gain employment in the company.

Mr Olayemi Success, Chief Convener, Civil Society for Justice and Equity called for the removal of the fuel subsidy and urged government to channel the money towards improving the

ENTREPRENEUR WATCH

WITH CELESTINE D. ATTSAR

Afrigo: How it will drive SME growth

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), in conjunction with the Nigeria Inter-Bank Settlement System Plc (NIBSS), recently introduced the card scheme known as AFRIGO. EMMANUEL OTORI, writes.

IN order to enable cardholders to use their payment cards to make purchases and access cash at businesses around the world, payment networks and financial institutions form a system known as a card scheme. The widely used card schemes are Visa, Mastercard, American Express, and Discover.

These schemes develop standards and processes for card issuance, authorization, and security, among other things, to ensure a simple and secure experience for both cardholders and merchants. AFRIGO was launched on January 26, 2023 to unify all banking technologies in one card like UnionPay of China, RuPay of India, etc.

AFRIGO is believed to address the core difficulties by releasing foreign exchange reserves and promoting easy cross-border trade in the wake of the economic crisis in Nigeria. AFRIGO will address the drawbacks of previous card systems like Mastercard.

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) anticipates that AFRIGO will lessen the costs connected with the existing card systems and the requirement for keeping multiple cards by paying with local currency.

The CBN believes that the data kept on each AFRIGO



card will help to improve the transactions, this system development in Nigeria by economy by reducing was created. To offering a safe and haven't kept up with financial improvements throughout time. AFRIGO would promote the adoption of many cards in a less expensive and cashless way. This can support the expansion of SMEs by lowering their dependency on cash transactions and increasing their capacity to participate in the formal economy. In essence, the AFRIGO card scheme intends to reduce expenses, gain data sovereignty, and address foreign exchange problems, all of which, when implemented, have a triple positive impact on the growth of SMEs. The CBN has accomplished a great deal and AFRIGO's status as the continent's first project of its kind is commendable. In general, the new domestic card from the CBN might give Nigerian SME growth the much-needed boost. Otori has over 10 years of experience working with 100 start-ups and SMEs across Nigeria. He is the Chief Executive Officer at Abuja Data School.

laundrying. Furthermore, accommodate varied convenient payment mechanism.

Ease of Commerce

The new domestic card initiative from the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) aims to improve small and medium-sized enterprises' (SMEs) access to financial services by providing them with a more straightforward and safe method of handling payments. Safe payment methods increase client loyalty and buy their faith, helping businesses expand.

Foreign Exchange Control AFRIGO will help balance the fluctuations in rate of exchange during trade. This domestic card scheme will help in seamless importation and exportation of products as well prevent the continual increase in commodity prices brought on by fluctuations in foreign exchange rates. Customers' perception that they are being exploited has made it difficult for SMEs over time to gain their loyalty.

Financial Inclusion The CBN considers that because many Nigerians

"The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) anticipates that AFRIGO will lessen the costs connected with the existing card systems and the requirement for keeping multiple cards by paying with local currency. The CBN believes that the data kept on each AFRIGO card will help to improve the economy by reducing laundrying. Furthermore, through data sovereignty, AFRIGO seeks to shield customers from the monopolistic regulations of international card schemes. Nigeria's AFRIGO card scheme seeks to give both consumers and businesses a safe and practical way to make payments. In order to provide a widely used and effective form of electronic payment in place of conventional cash transactions, this system was created. To accommodate varied consumers' demands, the Afrigo card scheme offers a range of payment methods, including debit cards, credit cards, and prepaid cards."



'It's time to step aside from your struggles'

Continued from page 18

learning experience. It was in Kingston, Jamaica. I was very nervous looking out in the sea of eyes, but after a few songs, I was able to keep my nerves in check.

What projects are you working on right now?

I am working on a few LPs and, of course, getting the final touches done on a song towards my album. I also have a music video that was shot in Jamaica and will soon be premiered. I am excited about it, it has some really nice scenes.

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?

All of Me by John Legend, Color of Love by Boys to Men, Smile for Me Jamaica by Chronixx, Back at One by Brian McKnight, and All Things are Working by Fred Hammond.

My favorite guilty pleasure is...

Well, it would have to be some sweet snack or pistachio ice cream.

What is the book, movie, or song that changed your life?

One book that really made a great impression on my life was Gifted Hands by Ben Carson. I was captivated by his life story and the possibility of doing great from small beginnings.

I feel happiest for the day when...

I am with my Family.

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

This will definitely be one for the future. I have not written it yet.

A movie I can watch a thousand



times and never get sick of...

I like this movie called Finding Forrester. It's about how an aspiring young writer crosses paths with a once-famous writer who helped to set him on the path to success. It's a great story.

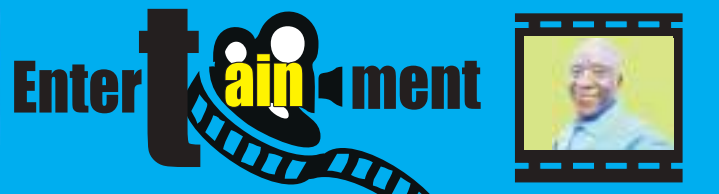
Growing up my hero was...

I didn't really have any heroes. I was really into track and field, still, am. So, my star back then was Michael Johnson.

When I started paying attention to music, I was really into groups like Boyz to Men. In terms of gospel, I was drawn to the Acappella group. A few of us as teenagers formed an a cappella group that went around singing at various church events so that was the genesis of my interest in music.

Thanks for your time. Do you any closing thoughts?

Yeah, just want you to be on the lookout for the LPs and album coming soon. I also want someone reading this to know that God is working it out for you. Be encouraged and trust Him.



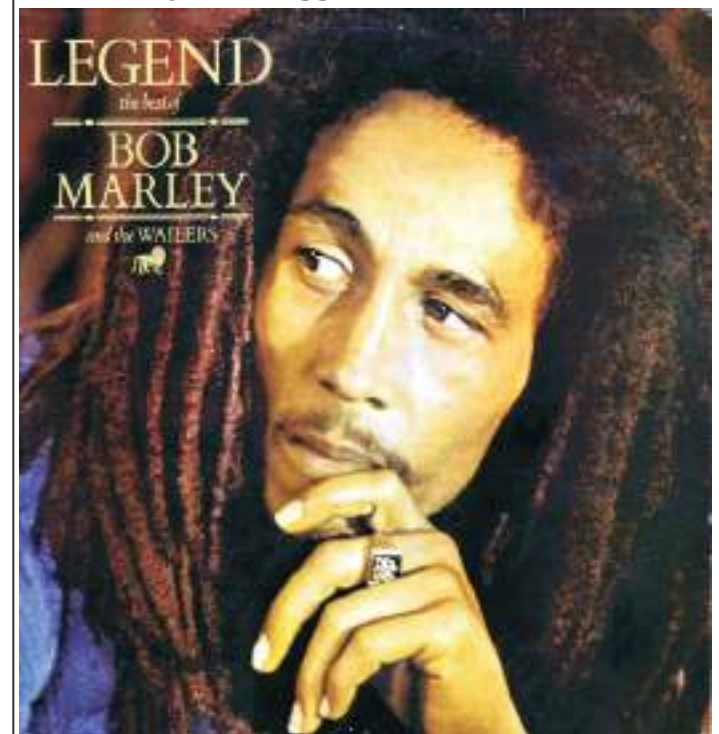
Influential black musicians of all time

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

Humans, animals wait to fetch water in Gabchari

From

ABBAS GUNGURA, BAUCHI

GABCHARI is a 25 kilometers Kanuri Village from Darazo Local Government Headquarter of Bauchi State. The 25 kilometers village from Darazo is a hard-to-reach community due to bad situation of road network. It is a 3 hours journey to access due to the nature of the only sandy road to the village which is a political ward headquarters in the LGA.

The dominant tribe in the village is Kanuri and followed by Fulani. They are predominantly farmers and cattle rearers, they live harmoniously with one another considering that a large percentage of the people are Moslems with a handful of Christians, with a Population of not less than 200,000 People.

The fact that the people are living peacefully together as brothers and sisters yet they are suffering in silence having cried so loud with nobody hearing their cries not to talk of soothing them and wipe away the tears from their eyes, over the years, the story has remained the same, a sorrowful, pathetic position with no single development.

Lack of potable drinking water for human consumption, domestic use, Animal consumption and other use by the community is an aspect of concern and urgent intervention by relevant authorities to salvage the Gabchari community considering the fact that water is life.

It is interesting to unfold that journalists on tour of the Village sponsored by UNICEF Bauchi, described their Water situation as pathetic and helpless having seen the people and animals in a long queue waiting for their turns to fetch water to drink in order to keep life going in the only Well in the village build by the community over 20 years ago.

Lack of Road and Water has really affected life of the communities as it denied them other social amenities to make their communities more habitable and opportunity to provide their children with full potentials in life, such as quality education and healthcare services.

The first sight as one enters Gabchari is a new commercial borehole provided by a businessman



Students of Gabchari Central Junior Secondary School JSS

in the village which gives water to both people and animals at the payment of N200 per drum, 250 liters. In fact it is painful, pathetic and in Justice to those that can not afford to buy.

This was the clarion call made to the Bauchi State Government, International Development Partners and other well meaning citizens of the State and LGA by the residents of Gabchiyari Community when select

group of Journalists went on a field visit on Thursday 16th March, 2023, preparatory to the commemoration of World Water Day, set aside by UN every 22nd of March to highlight issues around water globally.

Speaking to team of journalists led by the Chairman of Correspondents Chapel Mallam Ahmed Muhammed, the District head of Gabchari Community, Mallam Muhammad Garba, while welcoming the journalists in his Palace, explained that, "Our Community is a hard-to-reach location whose Water Challenges is being compounded by the lack of good road. Surrounding Hamlet's have to travel between 3-5 or 6 Kilometers to access paid potable Water. So, you see and can imagine the productive time and energy wasted in getting Water".

Mallam Mohammed Garba, said "Ordinarily, it takes only 20 minutes to get to Gabchari from our LG Headquarters, but due to the absence of feeder road, it will now take an average of two hours or more to get here, that is if the vehicle does not get stuck in the sand that dotted our terrain. saying It is even worse during rainy season."

He lamented that the situation has negatively affected education in the area as children must first go far to fetch water for use at home before going to school later in the day.

The traditional ruler further informed that, lack of adequate source of water has a negative impact on effective healthcare services delivery as the only PHC in area lacks water to function as the community use to contribute money in order to buy water for the facility.

Mallam Garba then appealed to Bauchi State Government and other stakeholders to see how water can be made available for them as well open

up the community for ease of transporting their farm produce and also attract development for the community.

Also speaking, the Chairman of Gabchari Ward Development Community (WDC) Aliyu Alhaji, expressed worry on how lack of adequate potable water seriously affected other critical areas of human development, such as school enrollment and retention and Sanitation.

He said "The danger is that the children spend school hours looking for water and thereby missing classes and at the end abandoning it all due to tiredness".

The WDC Chairman, pointed out that, children that even made the forts to fetch the water and still attend school, "you discover that they attend classes late and were usually fatigued to comprehend any meaningful teaching in the class."

A politician from the area who served as Councillor representing the ward on 3 occasions, Alh. Suleiman Gabchari, in anger voiced that the area is really suffering because of the lack of sustainable sources of water, thereby causing unbearable condition to the people especially in this dry season, which makes our life more laborious and miserable.

He said as councillor he made a lot of efforts to get something done to the community but his efforts did not yield fruitful result as there was no political will by the government to do the needful to salvage the suffering of the people.

"There was an occasion I had a personal discussion with the former Governor of Bauchi State, Malam Isa Yuguda, he promised to do something about our situation, but, nothing good came out upto the time

he left office in 2019."

Suleiman Gabchiyari however expressed hope that in no distance future, the problem will become a thing of the past particularly with the visit of the team of Journalists which will highlight their suffering to the outside world.

Garba Sani and Bala Aliyu are JSS one students in Gabchari Central junior Secondary school with 150 Students and only 2 teachers, separately told Nigeria Standard that, their first assignment in the morning must to fetch water, fill up the available containers in the house before going to school every day no matter how late, which is affecting their studies which is why according to them they can not speak English no read good.

Despite the complaints and cries calling for concerned to solve their Water and road perennial problems, the Darazo LGA Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Coordinator Ibrahim Mohammed Hassan, said all hope is not lost as disclosed and assured by the Darazo LGA Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH).

While speaking with Journalists, he said that the Bauchi State Government has mainstream the LGA into a WASH project under the African Development Bank (ADB) intervention signed by the State Government.

The WASH Coordinator was also quick to add that the only water scheme that will be productive in Gabchari community would be a motorized or solar powered borehole considering the terrain of the area.

"It takes a minimum of 90 feet before we could hit water level here. This is because of the topography of the area. So, you can see that a hand pump borehole will not serve the purpose here", Hassan said.



One of the only two sources of Access drinking water for Humans and Animals in Gabchari Darazo LGA in Bauchi State.

NEWS

Stop revelation or your husband goes mad-Prophet

BY EZEKIEL DONTINNA

PROPHET Moses Essessein of the Mountain of Fire Ministry Bassa, has warned the wife of one Adewumi Abayomi who has been victim of his sexual assault to stop exposing him or he would make her husband go mad and be taken to the village.

The victim who was testifying as PW3 in the case between the Plateau State Commissioner of Police and Prophet Moses Essesse in before West of Mines High Court Jos, where she told the court that the Prophet sent his secretary, one Paul Nimmyel, the 2nd Defendant recently.

When she reported the case to the A-Division Jos, but the 1st Defendant denied having any canal knowledge of the woman, but she insisted and asked the Investigating Police Officer (IPO) in charge to take off the clothes of the Prophet and they would see some spots and marks on his body. And that was done and behold, it was exactly as she insisted.

However, she alleged that the next day while she was in her shop around 6pm and was about to close, the Prophet's secretary came to her shop with 8 anti-cultism police squad wearing black masks and picked her to A-Division where Prophet Moses Essesse in was already there.

She said, "I called my husband and the two of us were transferred to C-Division without writing a statement and we were locked up there until our lawyer came to our rescue the following day. As it is now, two of our phones were seized and they are still with the police. When the Prophet went



Onyeka

back to his Ministry, I was told that he was bragging to members that Abayomi and wife were arrested by his boys for lying against him".

During cross examination, Counsel to the 1st and 2nd Defendants, said the victim who is PW3 just cocked up all these stories to blackmail his client because he suspended her as one of his Pastors and refused to marry her after leaving her husband.

It would be recalled that the

victim alleged that the Prophet took her, Mrs. Adewomi to one Gravity Hotel under the guise of going for evangelism and was served with a wine that was drugged and it divies her season. Only for her to find herself naked in bed the following day.

Presiding over the case, Justice Zakka Dung, after listening to testimony of PW3 and her responses during cross examination by Counsel adjourned the case to April 27, 2023 to enable the court entertain the next witness who would be PW4 respectively.

of the human domain of operation, which, according to him, comprises humans as physical beings, thought of mind, action and what they create.

He said the military's objective in the human domain was the ability to influence targeted individuals and groups better than the adversary.

Languages, according to him, are seen as the best mirrors of the human mind, which in turn determine action and events.

"Consequently, a key requirement for success in the human domain operation is the ability to communicate with the local population which hinges on mastery of indigenous languages within the operating environment," he said.

The Director General of NARC, retired Maj.-Gen. Garba Wahab, said understanding of local languages by troops was essential to achieving success in the ongoing internal security operations across the country.

Wahab said the deployment of the military in nearly all the states of the federation had made it imperative for army personnel to be able to communicate in local languages rather than English.

According to him, there are some words we find very difficult to translate, so when you understand each other, it is easier to deal with locals and people from particular areas and speak their

THE Kogi State office of the Agro-Climatic Resilience in Semi-Arid Landscapes (ACReSAL) Project for Nigeria has received a delegation from ACReSAL office from Yobe State on study tour of achievements recorded under Governor Yahaya Bello's administration.

The ACReSAL team from Yobe State, on the instruction of the World Bank, was in the state to understudy the performance of ACReSAL, formally NEWMAP, on the achievements recorded under the administration of Governor Yahaya Bello.

The Yobe team arrived the state, would understudy how the Kogi State ACReSAL, formerly NEWMAP was able to do well and to achieve outstanding achievements that caught the attention of the World Bank.

The Yobe team will use the visit to learn how the Kogi State office for ACReSAL was able to perform to the admiration of the World Bank in project execution.

language.

"They feel this is one of us and that is the essence.

"I believe that if you can speak my language I can understand you, and misunderstanding is reduced to great extent," he said.

Wahab said the centre was planning to expand the course to other local languages other than the three major Nigerian languages. (NAN)

NUC accredits 7 courses of Salem University Lokoja

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

THE National Universities Commission (NUC) has fully accredited 7 academic programmes of the Salem University Lokoja in Kogi. Its Vice Chancellor, Prof. Alewo Johnson-Akubo has said. The seven accredited courses in BSc are: Computer Science, Information Technology, Geology, Microbiology, Biochemistry and MSc/MBA Business Administration. Speaking to newsmen on Wednesday in Lokoja, the VC said, "With the new development, all our courses are now fully accredited."

Johnson-Akubo said that the NUC approval was

ACReSAL team arrives Kogi on appraisal

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja



Bello

The Kogi State described the feat ACReSAL, formerly achieved by the Kogi NEWMAP is adjudged by State ACReSAL as a product of dogged determination of Gov. Yahaya Bello.

The Commissioner assured that the visit will be rewarding, promising that the Kogi State ACReSAL is resolved to doing more in the coming years.

Speaking on the development, the Kogi State Project Coordinator, ACReSAL, Barr. Ladi Jatto, described the visit by the Yobe team as commendable, and said the visit will be used by the Yobe team to learn and for peer review mechanism by the two

Adewale Omofaiye states.

been fully accredited by the NUC.

"In fact, with this accreditation, Salem University Lokoja can admit more students in the 2022/2023 academic year, whose admission is still opened," he said.

Johnson-Akubo said, "By the way, with the kind of infrastructural development we have in Salem University, we have what it takes to admit more students now."

The VC was full of praises to the Chancellor of the University, Archbishop Sam Amaga, for what he described as, his "impressive" and "encouraging" leadership qualities, driving the university to greater heights.

"We give God the glory now that all our programmes in the seven Colleges have

Understanding local languages will enhance operations – Army

THE Chief of Administration (Army), Maj.-Gen. Okpe Ali, says the understanding of the major indigenous languages by the troops of the Nigerian Army will enhance their operations.

Ali said this during the inauguration of the Indigenous Languages Course 12/2023 organised by the Nigerian Army Resource Centre (NARC) on Thursday in Abuja.

He said the conduct of the previous 11 courses recorded tremendous success and informed the need to continue with the programme.

He said the 12th batch was being conducted for officers and soldiers of 2

Division, 81 Division and Army Headquarters' departments and units within Abuja.

According to him, the aim of conducting the ILC is to ensure that army personnel are proficient in Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba.

"As you are all aware, Nigeria is a multi-ethnic and multilingual society with the largest number of indigenous languages in the West African Sub-Region as well as the most populous nation on the African continent.

religious conflicts and increase in the number of violent non-state actors and groups across the country.

"The threats posed by these groups and in fuelling conflicts have necessitated the deployment of troops in almost all the 36 states of the federation for internal security operations in aid of civil authorities.

"Thus, the importance and need for army personnel to understand the local languages, particularly in the areas where they operate will build trust and confidence in troops by the locals," he said.

He added that the 2016 Order of Battle and its subsequent implementation had led to the establishment of new formations and units across the country where most of the residents spoke only their indigenous languages.

"This situation requires that all Nigerian army officers and soldiers have the basic knowledge of the three major languages that are widely spoken within the Nigerian operational environment.

"This will among others promote esprit-de-corps among personnel; afford troops the ability to effectively communicate with the locals and most importantly assist in gathering intelligence which is necessary in the execution of assigned tasks," he said.

Ali said the 21st Century operational environment had changed with the emergence

NEWS

Ramadan: Preach peaceful coexistence, intensify prayers for development

- Inuwa

From **WILLIE ATTAH, Gombe**

GOVERNOR Muhammad Inuwa of Gombe State has called on Muslim clerics to preach on the importance of peaceful coexistence during their Tafsir sessions.

In a goodwill message to mark the commencement of the Ramadan fast, Governor Inuwa also appealed to them to avoid anything that would jeopardise the peace and unity of the state and the country.

Governor Yahaya who admonished the well-to-do individuals in the society to assist those in need during the season, also enjoined the Muslim Ummah and the citizenry in general to use the period to pray fervently for peace, development as well as prosperity of the state and Nigeria.

He particularly admonished Muslims to embrace piety as demanded of them during the month-long fast.

According to him, "as one of the five pillars of Islam, Ramadan fast avails the Ummah a golden opportunity for spiritual rejuvenation and devotion through supplication and other acts of worship.

"We therefore must use this opportunity to pray fervently



Inuwa

for our dear state and the nation as well as for those in authority as we collectively battle to combat the many socio-economic challenges facing our nation and humanity", he said.

He expressed optimism that with prayers, commitment and patriotism of the citizens, the country will surely overcome its challenges and emerge stronger.

Governor Inuwa then admonished the Muslim

Ummah to always demonstrate in their lives the spirit and ideals of Ramadan and by extension, Islam by living according to the tenets of the religion, which promotes peace, kindness and obedience.

On the part of government, Inuwa said, "We shall continue to live up to our commitment of ensuring peaceful coexistence as well as guaranteeing security and wellbeing of the people".

TRADER in solid minerals goods accounted for 0.47 percent of N55.15 billion of total trade in the fourth quarter of last year.

The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) that stated this in its report said solid minerals exports in the period under review was N21.03 billion.

The document which *THE NIGERIA STANDARD* obtained recently, said "The value of total trade in solid minerals goods in Q4, 2022 stood at N55.15 billion, representing 0.47 percent of total trade in Q4, 2022 of which solid minerals exports stood at N21.03 billion.

According to NBS, this shows decrease of 6.41 percent compared to the value recorded in Q3, 2022 (N22.47

Solid minerals earnings accounts for 0.47% trade

FROM JIDAUNA YANUNG, ABUJA

billion).

NBS said, however, it increased by 55.07 percent when compared to the corresponding quarter of 2021 (N13.56 billion).

The major exported solid minerals goods, said the Bureau, were 'Other excluding white cement to Niger, valued at N5.21 billion, followed by 'Tin ores and concentrates' worth N3.74 billion to Malaysia.

It noted that, on the other hand, solid mineral imports were dominated by 'Plaster' imported from Turkey worth N4.69 billion and Egypt valued at N2.44 billion.

NBS further disclosed that other products imported under this category were 'Gypsum: anhydrite' from Spain (N4.87 billion) and Turkey (N2.33 billion).

Similarly, the Bureau added that the value of total trade of raw materials stood at N770.03 billion in the fourth quarter of last year of which imports were valued at N559.25 billion while exports stood at N210.78 billion.

During the quarter, NBS said 'Urea whether or not in aqueous solution' was exported to Brazil at a value of N62.31 billion.

Kogi Assembly suspends 9 members, 8 LG chairmen

From **AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja**

KOGI State House of Assembly has suspended nine of its members on allegation bordering on terrorism.

This was after the House Speaker, Rt Hon Prince Mathew Kolawole read a letter from the state Governor, Alhaji Yahaya Bello alleging that the lawmakers engaged in terrorism acts based on security report.

Contributing to debate on



Bello

Adieu our great Treasurer. Till we meet at Jesus feet".

Until her demise, the Late Eunice who died at the age of 43 was passionate about education and this saw her being a graduate of Political Science from the University of Abuja. She was also a holder of two Masters Degrees, in Law and Diplomacy, and International Relations from the University of Jos, aside obtaining a Post Graduate Diploma in Education from the National Teachers Institute in Kaduna, which was all in her quest to impart knowledge to others by being a university lecturer.

She is survived by her husband, Mr. Pwanangba Agabus, who is also a journalist and correspondent of the Daily Post, 3 children and many relations.

After the funeral Mass, the final interment and burial rites were held at the family land, JIB Industrial Area, Jos.

Plateau NAWOJ pays last respect to colleague

By **PALANG KASMI**

IT was a sad day for members of the National Association of Women Journalists, (NAWOJ), Plateau State Chapter, who gathered to pay their last respect to a member and Treasurer of the Association, Late Mrs. Eunice Zong Pwanagba Agabus.

She was until her demise on March 16 2023 after a prolonged illness, a staff of the Plateau Radio Television Corporation.

The female journalists were led by the their National Officer and NAWOJ National Vice President Zone D, Jamila Abubakar, state officials, and members who came out in their numbers clad in their associations uniform to pay their last respect and mourn the departure of one of them.

They eulogised her, describing her as a dedicated and hardworking personality who has contributed immensely to the growth of journalism in Plateau State.

Her Corpse was taken from Bingham Teaching Hospital (Jankwano) Jos, on Thursday, 23 March 2023, for a funeral Mass which was held at Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic Church Gold and Base, Rayfield.

Taking the homily from Matthew 5: 1-12, and James 4:14, Parish Priest of Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic Church Gold and Base, Rev. Fr. Joseph Agbazi said life is like a mist and death is the end of life which must certainly come.

He urged the congregation to live life well by living a worthy life so that no matter how short we live, we will leave great legacies behind.

"Everyday of our lives, death comes to us, death is

inevitable. We are like water poured out on the ground which cannot be collected back again. Death will come when it will com, so let us prepare for death and not spend our time chasing wealth, and things that are vanity, and temporarily here on earth", he said.

He tasked Christians to work for a just society and country, Nigeria, and prayed for the peaceful repose of the soul of the Late Eunice, whom he said has lived a blessed life.

The General Manager of PRTVC, Mr. Jefta Jacken represented by the Director of News, Mr Yakubu Taddy in his speech described the Late Eunice as a humble, peaceful staff of the organisation who loved her job and performed her duties well.

Barr. Enodo, who spoke on behalf of the family said the loss of Eunice and the vacuum created in their lives will not be easy to fill.

He described her as a good mother, friend and in-law who was very receptive to those who came into their home, and asked for prayers for the Lord to take care of the 3 children she left behind.

The Parish Priest, Rev. Fr. Joseph Agbazi also on behalf of the Church Council and the priests condoled the family over the loss of Eunice, urging them to trust God, and in the hope that her soul is resting peacefully with the Lord in heaven.

Earlier, a Wake Keep was held in her honor on Wednesday 22nd at the family residence, which was attended by members of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), family, friends, neighbours, and well-wishers.

Chairman of NUJ, Plateau

State Chapter, Mr. Paul Jatau in a tribute said: "What can we say? The Lord gives and He takes, blessed be his name. Eunice was a good person, dedicated to her duties and activities of NUJ. We will miss her, we pray that the Lord will give her husband, children, and other family members the fortitude to bear this irreparable loss and the strength to carry on. Good night Eunice, till we meet on the resurrection morning".

Plateau NAWOJ Chairperson, Mrs Nene Dung also in a tribute to her late member said: "My dear Eunice, words actually fail us as an association. You had told us you were getting better and we looked forward to achieving great things with you for Plateau NAWOJ. But we can't question God, we pray that your soul finds rest with our Lord and the children you left behind, He alone will nourish them to maturity.



NEWS

INEC observers allege Governorship election marred by irregularities

From Abbas Gungura, Bauchi

ACCREDITED observers of Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) have alleged that the March 18, 2023 Governorship and State House of Assembly Elections in Bauchi State were characterized by vote-buying, over-voting and violence.

This was disclosed to journalists at Yimir Hotel, Bauchi recently by the Observers, led by the Centre for Child Care and Youth Development, describing the elections as below electoral standard practice and the standard of the INEC Electoral Act.

Madam Rebecca Maimato, who spoke for the Observers, alleged that irregularities and malpractices trailed the elections in many local government areas of the state.

Rebecca Maimato called on INEC to visit the areas where widespread irregularities and malpractices were recorded during the election.

According to her, "From our observation for instance, in Alkali ballot papers used were not carrying the official stamp. We also observed that pre thumb printing of ballot papers occurred before the commencement of voting. There were cases where over-voting and vote- buying were widespread and observed."

She alleged that, "In Warji Local Government, a commissioner was alleged to have shot sporadically to scare voters away to enable over-voting and vote- buying. This was also recorded and the video can be verified."

She further alleged that, "In



Yakubu

Kirfi, there were cases of over-voting and violence, especially in Kafin Iya and Bara wards. In Bauchi Local Government, we observed that in Birshi Miri Ward, there were cases of over-voting and vote- buying."

The Observers added that, "In Toro Ward, a viral video showed a local government Chairman sharing N2000 notes to voters on the queue which can be verified."

"This is a summary of the irregularities observed in the election. We therefore recommend that INEC as a matter of urgency look into the just concluded Bauchi State elections characterized by so much irregularities," she called.

Madam Rebecca concluded that, "This is a major setback to Nigeria's democracy. Secondly we recommend that INEC should critically visit the issue of vote- buying, results sheets

alterations and malpractices in the entire Bauchi State elections for immediate prosecution. INEC should ensure that LG with election irregularities and malpractices are cancelled for fairness and justice to the citizens of Bauchi State".

Concerned Professionals dispel smear campaign against Uni-Jos VC

By DANLADI DUK

A group known as Concerned Professionals on Friday held press conference at the Nigeria Union of Journalists, NUJ Press Centre Jos, the Plateau State capital to dispel the smear campaign against the person and personality of Prof Tanko Ishaya, Vice Chancellor of the University of Jos who served as the Returning Officer during the Presidential and National Assembly as well as the Governorship and State

banks across the country as part of a coordinated effort to ease the circulation of banknotes of various denominations.

The apex bank has also

directed all commercial banks to open for operation on Saturdays and Sundays.

The Acting Director, Corporate Communications Department of the CBN, Dr. Isa Abdul Mumin, disclosed this in Abuja, on Friday, stating that a substantial amount of money, in various denominations, had been received by the commercial banks for onward circulation to their respective customers.

According to him, the CBN had directed all banks to load their Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) as well as conduct physical operations in the banking halls through the weekends.

"Branches of commercial banks will operate on Saturdays and Sundays to attend to customers' cash needs," he noted, adding that the Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, Mr. Godwin Emefiele, would personally lead teams to monitor the level of compliance by the banks in various locations across the country.

He, therefore, urged Nigerians to be patient as the current situation would ease soon with the injection of more banknotes into circulation.

From DORCAS PANKYES, Jos

THE Plateau State Governor-elect, Bar. Caleb Mutfwang has pledged to equip the state legislative arm of government to facilitate training to give them all the exposure needed for law making in the state.

He disclosed this on Friday when the team of PDP delegation of the state legislators paid him a courtesy visit to felicitate with him over his victory at the poll in JD Jang Lodge, Government House, Rayfield, Jos.

Barr. Caleb assured the legislators even as they prepare for May 29 swearing-in. He assured them that the state House of Assembly will be active under his administration.

"Legislative business is not going to be business as usual. We will disturb the House because we have many things that need to be reformed."

He added that the law governing the GMDP before is 1974 Law. He said one of the Organization we are going to activate is GMDP, there will be a lot of work for you to carry out.

He therefore encouraged the candidates who contested and lost to keep faith alive, while the executive will sit after the

Governor- elect vows to strengthen capacity of lawmakers



Mutfwang

swearing-in to look for a way to accommodate those who loss out.

Earlier, the leader of the state Assembly delegates, Timothy Dandong pledged their support to the Governor-elect to work together as one for the

success of the state.

He congratulated the Governor-elect over his victory and the role he played to achieve the success that they have achieved at the poll. "With this victory, the fortune of Plateau will take a new turn for good", he said.

CBN evacuates banknotes from vaults

From Dorcas Pankyes, Abuja

THE Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has confirmed the evacuation of banknotes from its vaults to commercial



Emefiele



Ishaya

Assembly elections for Nasarawa State.

Briefing journalists, the Concerned Professionals spokesperson, Barr. Chesil Drenkat said, the group attention has been drawn to a very wicked, malicious and uninformed campaign orchestrated and spread on the social media against Prof Tanko Ishaya, the Vice Chancellor of University of Jos who served during February 25" Presidential and National Assembly elections and March 18" Gubernatorial and State Assembly elections all in Nasarawa State as the state Returning Officer.

Drenkat said as Concerned Professionals who know and can vouch for the person of Prof. Tanko Ishaya, by the special grace of God, the VC of Uni-Jos, we feel compelled to rise to the occasion by not only putting issues into proper perspective but to counter and dispel this dangerous campaign of calumny against

a patriotic, forthright God-fearing and perfect gentleman in the person of the professor.

Prof Ishaya before coming to University of Jos in 2010, was Head of Center for Internet Computing, University of Hull in 2010, having earlier worked at University of Manchester, so arriving at Uni- Jos is more of patriotism than for monetary gains and while at the Uni- Jos, the Professor' s sole efforts attracted foreign research grants of over (\$1M) at one instance in competitive research funding, from the UK Research and Innovation, UK DMI11 British Council, Carnegie Corporation of USA ,UK Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) and TETFUND, NRF, Prof Ishaya contributed to securing, implementing and managing external grants of over 15 million US dollars to the University of Jos. He currently holds 4 funded

research grants.

He has never been found wanting in accountability and management of funds.

Barr. Drenkat said, we therefore submit that Prof Ishaya is no stranger to money and no candidate in Nasarawa State irrespective of political party can entice, induce or influence this man of high pedigree with some paltry sum of money. We on the Plateau, cherish respect Prof Ishaya as an accomplished scholar far beyond the entire value associated with the local politics in Nasarawa State. Nasarawa State politics cannot afford the price of the VC because he is a priceless jewel with unshakable fear and faith in God in addition to his incorruptible and forthrightness.

To illustrate the characters and inherent qualities of Professor Tanko Ishaya at the same Nasarawa State, while on the national assignment as INEC Returning Officer for the 2023 General Elections. Prof Ishaya returned as duly elected two SDP Senators in the persons of Hon. Ahmed Akwashiki and all others who duly won their elections. We as a Group challenge all or any of the returned winners to mention any sum of money they respectively used to influence the proclamation of their victory. Most importantly, he returned the Labour Party as winner of Presidential election despite Nasarawa State being renown as an APC state and home of the APC National Chairman.

Drenkat said we urged politicians who lost to accept the outcome of the elections.

SUNDAY MAGAZINE

Nigeria's polls, challenges and way forward



Continued from page 10

economic diversification, investment in infrastructure, security and good governance, an educated and healthy population, poverty alleviation and economic social development”

In his words, “another event worthy of note is the enactment of the Petroleum Industry Act 2021, a law directed to reform the oil and gas sector and make it profitable and attractive to investors.” At the national level, though victory has been declared and Senator Ahmed Bola Tinubu is the President-elect, the opposition is strongly challenging the outcome of the polls at the Presidential Elections Tribunal. So far, the two major political parties in the country, the People's Democratic Party, (PDP) and the Labour Party, (LP) are challenging the outcome of the polls which is usually the tradition when opposing sides are feeling aggrieved over the outcome of any such results. But again, the outcome of the presidential result has further polarized the citizenry particularly those who had kicked against the Muslim-Muslim ticket of the APC. No

matter their grievances however, it is anticipated that in the aftermath of the polls, all necessary mechanisms must be put in place to integrate all citizens of the nation for greater productivity and socio-economic wellbeing of the entire citizens. In this regard, the incoming Tinubu led government would have a herculean task winning the hearts of the people that it will run an inclusive government where everyone one would have a sense of belonging.

For the Igbos in Lagos who before now regarded the state as no man's land, the negative campaigns which heralded the gubernatorial elections refrained many of them from voting, left many issues pragmatically unsettled.

Lagos is today no longer the state many of us used to know. Campaigns based on ethnicity and other provocative sentiments have this time around polarized the entire state beyond comprehension. Be that as it may, the entire general elections campaigns were basically midwifed alongside obvious unnecessary unhealthy sentiments not minding its devastating effects.

Beyond this, the need for ensuring that campaign promises are kept by the president-elect is also profound on the minds of the citizenry. During the campaigns, the Senator Ahmed Bola Tinubu had reemphasized that if given the mandate, he would run an all-inclusive government devoid of any sentiments and divisionary antics that may jeopardize the prospects of this nation.

In the aftermath of the elections and his declaration as president-elect, Tinubu is aware of the problems facing this country and knows that one of his obligations would be how he would bring his experience to bear on the governance of many failed institutions for the benefit of all. While Tinubu would be busy trying to impress citizens on his capacity to rule, so will all the 28 state governors be busy trying to provide dividends of democracy to their people. Here on the Plateau, incoming governor, Barrister Caleb Mutfwang is succeeding incumbent Governor Rt. Hon. Simon Bako Lalong in the state.

During his campaigns, the state Governor-elect's vision, mission and policy thrust is hinged on leaving a legacy of

service and better life for the people. Top on his priority is taking the security challenges through problem-solving approaches and bringing government to interface with communities and stakeholders. Interestingly, the Lalong led administration has lucratively established the Plateau State Peace Building Agency which has covered a lot in terms achieving sustainable peace. But Mutfwang in the manifesto believes that “we will defend and secure the state using different framework, community vigilantism and empowering local communities, deploying cutting edge technology and combatting marauders. We will partner with the federal security agencies and champion the restructuring of national security architecture for better controlled results.”

Evidently, the state which according to State of the States Report is one of states that reduces its FAAC dependence while increasing total revenue. FAAC dependency had dropped from 77.93 percent in 2020 to 59.51 in 2021. At the same time, total revenue increased by 2.14 percent from N69.7bn in 2020 bn in 2020 to N71.25bn in 2021.

According to the report, “first, operating expenses and loan repayments exceeded total revenue by 0.76 percent leaving little room for sufficient allocation of resources to capital expenditures. Consequently, CAPEX reduced by 34.22 percent compared to 2020. It was therefore inevitable that total recurrent expenditure (N72.02bn) consumed 84.54 percent while CAPEX (N13.17bn) represented 15.46 percent of total expenditure. Debt stock increased in the period under review adding 9.9 percent to settle at N165.23bn.”

Against the backdrop of this difficulty, it is also anticipated that the incoming government on the Plateau will tackle some and if not all these teething problems and forge ahead.

In the aftermath of these polls, many have predicted that it is still not yet uhuru for this country even as our leaders continue to search for a way forward. Be that as it may however, it is a general consensus that despite some of these complex hurdles, there are great prospects ahead if and when the right strategies are religiously implemented.

METRO-FOCUS

The gold mine on the Plateau

By YVONNE ISHOLA

ONE of the states that stand out when talking about rare vegetables, the best varieties of food stuffs, root crops and herbs is Plateau State. Root plants like radishes, beet root, carrots, etc abound, and so does the best varieties of tomatoes, yellow pepper, Irish potatoes.

Sweet potatoes in several varieties can only be grown in Jos. The soil is also friendly to hungry rice in different varieties. If you want to know the varieties, go to Bassa or any Berom community and you would be enlightened.

Cabbage, lettuce, cucumber are grown in abundance. And so is spinach, ugu leaves, spring onions, curry leaves, scent leaves, okro, karkashi, etc. Not to mention kale, parsley and celery.

Medicinal flowery plants like broccoli and cauli flower are grown here. And the soil is very friendly to so many fruits too. It is one of the few places apple grows in Nigeria because of its temperate weather.

No wonder, a visiting Chinese said to Plateau residents: "You have no reason to be sick". He made these statements after seeing the wealth of herbs, vegetables, fruits that the soil produces.

The Chinese don't play with diet, especially vegetables, herbs and fruits. They are aware that these groups of foods fortify one's immunity. In essence, what the Chinese meant was that Plateau people have all it takes to live healthy.

Unfortunately, in spite of the fact that Plateau State's tomatoes is adjudged as one of the best in the country, I don't see the state using it to its advantage for revenue drive. There has been no attempt to establish a factory that would process the tomatoes into paste for revenue creation. Instead, we buy from other states that don't grow tomatoes. What a shame!

It is sad that our farmers just recently discovered that it is possible to do dry season Irish potatoes farming and that there are so many advantages to that. Firstly, it pays a lot. Secondly, diseases do not ravage them during the dry season. The government is yet to take advantage of this to generate revenue. If it has, I'm not aware.

It won't be out of place to have a packaged chips factory in the state that will generate good money to government coffers. There is a big market for that in Nigeria and it could be exported. God knows Nigerians spend so much on Pringles. Anything similar and sold at a cheap price will be a welcome development.

One was shocked to discover that the best egg in Nigeria as far as quality and durability is concerned is Jos egg. It is common to hear people asking shop owners in Abuja if it is Jos egg if the price is high. Some caterers only go for Jos eggs. But what have we done about it as a state? Nothing! The state could invest in poultry to



raise our IGR.

The government has bought back BARC Farms. This is a step in the right direction. Let the activities to be carried out there include poultry, tomatoes farm, growing of broccoli, cauliflower, hungry rice, potatoes etc. Those items other states look to us to get the best. That could put Plateau on the map as the best performing

state.

A glaring booster to the economy of the state that we seem to be ignoring is tourism. In the past, the traffic of people coming to the state for conferences, vacation was so much. But due to crises and attacks here and there in different communities within the state, that area of Plateau's

economic life is silent.

It started in a subtle way with the burning of Jos Ultra Modern Market more than a decade ago. Then other orchestrated attacks, all geared towards making a lie of Plateau State slogan: Home of peace and tourism. So many foreigners and businesses relocated to safer climes just as was intended by the enemies of the state. However, I believe, we can

change the narrative. Let's tell the world our story. And let us all work together as one against our common enemy. Plateau as the name implies, will be great again.

Be encouraged, do not give up. Plateau shall arise again and live up to its name: Plateau! Secure the state and deal decisively with anyone who steps out of place. Plateau arises!!!



SUNDAY PEOPLE

PPC MANAGEMENT CONDOLES FAMILY OF KEFFI CORRESPONDENT

The Acting General Manager, Plateau Publishing Corporation (PPC) Mr. Paul Jatau on Thursday led a powerful delegation to commiserate with the family of The Nigeria Standard Newspapers, Keffi Correspondent Mallam Auwal Mohammed Abdullahi who died recently at his residence, Ali Kazaure Street, near the Eid ground, Jos



Mr. Paul Jatau (left) presenting condolence letter to Mallam Abdullahi Rabiu



From left are, Mrs. Elizabeth Gimba, Acting Daily Editor, Mrs. Franca Adidi, Director of Property Development, Mr. Francis Jatau and immediate past Managing Editor, Mr. Katdapba Gobum among the delegation



Brother to late Auwal Mohammed Abdullahi (standing) responding to the condolence message



Acting Director, Admin, Mallam Jibrin Dagor (2nd right) with other Management Staff of PPC during the condolence visit



Mother of the deceased (left) flanked by his sisters and brothers wives during the visit



Cross section of relations of late Mallam Auwal Mohammed Abdullahi



Cross section of Mallam Auwal's relations offering prayers for his repose



PPC Management Staff that accompanied the Acting General Manager

Photos: DANLADI DUK

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First aid practice at crash scene

REMEMBER at all times the importance of common sense in First Aid as an addition to actual knowledge of first Aid. The application of common sense of necessity considers the treatment of only one condition at a time. In the actual sense it will be found that serious crashes rarely produce only a single injury. Most often, multiple injuries occur so that the correct treatment of one condition may interfere with another. One injury may require the placement of the casualty on his/her back but another placement in recovery position. In such circumstances, the First Aider must decide triage by deciding which injury is more or most serious and needs the most urgent attention. He then proceeds to treat the most serious condition in the correct way and thereafter deal with the second injury as correctly as possible under the conflicting conditions. The scope of First Aid. This consists of four parts:

1. Assessing the situation
2. Diagnosing what is wrong with the casualty
3. Giving immediate and appropriate treatment
4. Disposing of the casualty to the doctor, hospital or home according to the seriousness of his/her condition.

Assessing the situation
 Be calm and take charge
 Give confidence to the casualty -talk, listen to and reassure him/her
 Ensure safety of casualty and yourself
 Guard against any further casualties arising. In the case of road traffic crashes,

instruct someone to control traffic, fend off the crash scene before giving First Aid. Get others to help
 Make use of bystanders by keeping them occupied. The more they are given to do the less they will interfere. They can be used to:
 Telephone ambulance, police, FRSC and other services
 Keep back the crowd
 Assist with traffic control
 Assist if necessary, with the actual treatment
 When sending bystanders to telephone, make sure they understand the message to send; write it if possible and in any case ask them to repeat the message before actually sending it. Ensure they report back to you
 Diagnosis
 In arriving at a diagnosis, the First Aider is guided by:
 History of the case- report given by the conscious casualty or by persons present as to how the crash happened or illness began
 Signs-obtained by a complete examination of the casualty
 Symptoms-details of his/her sensations obtained from the casualty
 Use all your senses to obtain maximum information-look, speak, listen, feel and smell.
 Conscious casualty-if casualty is conscious:
 Ask him if he has pain and where it is; examine that part first
 Handle injured parts gently and firmly
 Make sure there are no other injuries present which may be masked by pain, by asking the casualty if he thinks there is anything else wrong and by checking for tenderness and bleeding
 Examine the casualty carefully in a regular and

methodical manner by running your hands gently but firmly all over parts of the body. Start at the head and neck, then check the spine and trunk, the upper limbs and the lower limbs. Always compare the abdominal size with the normal.
 The First Aider need only remove enough of the casualty's clothing to expose the injuries in order to treat them.
 Then check:
 Colour of the skin
 The nature of the breathing; listen to it, smell the breath
 The pulse: count it, note its strength and rhythm
 The temperature of the body: whether it is hot or cold.
 Unconscious casualty
 If the casualty is unconscious the task is much more difficult and thorough examination is necessary, as no symptoms are available to help.
 Note if breathing is present. If absent, immediately commence artificial respiration
 Examine over and under the casualty for dampness which might indicate bleeding or incontinence. arrest any serious bleeding before proceeding further with the examination. Bear in mind the possibility of internal bleeding.
 Establish the cause of unconsciousness by examining the:
 Breathing-rate and depth
 Pulse-rate and character
 Face and skin-colour, temperature and condition
 Pupils of the eyes-size and reaction
 Head-for injury
 Ears, eyes, nose and mouth-for blood or other signs
 Whole body-for signs of injury.



NEWS

Kogi Assembly Election: Commissioner hails APC's victory

From
AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

THE Kogi State Commissioner for Information and Communications, Kingsley Fanwo, has hailed the victory of the Hon. Olawumi Jacob, in the recently conducted state Assembly election in Mopamuro.

Fanwo who stated this in a special appreciation message to the people of Mopamuro LGA for electing the APC candidate, described the victory as "the force of a united people", insisting that he deserved the resounding victory.

The commissioner urged the people of Mopamuro Local Government Area to remain united.

It wasn't our victory but the victory of all Mopamuro people, irrespective of political affiliations or religious division. Our people spoke with one voice and emphatically too that Olawumi Jacob is the man they want to represent them at the state House of Assembly.

"Hon. Olawumi Jacob is a great communicator, a wonderful lobbyist, a humble representative and a great example of what the youth can offer in leadership positions. Mopamuro will be proud of him."

"On behalf of all the leaders and supporters of our party, I want to sincerely thank all the people of Mopamuro for making the historic win a special one."

"You have demonstrated unmistakably that power truly belongs to the people."

"We also thank the people for conducting themselves in such an organized manner with the over 50 polling units across Mopamuro, speaking in one voice. Your Olawumi Jacob will not let you down."

"On Saturday, the All Progressives Congress won all the wards. Nobody remembered any division. We spoke resoundingly with our voice and we have heard your voice," Fanwo said.

Fanwo called on the co-



Adamu

contestants to accept the olive branch from the ruling APC, saying they will be well accommodated into the 'Mopamuro Progressive Family'.

He added: "We welcome those who challenged our party's candidate to the Progressive Family."

"We want them to join hands with the winner in order to move Mopamuro forward. In politics, some people will win while some people will lose. But in this case, we are all winners".

He commended the Local Government Chairman, Hon. Moses Sunday David, for his "political master class" that delivered even the ward of the main oppositions to the APC, saying he has "justified his position as the Political Bulldozer of Mopamuro LGA".

The Information Commissioner also commended the state House of Assembly member, all government

officials from Mopamuro both at the State and local government levels, all the local government and ward executives of the party as well all party members across Mopamuro, saying when the people stand together, no wall can stop their success.

He also commended the Executive Governor of the state, His Excellency Alh. Yahaya Bello for providing leadership and support that has distinguished Mopamuro as one the few LGAs to deliver all the wards to the APC.

"Our Governor is an extraordinary leader. He provided all the necessary support that led to this historic victory."

"We appreciate Your Excellency and I want to assure you that our Local Government will continue to be the abode of progressive politics", he said.

Bello charges muslims to pray fervently for Nigeria

From
AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

KOGI State Governor, Yahaya Bello has congratulated the Muslim Ummah on the sighting of the moon which signifies the commencement of this year's Ramadan fast, urging the people to dedicate the season to pray fervently for the state and country in general.

In a statement issued in Lokoja by his Chief Press Secretary, Onogwu Muhammed, Governor Bello also charged Muslims to align

themselves with the universal values of peace, kindness, love and respect for others which the Islamic faith promotes.

He noted that the Ramadan period which is globally revered should be utilised by Muslim faithful across the nation to pray for progress and peace while admonishing them to engage in good deeds and acts of Ibadah.

"I wish to congratulate the

Muslim Ummah for witnessing another month of Ramadan and to wish them a blessed and peaceful Ramadan.

"The holy month of Ramadan, for millions around the world has always been an opportunity to renew and strengthen their faith through rigorous fasting, devout prayers, reading of the Quran, reflective meditation, and carrying out of charitable deeds.

"All these acts closely conformed to the universal values that the Islamic faith promotes namely, peace, kindness, love and respect for others", the Governor said.

Bello called on Muslims to devote more time to prayer and acts of charity as they similarly strived to improve their self-discipline motivated by hadith. He further admonished that this year's Ramadan which coincides with the transition of democratic leadership of the nation and many states should be used to pray for peace, unity and progress of the nation. He added that Ramadan is a time of spiritual reflection, self-improvement, and heightened devotion and worship, as followers of Islam were expected to put more effort into following the teachings of Prophet Muhammed (S.A.W). Governor Bello prayed for God to bestow on all Muslim Ummah good health to engage faithfully and benefit from the blessings of the season.



Bello

NEWS

Gender equality can increase GDP by 50% – NITDA

THE National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) said that gender equality in the digital space could increase the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the country by over 50 per cent.

Mallam Kashifu Inuwa, Director-General of NITDA said this on Friday at the closing ceremony of its 'Fasaha Gina Mata, Gina Al-Umma', digital skills programme in Abuja, in collaboration with World Bank and Natview Technology.

The NITDA, Fasaha Gina Mata Gina Al-Umma is a digital skills training programme to equip young women with the relevant skills they need to succeed in the digital world.

The four-day programme was held as part of the activities from the agency to celebrate the International Women's Day, as well as the month.

Inuwa recalled research by McKinsey Global Institute which said that placing women together with their male counterparts would increase the global GDP to about 18 trillion USD in 2025.

"The research was narrowed to some countries which included Nigeria and it said that if we can achieve gender equality, we can add to the Nigerian GDP 299 billion by 2025.

"Within our own mandate, implementation of the National Digital Economy Policy and Strategy, we are working on so many initiatives.

"One of them is the National Digital Skills Strategy, which World Bank has keyed into as one of the implementation partners.

"Under that strategy, we want to achieve 95 per cent digital

literacy, we want to position Nigeria to become global talent factory," Inuwa said.

The director-general said that looking at the global talent factory and according to research by Korn Ferry, a global organisational consulting firm, by 2030 there would be 85 million talent deficit globally.

He further said the deficit would result to 8.5 trillion USD unrealised annual revenue.

Inuwa added that deploying the Gig economy strategy which he explained as leveraging the power of information technology to work remotely, do freelance work could help the country position for revenue globally.

He also said that with the Gig economy and having skills like content creation, digital marketing could help one use digital platforms to promote their businesses.

"If Nigeria can position itself, we can be part of this, we can have Nigeria be part of the Gig economy and working remotely.

"We can be part of the global value chain working remotely from Nigeria for European countries, the US companies, Asian companies and programmes like this will help us achieve that," Inuwa said.

The director-general added that they were initiating programmes that were women based to encourage more female participation and digital literacy among women.

He decried that from November 2022 to-date, the agency had trained 226,000 young Nigerians on various digital skills but women represented only 28 per cent of the figure.

The NITDA boss said that the

idea was to achieve 95 per cent digital literacy by 2030 which was kick-started with the Gina Mata programme to train 800 young women in the pilot programme.

Inuwa further said the training would accord the participants access to education, job opportunities, access to information, enable them learn to protect their data against threats and promote gender equality.

Mr Nuradeen Maidoki, Chief Executive Officer of Natview Technology, the implementing partner, said Fasaha Gina Mata, Gina Al-Umma was translated as 'Building Women, Empowering Communities.'

Maidoki said that they intended to create a chain of highly skilled female technologists who could contribute to innovation and growth in Nigeria's technology industry.

"We believe that by empowering young women with digital skills, we can create a more inclusive and diverse technology industry that reflects the richness and diversity of our society," he said.

Maidoki added that the additional 600 young women would be trained from Borno, Gombe, Kano and Zamfara.

He said that they were working with SheCluded, a digital financial company for women that would be ensuring mentorship, helping the women access loans and grants where needed.

Two participants, Miss Adewumi Adekola and Mrs Hajara Musa-Mohammed, said that with the knowledge they acquired, they would be financial assets to their families and the country.

Certificates of participation were also issued to the participants. (NAN)

Develop critical thinking in students through competitions – GOC

THE General Officer Commanding (GOC), 81 Division Nigerian Army (NA), Maj.-Gen. Obinna Ajunwa, says debate and quiz competitions are well thought out strategies to develop critical thinking in students.

The GOC, 81 Division, Maj.-Gen. Obinna Ajunwa presenting the trophy to the overall best, CDSS Lagos. Ajunwa made the assertion at the 81 Division NA 2nd Inter-Command Army and Other Secondary Schools quiz and debate competition which held at Nebo Hall, Nigerian Army Ordnance Corps, Ojuelegba, Lagos.

The competition was sponsored by the GOC, who is passionate to see children grow up into critical thinkers and become world-class leaders in different endeavours.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that Command Day Secondary School (CDSS) Lagos, (Ipaja), came first; CDSS, Oshodi, came second and CDSS, Ojo came third.

Ajunwa said that the best thing that one could give to a child was education, be it university education or craft, indicating that both educations were complementary.

"So, we must aspire to get both and that is why the education system is changed to 6-3-3-4 to make sure we can acquire both.

"The idea of this event is not to get a winner or loser but to make sure that we improve

you in your studies, confidence level and especially in your ability to think critically.

"Critical thinking is one of the first forms in which a system develops and you may be able to critic whatever somebody gives to you and not swallow it hook, line and sinker," he said.

The GOC said that during his days as a student, he was privileged to have participated in debate and quiz competitions which he said developed his confidence level.

"It is one thing for you to have the knowledge and it is another thing for you to practise it and to make it available to the public.

"It is my privilege to have seen that the students communicated a high level of knowledge and I believe that there are also good ones among you that did not come out to participate.

"I urge the teachers and the administrators to make sure that they continue to give the best to them so that their tomorrow and our tomorrow will be better," Ajunwa said.

Ajunwa said that it was important for students to know that education was not only done in the classroom but also done outside the classroom.

"So, we must teach them to

remain focused in that direction that is why you have to bring them out for activities such as this, sports among others.

"By so doing, they will have a complete education that is comprehensive and that is why this type of programmes are important.

"I believe in them because all of us are actually products of the same process and we will not allow the process to die," Ajunwa said.

One of the students of CDSS Ojo during the debate.

Muhammad Owolawi, an SSS 3 student of CDSS, Lagos (Ipaja), said that such competitions had helped him to build his self esteem.

Owolawi ascribed his ability to speak in public to his teachers and his colleagues who encouraged him to be bold and always give his best.

Also, Mariam Adebayo, 12-year-old student in JSS 3, CDSS, Ojo said that her participation in debate, especially, when it brought laurels to her school, suppressed her initial stage fright.

Adebayo said that she was grateful for such opportunity to engage in public speaking and looked forward to more competitions in future. (NAN)

CBN debunks viral news suspending OPAY, PALMPAY

THE Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has described as fake, the news making the rounds that it suspended accounts of Fintech companies like OPAY and PALMPAY.

CBN's Acting Director of Corporate Communications, Isa AbdulMumin, told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Abuja on Friday that the viral news "is simply fake".

The viral news credited to Mr AbdulMumin stated that the CBN was about to suspend accounts of the Fintech companies because they were being used to perpetrate fraud.

"Please if you are using OPAY, PALMPAY or any of these CHINA APPs or their POS, stop keeping much money in the account or stop using it.

"The CBN is about suspending their accounts because these apps are being used to perpetrate fraud," the viral news read in parts.

OPAY and PALMPAY had in separate social media messages denied being under the radar of the CBN.

OPAY had stated that: "the post mentioning the CBN shutting down our operations is false and misleading to the general public."

PALMPAY also posted a similar disclaimer, saying: "we are aware of news currently being spread on social media about CBN shutting down the operations of PALMPAY.

"Please ignore all such misleading news of this nature," it stated.

OPAY and PALMPAY are licensed under the CBN mobile payment regulatory



Emiefele

framework. They are to provide mobile money services including mobile payment services to both the banked and unbanked and to drive financial inclusion.

Public Notice

GOLDHEART THYROID AWARENESS FOUNDATION

The general public is hereby notified that the above named foundation has applied to the Corporate Affairs Commission, Abuja for change of name, removal of some trustees and addition of some trustees under the Companies and Allied Matters Act of 1990.

REMOVED TRUSTEE Dooshima Sim David Jang

NEW TRUSTEES

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|-----------|
| 1. Oketona Ben Olaturuji | - | Chairman |
| 2. Dr. Zabab Mohammed Jawa | - | Member |
| 3. Oketona Florence Omowumi | - | Member |
| 4. Ojeyia Henry Ajine | - | Member |
| 5. Oketona Hilda Aanuoluwatomiwa | - | Member |
| 6. Egunoluwa Babatunde-Adejokun | - | Secretary |

NEW NAME: GOLDHEART THYROID AWARENESS, WOMEN AND GIRL-CHILD EMPOWERMENT FOUNDATION

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- To create awareness and educate the public on thyroid health, symptoms, prevention and treatment.
- To educate the public, on the effects of thyroid malfunctions on marriages and families.
- To advocate for women and girls in the area of economic, educational and social empowerment
- To rescue and rehabilitate sexually and domestically abused women and girls.
- To solicit and create a safer haven for women and girls in areas affected by crisis
- To create awareness and educate women in rural areas on cultural and health challenges posed by such societies.

Any objection to the registration should be forwarded to the Registrar-General, Corporate Affairs Commission, Maitama, Abuja within 28 days of this publication.

Signed,
SECRETARY



PANKSHIN LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCIL

TENDER NOTICE

From

Pankshin Local Government of Plateau State

Pankshin Local Government Council is hereby calling for suitably qualified prospective and interested contractors who registered with the Local Government and are willing to executive the following project for Pankshin Local Government to submit their tender to the Technical Committee of the Local government.

Lot I:

- Renovation of Nefur Arena
- Renovation of Works Department
- Furnishing of Council Chambers
- Construction of Semi bridge at Tinjim Wuya
- Installation of bullet proof window and roof at cash office
- Construction of open shops (Cubiches) along GRA Road Pankshin
- Laterite filling at Tomatoe Market, Pankshin

Lot II:

- Solar electrification of the LG Secretariat.
- Solar Street lights in Pankshin town Phase II.
- Rehabilitation & Grading of Mile 8 Fier Road with culverts and drainage.
- Beautification of Pankshin township roundabout, drainages and culverts.
- Purchase of vehicles:
 - Tipper truck
 - Water Tanker
 - Toyota Hilux
 - Chairman's Vehicle
 - Tractor
 - Refuse truck
- Renovation of Education administrative building in Pankshin.
- Reconstruction and Renovation of Primary Healthcare cold room
- Construction of box culvert at Longkat.

Kindly note that all lot(s) applied are to be addressed to the Chairman Technical Committee, Pankshin Local Government Council.

Note that submission of bids closes two weeks from the date of this advertisement.

Signed:

Jacqueline Dakat,
Information Officer,
For: Executive Chairman

SUNDAY SPORTS



Kane missed a penalty in the World Cup quarter-final loss to France in December but made no mistake from the spot in Italy three months later

How Kane broke the England goals record

By PHIL DAWKES

THE calm demeanour, the sharp exhale, the run up and clinical finish. It was the same old penalty routine from Harry Kane, only this time it took him to a place no England player has gone before.

By netting from the spot against Italy on Thursday night, Kane fired himself into the record books, scoring his 54th international goal to surpass Wayne Rooney as England's all-time leading goalscorer.

Remarkably, Kane has reached the tally in 39 fewer games than it took Rooney, and the 29-year-old's England career includes an **ominous strike 79 seconds into his debut**, a World Cup Golden Boot and more than a goal a game in major tournament qualifiers.

Six Englishmen have reached the 40-goal mark in international football, the other four being Sir Bobby Charlton (49), Gary Lineker (48), Jimmy Greaves (44) and Michael Owen (40).

What marks Kane out among this group is the speed at which he has scored his goals, accruing them at a rate of one every 1.5 games. Only the prolific Greaves can beat that with 1.3.

The deposed Rooney was much slower than Kane, amassing his 54 goals at a strike every 2.26 matches.

His acceleration since March 2021 has been something to behold - a tally of 22 goals in 28 games, including four in the first half of a **10-0 win over San Marino** in November last year. He became the first player to score four goals in an England game since Ian Wright against the same opponent almost exactly 28 years earlier.

His penalty against France in the World Cup quarter-finals in Qatar in December saw him draw level with

Rooney. Agonisingly, he missed the chance to overtake him by missing a second penalty in that game, **which England lost 2-1**.

Kane's 16 goals in a calendar year (2021) is another England record, beating the 12 scored by Dixie Dean in 1927 and George Hilsdon in 1908.

And he has five England hat-tricks to his name, the same number as Lineker and one shy of the record tally of Greaves.

His fourth and fifth hat-tricks were scored just three days apart - the one in San Marino coming shortly after a treble against Albania at Wembley. This set a new record for a European player in World Cup/Euros qualifying, previously held by Spain's Raul (four days in March 1999).

Kane also joined Vivian Woodward (1909), Dean (1927) and Tommy Taylor (1957) in scoring hat-tricks in successive appearances for England.

Most of Kane's goals have come under Gareth Southgate - 49 of them in 64 caps to be precise. No player has ever scored more for a single manager in England men's football history, with Lineker's 35 in 58 matches under Sir Bobby Robson the next best.

The breakdown of the goals scored by England's leading goalscorers says a lot about their era. Charlton and Greaves scored a combined six tournament goals and just nine in qualifying - with the vast majority (83.87%) coming in friendlies.

In contrast, goals in qualifying tournaments have become much more of a factor in the modern era - 20 of Owen's 40 and 30 of Rooney's 50 came in these matches.

Kane's goal haul includes an incredible record of scoring in qualifying matches for major tournaments. He has netted 33 times in 28 games to help his country reach two World Cups and three European

Championships - and he scored in a remarkable 15 qualifiers on the trot from 5 October 2017 to 8 September 2021.

During qualifying for the 2020 Euros, he netted in all eight of England's games, scoring 12 in total against the Czech Republic, Kosovo, Bulgaria and Montenegro.

His record at major tournaments is not too shabby either. Four goals in 11 European Championship games may seem somewhat modest, but he has eight in 11 at World Cup finals - second only to the 10 scored by Lineker.

He and Lineker are the only two Englishmen to win a World Cup Golden Boot, the latter in Mexico in 1986 and the former in Russia in 2018. Alan Shearer - at Euro 96 - is the only other one to be top scorer at a major finals.

In total, Kane's competitive scoring record for his country is 48 goals in 68 games.

On the flip side, only seven of Kane's goals came against sides occupying a top 10 spot in Fifa's world rankings at the time.

Three of these were in friendlies - one in a 3-2 win in Germany in March 2016 and a double in another 3-2 victory, this time against France, in June 2017. Three were against a then fourth-ranked Croatia in a 2-1 home Uefa Nations League win in November 2018, the extra-time penalty winner in the Euro 2020 semi-final against Denmark, who were then ranked 10th, and his goal against fourth-ranked France in Qatar.

His goal against Italy on Thursday is the seventh, with the Azzurri currently ranked sixth in the world.

The average ranking of the teams against whom he has scored his goals is 64.55. Rooney is slightly behind him on this front, with an average

opponent ranking of 69.21.

The team against whom he has scored the most goals is San Marino with five, although Germany will also be sick of the sight of him, with Kane having scored in all four of his games against them.

For all of his international career, Kane has functioned as England's central striker - a predominantly right-footed predator, who comes alive in the box. The nature of his goals reflect this.

Over 70% of his goals (39 of 53) have been scored with his right foot, with all but two of them from inside the box (including an England record of 18 penalties).

The breakdown of which minutes his England goals have come in offer a fascinating insight, with each half yielding a similar pattern.

There are a number of factors that can play into this, but the increasing number scored towards the end of each half does hint at a forward who grows as a threat as he becomes ever more acclimatised to the game and opposition legs tire.

He has 31 goals outside England (10 of those at neutral venues) and scored 23 at home, 19 of them at Wembley, with the other two coming at Manchester City's Etihad Stadium and St Mary's Stadium in Southampton.

Where does he rank against the world's best?

Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo is the top goalscorer in international football history, with 120 goals in 197 games.

Beneath him are six players who have reached the 80-goal mark - Iran's Ali Daei (109), Argentina's Lionel Messi (98), Malaysia's Mokhtar Dahari (89), Ferenc Puskas, who represented Hungary and Spain (84), India's Sunil Chhetri (84) and Ali Mabkhout of the United Arab

Emirates (80).

Kane's goal every 1.5 games puts him above all of those players but Puskas (a goal every 1.01 games) and Mabkhout (every 1.34 games).

Age is on Kane's side as regards extending the England goals record further.

He is currently 29 years old, giving him potentially another four or five years of international football, barring injury.

At Kane's age, Rooney had 47 goals to his name, Charlton had scored 41, Lineker 29, while Greaves and Owen had both played their final international match.

Kane shows no sign of slowing in his goalscoring either, having recently passed the 270 mark for Tottenham. He has 204 Premier League goals to his name, meaning only Rooney (208) and Alan Shearer (260) sit above him on the list of all-time scorers in the rebranded English top-flight.

Kane's international career could also be prolonged by the lack of an obvious natural successor waiting in the wings.

The next highest scorer in the current England setup below Kane is 27-year-old Raheem Sterling with 20. Only two more current internationals - Danny Welbeck and Marcus Rashford - are into double figures. Forward Bukayo Saka and centre-back Harry Maguire are next with seven.

Southgate has experimented with a number of options to try and find a fitting backup to his captain, with Dominic Calvert-Lewin, Oli Watkins, Patrick Bamford, Tammy Abraham all making the squad. Brentford's Ivan Toney and Callum Wilson of Newcastle are the latest.

Six and a half years separated Rooney and Kane breaking the England goals record. We are likely to be waiting much longer for Kane's eventual successor.

SUNDAY SPORTS

Messi reaches 800 goals



Lionel Messi scored his 800th goal with an 89th-minute free-kick for Argentina

LIONEL Messi scored his 800th top-level goal as Argentina beat Panama 2-0 in their first match since winning the World Cup.

BBC SPORT said that, the 35-year-old Paris St-Germain forward becomes the second player to reach the milestone after Cristiano Ronaldo.

Messi's tally includes 672 goals over 17 seasons for Barcelona and 29 for PSG.

He also has 99 international goals, with two coming in the World Cup final.

The Argentina captain scored an 89th-minute free-kick at the Monumental de Nunez Stadium in Buenos Aires to add to Thiago Almada's opener 11 minutes earlier.

Messi will have the opportunity to score his 100th international goal when Argentina play Curacao on Tuesday.

It is yet another milestone in an extraordinary career during which he has won almost every major trophy, including four Champions Leagues, 10 La Liga titles, the Copa America and, finally in December, the World Cup.

Established as one of the greatest players of all time, Messi has won the Ballon d'Or - awarded to the best player of the year in European football - a record seven times, twice more than Ronaldo.

The only major competition Messi has played in but failed to win so far is the French Cup.

Messi's haul of 35 trophies with Barcelona, whom he joined at the age of 13, makes him the most decorated player in the Spanish club's history and he unsurprisingly holds Barca's all-time scoring and appearance (778) records.

He has also scored more goals (474) and provided more assists (192) than any player to have featured in La Liga and has the record for the most goals in a single season in the Spanish top flight - 50 in 37 games during 2011-12.

Cesc Fabregas speaks to BBC Sport for new documentary 'Messi'

He has the most La Liga hat-tricks (36) and shares the record for the most trebles in a single season with Ronaldo, who also has eight.

While the Portugal forward remains the Champions League's all-time top scorer with 140 goals, Messi - who has 129 - was the first player to register five goals in a match in the competition and his

sequence of scoring in 18 consecutive years is also unmatched in the European club game's elite tournament.

Should he carry on playing and stay fit, Messi should reach 900 club appearances next season and would likely score in his 20th consecutive top-flight season.

He is already Argentina's

most capped player (172) and is one away from a century of goals for his country. Gabriel Batistuta is second on the list with a distant 56 from 78 games.

Only Ronaldo (120) and Ali Daei, who scored 109 times for Iran between 1993 and 2006, have scored more men's international goals.

Balogun holds talks about playing for US

UNITED States caretaker coach Anthony Hudson says talks have taken place with Folarin Balogun about the striker switching international allegiance.

BBC SPORT said that, the 21-year-old was born in the US to Nigerian parents but raised in England, and can play for any of those three countries.

Balogun, who is on loan at French club Reims from Arsenal, has featured for England in four different youth teams.

He withdrew from the



Folarin Balogun has played for England at under-21 level

England Under-21 squad this week due to an injury.

"As I've said before, we've had dialogue," said Hudson.

Mbappe says he understands Griezmann's upset



Mbappe and Griezmann are both in the France squad to play the Netherlands on Friday

NEW France captain Kylian Mbappe said team-mate Antoine Griezmann's disappointment at being overlooked for the role is "understandable".

BBC SPORT said that, Mbappe, 24, was named skipper this week after the international retirement of World Cup-winning captain Hugo Lloris.

Griezmann, 32, was reportedly unhappy to only be vice-captain with one report suggesting he was considering retiring.

"I spoke to Antoine because he was disappointed and frankly it is understandable," Mbappe said.

"I told him that I might have reacted in the same way.

"What I told him was that as long as I am captain and he is vice captain, I won't be superior to him."

Mbappe has won 66 caps for France having made his senior debut in 2017 and

was the top scorer at last year's World Cup, where his side reached the final before being beaten by Argentina on penalties.

Four years earlier he scored twice in the final against Croatia, sealing a second World Cup for France.

Griezmann, also a key player in both tournaments,

has played 117 times for his country since his debut in 2014.

"He has an experience of playing for France that I don't have," Mbappe said.

"He is held in high esteem and is liked by the whole squad so it would be a shame for us not benefit from his experience, and his zest for life as well."

joint top scorers Kylian Mbappe and Jonathan David.

He has previously said he would be open to representing Nigeria and still has the choice of which country to play for as he has not appeared for the England senior side competitively.

Balogun was named in the England Under-21 squad for friendlies against France and Croatia in March but withdrew because of injury.

The US team have been in Florida preparing for a Concacaf Nations League

game in Grenada on Friday. Hudson said: "We've spoken [to Balogun]. He's out here having a bit of a break and then some training, and we've had some discussions."

"I think it's been good because it's been an opportunity for us just to share about our programme and who we are and what we do and that's it. I hope we get the chance to speak with him again."

"It's been good and I know a few of the guys have spoken to him as well."

Ronaldo set men's caps record

reached yet another milestone in fine fashion, while also becoming the first man to score 100 times in competitive internationals.

Ronaldo had moved level with Kuwait forward Bader Al-Mutawa on 196 caps at the World Cup but there were question marks over

Portugal's elimination by Morocco at the quarter-final stage.

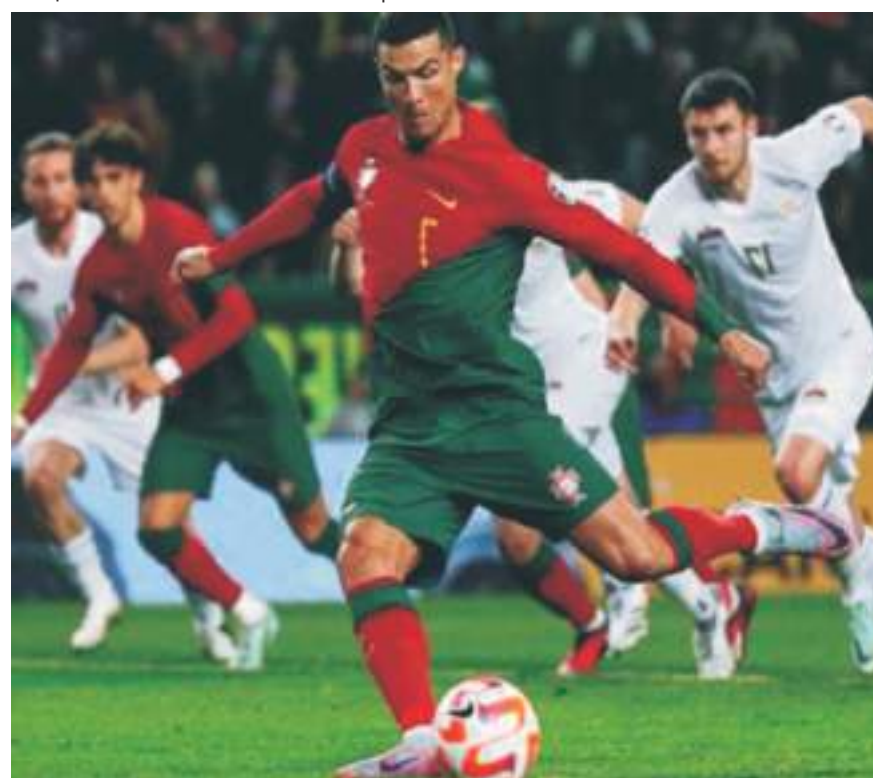
The five-time Ballon d'Or

winner found himself dropped from the Portuguese starting XI but justified his selection as captain in new manager Roberto Martinez's first game in charge.

Ronaldo's latest records only further cement his status as one of the greatest players of all time. His glittering career has seen him win seven domestic top-flight titles, 11 other major domestic trophies, five Champions Leagues, four Club World Cups and one European Championship.

The former Sporting Lisbon, Manchester United, Real Madrid and Juventus forward has also been named the Best Fifa Men's player twice.

In November, he became the first player to score 800 top-level career goals and he also holds a host of other men's individual records for both club and country including:



Cristiano Ronaldo helped Portugal win the 2016 European Championship

SUNDAY SPORTS

Miami Open 2023: Kostyuk refuses handshake with Potapova

UKRAINE'S Marta Kostyuk refused to shake hands with Anastasia Potapova after she was beaten by the Russian at the Miami Open.

BBC SPORT said that, their two countries are at war after Russia invaded Ukraine last year.

Potapova, who was recently warned after wearing a Spartak Moscow football shirt at a match, won the second-round encounter 6-1 6-3.

Kostyuk has previously refused to shake hands with Russia's Varvara Gracheva and Belarusian Victoria Azarenka.

Belarus has been a key ally of Russia in the war against Ukraine.

After losing to world number 26 Potapova, Kostyuk said there had been no response from the WTA about a request from Ukrainian players to meet.

"Yes, we wanted to have the meeting with the board and we didn't get one. No reply, nothing, just silence," she said.

WTA chief executive Steve Simon recently told BBC Sport his organisation was doing as much as it was able to for players from Ukraine.



Marta Kostyuk is number 38 in the women's rankings

"I mean, once we're in the meeting we can talk about it," said 38th-ranked Kostyuk. "Before the meeting, I don't think it's a good idea to talk about what we want to talk about there."

Speaking about Potapova's warning for wearing a Spartak football shirt, she said: "There are a lot of things that I don't agree with that the WTA is doing. This is not going to change anything."

"I'll just get more hate online. Whatever I say, I will get a lot of hate. I don't know."

"Warning, whatever. You give her a warning... You can

suspend someone, I don't know. I can't comment on that really, it's just funny."

Potapova will next play American Coco Gauff, who beat Canada's Rebecca Marino 6-4 6-3.

Jessica Pegula secured a 6-3 6-1 win over Canadian qualifier Katherine Sebov and will play fellow American Danielle Collins who beat Viktoriya Tomova 7-6 (7-3) 6-2.

Wimbledon champion Elena Rybakina, of Kazakhstan, also made it through to the third round after a 7-5 4-6 6-3 victory against Anna Kalinskaya.

TWO-time champion Andy Murray suffered a straight-set loss to Dusan Lajovic in the first round at the Miami Open.

BBC SPORT said that, the former world number one Murray, winner in both 2009 and 2013, was beaten 6-4 7-5 by the 76th-ranked Serb.

It comes a week after the fatigued 35-year-old Scot lost to Jack Draper in the third round at Indian Wells.

Fellow Briton Kyle Edmund is also out after losing 7-5 7-5 to Wu Yibing, while Emma Raducanu was defeated in the women's draw by Bianca Andreescu.

Murray, currently 52nd in the world, won a remarkable seven deciding sets among several marathon victories in an exhausting opening to his 2023 season.

But he was unable to produce the response required after Lajovic, 32, forced the first break of serve in game seven and went on to clinch the opening set.

Murray hinted that another memorable

Murray loses to Lajovic in straight sets

comeback could be on the cards as he broke back immediately to stay in the second set at 5-5.

However, Lajovic moved quickly to extinguish those hopes with another break and was relieved to serve out the match in straight sets when Murray framed a forehand.

"When I didn't close it out I thought it's happening again," Lajovic, who will play American

Maxime Cressy, said of Murray's ability to battle back.

It is a disappointing result for Murray, who had not lost in the opening round of a tournament since early January, and he is now 8-5 overall this season.

"Some days you obviously don't hit the ball your best, but my movement wasn't great today," Murray said.

"I served pretty well, but the rest of the game was a bit of a problem."



Murray

World Championship: Fitzpatrick wins to keep hopes alive

MATT Fitzpatrick kept alive his hopes of reaching the knockout stage at the WGC-Dell Technologies Match Play Championship by beating Min Woo Lee.

BBC SPORT said that, US Open champion Fitzpatrick, the top seed in group 11, responded to his opening loss to JJ Spaun with a 2&1 win against the Australian in Austin.

He must beat Sahith Theegala on Friday and hope the unbeaten Spaun loses to Lee to set up a three-way play-off.

World number two Jon

Rahm also remains in contention to progress.

The Spaniard, winner of three PGA Tour strokeplay events this season, beat Keith Mitchell 4&3 following his defeat by Rickie Fowler on Wednesday.

Rahm must defeat Billy Horschel in the final round of group matches to stand a chance of topping group two at Austin Country Club.

Former US Open champion Rahm ended American Mitchell's challenge with a fine run of three birdies and an eagle

between the ninth and 13th holes.

On facing Horschel, who beat Fowler 3&2, Rahm told the Golf Channel: "Not many pairings are going to have more electricity on the course than me and Billy combined, so it should be a good one."

World number one Scottie Scheffler and Rory McIlroy, ranked third, are both in control of their respective groups after making it two wins from two on Thursday.

Scheffler won 5&4 against Alex Noren, while former champion McIlroy finished two up against Denny McCarthy.

McIlroy secured the win with a superb eagle on the 368-yard par-four 18th, driving his tee shot to four feet.

Elsewhere, England's Tommy Fleetwood suffered an early exit after tying his game with American Maverick McNealy. Fleetwood lost to JT Poston on Wednesday and the tied game against McNealy means he cannot qualify for the last 16.

Meanwhile, former Open champion Shane Lowry suffered an early exit as a 4&3 loss to Mackenzie Hughes ensured he cannot qualify as one of the 16 group winners.

Lowry could not recover as two bogeys in the first four holes contributed to him trailing Canadian Hughes by

five after seven holes.

The Irishman will play Jordan Spieth on Friday, but it is Taylor Montgomery who is in control of group 12 after he beat fellow American Spieth 2&1 and now takes on Hughes in his final match.

McIlroy makes winning start in Austin

RORY McIlroy made a winning start at the WGC-Dell Technologies Match Play Championship but Matt Fitzpatrick's struggles continued with defeat in his opening group match in Austin, Texas.

BBC SPORT said that, the former champion McIlroy led from start to finish in his 3&1 victory over American Scott Stallings on Wednesday.

US Open champion Fitzpatrick, the top seed in group 11 at Austin Country Club, lost 5&3 against JJ Spaun.

Only the winners of the 16 has missed the cut in three of his last four starts, conceded the knockout stage.

World number three McIlroy birdied the 11th and 12th was three up after six holes before an eagle on the 13th and Stallings, who rallied with and a final birdie for good measure.

16th, conceded after Tyrrell Hatton Northern Ireland's four-time major winner made a sixth hand and arm following a birdie of the day on the 17th.

Spaun took control of his match with Fitzpatrick with birdies on the third and fifth but the Englishman responded with an eagle on the sixth to reduce the deficit. However, Fitzpatrick, who two up against the Spaniard.



Fitzpatrick



Rory McIlroy will also play Denny McCarthy and Keegan Bradley as he bids to finish top of his group

SUNDAY SPORTS



The Super Falcons are the most successful team on the continent, and they remain the leading light following the latest global ranking

FIFA ranks Nigeria first in Africa ahead SA

FOLLOWING the March rankings released by FIFA, Nigeria's Super Falcons are still the number-one team in Africa. The Falcons finished fourth – behind champions South Africa, Morocco, and Zambia – at the 2022 CAF Women's Africa Cup of Nations in Morocco, relinquishing the crown they won in 2018. After that outing in August, the Super Falcons fell to their lowest rating of 46 on the FIFA ranking.

Nigeria have claimed only one win – over Costa Rica – since then but remain ahead of South Africa, who are second on the continent, with Cameroon, Ghana, and Cote d'Ivoire completing the top five. Interestingly, Nigeria moved three spots up the global ranking to 42nd. That is 12 rungs above African champions South Africa, placed in the 54th position. The three West African giants, Cameroon, Ghana, and Cote

d'Ivoire, are 56th, 59th, and 64th, respectively. The United States remain the top team in the world, followed by Germany, while Sweden, England, and France complete the top five. Two of the Super Falcons' group stage opponents at the FIFA Women's World Cup are in the top ten, with Canada sitting in sixth while co-hosts Australia are in tenth. Nigeria, however, fare better than Northern Ireland, which occupy the 45th position.

We studied match tapes of Super Eagles, Osimhen

DJURTUS of Guinea Bissau coach, Baciro Candes has given a summary of how his Wild Dogs caged Super Eagles strike force led by red-hot Victor Osimhen and Ademola Lookman, BSNSports.com.ng reports. Super Eagle suffered a shocking 0-1 defeat on Matchday 3 of the AFCON qualifiers played at the MoshoodAbiola Stadium in Abuja on Friday. It was Jose Peseiro's 4th successive defeat since becoming Super Eagles manager. Mama Balde broke the deadlock for the Wild Dogs in the half hour mark after he made the most of a lob pass from his skipper, to slice the ball in between the legs of goalkeeper Francis Uzoho for

the only goal of the game, after he beat the Super Eagles flat defence line. Candes couldn't hide his delight at the post-match press conference. "I'm very happy, the result against Nigeria is an important one for Guinea Bissau. "It's a little surprise for the team, and my lads did very well in training and today's game. "Never easy against a big football country like Nigeria, who's team has a lot of quality players. We feel good with this victory in Abuja. "I can not tell you the strategy we used, as we have other game to play on Monday. "Before today's game, we

have been studying the videos of the Super Eagles and players to understand their playing patterns. "It wasn't easy marking Osimhen and others but in the end, we were lucky with the chance and we won." The lone goal victory sees the Wild Dogs go top of Group A with 7points, and a second leg game of their lives to play for in Bissau on Monday. **Euro 2024 Qualifier: Oliseh praises extraordinary Mbappe** **F**OLLOWING his outstanding performance in the game against the Netherlands, former Super Eagles coach Sunday Oliseh has praised Kylian Mbappe, BSNSports.com.ng reports. The Paris Saint Germain forward was named the captain of the Leus Bleus on Thursday following the retirement of Hugo Lloris. Mbappe scored twice on Friday night as France thrashed the

2023 AFCON Qualifier Guinea Bissau shocks Super Eagles

IT was another day to forget for Nigeria's Super Eagle as they suffered another shocking defeat at the MoshoodAbiola Stadium in Abuja, BSNSports.com.ng report.

The 3-time African champions played host to the Djurtus of Guinea Bissau in the match day 3 of the 2023 African Cup of Nations fixture and it ended in a shocking 0-1 defeat.

The Nigerian side started the game on a bright note with Villarreal winger Samuel Chukwueze trying to run down the Guinean from the right side.

Napoli forward Victor Osimhen almost put Nigeria ahead midway into the first half but he was caught off on two occasions.

Mama Balde broke the deadlock for the away side in the half hour mark after he received a long pass from the team's skipper and two Nigeria defenders were caught flat-footed.

The Nigeria coach Jose Peseiro made changes early in the second half, Moses Simon and Paul Onuachu came in for Ademola Lookman and Kelechi Iheanacho.

The Nigeria attack came alive and the biggest chance of the game fell to Simon and Ndidi but both players failed to convert as Guinea went

away with a valuable 3 points. The Djurtus of Guinea Bissau now seat top of Group A with 7points and could brighten their chances of qualification in the second leg billed for Monday in Bissau. Meanwhile, Super Eagles have an opportunity to redeem themselves if they secure a win in the reverse fixture.

NFF can't sack me - Peseiro

SUPER Eagles head coach, Jose Peseiro said losing just one competitive game in a tournament like African Nations Cup qualification games does not warrant being sacked by his employer, the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF), BSNSports.com.ng can report.

The Portuguese tactician insisted that losing to Guinea Bissau at home has not changed his dream of winning the next African Nations Cup in Cote d'Ivoire and as such, sacking him will only cut short his dream of winning the title for Nigeria for the fourth time. "Losing a game in the qualification games don't warrant being sacked." He told journalists during the presser on Friday.

"Why will I be sacked? We are on good position to play in the next African Nations Cup, so, should a coach who will lead the team to victory be sacked? No, you don't do that. "Of course today, we created many opportunities but Guineans are lucky. Moses Simon, Victor Osimhen, Onuachu, Ndidi could not score when scoring chances were created. The players and coach are not happy about the result. "To say the truth, everyone who watched this match today knows that our team deserved a win because we created many opportunities. Ordinarily, we could have scored 4 or 5 goals but it happen in football. "We just lost one match. Any team can lose one match because if we play the way we played today, we can beat any team including Guinea. With the win, Guinea Bissau have moved to the top of group A table with 7 points in three games while Super Eagles are placed second with 6 points in three matches. The return leg (AFCON qualifier Match-day 4) holds on Monday at the Estadio 24 de Setembro in Bissau.



Peseiro

-Candes

The lone goal victory sees the Wild Dogs go top of Group A with 7points, and a second leg game of their lives to play for in Bissau on Monday.

Dutch Boys 4-0.

Oliseh via his social media handle heaped praises on the hardworking attacker and further said the game would have been 7-0. "Extraordinary French Captain, Kylian Mbappe totally "wowed" me last night as he led France to a total 4-0 domination of the Netherlands! "Sad to see Dutch football in such a sorry state. It could easily have been a 7-0 victory." He wrote.

World Athletics bans transgender women from female events

WORLD Athletics Council (WAC), the governing body for athletic events worldwide, yesterday, voted to ban transgender women from elite female competitions if they have undergone male puberty. The governing body said the decision was taken to "protect the future of the female category". Speaking after the ruling, which comes into effect on 31 March, World Athletics president, Seb Coe, accepted that the decision would be contentious but said his sport had been guided by the "overarching principle" of fairness, as well as the science around physical performance and male advantage. "We believe the integrity of the female category in athletics is paramount." However, Coe also stressed that

he would set up a working group that would consult with transgender athletes and review any fresh research that emerged. "We're not saying no forever," he said. Sports have been increasingly wrestling with the thorny issue of transgender participation in recent years, notably when New Zealand weightlifter, Laurel Hubbard, qualified for the Tokyo Olympics, having transitioned in her 30s. Since Tokyo, most sports have opted to allow trans women to compete if they lower their testosterone to 5 nanomoles per litre for 12 months. However emerging science showing that transgender women retain an advantage in strength, endurance, power, lung capacity, even after suppressing testosterone, had led World Athletics to propose a lower testosterone limit for at least 24 months in January. Coe said there was "little support" for such a policy, with athletes and federations making it clear they wanted to prioritise fairness for female sport over inclusion. Athletics becomes the latest sport to ban transgender women from female sport, following World Rugby three years ago and World Swimming and the Rugby Football League last year. Swimming's decision came shortly after Lia Thomas, who had been a moderate college swimmer as a male competitor in the United States, won an NCAA national college female title in 2022. World Athletics' decision is likely to be opposed by LGBTQ+ groups who last month, urged sports to be as inclusive as possible.





SUPER Eagles head coach, Jose Peseiro has promised Nigerians to expect a positive result different from their home loss to Guinea Bissau on Friday in Abuja, BSNSports.com.ng reports.

Guinea Bissau shocked Super Eagles with an away 0-1 win to leapfrog to the top of the top of the table with 7 points.

Super Eagles will have a chance to revenge the home defeat on Monday when both teams clash in the Matchday 4 of 2023 African Nations Cup qualifier in Bissau.

Peseiro while reacting to questions from journalists in Abuja during the post match presser said the players and coaches were not happy with Friday's result, and reclaiming the top position in Bissau is the target on Monday

"Today's game we were just unlucky and that don't happen everyday in football. We won't see repeat of such in Bissau. Players and coaches are not happy about the result." He said.

"Of course today, we created many opportunities but Guineans are lucky. Moses Simon, Victor Osimhen, Onuachu, Ndidi could not score when scoring chances were created.

"To say the truth, everyone who watched this match today knew that our team deserved a win because we created many opportunities. Ordinarily, we could have scored 4 or 5 goals but it happen in football

"We just lost one match. Any team can lose one match because if we play the way we play today, we can beat any team including Guinea."

Meanwhile, to have a better outing against Nigeria's Olympic Eagles in the second leg of the U23 African Cup of Nations, the Junior Syli national of Guinea have intensified the preparation for the game, BSNSports.com.ng reports.

The Guinean side recorded a valuable goalless draw against the Olympic Eagle on Wednesday at the MKO Abiola Stadium in Abuja.

The MorlayeCisse boys arrived in Rabat Morocco the venue of the second leg on Friday evening and has their first training session on Saturday morning.

Newly invited AJ Auxerre striker Madious Keita has joined the team and he was also part of the training.

The game will take place on Tuesday in Rabat with the winner over both legs going through to the competition proper.

Meanwhile, Super Eagles head coach, Jose Peseiro has refused to speak on the alleged 10-month unpaid salary by his employer, the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF), BSNSports.com.ng

Expect better result in Bissau-Peseiro



Victor Osimhen blocked by a Guinea Bissau defender

can report.

The Portuguese tactician on Thursday during the presser ahead of Friday's Nigeria versus Guinea Bissau game said issue surrounding his salary is not meant to be discussed in the public but between his employer and him.

"The situation about my salary is between me and the NFF. I can't share nothing on it." He told BSN Sports.

"I can share the information with my wife because she is my wife and there is no problem about that." He said jokingly.

"It's not all about the money. All we need now is to focus on Guinea match on Friday because we are one step away from qualifying." He concluded.

An insider had told BSN Sports that NFF has not paid the Portuguese in the last ten months.

"It's unfortunate that the NFF is owing Peseiro ten months salary. Recall that, one of the reasons former Super Eagles goalkeeper trainer, Ike Shorounmu left his position was because he has not been paid for months also." The source told BSN Sports.

The salary allegedly owed the Portuguese is \$700,000 in total. The former Saudi Arabia and Venezuela coach was appointed in May 2022 on a monthly pay of \$70,000.

Group A table toppers, Nigeria are hosting Guinea Bissau in the first leg of the 2023 African Nations Cup qualifier on Friday at the MoshoodAbiola Stadium, Abuja. The second leg will hold next Monday, 27th March in Bissau.

Also, Napoli striker, Victor Osimhen, said the Super

Eagles will do everything to win their 2023 African Cup of Nations (AFCON) qualifiers against Guinea-Bissau and secure a ticket to the tournament in Cote d'Ivoire next year.

The Super Eagles failed to make their seventh appearance at the global football showpiece in November last year, to the extreme disappointment of highly expectant football fans in the country.

The 2023 AFCON qualifiers have given the players the opportunity to quickly make soccer-loving Nigerians forget the pain of having to watch the mundial without their darling team.

The Jose Peseiro-led boys have recorded two wins from as many matches so far in the qualification series after defeating both Sierra Leone as well as Sao Tome and Principe.

A win in their third Group A game against the Wild Dogs of Guinea Bissau at the MKO Abiola national stadium in Abuja today will see the three-time African champions take a step closer to another appearance at the biggest football event on the continent.

With a full complement of the players at his disposal and no injury worries, Peseiro and his team are expected to brush aside the

visitors who are closely following Nigeria in second place with four points from two matches.

In an interview with the NFF TV ahead of the 2023 AFCON qualifier against Guinea Bissau, Osimhen who is currently the Serie A top-scorer with 21 goals, acknowledged that the team had let Nigerians down in the past.

He added that he and his team-mates are determined to do everything possible to win back the love of Nigerians. The 24-year-old averred that the team will do its best to win the game today.

"Thank you very much for

your support, thank you for sticking with me, the Super Eagles, especially your support throughout the years.

"I know we might have let you down in the past, we will do everything within our power to win your love back, thank you for your support," he stated.

Guinea-Bissau will have the opportunity to test Nigeria once again after Friday's encounter when they meet in the return leg of the tie at the Nacional 24 de Setembro Stadium on March 27.

In another development, Super Eagles captain, Ahmed Musa on Thursday in Abuja said he will end his international football career once the coach stop inviting him to the national team.

The Nigeria highest goal scorer at the FIFA World Cup told journalists at the Super Eagles presser that he is being invited because the team still need his experience and services.

"In as much as I am being invited by the coach and my body can carry me, I will continue to play for Nigeria.

"The coach who invited knows better and as a patriotic Nigerian, I can't decline my national team invitation after so much sacrifice.

"I don't listen to those who are clamouring for my retirement. I remain focused on my career. Whoever is invited, people must talk, so, why should I listen to their comments.

The 30-year old has 107 caps for Super Eagles and has scored 16 goals since his debut in 2010. He is Nigeria highest goal scorer at the FIFA World Cup with four.

Eagles set record in Nigeria Vs Guinea Bissau match

THREE different players captained the Super Eagles in the Matchday 3 fixture of the 2023 African Nations Cup qualifier between Nigeria and Guinea Bissau on Friday at the Moshood Abiola Stadium Abuja, BSNSports.com.ng reports.

Ndidi who started the game as captain handed the arm band to Moses Simon in the second half and Simon gave it to Ahmed Musa when he came on in the final stage of the game, making it three captains in a single match.

At the end, it was a disappointing showing from the three times AFCON king lost by a lone goal to the Wild Dogs and their fourth successive defeat under Jose Peseiro since becoming manager of the Super Eagles.

Mama Samba Balde broke

the deadlock for the Wild Dogs in the half hour mark after he made the most of a lob pass from his skipper, to slice the ball in between the legs of goalkeeper Francis Uzoho for the only

goal of the game, after he beat the Super Eagles flat defence line.

The victory sees the Djurtus leapfrog the Super Eagles as Group A new leader with 7 points, after two wins and a draw, while

Nigeria are in second position with 6 points from the same number of games.

Both teams will square things up on Matchday 4 in a must-win game on Monday at the Estádio 24

