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Sunday Standard

TRUTH EXALTS A NATION

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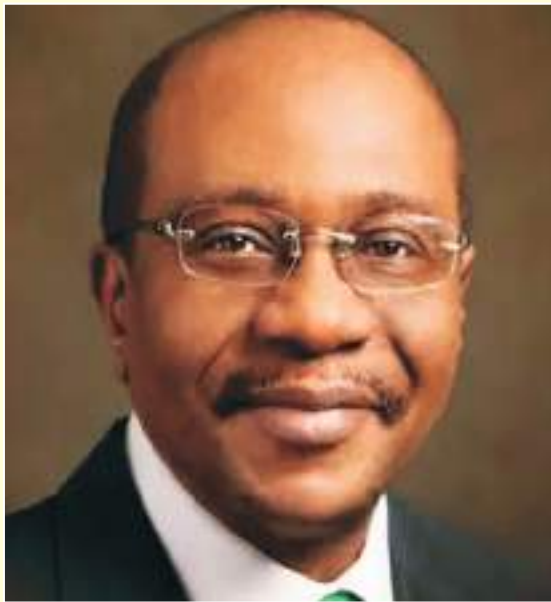
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Cash crunch and the Nigerian populace

Turn to
pages
10, 31.

Since last year, 2022, when the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), announced its intention to redesign and rebrand the Naira, arms were kept akimbo by Nigerians to see the outcome of the policy. Alas, when it finally came, it became a near "disaster" as the people and the economy groan and suffers.



Even classy ladies
now wear 'okrika'

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Need for social media control in Nigeria

THE emergence of social media has in the past few decades been applauded considering its massive contribution to national growth. This is owing to the innovative mechanism which has continued to flourish through the application of contemporary social media strategies to help accelerate the quality of human lives in our society.

IN most developing nations of the world, the social media has continued to promote significant awareness and educational excellence through opportunities and benefits inherent in the scheme. As it is today, most societies in some developing communities which have embraced some of the positive aspects of the social media, have no doubt benefitted from these lucrative opportunities for socio-economic and political advancement.

IN Nigeria, a country which has accepted and provided an enabling environment for social media to flourish, many achievements have been recorded for the benefit of its citizenry. Aside the success recorded in the area of building a more comprehensive capacity framework for students in both tertiary institutions and secondary schools. For instance, social media usage has relentlessly persuaded the business community to also employ contemporary methods of networking to ensuring that goods and services are showcased to the wider markets both within and in the Diaspora.

IT is also an established fact that for any country to adapt any such productive mechanism which will facilitate the much-anticipated desire for ease in doing business policy, many stakeholders in the business sector have embraced its positive advantage in changing the impact of our market economy without excruciating adversity.

HOWEVER, in most recent times, negative messages and materials dished out through the social media have generated great concern in the country. Prior to the 2023 general elections, most social media handles or platforms were flooded with negative messages that nearly created unpleasant situations in various parts of the nation.

AS various political parties campaign climaxed before the immediate past general elections, most political party sympathizers across the nation intensified their social media campaigns, posting malicious, unfounded and unsubstantiated information, insulting political opponents and heating up the polity. In the aftermath of the polls, many citizens and or social media operators still have not soft paddled in their unprecedented campaigns of culumy, unfounded media propaganda and character assassinations.

THIS unrepentant behavioral attitude has continued to portray Nigeria as a lawless nation where anything goes with impunity to the detriment of our corporate existence as an indivisible country yearning for sustainable and credible democracy laid by the founding fathers of this great nation.

WE are of the opinion that the reckless way and manner the social media is used in this country if not checked would sooner or later drag the country into a phenomenal, catastrophe and total anarchy. In this regard, our political leaders and elites who have thrown caution to the wind must be warned of the serious implications of the negative usage of the social media.

WE equally believe that it is high time all those who are in the habit of employing the social media to cause disaffection, and or ridicule the integrity of the nation are caught and made to face the full wrath of the law. Nigeria should establish regulatory bodies which should be given the mandate of fishing out some of these unscrupulous elements and punish them in accordance with the laws of the land.

AFTER coming this far in our journey to nationhood, Nigeria cannot afford to slip by the way due to our inability to control activities of social media in the country. Therefore, it is high time we all do the needful before it becomes too late for all of us.

Governors to DSS: Arrest interim government plotters

Governors elected on the platform of the All Progressives Congress (APC) have demanded the immediate arrest and prosecution of those behind the plot for an interim government.

Deploing the clamour for an interim government to take over from President Muhammadu Buhari on May 29 despite the emergence of a president-elect, the APC governors under the aegis of Progressive Governors Forum (PGF) implored Nigerians to remain vigilant and resist any undemocratic conduct that is capable of undermining Nigeria's democracy.

In a statement signed by chairman of the PGF and Kebbi State governor, Abubakar Atiku Bagudu, the APC governors applauded the Department of Security Services (DSS) for exposing the plot, saying the secret police must arrest and prosecute masterminds of the plot.

"The Progressive Governors Forum stated in a press statement issued by the Department of Security Service on the unfortunate, condemnable and treasonable conduct of some undemocratic elements who are agitating for an interim government.

"We condemn such agitation. It is commendable, however, that the Department of State Services exposed the plot, and we call upon them to arrest and prosecute anyone involved.

In a related development, state governors have accused the Department Of State Services (DSS) of overheating the polity by not arresting those it claimed were plotting an interim government.

The governors under the aegis of the Nigerian Governors forum called on the DSS to arrest those behind the plot as a matter of urgency.

Chairman of NGF and Sokoto State governor disclosed this on Thursday night after a meeting of the forum in Abuja.

According to him, the forum deliberated extensively on the alleged plot by some unscrupulous elements to install an interim government, as contained in the recent statement issued by the DSS.

Regarding the refund of backlog of stamp duties due to state governments, Tambuwal said the Forum restated its commitment to engaging with all stakeholders and exploring all legal channels available to it in ensuring that monies which ought to have since been used for development projects are duly refunded to the States.

On the Implementation of the National Development Plan (2021-2025), he said the Forum nominated six (6) Governors to represent the six geopolitical zones of the country in the National Steering Committee.

He said; "North Central – Governor of Kwara State, North East – Governor of Bauchi State, North West – Governor of Zamfara State, "South South – Governor of Edo State, South East – Governor of Anambra State and South West – Governor of Ekiti State

Tambuwal said the forum received a briefing on the cancellation of the proposed privatization of Five (5) National Integrated Power Projects (NIPPs) by National Council on Privatization (NCP).

He said " and the withdrawal of the matter at the Federal High Court between the 36 States of the Federation Vs the Federal Government of Nigeria which was instituted to halt the process to enable stakeholders address the concerns by States and Local Governments who collectively own a joint stake of 53% in the Niger Delta Power Holding Company (NDPHC).

"Members applauded this move by the NCP which appears to have taken into consideration the recommendation of the States to halt the process due to ill-timing amongst other reasons.

NPC will engage 23,000 numerators in Plateau

By our Correspondent

AHEAD of the 2023 Census slated for 3rd to 7th May, 2023, the National Population Commission has said it will engage over 23,000 numerators to cover the 17 local governments of Plateau State.

State Director of the NPC, Plateau State, Mr. Pam Deme stated this on Friday in Jos when he visited the leadership of the Nigeria Union of Journalists, Plateau State Council.

He noted that NPC since 2014 has been preparing and the commission has made adequate arrangements for the success of the census, adding that nobody will manipulate the 2023 census.

"You can only operate the equipment to be used in the location allocated to you. If you go to a wrong or different location, it won't work for you especially on the map captured.

Deme added that the census will be credible and reliable by producing data that will stand the test of time. He pointed out that this national assignment is one that will need journalists to partner to achieve the success of the census if not the investment of government will be a waste of time and money.

"We are here to inform and update you on our activities so that you will inform the public. Media are critical stakeholder and have an important responsibility to begin the publicity campaign in order to properly educate and enlighten Nigerians on the need to support the successful conduct of the 2023 census

"This visit to NUJ and also journalists in the state is very important because we cannot achieve this very big task without the media educating the public on the role they will play.

He further stated that the 2023 population and housing census

would leverage on a full digital methodology with the use of mobile application devices.

Deme said government has spent huge resource to achieve the census by introducing technology to bring out the best results just like is being done in the United States. He stated that 2023 census is very unique with technology to be used to curtail the human factor experienced some years back.

He added that there was shift in the method of census taking which implies a change on how data on population and housing information are to be captured.

FCT indigenes sue Federal Govt, NASS over status

INDIGENES of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) have taken the federal government and National Assembly to court over recognition of state status.

The FCT High Court has fixed April 24, 2023 for hearing of the suit filed by the Registered Trustees of Abuja Original Inhabitants Youth Empowerment Organisation (AOIYEO) on behalf of natives of the FCT.

Justice Sylvanus Orji decided to adjourn the hearing of the matter till April 24 on account of the absence of legal representations for the president and attorney general of the federation.

The counsel to the National Assembly who was present, pleaded with the court to give them 48 hours to do their filings and also allow counsel to the 1st and 3rd respondents in the suit properly be served.

The suit which was filed by the Registered Trustees of the Abuja Original Inhabitants Youth Empowerment Organisation (AOIYEO) is seeking that the FCT be granted the full status of a state like the existing 36 states with their state governor and more seats in the National Assembly.

The suit marked FCT/HC/CV/85/2023 which was filed

Plateau State chairman, Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Mr Paul Jatau, in a remark, lauded the commission for including journalists in reporting the census. He promised that the media in the state would ensure that the exercise is reported accurately and the public enlightened.

He assured the NPC of journalists' maximum co-operation and support in the state and was quick to task the NPC to train their enumerators so that it won't go as the 2023 elections.

by counsel to the applicant, James Egah Nadeye, has the president, National Assembly and attorney general of the federation as 1st to 3rd respondents respectively

The suit is also seeking a court order enforcing the fundamental right to freedom from discrimination and dignity of FCT natives.

According to the suit, the natives are aggrieved that they are not accorded the privileges and rights to participate in elections to vote and to stand for elections into legislative and executive bodies akin to the state House of Assembly and governor of a state like their counterparts in the 36 states of the federation.

They also noted that indigenes of the FCT are the only people who are governed by a minister as a governor acting for the president of Nigeria.

They said being denied the status of a state amounts to a denial of the FCT indigenes' right to dignity of their persons and freedom from discrimination as enshrined in Sections 34 and 42 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) and the African Charter on Humans and Peoples' Rights.



With
**Katdapba
Y. Gobum
On Sunday**



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"As a result of this development, more people are by the day getting disenchanted, if not disillusioned on a number of things happening in the country. Such people cannot be blamed, rather; more dialogue is encouraged and expected to draw them to understanding the dynamics of togetherness".

Restructuring: The idea still needed

THE voices are discordant, just as the tunes are not suggestive of peace. There is no way that everything can be alright given the circumstances that we find ourselves and the antagonism that is building around the issue of restructuring.

Given the altercations we have noticed in the last couple of months, nothing suggests that we are anything near a united entity. If anything, we are daily going down the cliff; and several of us are working tirelessly to encourage that proclivity into madness.

Understandably, a number of things have taken place; and are continuing so much so to the extent that they are suggesting that a majority is not considered for the enterprise. Some of the parts that make the commonwealth are more important than some parts.

As a result of this development, more people are by the day getting disenchanted, if not disillusioned on a number of things happening in the country. Such people cannot be blamed, rather; more dialogue is encouraged and expected to draw them to understanding the dynamics of togetherness.

We are all products of 'forced marriage' - a marriage of convenience foisted by the colonial masters. That forced marriage led us to a fratricidal war from 1967-1970, even as today not many people are considering the number of deaths that were recorded while it lasted, as well as the cost the country incurred in wasted development and opportunities.

A number of the young people do not go by the history that we went through in the last 57 years as a nation. We cannot continue in this fashion forever. We need to change gear and make certain adjustments for our children.

If our children who are growing with us have the benefit of being taught their history, they will be in a better position to know where we are coming from as a people. There is no doubt that some of the people who are making certain agitations would have differently made them were they educated about what their parents went through a couple of years back.

Today, however, the older ones are not helping matters; they are adding salt to the nation's injury. They are in the forefront instigating their children to rise against certain parts and peoples for their opinions about our togetherness. They are not working to educate their children and communities about what we should do to bring about cohesiveness between them and other peoples and communities.

Certain things said about a week ago by former Vice President, Abubakar Atiku are instructive in this direction, even though some people have disagreed with him on the condition that, he had the opportunity once, but didn't show the light. Some are saying he is engaging in it as a latter day born again believer in the restructuring of the country.

Whether he is one of the two things mentioned above or not, the fact still



Buhari

remains that, Nigeria has a fundamental problem that has refused to be solved; which indeed demands that people of differing views must have a convergence to be able to enable the nation wriggle out of the problem.

I sincerely believe in the fact that we all have a stake in Project Nigeria, as such; we must be able to dig out solutions to our problems. We must not leave it for just a few to continue to befuddle us consistently, in the belief that they know all.

You may wish to read him through this piece of news: Former Vice President, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar on Wednesday disclosed that he is throwing his weight behind the country's restructuring because of his conviction that it would guarantee a united Nigeria and take power from the elite, giving same back to the people.

Revealing that his interest in the restructuring agenda dates back to his days as a member of the defunct Social Democratic Party, SDP, he pointed out that the party's manifesto included the following words: "To improve the people's welfare and fight for social justice".

Atiku stated this in a lecture delivered on Wednesday at the University of Nigeria Nsukka, UNN, on the occasion of the Senior Staff Club Lecture Series on Restructuring Nigeria/Award of Excellence in Good Governance which was conferred on him.

At the event chaired by the President-General of Ohanaeze Ndigbo, Chief Nnia Nwodo, he said with the political will, it will not take more than six months to restructure Nigeria starting with the transfer of all the items in the concurrent list to the states, a decision he said will not require a constitutional amendment.

Atiku maintained that reordering of the governance structure would ensure that "everyone has a chance to build and share in this great

nation's potential", noting that restructuring might not be convenient for the elite who profit from the oil rent economy and the feeding bottle federalism being practised in Nigeria.

"But I believe we need to speak the truth. And the truth is this: our national wealth is being drained by a select few instead of building a country for all of us. This has to end.

"We need to return the resources and power back to the local level, and from the elite to the people.

"Only by restructuring can we guarantee unity, equity and security for our nation," the former Vice President said, adding that Nigeria was drunk with easy money from oil but needed to change that mindset.

He warned that except Nigeria moved from being a sharing country to a productive one, it would continue to totter, adding that restructuring Nigeria to bring it back to the original dreams of the founding fathers was a choice that the country must quickly make."

Atiku said, "To me, restructuring means making changes to our current federal structure so that it comes closer to what our founding leaders established, in response to the very issues and challenges that led them to opt for a less centralised system.

"It means devolving more powers to the federating units with the accompanying resources. It means greater control by the federating units of the resources in their areas.

"It would mean, by implication, the reduction of the powers and roles of the federal government so that it would concentrate only on those matters best handled by the centre, such as defence, foreign policy, monetary and fiscal policies, immigration, customs and excise, aviation, as well as setting and enforcing national standards on such matters as education, health and safety.

"Some of what my ideas of

**“
Today, however, the older ones are not helping matters; they are adding salt to the nation's injury. They are in the forefront instigating their children to rise against certain parts and peoples for their opinions about our togetherness. They are not working to educate their children and communities about what we should do to bring about cohesiveness between them and other peoples and communities.
”**

restructuring involve requires constitutional amendment, some do not. Take education and roads for instance, the federal government can immediately start the process of transferring federal roads to the state governments along with the resources it expends on them.

Again, a few days after the Nigerian Senate sat and took a look at the review of the constitution, Atiku described as shocking and saddening, the decision of the Senate to block the passage of Bill No. 3, which would have granted devolution of power to the states.

In a statement released by his media office in Abuja, the Waziri of Adamawa decried the lost opportunity to honour one of the Party's election promises to bring about change by shifting power closer to the people in the remotest regions of our country.

Atiku decried the reluctance of democratically elected lawmakers to remove the insidious structural impediments to development, which decades of military rule had hoisted upon our nation.

"This blockage of the Bill by an APC-led Senate majority is a betrayal of our Party's pre-election promises," Atiku said.

"It was an important vote and I'm shocked by some so-called progressives' visceral and cynical opposition to restructuring."

According to him, instead of building the foundations for a true federation, a small group of so-called progressive Senators decided to stick with the new party line, pretending they didn't know what restructuring was all about, and that even if they knew, it couldn't be done.

"And I think it is a sad day for our Party. But I'm confident the APC will learn the right lesson from this self-inflicted defeat, and remember the mission and mandate given to us by the people."

Atiku, however, expressed hope that Nigeria's lawmakers would find the courage to stand by what is

right, and not by what serves their personal vanities and political interests.

"Let me be clear: Restructuring is no panacea to all our nation's problems. But devolving resources and responsibilities from an overbearing, unresponsive, and ineffective federal government to the states is the first step we must make if we are serious about putting our nation back on track, and our people back to work," he said.

Nigerians: Spending \$5bn to generate electricity

When shall we learn? Nigerians have spent so much yet; we have nothing to show for our electricity. If you doubt it, could you please take some time and consider this: The Speaker of the House of Representatives, Hon. Yakubu Dogara, has stated that Nigerians annually spend an estimated \$5 billion to power their generating sets, assuring that the House would support the Executive to find a lasting solution to the power problem.

Dogara, who spoke at a public hearing by the House Committee on Power, stated that the whopping sum being expended by individuals and businesses to generate power was highly detrimental to economic growth.

Describing the situation as highly unacceptable, he stated that the National Assembly was reviewing some of Nigeria's energy laws in order to provide the appropriate legal framework that would facilitate the exploitation of renewable energy to the benefit of the Nigerian economy.

The Speaker said, "Power is arguably the single most important driver of the national economy. Indeed, it is difficult if not impossible, to imagine modern life without power. Our industries and factories need electricity to run; and so do our offices, homes and businesses.

"It is estimated that Nigerians spend about five billion US Dollars yearly to fuel their generators. This is an unacceptable situation and the House of Representatives stands ready to support the Executive arm of government to put a stop to this state of affairs.

"Renewable energy is a source of clean energy, which is environmentally friendly and is crucial to the economy of the future.

"We can only be self-sufficient in the energy field when we combine all of our energy resources such as wind, solar, hydro, biomass, bio-fuel, landfill, sewage gas, solid waste, geothermal energy, ocean energy etc.

"Renewable energy sources are natural and often replenish itself. Nigeria needs to invest more in renewable energy as fossil fuel is a diminishing asset.

"An appropriate legal framework to exploit renewable energy, which is nature's gift to mankind, is not adequate in Nigeria. This makes it difficult to organise the sector in a commercially viable matter. Herein lies the merit and strength of this Bill under consideration."



All that glitters is not gold

SOMETIME ago, something happened in neighboring Abuja that was an eye opener. In one of the busiest areas of Wuse Market Abuja, a young lady was employed to sell recharge cards, assorted drinks and snacks. Ijay's goods were selling like hot cakes. She was a smart lady who had always been referred to as multi-tasking. Alone she had been carrying on for months successfully, with no problems.

On one of the, hour when Ijay's business was at its peak (that is around 11:00am to 1:00pm), Ijay had an unexpected visitor. It was a young girl of about 12 years, in the midst of "please give me N100 recharge card"; "let me have one Maltina, cold one with meat pie". "I want N1000,00 MTN and N500 Etisalat, and others asking for their change, Ijay heard a small girl's voice calling her attention, "Auntie!!! She called out gently, almost afraid to come very close.

"Yes?" Ijay spared the innocent voice a look. "Can I help you?" Ijay asked politely.

"Please auntie, the little girl curtsied in respect, "my auntie over there," she pointed at a woman busy buying thing, "is busy buying a lot of things. I just want a place where I can sit and wait for her until she finishes."

"It is okay," Ijay assented then went back to business. Ijay had a waist purse where she kept all the money for her transaction and the recharge cards, this is usually securely strapped around her waist. However, in the heat of business when she needed to sell a certain recharge card, she removed her waist purse to locate it easily.

Business was very good that day and Ijay was in high spirits poking fun at her regular customers. She had even forgotten the little girl in her stall until she heard her childish voice saying: "Thank you ma. My auntie just motioned to me to come," the little girl curtsied and hurriedly left.

Shortly after that, a customer wanted recharge card. Ijay's hands automatically went to where she had kept it. But it wasn't there. She looked under tables, it was not there. She overturned the shop. It was not there.

But this time, Ijay was sweating. The last person on her mind was that little girl. Volunteers ran around the market looking for the girl but she had disappeared into thin air.

It was at this point that other traders that were once bitten, shared similar stories. But it was too late for Ijay to tackle the situation. She has been robbed by the cradle. It amounted to N79,000 in cash and over N25,000 recharge cards. Ijay lost her job but had to pay her madam (nicknamed Shylock) for every dime.

Well-wishers in the market and some passers-by raised over N50,000,00 which Shylock collected grumbling. It was only after Ijay wrote an undertaking that she would pay the

balance in 3 months that she was released by the police. Today, Ijay is wary of innocents.

In a similar situation on one full day when business appeared to be slow running for more than a week, a car seller learned not to judge a book by its cover, an expensive Mercedes Benz drove to this car stand in Jos and 2 of the occupants went for the most expensive car on display. It was a jeep.

Overjoyed, the owners proudly marketed their goods. The prospective buyers asked if they could test run it and see how it worked. The sellers were enthusiastic about it, why not, they thought; since Oga (the one the two men obviously worked for) was in their car and their car was expensive too.

However, about ten minutes after they left, oga who had been busy eating a mountain of suya with massa (roasted meat seasoned with groundnut cake with rice snack) started exhibiting some kind of attitude. First, he ate even the paper the suya was wrapped in; then started behaving as if he was dancing Michael Jackson's Thriller dance steps- the one that entailed dancing with the shoulder. The car sellers were laughing until his cap fell off.

What they saw almost gave them a heart attack. Oga's hair was dreadlocks, thick with filth. There was no question that it was home of lice because from every indication, the last time it enjoyed the luxury of being washed must have been several years back.

Oga started making animal sounds, tore the well designed babanriga he was wearing, the caftan, then trousers, exposing very filthy tattered clothes. Next, he damaged the door of the car and made to run, the car sellers used all their might to hold him down until security men were called. In the end, they could not hold on to him-oga- he was a mad man who ignorantly used in committing crime. And of course, their jeep never came back and they could not hold on to the Mercedes Benz the thieves came in because the police discovered it was also a stolen car.

So many people are in unhappy marriages because they judged a book by its cover. Nigerians are suffering because they reposed their confidence in the wrong politicians. They come looking for you with a smile pasted on their faces when campaigning for positions. But after using you as ladder to climb up there; they start looking at you with their noses; they become inaccessible. They go to the extent of changing their numbers and their circle of friends. They forget that without people, they are nothing; In fact, they are good as dead.

The electorate know more than ever their votes. To sell out votes is to mortgage our future. It is high treason. And to be influenced by sentiments is to remain under bondage with no hope.

NEWS

PPBA tasks farmers/herders on peaceful coexistence

By JIDAUNA DARING

DIRECTOR General, Plateau Peace Building Agency (PPBA), Mr. Joseph Lengman has reiterated the need for farmer/herders to fall back to mechanism that would continue to make them to co-exist with one another for peace to reign at all times.

Lengman stated this during monthly media parley with Journalists, held at the agency's conference hall in Jos recently.

He expressed hope with the level of understanding that is currently going on with farmer/herders in some communities. He described such move as a welcome development to the agency and the state as a whole.

Lengman told journalists that the essence of the meeting was to brief them on measures put in place by the agency to mitigate conflict between farmers and herders as the rainy season sets in and managing the outcome of the just concluded general elections.

He said that the agency has never relent in it efforts in championing the course of peace building across the 17 local government areas (LGAS) of the state, adding that the agency would continue to consolidate on what it has been doing, particularly in the area of promoting peace in the state and beyond.

Lengman disclosed that both rainy and dry season usually witnessed come with some tension, hence the need for the agency to brief journalists on what farmers/herders conflict can bring to some communities in the state.

He called on traditional institutions, religious leaders and the media to be at alert



Lengman

when it comes to conflict. He pointed out that the agency will continue to dialogue with farmers/herders, adding that the agency would continue to carry out its advocacy to the major stakeholders.

According to Lengman peace spoilers are sometimes difficult to pin-point because such people play both good and bad role in the society.

He then called on the incoming government to also come and place more emphasizes on peace building process, so that whatever the agency has put in place since its establishment on peace project would not be abandoned after the exit of the present administration.

Lengman applauded the media for also championing the course of promoting peace which is an essential commodity to all mankind on earth. He added that the agency has enjoyed good partnership with the media for

over the years, describing the media as a great partner in the peace project.

He commended the media for the good reportage it exhibited during the just concluded elections and called on media to equally use it ethic to control some of the unguided statement that are capable of causing conflict or crisis.

Lengman thanked GIZ for investing in peace project through the agency. He appreciated the staff of the agency for their commitment to work and urged them to sustain such tempo at all times for the betterment of the state.

Giving the vote of thank, Director Admin of the agency, Mr. Gayi Timothy Gayi thanked the media for honouring the invitation and assured them of more cordial working relationship.

Court declares activities of KOTRAMA as Illegal

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

AKogi High Court on Thursday declared the activities of the Kogi Transport Management Authority (KOTRAMA), as illegal.

Justice Clement Kekerere of High Court 10 made the order while delivering judgment in a case instituted against the agency by an Abuja-based lawyer, Mr Martin Atojoko.

Kereke faulted the law establishing KOTROMA.

"By the evidence before the court, I hereby order that the Law establishing the agency be set aside forthwith.

"This is because the law made by the state House of Assembly contravenes the provisions of the Federal Road Safety Commission Act 2007.

"In all, the laws establishing KOTRAMA is inhuman, and is established to cause hardship on motorists," the judge held.

The judge also awarded the plaintiff, N100,000 as general damages against the agency.

Atojoko had sued KOTROMA and joined the Kogi House of Assembly, the Attorney-General and Commissioner for Justice and the state government as second, third and fourth defendants in the matter.

Atojoko had prayed the court to compel the defendants to pay him N10 million as general and exemplary damages for inter-alia the first defendant's unlawful and illegal action of detaining and impounding his car.

The plaintiff had told the court

in his originating summon that on June 22, 2022, he was stopped by officers of KOTRAMA over an expired driver's licence while they impounded his Toyota Corolla car.

"My Lord, I only got my car back the next day, after paying N10,000 in fines, an action which is but a contravention of the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) Law of 2007," he said.

Atojoko thereafter prayed the court to issue an order declaring that the second defendant could not make

laws empowering the first defendant to exercise the powers of the Federal Road Safety Corps (Establishment) Act, 2007 in inspecting the driver's license of motorists, issued by the FRSC and codifying same in Kogi Road Traffic Administration and Vehicle Inspection Law, 2018.

"An order that the KOTRAMA cannot fine the plaintiff and impound his vehicle with registration No. 2T1BU4EE9AC312480, without first trying him and finding him guilty before a court of competent jurisdiction.

But KATROMA and other defendants through their Counsel, Mr B.O. Obenege, had debunked the claims of the plaintiff and said that the agency acted within the ambit of the law that established it.

Obenege claimed that the House of Assembly Law that established KOTRAMA was not a duplication of FRSC Law of 2007.

He prayed the Court to hold that the action of KOTRAMA has not contravened the Kogi Law or any other law, and the claimant was given a summary fine of N10,000, all in accordance with the Section 1(3) of the law.

"In conclusion, we urge your lordship to dismiss the case for lack of merit," Obenege had pleaded with the court.



Arioola

SUNDAY POLITICS

INEC presents Certificate of Return to Gov Inuwa

From **WILLIE ATTAH, Gombe**

THE Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has presented Certificate of Return to winners of March 18, 2023 Governorship and State Assembly elections for Gombe State.

Governor Muhammad Inuwa Yahaya and his Deputy, Manasseh Daniel Jatau, who were re-elected for a second tenure, were presented with their certificates by INEC National Commissioner representing Adamawa, Gombe and Taraba States, Dr. Baba Bila in company of the state Resident Electoral Commissioner, Umar Ibrahim at the Gombe International Hotel.

The 24 members-elect, comprising 20 APC and four PDP members of the state House of Assembly also took their turns to receive their certificates from the INEC top officials. However, three members were absent during the certificate presentation.

Re-elected Governor, Muhammad Inuwa Yahaya, while responding, thanked the people of the state for giving him the mandate the



Yahaya

second time to be the governor of the state promising to uphold the trust bestowed upon him.

He called on his opponents to join hands with him in taking Gombe State to the next level, adding that the elections have been won and lost but he said in the spirit of moving the state forward, "there is no victor, no vanquish".

Earlier, the Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC), Umar Ibrahim, commended the people of the state especially stakeholders for ensuring a peaceful conduct of the

election. He also appreciated INEC staff, ad-hoc staff, particularly youth corps members for their sacrifices to the nation by offering themselves for the conduct of the polls.

'Don't see your victory as money making venture'

From **AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja**

THE Kogi State Council of Nigeria Union of Journalists would from Monday, 3rd April, 2023 begin a media parley for aspirants in the forthcoming Governorship Election.

A statement issued by Jerry Ocheme, Chairman and Abuh Michael, Secretary, Media Parley Planning Committee, said invitation letters to attend 2023 Kogi State NUJ Media Parley For Governorship Aspirants have already been sent to Governorship aspirants irrespective of political parties.

The statement said it is by virtue of section 22 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, which empowers the media to hold public office holders and those seeking public office accountable.

The union called on the governorship aspirants to use the opportunity to unveil their mission and vision to the delegates ahead of the various party primaries and by extension, the people of Kogi State.

Kogi media parley with governorship aspirants

The media parley which would hold at the NUJ Press Centre, Lokoja has scheduled Asiawaju Asiru Idris and Pharm. Jamiu Asuku to make their appearances on Monday, 3rd April, 2023.

Similarly, Hon. YakubuOkala, Alhaji Jibrin Momoh and Engr. Friday Idachaba are expected to make their own appearances on Tuesday, 4th April, 2023. Furthermore, Murtala Yakubu Ajaka, Prof. Stephen Ocheni and Barr. Abdulsalaam Ozigi

Deedat will make appearance on Wednesday, 5th April, 2023.

For further enquires and information, Media Aides to the Governorship Aspirants are advised to kindly call the following telephone numbers: 08069449571, 08036275871 for more information regarding when their principals are to make appearances and the timing.



Isiguzor

From **AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja**

they should rather see their victory as a challenge to advance the course of their constituents through quality representation.

The REC gave the charge during the presentation of

Certificate of Return to the Assembly members-elect in Lokoja recently.

He also advised them to remain committed to the ideals and motivation that propelled them to contest the election.

Dr. Longpet said the journey to contest the election started two years ago with the campaign process by candidates which has finally come to a climax with the presentation of Certificate of Return.

He said their intention to serve their communities may have been the motivation and driving force for them in the first instance to contest, hence, they should justify the confidence the people have reposed in them.

He said winning an elective position is a call to service and not just to be called Honourables and to lord themselves over the electorate.

He said, elections in the past used to be a game between mutual friends where only one person must definitely emerge as winner, but decried the present situation where election has become a do or die enterprise.

The INEC boss challenged

them to reflect on their campaign promises so as to work assiduously to effect those objectives on the quality of service to be rendered to the communities.

According to him, "Don't abandon your people. Let your commitment to the people be your driving force. Uphold the code of conduct that guides the House of Assembly and constantly reflect on the essence of your position so as to live above board."

"We, in the INEC have no preferred candidate but to provide a level playing ground for all the candidates who presented themselves and we have largely maintained the ideals."

"I challenge you to strive to address the needs of your people, as there is a lot to be done to improve their living standards."

The society is undergoing serious changes and development and you are lucky to be agents of that change. Devote yourselves to the advancement of the course of your people as anything in the negative will spark reactions from them when again you will be going back for re-election," he admonished.

Qua'anPan PDP stakeholders visit Governor-elect

THE People's Democratic Party (PDP) in Qua'anPan LGA of Plateau State, led by the party Chairman, Raymond Dangwam, has paid a congratulatory visit to the Plateau State Governor-Elect, Caleb Mutfwang, at the Old Government House in Jos.

In a statement signed by Raymond Dangwam, Chairman, PDP Qua'anPan LGA, the delegation comprised of party officials, including the PDP National Vice Chairman, North Central Zone, Hon. Theophilus Dakas-Shan, the State PDP Secretary, Hon. Emmanuel Tuang, and all ward chairmen in the LGA.

The statement added that

during the visit, the team conveyed the party's warmest congratulations and best wishes to the Governor-Elect.

Hon. Isaac Kwalu, the House of Representatives Member-Elect, along with Hon. Paul Datugun and Hon. Cornelius Doeyok, who are the House of Assembly Members-Elect were also present to felicitate with the Governor-Elect on his well-deserved victory.

In a statement, the party Chairman, Raymond Dangwam, expressed delight at the Governor-Elect's victory, noting that it was a testament to the trust and confidence that the people of Plateau State have in the PDP and its leadership.

Dangwam reiterated the

party's commitment to supporting the Governor-Elect in fulfilling his campaign promises and ensuring that the people of Plateau State receive the best possible governance and development in the years ahead.

He also praised the Governor-Elect for his exemplary leadership qualities and his dedication to the people of Plateau State,

adding that his election marked the beginning of a new era of progress and prosperity for the state.

The visit was marked by a spirit of unity and optimism, with party officials and members expressing their confidence in the Governor-Elect's ability to lead Plateau State to a brighter future and wished him a successful tenure in office.

INEC presents Certificate of Return to Governor-elect, others

From **ANENE AIKE, Sokoto**

THE Sokoto State INEC has on Thursday 30th March presented to Alhaji Ahmad Aliyu of the APC as the Governor-elect and several others that won the House of Assembly seats.

The ceremony which took place at the Collation Hall within the INEC premises, Tangaza Road, Sokoto witnessed a large turnout of APC members and the general public to witness the exercise.

Our correspondent also reports that as early as 9.00 am, APC members, stalwarts and big wigs had already occupied all available spaces in and outside the INEC Collation Centre waiting for the ceremony billed for 10 a.m. to start.

Alhaji Ahmad the chief celebrant arrived the venue already guarded by

masquerade looking and over armed security operatives made up of Police, Civil Defence, SSS brought to the venue by armored vehicle and an entourage of cars of different structures, sizes and shapes and waited impatiently for the event to start.

The APC campaign music vehicle was seen standing by waiting for signal to switch on the musical instruments and the commercial musicians in their numbers were also waiting to be beckoned upon to play and demonstrate their talent for a fee.

It could be recalled that the 30th March, 2023 day was set aside by INEC to issue The Certificate of Return to the Sokoto Governor-elect and House of Assembly members that won the elections numbering about 26.



Mutfwang



Yakubu

SUNDAY POLITICS

2023 elections and the consequences of 'Obidience'

The 2023 presidential election served as a test not only for Nigeria's democratic credentials but also as a conduit for certain political figures and their supporters to rekindle deep rooted prejudices and sentiments. The political atmosphere was shrouded in sturdy fabrics of ethno-religious and regional schisms that weaponised our diversity and prevented many from adequately contemplating the consequences of such divisive inclinations with respect to our politics and democracy. ABDULHALEM ISHAQ RINGIM writes.

FOR proper context, Nigeria's current political landscape is predominantly controlled by two major parties, APC and PDP. This two-party dynamics has been prevalent since 1999 when Nigeria adopted democracy. Political contests in the country have always been between a ruling party, a major opposition party (or at most two) and other minor opposition parties in the background. Until 2015 when the marriage between CPC and ACN was consummated, major opposition parties were largely representative of regional voting blocs.

The 2015 merger was borne out of the realisation that Nigeria's presidency cannot be won by the sole or combined agencies of popularity, resource strength and sectarian influence. It could only be won by a concerted effort at forging alliances and establishing demographic balances that can assure transnational political cooperation. The APC achieved that in 2015 and was resultantly able to displace the political hegemony that PDP represented at that time.

Contrastingly, 2023 election was defined by the opposite of the events of 2015. Instead of consolidating the strength of the PDP, which is Nigeria's major opposition party, it was hit by a wave of fragmentations as seen with the emergence of Kwankwaso's New Nigeria People's Party (NNPP) and Peter Obi's Labour Party (LP). These supposed third forces went ahead to seize political influence from the grip of the PDP in some of their strongholds and cost the party tremendous political capital.

The rise to prominence of Labour Party constitutes the biggest misfortune for not only PDP, but all Nigerian opposition parties. Peter Obi, who was Atiku Abubakar's running mate in the PDP in 2019, defected from the party in protest against the party's refusal to zone the presidential ticket to the South. Some reports suggest that Obi also got an early signal that Atiku would not be picking him again as his running mate. These, reports suggest, were his major reasons for defecting to Labour Party.

Obi's candidature started as a representation of the general agitation for good governance in Nigeria. His Labour Party provided a political platform for Nigeria's huge population of angry and aggrieved youth, especially those with affiliations (both active and passive) to the leaderless #EndSARS movement through which mass protests against the government were held in southern states and some North-central ones in 2020. Obi sparked a consensus among these young people who formed the 'Obidient Movement' and became the driving force for his campaign.

The second agitation that Obi symbolised is that of a southern presidency. There's this widely held assumption that Nigeria's presidency is subject to a nationally-binding power rotation arrangement. Hence, after eight years of the President Muhammadu Buhari administration, the people that hold this assumption expected a seamless rotation of power to the



Obi

South, particularly to a Christian southerner. Although this assumption is flawed because zoning is strictly subject to the peculiar political dynamics of individual political parties in Nigeria, APC's zoning arrangement favoured the South.

As a result, agitation for the PDP to also zone their presidential ticket to the South became louder. But the party's zoning arrangement did not favour a southern presidency. This is because for the 16 years of PDP rule, 13 years were administered by a southern presidency while only three years were administered by the North. Jonathan by contesting in 2011 and 2015 (even though he lost) sought to fulfill another eight uninterrupted years of a southern presidency. Hence, it was only fair that a northerner also contest for two consecutive elections (whether he wins or loses).

The APC eventually settled for a Muslim from the South-west and the PDP, a Muslim from the North-east. Peter Obi of the Labour Party was seen to be the only hope of achieving a power shift to a Christian southerner and he became a symbol for this agitation which he proudly embodied and radiated.

The third symbolism that Peter Obi's candidacy represented is that of a politico-religious crusade. Although PDP's ticket had Atiku, a Muslim from the North-east and Okowa, Christian from the South-south; his candidacy was still invalidated by the agitators of a southern presidency. Unfortunately for them, the APC decided to settle for a ticket that had a presidential candidate that is a southern Muslim (which in itself is less preferred by this group of agitators) and a running mate that is also Muslim from the North-east. This Muslim-Muslim configuration was strictly borne out of APC's desire to attain unmatched political advantage in relation to the demographic factors that define Nigeria's politics. This was considered politically blasphemous and became the final

recipe needed to start a political war against all Muslim candidates, irrespective of the faiths of their running mates, like Atiku.

Resultantly, the ethnic and religious aspects of the factors that strengthened Peter Obi's candidacy relegated that of advocacy for good governance to the rear and he became a symbol for multi-dimensional identity politics that was successful in polarising the country's politics along ethnic cleavages and religious schisms.

From the outset, the impossibility of fulfilling the constitutional requirement of securing not less than 25% of votes cast in at least 24 states including the FCT was glaringly obvious for Peter Obi, not to talk of securing the highest number of votes. He knew he could only go as far as securing the states in the South-east, some states in the South-south, one or two states in the South-west and North-central and some fraction of votes from Christian-dominated constituencies of the core North. Notwithstanding, the Obidient Movement-backed "Ellu P" jettisoned traditional political structure-based mode of political mobilisation that is usually deeply penetrative in favour of radical media approaches. And he chose to deliberately and unapologetically ride on ethno-religious sentiments at the expense of fostering trans-national politicking.

Regrettably, the idea of politics as a game of consensus and compromises and an exercise in trans-demographic consensus building, which is critical in Nigeria's democratic context, was noticeably suppressed in favour of politically motivated ethno-religious sectarianism. This portended profound political ramifications with severe potential repercussions for Nigeria's quest for national unity and cohesion.

A man whose performance as governor of Anambra state was mediocre at best; who was a beneficiary and product of the

supposed "evil political status quo" as a former member and vice presidential candidate of the PDP; who was fingered in the Pandora papers for operating secret overseas companies in tax havens in a manner that violated Nigeria's laws; who was overly simplistic in his articulation of the solutions to the myriad of problems facing Nigeria and who is popularly known for his rendition of incorrect statistics and incongruous analogies of development stories; was elevated to political sainthood in a short period of time solely because he represented certain sentiments. It was as though there was an epidemic of selective amnesia!

Social media platforms became tools for political mob actions against supporters of other candidates and political parties by the members of the Obidient movement. One had to either join them in embodying their bandwagonist tendencies or risk being vilified and tagged an enemy of development. A section of Nigeria's media incessantly portrayed him as a political messiah who had all the solutions to Nigeria's problems and painted all other candidates as Nigeria's major problems and impediments to progress and development.

But even with all these factors conspiring in his favour, he lost as expected, polling third with 6.1 million votes and securing 25% votes cast in just 16 states. This expected loss is not without dire consequences for Peter Obi as a person and the constituencies whose interests he was seen to be representing.

Specifically, he has been tagged as an agent of a politico-religious crusade that was blatantly furthered by the church and would never be trusted by Nigeria's Muslim population without whose votes he can never smell the scent of Aso Rock. As I inferred in another article, "the religious and ethnic colourations of the factors that influenced his relative prominence and gave him a comparative advantage in this election would be same that would mar his chances in future elections. Hardly would he ever get the chance to command protest votes like he did this time around because of APC's Muslim-Muslim ticket. He is basically done".

Secondly, his candidacy and eventual loss at the polls did as much harm to his political career as it did to the general Igbo presidency agitation. Unlike the PDP where a South-eastern presidency was possible in four-eight years especially with Atiku who promised to personally lead this charge, APC's South-western presidency with Tinubu which is likely to run for eight years assures a rotation back to the North for another eight years in line with the party's zoning arrangement. This makes it 16 years of South-western and northern exclusive presidency. All courtesy of Peter Obi, the South-east has been rendered incapacitated in the quest to securing the presidency for the next 16 years unless a significant disruption of the status quo is experienced which is not expected due to the lost opportunity that was

not utilised in the 2023 elections.

Thirdly, the parochial tendencies of the members of the Obidient movement (especially the Igbo) as deeply embedded in the manner through which their campaigns (of self-righteousness and entitlement) were fostered have widened ethnic intolerance and further compromised the possibility of a sustainable socio-cultural handshake between Igbo and Hausa as well as the Yoruba. This seems to be exacerbated by the subsisting manner in which some Igbo supporters of Peter Obi have continued to stereotype the Hausa/Fulani by tagging them as terrorists and Yoruba as rascals even after the elections. Interestingly, same set of people have started to complain of victimhood (what they like to term 'Igbophobia') which most consider self-inflicted — what a juvenile attempt at ad hominem!

As overbearing as the implications of Obidience to Nigeria's political and socio-cultural prospects may seem, it still presents us with an opportunity to learn significant lessons which are essential for the rectification of the fault lines that have been further emboldened by their misadventure. As stated in the opening paragraphs of this article, it is now clear that Nigeria's presidency can never be won by the sole or combined agencies of popularity, resource strength and sectarian influence. Neither can it ever be won through political mobilisation methods that are entirely fueled by sentiments and emotions, irrespective of the strength of the media power behind their propagation.

Winning presidential elections in Nigeria requires building bridges across the nation's demography and evoking transnational consensus on the need to stand on a candidate's mandate. Expression of excessive entitlement and self-righteousness in the quest for securing power by a people only breeds resentment and isolation. Dexterity in political bargaining and deliberateness in playing this game of consensus and compromises is what is required in order to succeed in this exercise in fostering transnational alliances.

As for political parties, the events of the 2023 presidential election have further proven the fallacy of the third force in Nigeria. As posited in my article titled 2023 Elections: Nigeria and the Third Force Fallacy, "the formation of APC in 2014 has greatly stalled chances for the emergence of any other strong coalition or third force movement" that is capable of dislodging a ruling party. Unless APC disintegrates, it will take a strong alliance of opposition parties just as the ACN, CPC and a section of APGA and ANPP did in 2013 to end the reign of the ruling party.

In the end, 'Obidience' has proven to be a lost cause with grave long term consequences on our political and socio-cultural fabric. We must never allow such misadventure to befall us again.

Ringim writes from Zaria, Kaduna state via haleemabdul1999@gmail.com

SUNDAY POLITICS

2023 polls: A season of political jargons

Since the first republic, politicians have continued to introduce new jargons in every electoral circle which become acceptable long after the elections. In this report, KEHINDE OSASONA examines some of the jargons and slogans that featured prominently in the just concluded polls.

POLITICAL slogans often feature in every election circle. While some lose their relevance soon after the elections, others endure like old wine.

In the first republic, the late Joseph Sanusi Gbadamosi Adegoke Adelabu was the face of Penkelemesi, a popular slogan back in the days.

Adelabu was the founder of Ibadan People's Party (IPP) before he moved to the National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC), under which he tormented and fought Chief Obafemi Awolowo and his Action Group Party in the Western Regional Assembly at Ibadan had led him to describe the situation as "peculiar mess".

Not understanding what he meant, the non-literate section of his audience translated the phrase to penkelemesi, a Yorubisation of the phrase which has stuck till today.

Many years after his death, political jargons and lexicons have continued to characterise successive republics as different situations have given rise to several other jargons.

These jargons sometimes redefine, not only the political space but serve as a winning strategy for many politicians.

'Do or die'

Prior to the 2007 election, President Olusegun Obasanjo, declared that the elections would be a do or die affair for the country and the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

Addressing elders and other stakeholders from Abeokuta, Obasanjo said that he would give it all it takes to ensure his party's victory in the elections, adding that he was not prepared to hand over to criminals.

The slogan was to later become his albatross as many political analysts and pundits condemned it, describing it as an act of desperation.

Similarly, former Kano Governor, Abubakar Rimi, criticised Obasanjo for describing elections as a do-or-die affair, insisting that it smacked of the garrison mentality in the PDP.

I had no shoe

"In my early days in school, I had no shoes, no school bags. There were days I had only one meal.

"I walked miles and crossed rivers to school every day. I didn't have power, I didn't have generators, studied with lanterns, but I never despaired," President Goodluck Jonathan's description of himself reverberated and elicited sympathy and was able to galvanise votes in his favour.

The slogan, however, elicited different responses in different quarters with columnist, Sam Omatseye, tagging it a seduction speech.

According to Omatseye, the ex-president merely tapped the



Yakubu

experience of many who grew up in his days, whether in the Niger Delta, in the South-east, in the South-west or all parts of the North. In the 1970s in Warri, we called it "tearing 10 toes."

Omatseye added: "Most people did not buy shoes. They could not afford it, and it did not seem like a big deal if you did not have shoes because many did not. That was the point President Jonathan did not make.

"He was not alone without shoes. He grew up in a generation of shoeless school goers. He was not an isolated poor. We all had that foot deficiency with blisters, petrified soles and toes, limping over wounds coming and going."

Happy hour

A few days to his election, the Governor-elect of Akwa-Ibom state, Umo Eno, had caused a stir on social media when he stated, during a press conference, that if elected governor, he would have "Happy Hour" to enable bars to sell drinks at affordable prices to the people.

Happy hour is a marketing term for a time when a venue such as a restaurant or bar offer reduced prices on alcoholic drinks. Discounted menu items like appetizers are often served during happy hour.

This is a way for bars and restaurants to draw in more business before or after peak business hours.

He said: "I'll tell you one thing, every Friday, I'll have what I call 'Happy Hour' for the state. It's simple, what do I want to do with 'Happy Hour'? I want to create opportunities for people that have facilities.

"You know what, between five and six; these are the bars that

will open up. So, we'll pick them randomly and send people there. Give us these drinks, as people come, if you were to sell for N200, sell for N50."

The proposal thereafter elicited so much comments, especially in the social media, so much so that a popular Hip hop artiste, Esegine 'Orezi' Allen promised to remind the governor-elect after his inauguration.

"He won ooo. So, it's happy hour every Friday, subsidised shayo and pepper soup. We will remind him," Orezi wrote in the comment section of a blog's post.

As e dey sweet us...

In the run up to the 2023 polls, the Rivers state Governor, Nyesom Wike, has been in the news over his stance on Southern Presidency.

Five governors on the platform of PDP and some other aggrieved party leaders had repeatedly called for the resignation of the party's National Chairman, Iyorchia Ayu, for peace to return to the main opposition party.

The governors led by Gov Wike, declared that the "Integrity Group" still stood on the position earlier taken in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, on Ayu's removal.

So, as part of his campaign strategy, the witty governor adopted the song: 'As e dey sweet us, e dey pain dem' as his official song to hit political opponents.

At political campaign, gathering and assembly, Wike would always sing the song so much that people started asking if the song had become Rivers State anthem.

Otooge

The otooge mantra was the slogan that catalysed the end of the Senator Bukola Saraki

political hegemony in Kwara state.

From the artisans, taxi drivers, okada riders, keke marwa riders, and pedestrians, the slogan was on everyone's lip till the Sarakis were thrown out of power.

Whether Saraki would bounce back or not after the crushing defeats he has suffered two times now remains to be seen.

During a book launch in 2021, the Kwara state Governor, Abdulrasaq Abdulrahman, said that contrary to some claims, the battle cry 'otooge' and its adoption were a product of a state-wide field research that he commissioned shortly after the primaries in October 2018.

"First, otooge is the struggle of our people and it did not necessarily start in 2019. Every Kwaran of good conscience owned and worked for that struggle in various ways. We were only positioned by providence to lead the final lap of the breaking of the jinx that dated back many decades," Abdulrasaq stated.

Chenji dole

The ruling All Progressives Congress (APC), found one in the slogan Change, which was to drive home the party's campaign for the change of what was considered as the difficult situations Nigerians believed they were living in before Buhari's emergence.

The change mantra and Sai Buhari that ushered in the new campaign slogan is like a good fortune: concise, clever and crisp.

Sai Baba, Sai Buhari was adopted as a way of greeting, popular among Okada riders, market men and women and even in corporate offices before

the March 28 presidential polls.

Later, the 4+4 slogan got an impetus when Buhari waved the sign by putting up his two hands with four fingers each in response to cheers from ruling party lawmakers.

Emilokan

President-elect, Senator Bola Ahmed Tinubu, popularised the 'emilokan' coinage. The Youruba expression literally translates to "it's my turn".

It was first mouthed by Tinubu in Abeokuta some days before the APC party presidential primaries election.

He reportedly used the expression to underscore his entitlement to the throne after helping President Muhammadu Buhari, some governors, the Senate President, Speaker and other public office holders to their current positions.

The 'emilokan' slogan later turned to an advantage to the one called Jagaban as many reasoned that for once, politics has returned home and one of the most prolific pro-democracy activists and politicians who alongside others helped in enthroning the country's nascent democracy in person of Tinubu will be on the driver's seat as Nigeria's President.

But while throwing a swipe at Tinubu over the comment, Former President Obasanjo described emi Lokan as a wrong attitude and mentality to bring into leadership in Nigeria.

Obidients

More than any other slogan, obidients as coined by supporters of the Labour Party (LP) Presidential Candidate, Mr Peter Obi, made the most impact.

The Obidient Movement ignited the majority of Nigerian youth consciousness who became his ardent supporters and followers.

The movement came like a wild wind and before one could say 'Jack' became a household name slugging with political heavyweights in the political firmament and has also rattled the ruling party.

Many have argued that Obi's campaigns for the little known LP gained momentum partly because of frustration and anger in the land as exhibited by mostly youth.

Back-to-South

The back-to-south movement was built and anchored on rotational governorship in Cross River state.

Proponents of the movement argued that the three senatorial districts have had their turns at the number one seat in the state; therefore, it should return to the South, where it will start another journey up North. This, they insisted, was the equitable thing to do.

The movement had its way in the March 16 governorship election with the emergence of a former member of the National Assembly and flag bearer of the APC, Prince Basse Out.

SUNDAY PEOPLE

INEC PRESENTS CERTIFICATE, PRESIDENT AND GOVERNORS ELECT

The Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC recently presented certificate of return to the President, Vice, Members of the National Assembly, State Governors and members of the State Houses of Assembly that were elected during the 2023 General Election. Photographs below as monitored by The Nigeria Standard Newspapers. Photo-Editor



Nigeria's President-elect, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu and his Vice, Sen. Kashim Shettima showing their certificate of return to President Muhammadu Buhari in Daura, Katsina State



Katsina State Governor-elect, Dr. Dikko Umar Radda, his deputy and the Governor, Hon. Bello Masari (middle) with their certificates



Governor Abdullahi Sule of Nasarawa State when he visited President Buhari at the Presidential Villa, Abuja presenting his certificate, flanked by the APC National Chairman, Sen. Abdullahi Adamu



Zamfara State Governor-elect, Alhaji Dauda Lawal Dare displaying his certificate of return in Gusau



Plateau State Governor-elect, Barr. Caleb Mutfwang, and his wife receiving his certificate of return at the INEC Headquarters, Jos



Abia State Governor-elect, Mr. Alex Chioma Otti (left) with his certificate



Cross River State Governor-elect, Prince Sen. Bassey Otu displaying his certificate after receiving it at the INEC Headquarters, Calabar



Bauchi State Governor-elect, Bala Abdulkadir Mohammed (middle) after receiving the certificate of return in Bauchi

By **TIMOTHY TYEM**

THE current Plateau State House Assembly (PLHA), is the ninth in the series of Legislative Assemblies in the state beginning from the Nation's Second Republic in 1979.

Inaugurated on 11th June 2019, the State Legislature hit the ground running but not sooner had it taken off than its Legislative functions were scuttled by the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic in the country which forced national and global lockdown.

An Assembly composed of a handful returning lawmakers from the Eighth Assembly with versed experience on parliamentary duties and ethics, the blend of old and young members in the Ninth Assembly is the oxygen that energized some level of achievements recorded.

Without any sense of doubt, the present Assembly in Plateau State is able to fashion the legislative framework that birthed the Plateau State Contributory Healthcare Management Agency, PLASHEMA, achieved its legislative financial autonomy and returned the state budget circle from January to December among numerous successes recorded in the exercise of its constitutional responsibility.

However, many keen followers of the Assembly's activities within the public domain had at different times held critical opinions on the state of Ninth Assembly's performance. While some levied their criticism on the parliament's underperformance when compared to past Assemblies others express worries on its inability to convene sittings and discussed the state of affairs within the larger Plateau geographical space.

The Ninth Plateau State legislative Assembly is currently headed by Speaker Yakubu Yakson Sanda after the perceived "ill-fated" impeachment of Abok Nuhu Ayuba; an impeachment some political analysts believed has remained a curse rather than blessing to the overall operationalization of House's responsibility. Sadly though, the Ninth Assembly in Plateau has its own share of solemn moments. Three lawmakers (Ezekiel Afon of Pengana, Henry Longs of Pankshin South and Eric Dakogol of Qua'anpan North Constituency) sadly passed on at different times while Musa Agah of Rukuba-Irigwe Constituency won and moved to the Federal House of Representatives, the Green Chamber, to represent Jos North/Bassa Federal Constituency.

In the meantime, eight out of the twenty one serving members in the Plateau State House of Assembly have won primary elections from their respective political parties to boost their chances of returning to the Tenth Assembly. The Speaker, Yakubu Yakson Sanda, from Pengana, Naanlong Gapyil Daniel from Mikang, Nanbol

Daniel Listick of Langtang North Central, Bala Hudu Ismaila from Kantana, Bala Fwangje of Mangu South, Abdul Yanga from Mangu North East, Timothy Dantong of Riyom and Fom Dalyop Gwottson representing Jos South Constituency are the few that made it beyond party primaries. Peter Ibrahim Gyendeng, representing Barkin Ladi Constituency, however contested and won the Barkin Ladi/Riyom Federal Constituency seat at the National Assembly.

That the Plateau Tenth Assembly is a grazing field with or without an experienced lead horse is a matter only time can



X-raying the state Ninth Assembly



Sanda



Naanlong



Yanga



Dalyop



Gyendeng



Tyem

tell. But given the scenario that played out especially during the just concluded Presidential and National Assembly Elections wherein unpopular political parties also gained representative seats, fears are being entertained on whether or not all or some of the eight

lawmakers that scaled the first huddle will make it pass the March 18, 2023 Gubernatorial and House of Assembly Elections. Pundits in Legislative affairs and Legislative scholars have often said that a legislator is like wine which tastes sweeter with

time. By this phrase, they are expected to perform optimally when the electorate decide to return them for another term. In conclusion, it is near obvious that a dearth of experience is certain to roar its ugly head in the Tenth Assembly with the number not

really encouraging as it stands. Where this permutation suffices, a gamut of time to learn the legislative processes and procedures will take a toll on the new Assembly with resultant effects which include, among others, delayed productivity.

SUNDAY MAGAZINE



Ngige



Emeffele



Ajaero

Cash crunch and the Nigerian populace

Since last year, 2022, when the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), announced its intention to redesign and rebrand the Naira, arms were kept akimbo by Nigerians to see the outcome of the policy. Alas, when it finally came, it became a near "disaster" as the people and the economy groan and suffers VICTOR ALI writes.

SINCE the decision of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) to redesign and redistribute the nation's currency, the naira, in 2022, the harsh conditions on the people of the country worsens, and the economy visibly suffers. Needless to say, currency change is not an anomaly all over the world. There has been evolution of currency used in Nigeria prior to 1960 and even after, which is one aspect of Nigeria's financial services, revolution and global best practices.

Writing sometimes in 2022, Jibril Salisu Naimma said, "according to international best practices, a national currency ought to be redesigned and rebranded after every 7-10 years. Like the United States, Dollars introduced 230 years ago had undergone several redesigns in different times right from the day its production on 2nd April, 1792 till date and there would even be another rebranding in year 2030 of some of the US Dollars denominations. The pound sterling which is currency of the united kingdom introduced in 1222 years ago had too undergone several redesign and rebranding virtually after passage of every King and Queen of England and time of need for new denomination introduction.

"The currency, Naira, First introduced on 1st January, 1973 by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) under the then Head of State, General Yakubu Gowon and governorship of the Apex Bank by Dr. Clement Nyong Isong who served from 15th August 1967 to 22nd September 1975.

CBN which is the only legal tender issuer body in Nigeria had since from then up till date been modifying and rebranding the currency which is the global best practices for both the paper note and coin. The Nigerian Naira has failed to undergo changes within the period of 5-8 years in accordance with globally recommended best practices not until this time".

Writing under the headline **THE EVOVING NIGERIAN NAIRA NOTES Na'ima** further disclosed that, "the first currencies introduced were the 50 Kobo, N1, N5, N10 and N20 respectively. Nigerians should know the antecedents of the evolving Naira when 11 years after its introduction to control money laundering and stop corruption, modification and rebranding were carried out when all colours of the Naira were changed under Muhammadu Buhari who happens to be Nigeria's head of State and Alhaji Abdulkadir Ahmed as the CBN Governor

then. In 1991, 50 kobo and N1 were both turned to coins and N50 notes introduced under the then head of state Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida with the same man in 1984 as CBN Governor. Four more denomination of N100, N200, N500 and N1000 were seen in 1999, 2000, 2001 and on 12th October 2005 respectively all under former president Olusegun Obasanjo under the governorship of Dr. Paul A. Ogwumma Chief J.O. Sanusi, and Prof. Chukwuma C. Soludo.

"Also, a remarkable and significant change was done under Olusegun Obasanjo in which N5, N10, N20 and N50 notes were changed to leather note from paper notes respectively. The Naira was further redesigned and rebranded in 2014 in commemoration of Nigeria's 100th Centenary anniversary since amalgamation. The rebranding at that time affected N100 alone which at that time Goodluck Jonathan was the president and the rebranding was under the governorship of the present CBN Governor Godwin Emeffele.

"Nigeria has in the past years not been redesigning and rebranding any of its currency nearly more than the internationally expected years for a country to rebrand and redesign its currencies but now again under

president Muhammadu Buhari -led Federal Government and governorship of the bank under Godwin Emeffele, Four denominations of Naira currency will undergo redesign and rebranding which is going to be historical and commendable. By the time the new currency is ready for circulation, PMB would have set a record as the first Nigerian President whom under his watch the naira undergone redesign and rebranding twice, one as a military head of State and as a democratically elected president"

Be that as it may, it must be pointed out at this juncture that the present attempt at redesign and rebranding came with a lot of hoopla. For whatever reason (s) the scarcity of the currency has led to untold hardship on Nigerians, consequently, both the citizenry and businesses suffer. So bad the situation became that the old Naira notes were rejected by riders in many cities of the country Governors threatened show down; supreme court ruling; Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) warning strike notice; amongst others. To say that anxiety and confusion gripped the country is an understatement.

In spite of the ruling by the apex bank in the land, the Supreme Court that the old

currency still remain legal tender, compliance by the Central bank of Nigerian (CBN) became an issue as the bank foot-drag. However, with intensified pressure, the apex bank capitulates). A statement by CBN's spokesman, Isa Abdulmunin said, "In compliance with the established tradition of obedience to court orders and sustenance of the rule of law principle that characterized the government of President Muhammadu Buhari, and by extension the operations of central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) as a regulator, Deposit money Banks operating in Nigeria have been directed to comply with the Supreme Court ruling of March 3, 2023.

"Accordingly, the CBN met with the Bankers Committee and has directed that the old N200, N500 and N1000 bank notes remain legal tender alongside, the redesigned bank note till December 31, 2023."

Before now, the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) had planned a nationwide strike action to protest the scarcity of Naira notes all over the country. But with the latest development from the apex bank, the NLC had a rethink. According to media reports, (Vanguard Wednesdays, march 29, 2023), the NLC has suspended the planned

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NEWS

Lalong invites Buhari for projects commissioning

By PALANG KASMI

PLATEAU governor, Simon Bako Lalong has formally invited President Muhammadu Buhari for commissioning of projects executed by his administration.

Lalong has also said calls for an interim government is not possible under the watch of President Buhari.

The Governor, and Director General of the APC Presidential Campaign Council disclosed this to newsmen at State House, Abuja after meeting with President Muhammadu Buhari.

He said the plotters are daydreaming adding that an interim government to thwart the inauguration of President-elect, Asiwaju Bola Tinubu, cannot happen under the watch of President Muhammadu Buhari.

"I was in the State House to formally invite the President



Lalong

to Plateau State to inaugurate the legacy projects executed by my administration".

"They include six model

secondary schools and six model primary schools. Apart from that, I have completed many abandoned projects left by my predecessors".

"One of them is a giant British-American overhead bridge, the best High Court in the North is in Jos now, waiting commissioning".

On the issue of the calls for interim government, Lalong stated "Nigerians will always say, 'God forbid.' Not under the administration of President Buhari, who has been saying every time that 'I believe in democracy. I believe that after my tenure, I want to go and rest'".

"He said it today that 'I'm going back to Daura,' and I told him that some of us will still disturb you in Daura. This man has worked very well for democracy".

"So those who are still talking about it (interim government), I will say they are just dreaming. They are just daydreaming. By the grace of God, Buhari is going to bring a successor and that successor is already Asiwaju Bola Tinubu."

SUNDAY STANDARD Newspapers recalls that recently, a statement issued by Nigeria's Secret Police revealed that some persons were plotting to stall the Inauguration of President elect of Nigeria's February 23 elections, Asiwaju Bola Tinubu as Nigeria's President calling rather for the installation of an interim government.

Devote your life towards prosperity of Nigerians

By PALANG KASMI

- Lalong

AMONG the many well wishers that celebrated Nigeria's President-elect, Asiwaju Bola Tinubu on his 71st birthday was Plateau Governor, Simon Bako Lalong.

Lalong who is also the Director General of the APC Presidential Campaign Council gave the goodwill felicitations in a message.

He congratulated the President elect for witnessing another birthday in good health, God's favour and his elevation arising from the recent General elections where Nigerians gave him the mandate to serve them for the next four years.

Said Lalong in the felicitation message: "The President-elect is a man of integrity and compassion whose commitment to service is legendary and well appreciated".

"Asiwaju is a man whose life has been full of investment in the progress, development and capacity building for others where many have been raised and mentored to become great people in their fields of endeavour as well as in politics".

"The recently concluded elections clearly shows that Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu is a man who is in touch with

Nigerians from all parts of the country irrespective of their backgrounds".

The DG said Asiwaju Tinubu's 71st birthday is coming at a time when he is reflecting on the task before him to serve Nigerians and attend to the immediate

challenges of nation building.

While praying and wishing him God's wisdom, good health and happiness, Lalong urged him to continue to build people and devote his life to the prosperity of all Nigerians which is aptly captured in his Renewed Hope manifesto.

APC demands for immediate resignation of Bauchi Chairman

From **ABBAS GUNGURA, Bauchi**

APC Patriotic Support Group in Bauchi state have demanded for the immediate resignation of the state Party Chairman over anti-party activities.

The leader of the group, Alhaji Almustapha Zubairu, while addressing journalists on the issue at the NUJ Bauchi Conference Hall, raised concerns that some party members who left the APC after losing in the primary election to contest for various elective positions in different political platforms are planning to come back.

The group while describing as disturbing, the lackadaisical attitude of the State Chairman of the APC in Bauchi, alleged that on his own volition, he abandoned his responsibility at the time

of peak need just to satisfy his 'paymaster'.

"This is totally undemocratic and the pinnacle of betrayal of trust. We call on him to honorably resign as the Chairman of our great party in the interest of Justice and for rebuilding process of our party to succeed", the group said.

The group alleged that the state party chairman did the worst when he decided to openly display his ballot paper without voting the gubernatorial candidate of his party.

"To say the least, this is the height of betrayal of trust. The truth of the matter is that he has eroded the trust, confidence and loyalty of the vast members of the party hence, the call for his immediate resignation", they declared.

Almustapha Zubairu said, those staging the comeback are the members who contested and failed woefully in a free and fair APC party primaries at Gubernatorial, Senatorial and House of Reps.

He regretted that, after losing, they shamefully defected to other parties to vie elective positions.

"Now they are head-bent to nefariously return to APC after melting all sorts of lies to the party and its leadership at both State and National levels", he said.

The group while condemning their actions, warned those hobnobbing with them to be wary about the desperate and

the unholy sportsmanship they exhibited in their quest towards self fulfillment at all post.

They urged the National Leadership of the APC, President-Elect, VP-Elect to be aware of what they described as "worrisome antics of the so-called leadership of the party in Bauchi State".

The group said there was an urgent need for the National Leadership of the party to advise them once and for all to refrain and repent from such heinous anti-democratic activities.

According to the group, to attain enduring unity, trust and genuine reconciliation, the affected members should be counseled on why they should not aid an outsider to destroy the house that they laboured collectively to build as well as support their collective resolve to restore the stolen mandate by the ruling party in Bauchi State.

The group opined that members who left the party at the time of need should not be given the listening ears without recourse to due diligence, consultations with critical Stakeholders and should be made to show remorse and tender public apology with commitment to be faithful, trust worthy in the subsequent dealings.

"This would serve as deterrent to others and will promote party loyalty and inculcate the spirit of patience and perseverance", the group demanded.



INEC to conduct supplementary elections

THE electoral commission, INEC, has announced that supplementary elections would hold in relevant states on 15 April.

The governorship and legislative elections have been concluded in most parts of Nigeria, but elections were declared inconclusive in some states and legislative districts.

The commission has decided that all outstanding Governorship, National, and State Assembly supplementary elections would take place on Saturday 15th April 2023.

Court restrains Ayu from acting as PDP Chairman

The crisis in the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has taken a new dimension as the Benue State High Court in Makurdi has ordered the National Chairman of the PDP, Iyorchia Ayu, to stop parading himself as the chairman of the party.

The judge, W. I Kpochi, on Monday, issued an interim injunction restraining Mr. Ayu from parading himself as the national chair of the PDP.

The judge issued the order following an exparte application by a member of the party in Benue State.

Nigeria police apprehend 781 suspected electoral offenders

The Nigeria Police Force arrested a total of 781 alleged electoral offenders across the country during the just concluded elections.

Nigeria held presidential and national assembly elections on 25 February while gubernatorial and state assembly elections were held on 18 March this year.

The Inspector General of Police, Alkali Usman, made the disclosure Monday afternoon during a meeting with Assistant Inspectors-General of Police (AIGs), Commissioners of Police (CPs) and other Tactical Commanders in Abuja.

The meeting, according to the force spokesperson, Olumuyiwa Adejobi, was to evaluate police performances during the elections.

Mr. Adejobi said Mr. Usman has directed state commands to submit case files of the electoral offenders to the force Electoral Offences Desk at the police headquarters.

NPC Sets New Date, Enumerator, and Supervisor Training

The National Population Commission (NPC) in Nigeria has announced the rescheduling of the 2023 Population and Housing Census timetable. The commission also confirmed the dates for the training of enumerators and supervisors for the upcoming census.

According to the new scheduled day released by the NPC, the Refresher Training for DQM (Data Quality Management) and specialized workforce at the state level will hold from April 3rd to 6th, 2023. This training is designed to equip the DQM and specialized workforce with the necessary skills and knowledge needed to carry out their duties effectively.

Super Eagles ranked as the most expensive team in Africa

The Super Eagles of Nigeria are the most expensive national team in Africa, according to the transfer market. The three-time African champions are also placed in the 13th position in the world.

Several Super Eagles stars play for clubs in Europe's lucrative leagues, making them one of the most valuable teams on the continent and world.

Napoli forward, Victor Osimhen is the biggest player in the Super Eagles at the moment and is expected to command a huge transfer fee in case he decides to leave the Partenopei this summer.

The likes of Alex Iwobi, Samuel Chukwueze, Ademola Lookman, Joe Aribi, Terem Moffi, and Maduka Okoye also contributed to the huge value placed on the Super Eagles. Morocco, Ivory Coast, Ghana, and Senegal complete the top five teams in Africa.

AFCOM: kick-off date set, January 2024

With other qualifications to be determined in June and September 2023, dates are now set for the tournament to go ahead in January 2024

The 2023 Africa Cup of Nations Cup tournament, postponed until 2024, now has dates set for the kickoff and the final.

The biennial tournament scheduled for Cote d'Ivoire would kick off on 13 January 2024, at the Alassane Ouattara Stadium in Ebimpe, Abidjan, with the final set for 11 February 2024.

The last international calendar date saw four nations, defending champions Senegal, Algeria, Morocco, and South Africa, book their slots in Cote d'Ivoire. Nigeria's Super Eagles moved a step closer to qualification with a 1-0 win over Guinea Bissau, in Group A, after suffering a shock 1-0 loss to the same opponents on Friday, 24 March.

Compiled by HOSEA NYAMLONG



Tinubu

SUNDAY FEATURE

There are many ways to success

Everything in life has rules and processes. If you miss the rules and process, you are likely going to hit the rock unless you have a form of luck or "grace factor". In law, you must understand the laws, rules, and exceptions to win a case. In mathematics, you must know the formula. In medicine, you perform some diagnosis to know the cause of an illness, [HENRY UKAZU](#) writes.

FOR the purpose of this article, the focus is on how soft skills are necessary to achieve success in life. These rules are not exhaustive, it's more like some basic and insightful ideas one can explore if one is determined to succeed in life.

Just like there are many ways to kill a rat, there are many ways to succeed. However, one thing is certain, you must follow and adopt certain principles. Principles are universal. Once you apply them in the right manner, you are bound to the benefits. I will be sharing some of the principles a diligent and progressive mind can adopt.

While reading, working hard and smart on your business is important, learning a skill, developing your talent and gifts, are important success magnets a rational mind must adopt. Some of these success principles which I call success magnet are built into soft skills amongst which are building capacity, having a good reputation, being diligent, consistent, networking, personal relationship, good attitude, good communication, problem solving skills, creativity, having empathy etc.

You may be wondering how one applies these soft skills? Let's start from the area of building capacity. In any area you'll like to get prominence, you must endeavor to learn as much as possible to gain credibility. When you have developed capacity, it will be easy to apply soft skills. It's sad to note that sometimes, some people put the cart before the horse and think the universe will favor them. No, you must understand the process. No serious mind will give you an opportunity when you are yet to develop capacity. When you develop capacity, it will be easy to apply the soft skills.

Even if you haven't developed capacity, you can creatively use soft skills to learn how to develop capacity if you have a good communication skill, great mindset and attitude.

These soft skills might sound ordinary, but trust me, they are very fundamental. This is because, even with theoretical and practical knowledge, if you don't have these soft skills, you might appear unattractive. But if you have these soft skills, you can learn both theoretical and practical knowledge.

It's easy to say I want to succeed in life, but, when we are exposed to the diligent and consistent work we must do,



we'll rather remain in our comfort zone. Trust me, I have been there, but I refuse to stay there because I have since understood that there's no gain in playing little when you can play big.

On a personal note, I normally do all within my reach to give my best shot by preparing for the best and expecting the worst to the extent it goes south. As you may know, nothing is guaranteed in life, no matter how hard you work and trust you may have in your work. You can do all you are expected to do and still fail. Yes, you can have theoretical, practical, and social skills etc. and still fail. In such a situation, just know that your time has not come yet.

It's important to note that there's no substitute for excellence. It's either the work is good or not. To achieve excellence in life, endeavor to spend one percent of your time in an area of your life you have a strong interest in or whatever you are passionate about. By doing, you will develop expertise.

Another great rule for success in life is surrounding yourself with greatness. By this, I mean people who are exceptionally good in what they do. They might not be in your areas of interest, but if

they are in your area of interest, that's a plus. These people might be younger or older than you, they must have certain traits or values you admire, but more importantly, they should bring out the best in you.

Most times, in our quest to make an impact in life, we tend to focus on hard work which is good, but experience and life has taught me to focus on what ignites your spirit and soft silks can be the game-changer. When you channel your energy on where you are celebrated, you will understand the importance of value. Imagine working with someone who doesn't understand the value you bring to the table, all your work will be considered as mere service, but someone with a heart of service, gratitude and appreciation knows the importance of value when they see one. This is the simple reason why most employers and resourceful beings make conscious efforts to retain certain people despite the noise outside.

When you are successful, there's this level of happiness and fulfillment that comes to you. This success comes to you because you have done something unique like having mentors or role models. Let's take a minute to discuss mentors and roles and its importance.

If you will agree with me, success leaves clues where it derived its strength and foundation. There's nothing in life that doesn't have a foundation. As you journey through life, find mentors and role models who have already achieved what you would like to achieve in life. Just like if you want true love, study what the happiest couples have done to stay together for decades; you can also learn from the experience of those whose marriage didn't work, they might give you one or two advise that might be more beneficial to you than couples whose marriage never broke up.

If your dream is to be the best lawyer in your city or State, study what the best lawyers in your city or country did to achieve their reputations. If you want to be a World Champion, study the lives of World Champions and learn how they did it. If you want to be a millionaire, find millionaire role models who you would like to be someday. If you want to be an entrepreneur, find a few entrepreneurs who inspire you and study how they achieved what they did. Without a doubt, mentors and role models are your shortcuts to unleashing your greatness in life. By learning from the experiences of

others, you will increase your probability of success, and avoid unnecessary mistakes.

Give and Give: This principle is mind-blowing. As humans, we are naturally selfish, we do care for ourselves most times more than others do. Don't get me wrong, you need to care for yourself first, however for the purpose of this principle, I want you to know that you will get what you want faster when you help other people to achieve what they want. Life is not about you, neither is it centered on you. The average man seeks what he can receive from the world. The extraordinary man seeks what he can give to the world. When you assist other people without having an expectation, they will be glad to go the extra mile for you if they have an appreciative mindset filled with graduation when they see an opportunity to say thank you for what you did to them.

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

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SUNDAY FEATURE

Beijing Forum: Interrogating the substance of democracy

Democracy is world's most recognised political lexicon and its universal appeal as people focused has catapulted it to the center-stage of international political discourse. Despite its pre-eminence, its discourse and applications are even vulnerable to manipulations and even abuse. Despite that its appeals and values are universal, it is however, not "a one size that fits all, CHARLES ONUNAIJU writes.

THIS was actually the broad convention of the "second international forum on democracy: the shared human values," held in Chinese capital city, Beijing on the 22nd and 23rd of March. The conference which drew scholars, political leaders, journalists, social movements, was hosted by the publicity department of the Communist Party of China, central committee, state council information office of the Peoples Republic of China and organized by the prestigious Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), China media group and the China international Media group,

Conference delegates believed that it has become imperative to broadly interrogate democracy and put in context and that these effort has become urgent, given that the desperate appropriation and hijack of democracy by the United States and its western allies to promote its hegemonic and power politics. Democracy in the context of a tool of US foreign policy has become inflexible, sterile and mere camouflage to pursue vested and special interests of the US and western ruling elites. Despite, using democracy as a tool of political and ideological members conference delegation reasonably agree that no clique faction no matter how powerful, should be allow the comfort to monopolize the discourse on democracy to rationalize its political and ideological prejudice.

Democracy as people-centered political practice must not only have been driven by the people but must bring concrete improvements in their living condition. This the Crux of the "people whole-process democracy which integrates process- oriented democracy with result-oriented democracy, procedural democracy with substantive democracy, direct democracy with indirect democracy and the people's democracy with the will of the state. From the perspective of the China state council, it is a model of socialist democracy that covers all aspects of the democratic process and all sector of society that democracy is a concrete phenomenon, that is constantly evolving and develops



along the paths chosen by expressed concerns at the different people based on their extremist remarks of western exploration." But international elites and feared that except, hegemonic power chiefly the they turn down their rhetoric, United States ruling elites would collusion with non-western have none of this, according to power, especially China might Mr. Fred Membe, president of the just be a matter of time. He socialist of Zambia, who cautioned that democracy is best wondered how the imperialist practiced and its result most West who instituted colonial visible in the life of the people, domination, extinguished with when it takes into account the renal force, every flicker of local peculiarities. Prof. Jeffery democracy in Africa could turn Sachs, professor of Colombia in round claiming to show Africa the United States and the author the path way to democracy that would work in their best interest, China whose institutions and just as extolled the Communist Party of China in leading the way country's leadership to end to finding the democratic poverty among its 1.4 billion pathway that is suitable to people.

China. Mr. George Galloway, Across various panels of the veteran former member of the two-day conference, consensus British Parliament and leader of emerged that democracy would the workers Party of Britain be best deepened in its many wondered at the west and variants through experience- mostly US finger pointing at sharing and that every model of China of the county's democratic democracy stands to gain and credentials. improve through respects and According to him only 1.4 engagement with others. Views billion acting in free will and in are broadly expressed that US atmosphere exercising their democracy has reached a tipping creative imaginations can point and needs renovation achieve what the Chinese have through engaging with others accomplished in the short period especially those that combine of all human history. He accused high rate of popular participation the western elite of perpetrating with concrete deliverables in the a process of inertia and drudgery livelihood of the people. The rise leaving the people on the tender hook of livelihood crises. and the spiraling tendency of the

Former Japanese prime US regimes easy resort to proxy minister Mr. Yukio Hatoyama wars, block contribution and

power point to ruling elite on the loose, without any democratic constraint or supervision by the people.

China's "peoples whole-process democracy" came under the gaze of participants who called people-centered, people-driven and people supervised form which combined rule-based process and tangible outcomes, enhances both broad participation and livelihood enhancement. This form of democracy is considered to respond to the question of many developing countries, whose democracies must not only enhance broad popular participation, but also enhance material improvement in the living condition of the people and also enhance their spiritual civilization. Most African delegates to the conference share a broad view that China through her intense cooperation with the continent enhances and promotes democracy in Africa. Through massive infrastructure construction spanning rail, road, air, power stations, ports China is delivering support to increased and productive economic activities leading to enhanced livelihood and raising the necessary material security and social consciousness for effective political participation and consequently building the formidable walls to secure democracy. Africa delegates to the conference vows to the "people whole-process democracy," interrogate and interprets its features to emerging democracy in Africa and further express concerns that liberal democracy in Africa is held by a pin-thread with its exclusive emphasis on procedures and rules.

In the opening address of the conference, the key note speaker, Mr. Li Shulei, member of the political bureau and head of the publicity department of the Communist Party of China said that the leadership Party has secured achievements with the

Chinese people through open and democratic consultations with all the social forces and have promoted consensus through cooperation and broad engagement. He told delegates that China stands ready to share its experiences with the world, and would work with the rest of the world to enhance democratic consultations and broad participation of all countries and people in the management of international affairs.

The two day Beijing forum called democracy the business of all people and not the exclusive preserve of any few people or countries, exhorting that democracy is better enhanced when it benefits from the experiences and insight of different peoples.

Despite that democracy, the most popular political concept of our time and epoch has featured more as routine slogan especially in the foreign policy tools of the US and western countries than a serious framework to depict political inclusion, generate popular participation and engage existential challenges. The subterranean attempt to fashion democratic paradigm as one size fits all, not only denies the trajectories of historical process with its specific local contexts at its core characteristics but would render democracy and its outcomes, sterile and impotent. The credibility of the democratic process and its trajectories depend to a large extent of how it solves practical problems. A substantive democratic process that is focused on problem solving must give the people, the sense of social and civic worth to be citizens and not just fashion them as electoral zombies periodically one faction or the other of the governing elites to inordinately pursue and fulfill their sense of entitlements.

Onunaiju, who participated in the Beijing forum, is the Director of the Center for China Studies, (CCS) Abuja.

"Conference delegates believed that it has become imperative to broadly interrogate democracy and put in context and that these effort has become urgent, given that the desperate appropriation and hijack of democracy by the United States and its western allies to promote its hegemonic and power politics. Democracy in the context of a tool of US foreign policy has become inflexible, sterile and mere camouflage to pursue vested and special interests of the US and western ruling elites. Despite, using democracy as a tool of political and ideological members conference delegation reasonably agree that no clique faction no matter how powerful, should be allow the comfort to monopolize the discourse on democracy to rationalize its political and ideological prejudice."

Continued from last week

GEOGRAPHIC necessity has played a part in promoting the maintenance of union within federal systems. The Mississippi Valley in the United States, the Alps in Switzerland, the island character of the Australian continent, and the mountains and jungles surrounding Brazil have all been influences promoting unity; so have the pressures for Canadian union arising from that country's situation on the border of the United States and the pressures upon the German states generated by their neighbours to the east and west. In this connection, the necessity for a common defense against common enemies has stimulated federal union in the first place and acted to maintain it.

Elements maintaining noncentralization

The constituent polities in a federal system must be fairly equal in population and wealth or else balanced geographically or numerically in their inequalities. In the United States, each geographic section has included both great and small states. In Canada, the ethnic differences between the two largest and richest provinces have prevented them from combining against the others. Swiss federalism has been supported by the existence of groups of cantons of different sizes and religio-linguistic backgrounds. Similar distributions exist in every other successful federal system.

A major reason for the failure of federal systems has often been a lack of balance among the constituent polities. In the German federal empire of the late 19th century, Prussia was so dominant that the other states had little opportunity to provide national leadership or even a reasonably strong alternative to the policy of the king and government. During the Soviet era (1917–90/91), the existence of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic—occupying three-fourths of the area and containing three-fifths of the population—severely limited the possibility of authentic federal relationships in that country even if the communist system had not.

Successful federal systems have also been characterized by the permanence of their internal boundaries. Boundary changes may occur, but such changes are made only with the consent of the polities involved and are avoided except in extreme situations.

In a few very important cases, noncentralization is given support through the constitutionally guaranteed existence of different systems of law in the constituent polities. In the United States, each state's legal system stems directly and to a certain extent uniquely from English (and, in one case, French) law, while federal law occupies only an interstitial position binding the systems of the 50 states together. The resulting mixture of laws keeps the administration of justice substantially noncentralized, even in federal courts. In Canada, the existence of common-law and civil-law systems side by side has contributed to French-Canadian cultural survival. Federal systems more often provide for modification of national legal codes by the subnational

governments to meet special local needs, as in Switzerland.

The point has often been made that in a truly federal system the constituent polities must have substantial influence over the formal or informal constitutional-amending process. Since constitutional changes are often made without formal constitutional amendment, the position of the constituent polities must be such that serious changes in the political order can be made only by the decision of dispersed majorities that reflect the areal division of powers. Federal

Rethinking federal character and federalism (I)

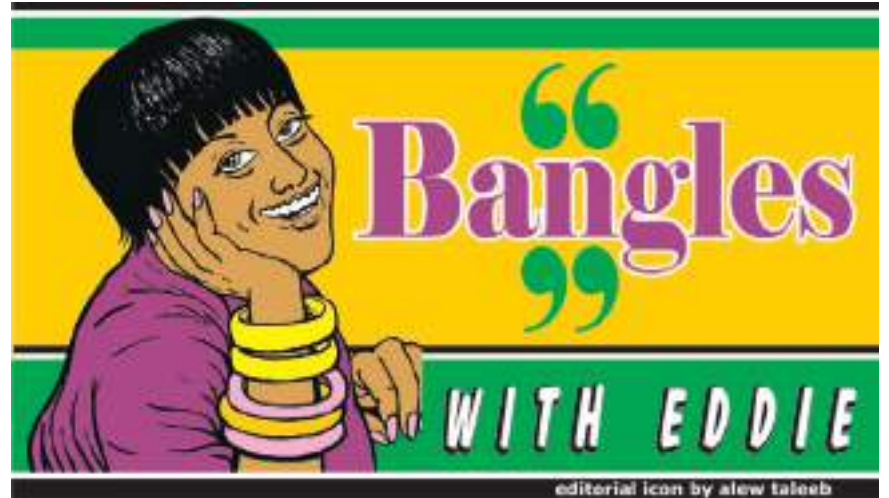


theorists have argued that this is important for popular government as well as for federalism.

Noncentralization is also strengthened by giving the constituent polities guaranteed representation in the national legislature and often by giving them a guaranteed role in the national political process. The latter is guaranteed in the written constitutions of the United States and Switzerland. In other systems, such as those of Canada and Latin America, the constituent polities have acquired certain powers of participation, and these have become part of the unwritten constitution.

Perhaps the most important single element in the maintenance of federal noncentralization is the existence of a noncentralized party system. Noncentralized parties initially develop out of the constitutional arrangements of the federal compact, but once they have come into existence they tend to be self-perpetuating and to function as decentralizing forces in their own right. The United States and Canada provide examples of the forms that a noncentralized party system may take. In the two-party system of the United States, the parties are actually coalitions of the state parties (which may in turn be dominated by specific local party organizations) and generally function as national units only for the quadrennial presidential elections or for purposes of organizing the national Congress.

In Canada, on the other hand, the parliamentary form of government,



with its requirements of party responsibility, means that on the national plane considerably more party cohesiveness must be maintained simply in order to gain and hold power. There has been a fragmentation of the parties along regional or provincial lines. The party victorious in national elections is likely to be the one able to expand its provincial electoral bases temporarily to national proportions.

Federal nations with less-developed party systems frequently gain some of the same decentralizing effects through what has been called caudillismo—in which power is diffused among strong local leaders operating in the constituent polities. Caudillistic noncentralization has apparently existed also in Nigeria and Malaysia.

Elements maintaining the federal principle: Several devices found in federal systems serve to maintain the federal principle itself. Two of these are of particular importance.

The maintenance of federalism requires that the central government and the constituent polities each have substantially complete governing institutions of their own, with the right to modify those institutions unilaterally within limits set by the compact. Both separate legislative and separate administrative institutions are necessary.

The contractual sharing of public responsibilities by all governments in the system appears to be a fundamental characteristic of federalism. Sharing, broadly conceived,

includes common involvement in policy making, financing, and administration. Sharing may be formal or informal; in federal systems, it is usually contractual. The contract is used as a legal device to enable governments to engage in joint action while remaining independent entities. Even where there is no formal arrangement, the spirit of federalism tends to infuse a sense of contractual obligation.

Federal systems or systems strongly influenced by federal principles have been among the most stable and long-lasting of polities. But the successful operation of federal systems requires a particular kind of political environment, one that is conducive to popular government and has the requisite traditions of political cooperation and self-restraint. Beyond this, federal systems operate best in societies with sufficient homogeneity of fundamental interests to allow a great deal of latitude to local government and to permit reliance upon voluntary collaboration. The use of force to maintain domestic order is even more inimical to the successful maintenance of federal patterns of government than to other forms of popular government. Federal systems are most successful in societies that have the human resources to fill many public offices competently and the material resources to afford a measure of economic waste as part of the price of liberty.

The following is from Britannica.com

Concluded from last week

TODAY we begin a new series, which I have entitled "Why Jesus Came". In this series, we will be focusing on Jesus and the anointing upon His life. This, if I may also add, is the core message of Christmas, which as we know, begins with the announcement that THE SAVIOUR, CHRIST IS BORN. The core of the Christmas message expresses the depth of God's love for humanity. The Bible says in John Chapter 3:16, **For God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten son...** and then in John 3:17, **God did not send His son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.**

Christ - who He is; the person of Christ; why He came; the anointing that He carries, and why His birth is such a blessing to the human race.

In Luke 2:9, we are told that Angel Gabriel appeared to As we talk about why Jesus came, examining the message of Christmas, our focus will be on shepherds on the hills of Judaea. They were the ones given the honor by Almighty God to be the first to receive the announcement concerning the arrival of the Saviour. Remember these shepherds on the Judean hills were Israelites, they were Jews, so they already had a background knowledge about the prophesy and they were expecting a saviour.

The Lord chose those lowly, humble set of people on the Judean hills that night to announce, what I believe to be the most important message that would ever be - the coming of the saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Luke 2:9 says, **"and Lo the angel of the Lord came upon them, the glory of the Lord shone around these shepherds and they were sore afraid; and the angel said to them, 'fear not: for behold I bring you tidings of great joy which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a saviour which is Christ the Lord'."**

For the record, Christ is not Jesus' surname but a title that denotes His office as Saviour, Deliverer and Messiah. It is His office as the One that God promised through the prophecies; through the Holy Scriptures that a saviour will come to this earth and will deliver mankind from their sin.

The word, "Christ" in Greek is "Christos", which means "the anointed one". Isaiah 10:27

says, **And it shall come to pass in that day, that his burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing.** It is the anointing that destroys the yoke. Jesus is the anointed one; He is the one that has been anointed by God to destroy every yoke and shackle of sin and to totally neutralize Satan's rights to afflict mankind.

is no in-between. The anointing that Jesus carries is the only anointing that can thoroughly severe or cut a human being off from the dominion of the devil. There is NO freedom outside of CHRIST, no true and genuine freedom and deliverance outside of CHRIST. I make bold to say that, according to the Bible, **there is none other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved** (Acts 4:12).

Now, when the angel, Gabriel, appeared to the shepherds at



Taking away the sin of the World



The Bible says in 1 John 3:8 the birth of Jesus, he made the announcement, as he lit up that Judean sky that day with the good news, saying, **for this purpose the Son of unto you is born this day in God was manifested, that he the city of David a Saviour, might destroy the works of which is Christ the Lord - the devil.** That He might undo that which the devil has done - Not only is Jesus the anointed one, He also carries anointed and appointed by God to be the deliverer of the human race. There is No deliverance found anywhere else outside of Jesus.

There is absolutely no deliverance in any other name. Any other option that is given to you is a temporary option that will eventually bring you back into bondage: because the truth of the matter is, in this life, there are only two kingdoms; the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness. The Bible says in Colossians 1:12, **giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.**

In this life, a man is either in the kingdom of light or in the kingdom of darkness and there

afflictions of the righteous; but the Lord delivereth him out of them all.

We are not insinuating that

Jesus came to give you a life that is free from challenges but that He came to guarantee that through the anointing that He carries, if you are connected to Him and have given your life to Him, that same anointing will come upon you as well; and He will fight your battles.

No matter what comes against you, that anointing will cause you to be victorious. Romans 8:31-32 says, **what shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?**

The anointing, that Jesus carries; the core anointing He carries is an anointing for salvation. The Greek word for salvation is "sozo", which means *to deliver, to preserve*. It also means healing, being made whole; to keep one safe and sound, to rescue men from danger or destruction. These are the virtues that the anointing upon Jesus carries. He is the saviour, He is the Lord. The core anointing He carries is the anointing to save.

God sent Jesus to this earth because He wanted all mankind to partake in His salvation. God desires that all of mankind, every human being living, to become connected to Jesus and the anointing He carries for it is only in Christ that we find true deliverance.

Now, the first anointing Jesus carries is that to deliver men

The anointing, that Jesus carries; the core anointing He carries is an anointing for salvation. The Greek word for salvation is "sozo", which means to deliver, to preserve. It also means healing, being made whole; to keep one safe and sound, to rescue men from danger or destruction. These are the virtues that the anointing upon Jesus carries. He is the saviour, He is the Lord. The core anointing He carries is the anointing to save.

from sin. Sin is the gateway to every satanic affliction in life. John the Baptist made this declaration concerning the Lord Jesus Christ at the waters of baptism when Jesus came to River Jordan where John was baptizing. Jesus came to fulfill all righteousness, submitted Himself to the ministry of John the Baptist to be baptized.

We see John 1:29 make the important proclamation, **Behold the Lamb of God.** When Jesus came, one of His assignment was to take upon Himself the sin of the world. 2 Corinthians 5:21 says, **For He had made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.** When Jesus took and paid for our sin, He effectively broke the dominion and power of sin over our lives. Romans 6:14 says **For sin shall not have any dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace.** This means that the authority of sin is broken over our lives for the payment for sin has been made. Hallelujah!

To be continued.

"Now, the first anointing Jesus carries is that to deliver men from sin. Sin is the gateway to every satanic affliction in life. John the Baptist made this declaration concerning the Lord Jesus Christ at the waters of baptism when Jesus came to River Jordan where John was baptizing. Jesus came to fulfill all righteousness, submitted Himself to the ministry of John the Baptist to be baptized."

INTERNATIONAL

Can US charm Africa against China?

First it was the US secretary of state who went on a trip to Africa, now it is the vice-president and later in the year the president himself is expected to come. This flurry of visits by top figures in the US administration reflects a growing awareness that the US needs to deepen its engagement with the continent ANNE SOY writes.

THIS all comes in the face of growing competition from other global powers, especially China and Russia.

Vice-President Kamala Harris started her nine-day trip in Ghana on Sunday, where she was greeted by drummers and dancers at Kotoka International Airport. She will later go to Tanzania and Zambia.

Ghana, with its focus on strengthening ties with the African diaspora as well as a record of several peaceful democratic transfers of power, provides an ideal launchpad for Ms Harris.

Her trip, according to an official statement, is intended to "build on" December's US-Africa summit in Washington where President Joe Biden said the US was "all in on Africa's future".

But it is that future, boosted by a youthful and growing population as well as the continent's immense natural resources, that have attracted a lot of other powerful nations vying for influence.

While Secretary of State Anthony Blinken's recent visit to Ethiopia and Niger focused on these countries' security challenges, the vice-president's tour will take her to nations facing serious economic problems.

Ghana's once-thriving economy is going through its most difficult financial crisis in decades.

The country is seeking to restructure its debt amid surging inflation of over 50%. Finance Minister Ken Ofori-Atta has just been in Beijing leading negotiations with the Chinese government.

"So far, very positive and encouraging meetings in China," the finance minister tweeted as he expressed optimism that it would secure external assurances "very soon".

It needs the assurances to unlock financial support from the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

It is not clear what, if any help, Ms Harris can offer, but it will be under pressure to act like a willing partner in the wake of Mr Ofori-Atta's China visit.



BIDEN



Jinping

Economist and professor of finance at the University of Ghana, Godfred Alufar Bokpin, does not think the visit will deliver "an immediate dividend" to help alleviate the country's financial woes.

"Having China on board is complicated," he said, while noting that Ms Harris' visit was "a very important" one for Ghana as it "elevates our relationship with the US to another level".

He told the BBC the interest the US is showing in the country and its debt crisis "is good" but he is worried about what he described as "unfavourable terms of trade" with creditor nations.

Zambia finds itself in a similar position to Ghana.

The copper-rich nation became the first African country to default on its

debt when the Covid pandemic hit.

It is in prolonged discussions with China to restructure its debt and has also sought financial support from the IMF.

The Reuters news agency quotes a senior US official as saying Ms Harris "would discuss the best ways for the international community to address debt challenges faced by Ghana and Zambia".

Like Prof Bokpin, Zambian analyst Dr Sishuwa Sishuwa thinks China holds more influence when it comes to restructuring debt. But the US wants to be seen as the more reliable partner.

There is a growing sentiment on the continent that Africa should have a free choice in its relationships with the rest of the world.

"Zambia sees the United States in

the same way as it sees China and Russia - a friend," Dr Sishuwa told the BBC.

"When a country turns to China, or Russia, or the US for support, this should not be seen as snubbing one major power bloc or the other."

He said attempts to seek exclusive relationships with African countries may be counterproductive and unsustainable.

This echoed South African President Cyril Ramaphosa's comments during a visit to Washington last year when he said: "We should not be told by anyone who we associate with."

Senior US officials have told the BBC it is not their intention to tell African countries who they can be friends with.

The US has however been keen to emphasise its focus on democracy in its relationships with African countries, something the vice-president is also expected to discuss during her visit.

President Hakainde Hichilema of Zambia is due to co-host a virtual Summit for Democracy, along with four other heads of state including President Biden, shortly before receiving Ms Harris in the country.

It is one of the values, along with human rights and good governance, that the US government says underpins its relationships with the continent - and sets it apart from China and Russia.

China has a non-interference policy in countries' internal political affairs - something that has smoothed its engagement with autocratic leaders.

And Russia's presence in African countries that have experienced coups recently - Burkina Faso and Mali - has led to a souring of relations between them and the West, especially France, the former colonial power which had maintained close ties to both countries.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has no doubt given Western nations an added sense of urgency in winning over more African countries. UN votes to condemn it divided African nations which accounted for half of all abstentions, including Tanzania which

is also on Ms Harris' itinerary.

Tanzania's President Samia Suluhu Hassan first met Vice-President Harris in Washington nearly a year ago

The US vice-president - the first woman to hold that position - will meet President Samia Suluhu Hassan, her country's first female head of state.

This shared experience of being pioneering women is creating a buzz in Tanzania.

Many are also touting the visit as an endorsement of the progress the country is making and its growing visibility on the global map.

It was not that long ago that Tanzania was something of an outcast under the presidency of John Magufuli, who was seen as having autocratic tendencies, curtailing the activities of the opposition and independent media.

Ms Harris is the most senior US official from the Biden administration to visit Africa and the fifth since December's US-Africa summit.

Others have been the Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, US ambassador to the UN Linda Thomas-Greenfield, First Lady Jill Biden and Mr Blinken.

But with the renewed interest comes a demand from the continent to be treated fairly.

Ghana's Prof Bokpin said there was a level of scepticism about the heightened interest in Africa.

"There's a belief that a new Scramble for Africa is in play," referring to the subdivision of the continent by European nations in the late 19th Century which led to decades of colonialism and exploitation.

"This engagement needs to emphasise mutual respect," he added.

Source: BBC news.

There is a growing sentiment on the continent that Africa should have a free choice in its relationships with the rest of the world. "Zambia sees the United States in the same way as it sees China and Russia - a friend," Dr Sishuwa told the BBC. "When a country turns to China, or Russia, or the US for support, this should not be seen as snubbing one major power bloc or the other." He said attempts to seek exclusive relationships with African countries may be counterproductive and unsustainable. This echoed South African President Cyril Ramaphosa's comments during a visit to Washington last year when he said: "We should not be told by anyone who we associate with." Senior US officials have told the BBC it is not their intention to tell African countries who they can be friends with.

INTERNATIONAL

Israel conducts air attacks near Damascus

ISRAEL has carried out an air attack near Damascus, Syrian state media reported, the second attack near the capital in the last two days.

Witnesses said that they heard at least three big explosions over the city overnight.

Citing a military source, state media reported that Israel fired "sprays of missiles" just after midnight.

"Syrian air defences intercepted the missiles and shot down a number of them," the source said, saying the aggression caused some material damage.

There were no details about casualties.

The source said the attack hit "a site in the Damascus countryside" but did not provide further details.

There was no immediate statement from Israel, which usually declines to comment on reports of attacks in Syria.

Israel has for years been carrying out attacks against what it has described as Iran-linked targets in Syria, where Tehran's influence has grown since it began supporting President Bashar al-Assad in the civil war that began in 2011.



Netanyahu

Israel says such operations are aimed at preventing Iranian weapons from reaching armed groups in Syria that are backed by Tehran.

There have been at least six attacks in March alone, according to a tally by the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a UK-based

war monitor with sources on the ground.

Two soldiers were wounded in an Israeli missile attack near Damascus on Thursday, Syrian state media reported.

Nearly half a million people have been killed in Syria's civil war, and about half of the country's pre-war population has been forced from their homes.

JAIR Bolsonaro waved as he arrived at Brasilia International Airport

Brazil's ex-president, Jair Bolsonaro, has returned from his self-imposed exile in the United States.

The far-right former leader landed in the capital, Brasilia, on a commercial flight from Florida, where he spent the past three months.

Supporters draped in Brazil's flag shouted "legend", but the former leader was led out by a side exit.

It is the first time he is back in his home country since his supporters stormed Congress on 8 January.

He faces an investigation into whether he incited the rioters.

There had been much speculation about how many people would turn out to greet the former leader after his 89-day absence.

Following the rioting caused by his supporters on 8 January, police have taken precautions, such as cordoning off the main esplanade in the capital.

Security was also tight at the airport.

Brazilian news site O Globo said that when his plane touched down at 06:37 local time (09:37 GMT), there were more police officers in attendance at the airport than supporters.

His fans had hoped to catch a glimpse of the former

Bolsonaro back to Brazil after self-imposed exile



Bolsonaro

president, but they have now started leaving the premises after Mr Bolsonaro's son Eduardo told them his father had left for the headquarters of the Liberal Party, of which he is a member.

There, he briefly addressed other Liberal Party politicians and took a swipe at the government of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva.

The Liberal Party leader has said that he is keen for Mr Bolsonaro to campaign on behalf of the party ahead of local elections next year, but Mr Bolsonaro told CNN before leaving Florida that he would not lead the opposition to the current president, who is known as Lula.

Analysts have pointed out

that during his three-month absence, other conservative politicians have come to the forefront of Brazilian politics.

Mr Bolsonaro left Brazil on board a Brazilian air force plane on 30 December, just two days before he was due to hand over the presidential sash to his rival, Lula.

Lula narrowly beat Mr Bolsonaro in a presidential runoff on 30 October, a defeat the far-right leader never publicly recognised.

Many of his supporters also refused to acknowledge Lula's victory, camping out in front of army barracks in the hope of swaying the military to depose the newly elected president.

With Brazil's institutions, including the military, backing the democratic handover of power to Lula, Mr Bolsonaro disappeared almost completely from the public scene, rarely leaving the presidential palace

and keeping uncharacteristically quiet on social media platforms.

His supporters, though, were anything but quiet, rampaging through key government buildings in Brasilia just a week after Lula took power.

More than 1,500 people were arrested.

While Mr Bolsonaro was in Florida when Brazil's Congress was stormed, investigators argue his rhetoric - repeatedly questioning the validity of the election result and saying that only God or death could remove him from office - incited the rioters.

The investigation into alleged incitement is not the only legal challenge he faces. There is also a probe under way into whether he tried to illegally import and keep millions of dollars' worth of jewellery he and his wife were given by Saudi Arabia in 2019.

FORMER United States President Donald Trump has been indicted in relation to a New York investigation into an alleged hush-money payment made to a porn star ahead of the 2016 presidential election.

After weeks of speculation, a New York grand jury voted on Thursday to indict Trump, according to the Manhattan District Attorney's office, making him the first former president to face criminal prosecution in US history.

The specific charges are not yet known, and the indictment will likely be announced in the coming days. The office of Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg issued a statement saying prosecutors are working with Trump's lawyers to arrange his surrender.

It also affirmed that, for now, the charges will remain under seal. "Guidance will be provided when the arraignment [court appearance] date is selected," the district attorney's office said through a spokesperson.

In a statement released through his 2024 presidential campaign, Trump called the

Trump indicted, to be arraigned

indictment "political persecution and election interference at the highest level in history".

He said the case was part of a coordinated "witch hunt" against him, adding that he is completely innocent.

The New York investigation centres on a \$130,000 payment that Michael Cohen, Trump's former personal lawyer and fixer, made to porn star Stormy Daniels in the waning days of the former president's 2016 campaign.

Daniels, whose real name is Stephanie Clifford, said she had an affair with Trump starting in 2006. Cohen said he paid her on Trump's orders.

The former president has denied the affair and said the payment was to protect his reputation from a false accusation, insisting that he did nothing wrong.

Ahead of Thursday's indictment, several US media outlets had reported that the potential charges relate to

the way Trump reimbursed Cohen, with prosecutors alleging he improperly labelled the payments as legal expenses.

US politics, Canada's multiculturalism, South America's geopolitical rise—we bring you the stories that matter.

If the payment is determined to be a campaign donation, it could also have violated election laws that cap contributions to political candidates at \$2,700 per individual and require them to be made public.

Trump said earlier this month that he faced potential arrest over the case. He is expected to be fingerprinted and photographed when he surrenders to the Manhattan District Attorney's Office in New York early next week, Al Jazeera's Gabriel Elizondo reported from New York, but it remains unclear when that will happen.

Trump has called on his supporters to protest in a fiery social media post that raised concerns about potential violence — especially in light of the January 6, 2021 storming of the US Capitol by a pro-Trump mob.

He also appealed for more money for his legal defence, raising more than \$2m since March 18, according to his campaign.

A report said the indictment comes at a surprising time, with the New York grand jury last sitting on Monday.

He added that Trump's indictment has divided people in the US, with the reaction being "largely along partisan lines".

While Republicans generally criticised the indictment, with many, like Speaker of the House, Kevin McCarthy,

describing it as a "weaponisation of the legal process", Democrats supported the move, saying Trump's criminal acts were catching up with him.

Daniels herself celebrated Thursday's news by thanking her supporters on Twitter, quipping she doesn't "want to spill my champagne". Meanwhile, her lawyer, Clark Brewster, said the indictment was "no cause for joy".

"The hard work and conscientiousness of the grand jurors must be respected," he wrote. "Now let truth and justice prevail."

The Republican party largely rallied around Trump in the aftermath of the indictment and photographed when he surrenders to the Manhattan District Attorney's Office in New York early next week, Al Jazeera's Gabriel Elizondo reported from New York, but it remains unclear when that will happen.

For his part, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, who is expected to challenge Trump for the

Senegal opposition leader found guilty of libel

SONKO'S supporters suspected the government of using the justice system to prevent him from running in next year's presidential election.

Sonko's supporters suspected the government of using the justice system to prevent him from running in next year's presidential election.

A leading Senegalese opposition leader, Ousmane Sonko, has been found guilty of libel and handed a two month suspended jail sentence.

Sonko was charged with libel after accusing the country's Tourism Minister Mame Mbaye Niang of embezzlement.

Protests broke out across the

Senegal opposition leader found guilty of libel



Sall

capital, Dakar, ahead of the trial.

Sonko's lawyers say the sentence is not expected to prevent him from running in

presidential elections next year.

He had previously denied the charges and said they were a tactic to eliminate him from the race.



Trump



'My message is love in whatever I do'

Romain Virgo has captured the hearts of many Jamaicans, as well as an international audience, with his smooth voice and genuine lyrics. The reggae singer entered the public eye in 2006 by participating in a high school choir competition, *All Together Sing*. The next year his popularity skyrocketed after winning the grand prize in Digicel's singing competition, *Rising Stars*. Since then, Virgo has worked with Donovan Germain and other Jamaican producers to make hits like "Mi Caan Sleep," "Wanna Go Home," and "Live Mi Life." The 26-year-old is currently working on his third album, *Love Sick*. At *Caribbean Rocks-NYC*, Richard Bryan and I had the opportunity to interview and see Romain Virgo perform. Here are 12 things you did not know about Romain Virgo.



percent of the songs are love songs.

Is this third album the same kind of sound you have come to develop?

This third album is called *Love Sick* and *Love Sick* is a story. There are songs on it that aren't necessarily rude reggae music or lovers music. It's just music and what I'm feeling inside and the way we want to put it on record. And we think people are going to love it. This is my third album and we are trying to just make it different and give people a different sound. We always try to introduce people to different aspects, different sides of my talent. I never want to lock myself in a box and say this is all I can do. I'm a singer at the end of the day. There is music that isn't necessarily reggae, or dancehall, or roots reggae, or whatever, or lovers rock, but I think it's music that people are just going to love.

When is the album coming out?

Summer for sure. We are looking at August. We plan on doing it differently. We are shooting music videos for songs that aren't released that are on the album that is going to release maybe next year. We are just kind of trying to do it a bit different from my colleagues.

Do you have a music inspiration or childhood hero?

Music inspiration, starts with the family too because my mommy sings, my daddy sings. My daddy plays musical instruments. Even though I didn't grow up with my father like that, but I think it's in my blood. I grew up listening to people like Bob Marley, and Dennis Brown, and Alton Ellis, Beres Hammond, just to mention a few. I listen to people like Otis Redding, and Marvin Gaye. That's the kind of music that plays inside of the house. I

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How would you describe yourself?

Romain Virgo, reggae artist, from St. Ann, Jamaica. I live in Kingston now in the middle of all reggae music. I think music is my life and that's what defines me being successful.

When did you get started making music?

I've been singing ever since I knew myself. But I think I got a breakthrough through a choir competition in Jamaica called *All Together Sing*, a high school choir competition. In 2006 I entered a competition called *Rising Stars*, which is similar to *American Idol*. I won in 2007. From there on I've been making music with some producers in Jamaica. Donovan Germain and a few other top producers in Jamaica. My first song, or first big song, was probably a song called "Mi Caan Sleep" by *Feel Good Riddim*. I have two albums out now and I'm working on the third one.

How would you describe your sound?

My message is love, in whatever I do. I think people, my fans, see me as a lover drunk singer maybe because I sing a lot of love songs. Ninety



Influential black musicians of all time

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

Prince: Simply, The Prince



Prince. Need I say more? Prince Rogers Nelson signed his first record deal at the delicate age of just nineteen. To this day Prince is famed for his genre-defying anthems, androgynous persona, undeniable genius, and extraordinary vocal range.

Prince was a musical genius and multi-instrumentalist whose anthems will go down in history as an encapsulation of genres. His album *Dirty Mind* would achieve critical success in 1980, but many more were to follow, including *Purple Rain* (1984), and *Sign o' the Times* (1987). Prince died in 2016 but his music is well and truly alive in the hearts of many.

Nat King Cole: The King of Jazz Piano



After facing consistent racial adversity through her early career, Marian Anderson performed at the Lincoln Memorial in 1939 to a crowd of 75,000 and a radio audience in the millions, which has been named a watershed moment in civil rights history. She then went on to become the first black person to perform at the Metropolitan Opera in New York City in 1955.

Sister Rosetta Tharpe



Sister Rosetta Tharpe is widely known as "The Godmother of Rock & Roll". She rose to popularity as the first recording artist to use heavy distortion on her electric guitar, coupled with gospel lyrics. She is cited as an influence to many early rock-and-roll musicians,

Continued on page 26

THE SLOW WORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Health

Best drinks that induce sleep at night

HERE are drinks that may induce sleep whenever you are having a difficult time falling asleep. These drinks can give you a boost in feeling sleepy and even improve your overall health and wellness. The good thing is some of the best ones can be easily prepared at your home.

Check out these 5 sleep-boosting drinks for you to have a few sips before going to bed.

Green tea

Although it originated in China, green tea is enjoyed and consumed all over the world primarily because of its taste and excellent health benefits. In fact, green tea is considered one of the healthiest beverages available globally.

The health benefits of green tea are pretty much endless. So, sipping a cup of green tea before bedtime won't just give you that needed boost but also other body essentials. For thousands of years, green tea has been used in traditional medicine that can improve crucial health areas, such as cardiovascular functions, mental health, and gut health. It can generally aid in preventing high blood pressure, regulating digestion and healing wounds.

Now, let's go to how green tea helps induce sleep. To begin with, sipping green tea can be truly beneficial for people suffering from sleep-related problems. This is because green tea contains L-theanine and a lot of Teami's Blends. These are amino acids with many essential properties, including helping you to relax and reducing anxiety that you may experience before sleeping.

Moreover, green tea can enhance the quality of your sleep without giving you that feeling of lethargy and sleep in comparison to other natural and synthetic supplements for sleeping.

Chamomile tea

Next is chamomile tea which is a traditional option in the world of natural sleeping options. Many health experts have suggested drinking chamomile for years to help people with insomnia. This is because chamomile promotes significant sensory activation where you can experience drinking a calm and soothing drink, plus it is caffeine-free!

Generally, chamomile tea contains chemicals that are called flavonoids. These flavonoids that chamomile has are a type of nutrient found in many plants, which also play a vital role in giving chamomile effective medicinal effects [3]. Additionally, this tea is known to help in relaxation and induce sleep. There are several clinical trials that tested chamomile tea's sleeping effects. Studies have shown that 10 out of 12 cardiovascular patients can fall asleep faster after consuming chamomile tea..

Warm milk

Drinking warm milk may seem like an old practice, but it is really effective in giving you a good night's sleep. This is because milk has tryptophan which increases your serotonin, commonly known as the



neurotransmitter that basically tells your brain to be happy, which also happens to be a forerunner in a sleep-regulating hormone called melatonin.

When you have enough tryptophan, your serotonin levels increase which may also lead to an increase in melatonin levels. Melatonin promotes sleep and helps in combating different sleep disorders, such as insomnia, jet lag, sleep apnea and shift work sleep disorder.

Tart cherry juice

Here's another sleep-boosting drink that can also give a wide variety of health benefits – tart cherry juice.

First things first, drinking tart cherry juice has shown a significant effect in decreasing insomnia for those who are suffering from this sleeping problem.

Drinking tart cherry juice is considered most effective when consumed in the evening hours before your bedtime, so it can have its effects on your body. You can also consume a glass of tart cherry juice every after a meal.

Valerian tea

With its long history of being health-beneficial, valerian tea is proven and tested to help you even with your sleeping problems. You can rely on valerian tea to give you a good night's sleep since it is able to induce sleep and decrease stress.

Moreover, valerian tea helps treat several health issues that may affect your sleep quality, including nervousness, headaches and heart palpitations.

Valerian is basically an herb that you can find in many health food stores; even some sleep aids and sedatives have it as one of their main ingredients. You can generally buy valerian over the counter, whether in tablet form or in tea bags. However, the downside of this drink is that the valerian root can have an odour and earthy taste that some may find unpleasant. Hence, you can add a dash of honey or maple syrup to it to improve its

taste.

Drinks to avoid before bedtime

While there are sleep-boosting drinks, it is also advisable to avoid the following drinks as they prevent you from falling asleep.

Coffee

Of course, we all know that coffee has caffeine that prevents us from sleeping. Hence, you must avoid drinking a cup of coffee a few hours before bedtime as it can generally delay your body clock and disrupt

your sleeping patterns. A study suggests that you must not consume coffee six hours before bedtime as it lessens your sleep by one hour.

Energy drinks

Energy drinks are energy-boosting, and having them before bed is a big no-no. You may find yourself rolling in your bed from side to side, trying to catch sleep while in full energy mode. Like coffee, energy drinks are fueled by caffeine to make your body invigorated. In fact, energy drinks have two or three times more caffeine than coffee.

Alcohol

You may think that alcohol can actually make you sleep faster, but it does not give you a quality one. Sleeping while under the influence of alcohol can give you interrupted sleep and full strange dreams. You may also need to get up in the middle of the night to urinate, disrupting your sleep pattern. Moreover, it can also decrease your rapid eye movement (REM) sleep, as a higher level of REM sleep can be associated with depression.

Soda

Drinking soda is also a bad idea when you are trying to sleep because it is loaded with caffeine and many sugars, making you super active. It may affect your ability to fall asleep and disrupt your sleeping pattern when consumed before bedtime.

The bottom line

You can incorporate sleep-boosting drinks into your bedtime routine, most especially if you are struggling with sleep-related issues. Not only will they help you manage your sleeping pattern, but sleep-boosting drinks can also provide you with substantial health benefits. Getting enough sleep is the primary step to wellness, keeping you away from many fatal diseases related to sleep deprivation.

Source: [Healthnews.com](https://www.healthnews.com)



EVER'S WORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Parenting

Stress and parenting: How they affect us

AT some point in our lives, we all can experience stress. Stress can affect us emotionally, mentally and physically. Evidence from the literature shows stress can impact the immune system. Notice that you often fall prey to the common cold whenever you feel stressed.

Stress directly reduces the ability of the immune system to ward off common infections such as the common cold and increases one's susceptibility to the rhinovirus that causes the cold.

Sources of stress

In rodent studies, exposure to chronic stress results in premature aging. This is a cause for concern since the sudden death of cells and early aging can lead to increased mortality risk and the development of long-term conditions.

Identifying the sources of stress is essential in managing this condition. In people, stress can come from daily stressors.

There is some evidence from the literature that stress from daily living or daily hassles tends to result in stress more than significant life event stressors.

However, pressure from major life stressors and daily hassles reduces emotional and psychological well-being. Stressed parents tend to have a less positive outlook on their parenting skills and abilities. They also tend to have less enjoyment and pleasure from their children.

Hence, it is not surprising that they report feelings of low self-efficacy in their parenting role. This means they feel less competent and empowered to carry out their responsibilities as parents and need more confidence in their ability to impact their children positively.

For some parents, high levels of parental stress contribute to depression and anxiety and other psychological disorders.

Stress and parenting

One of the stressors commonly identified by married couples includes parenting. Many young couples enjoy marriage but often complain of the stress of parenting, especially when the little ones begin to arrive. While parenting, for many, may be a joyous journey, some may find this stressful.

Meanwhile, being male and



having no partner were associated with lower parental satisfaction. The results of this study provide additional evidence that parental stress and satisfaction are essential dimensions of the parenting experience.

Traditional roles related to the care of children would help explain the gender gap in reported parental stress.

A child with chronic conditions contributes to parental stress

For instance, the parents interviewed in a study acknowledged that caring for a child with chronic conditions affects their relationship with their other children.

Many felt guilty and worried they were not spending sufficient time with the other children. At the same time, others experienced threats to their identities. They thought that they were living in a fishbowl with their lives open up to judging from others.

Many of the parents interviewed also reported losing touch with their friends and other family members due to the time spent caring for their chronically sick children.

Lack of social support

Financial troubles
Problems with marriage

Stressors affect parents' general health and well-being



and demand emotional energy and attention.

When parents are stressed, this can lead to the following:

- Reduced tolerance and patience toward the children
- Reduced attentiveness and parental participation
- Use of punitive practices

When children are subjected to the impacts of parental stress, this can disrupt family functioning and affect the children's ability to function socially.

What can be done to help ease parental stress?

•**Increase social support** helping parents access social support, such as going out with friends or attending social support groups in the

between infants and parents. This also enhances the parents' sense of their competence.

How do marital problems contribute to parental stress?

Marriage problems affect not only the parents' relationship, but they can also affect the ability of a person to be a good parent.

For instance, parents in unhappy marriages can be emotionally detached from their children due to preoccupation with their marriage problems.

This preoccupation can compromise their ability to be emotionally present for their children. In turn, they become less engaged in bringing up their children.

In addition, parents with marital problems might act permissive or overly lax, which can develop feelings of rejection in children.

Parents with marriage problems tend to exhibit authoritarian parenting styles, which often results in too many restrictions for their children and a lack of freedom for their children to express what they truly feel.

However, the dynamics change when parents divorce. Divorced fathers who exhibit the authoritarian parenting style but are involved in the child's lives or frequently visit the child result in a better parent-child relationship.

As pointed out in the literature children with close relationships with authoritarian fathers tend to succeed academically and have less internalizing and externalizing behaviors.

In contrast, having fathers who do not visit their children frequently can lead to a different father-child relationship.

These less involved fathers tend to assume the role of a recreational companion and tend to be more permissive instead of taking the role of a disciplinarian or teacher.

Take-home message

Parental stress can affect parents at different stages of their parenting life. However, those who are younger and older parents experience the most stress.

Parents with marital problems are most susceptible to stress and would require support to ensure that they can address these problems and parent their children more fully.

Source: Wikipedia.org



Reality Bites

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Know when you are not taken seriously

IN a quest to find love, most women get carried away that they don't watch out for signs to know if the man they love and care about loves them too.

Many women have ended up heart broken simply because they failed to read some of the visible signs to show that he is not interested in having a serious relationship with them.

Some women just chose to ignore the signs but they are visibly there for you to see, you do not need a soothsayer to tell you he is not serious with you.

Open your eyes and read what Stacey Laura Lloyd on LiveAbout.com says on how to decode signs your man does not want to have a serious relationship with you.

"When you really like a guy, you may be trying to decode and interpret his every move in order to determine if he wants a relationship with you in the future. You may find yourself wondering what his intentions truly are, and you may even count how many times he texts you during the day to try and gauge if he's interested in being your man", says Stacy.

However, Stacy says while you may want a long-term commitment, it's important to pay attention to the six clear signs that he doesn't want a relationship with you.

He's distracted when you're together

Have you noticed that he's always on his phone when you're with one another? Do you find yourself having to repeat things because he isn't paying attention to you? One of the clear signs that he's not interested in having a relationship with you is that he's distracted and disengaged when you're



together. If his mind is for these kinds of activities elsewhere, he's checking out mentally, and he doesn't seem present, he's actually presenting you with clear evidence that you're not of much importance to him. But if he's giving you his full and undivided attention and cherishes your every word, he's showing you that you matter, and he's far more likely to want a relationship with you.

He won't make Long-Term Plans (LTP)

When you really like a guy, you may be eager to make long-term plans with him. For instance, you may want to invite him to your friend's wedding a few months in advance, buy concert tickets ahead of time, and even nail down some dates for a trip together. But when a guy doesn't want a relationship with you, he's unlikely to commit to anything far off in the future. Rather than being excited by the prospect of being with you



your future together, he should be history to you.

He doesn't introduce you to his friends

Have you met his friend group yet? When a guy is into you, he'll make it a point to introduce you to the other important people in his life. Not only will he want his friends to meet you and get to know you, he'll also want to see how you mesh with everyone, especially when he's thinking about being with you for the long-term. However, if you haven't yet met his friends or really anyone else who is significant in his life, he's actually showing you that you're not that significant to him. When a

the case, he certainly isn't worth any more of your time and effort, either.

He's unreliable

If you can't trust him or count on him, you can count on the fact that he doesn't actually want a relationship with you. When a man is unreliable and undependable, it's because he hasn't made you a real priority in his life. For instance, if he frequently breaks plans with you, is vague about his whereabouts, and isn't forthright with you, he doesn't want to be with you. After all, if he was serious about having a relationship with you, he'd try his hardest to keep his word and honor his commitments to you as much

as humanly possible. But if he's constantly letting you down, it's time to let this guy go.

He's frequently MIA

Does he disappear for days or even weeks at a time before you hear from him again? This is a classic sign of a man who isn't truly interested in having a relationship with you. For example, when a guy goes MIA, it's not uncommon for him to be more of a player and date other people on the side. When he suddenly goes dark, it's typically because there are other people with whom he'd rather spend his time. And if you never really know when you're going to hear from him again or see him again, this is a key indicator that he doesn't want anything serious with you.

He's emotionally unavailable

While you may have opened up to this guy and feel as though you can confide in him, it's important to take a step back and look at his



THE SOW WORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Health

Onions are good for the skin! here's why

Onions are good for the skin! here's why

We all remember onions as the food staple that makes us 'cry' – the juice is so pungent and strong that it makes natural tears roll down our face. This ingredient, that is used to add flavour to food and keep our bodies healthy, is also beneficial in keeping our skin healthy.

While most people probably use onion juice for hair to grow it longer and thicker, today we'll share the surprising benefits of onion for the skin!

What's in an onion?

The secret of onions is sulphur – a magical component in skin care remedies and products. It dries out your skin, just enough to treat acne and balance the pH levels of oily skin. The sebaceous glands inside our skin produce sebum oil, and when excessive amounts of this oil are produced, our skin's complexion and health is affected. Enter: the vitamins A, C, and E-enriched kitchen staple – onions. They help target and treat this for you!

Benefits of onions for skin

When you first read the article's title, most of may have pulled back at the thought of applying this tear-inducing kitchen staple on your skin.

The benefits of onion for your skin and face will convince you! Here are a few benefits for the skin and face:

Is onion good for your skin? It is AMAZING for your skin! Some of the most important onion oil benefits for skin include:

Removal of toxins – It keeps your skin purified, healthy, and glowing by flushing out the harmful toxins from the body. It also prevents the damage caused by various skin infections.

Collagen production – Healthier skin cells are produced by consuming or applying onion on the skin, this reduces infections and boosts skin regeneration.

Protection from sun damage – Onion is an ingredient that is rich in vitamins A, E, and C, along with minerals, and antioxidants. This powerhouse of nutrients acts like a shield inside your body when your skin is exposed to the sun.

Is onion good for the face? It is MIRACULOUS on your face! Some of the most important onion juice benefits for face include:

Acne breakouts are prevented – The anti-inflammatory and antibacterial properties of onion make it a great solution for acne-prone skin.

Signs of ageing reduced – Quercetin, a plant pigment, found in onions helps reverse or slow down ageing of the skin, and helps you get rid of wrinkles, fine lines, and dark spots.

how to use onions for skin: ways to include it in your routine

Onion juice: Among the various onion juice benefits for the skin, it



is especially useful for pigmented and soft lips. Before you go to sleep, apply a mixture of vitamin E and onion juice over your lips, and one month into this routine will make your lips naturally pink again. Another way you can use onion juice is by mixing it with aloe vera gel to treat acne scars. Let the mixture stay on your scar area for ten minutes, before you rinse it off to see results.

Onion oil: Just like coconut oil for the hair, you can apply onion oil on your skin. Nourishing it right till the roots, onion oil makes your skin soft and supple. The onion oil benefits for the skin don't stop there – it also treats acne breakouts, reduces dark spots, and pigmentation. You can learn how to treat dark spots using onion oil here.

Onion face pack: Onion's effectiveness in lightening your

skin is incomparable to any other kitchen staple. It buffs away your dead skin layer, and stimulates your skin to reveal a natural glow. Since onion juice used independently may not be the best

way to achieve this, you can try making a face pack by mixing a teaspoon each of onion juice and gram flour, and add to it half a teaspoon of milk cream. Apply this face pack every single day for



approximately four months to see the glowing difference!

Another easy and effective way to use onion oil for your skin is by mixing it with a carrier oil like coconut based oil. After all, if you're choosing the natural way with a natural ingredient, you may as well give ayurvedic herbal remedies a try too. Coco Soul is brand who's ethos is based on ancient ayurvedic wisdom, and all its products are formulated with pure and organic coconut based oil, mixed with herbs.

You see onion is good for your skin, don't you? Get cutting and head on over to Coco Soul to check out the wide range of natural ingredients-infused skin care products to try on your skin.

frequently asked questions on benefits of onion for skin (FAQs)

Can I use onion on my face everyday?

Yes, you can apply it on your face every day, in the form of a juice. The acids in onion juice make it the ideal remedy to remove dark spots and scars from your face. Another one of the major **onion juice benefits for the skin** is the increase in cell turnover – giving you brightened skin.

Is onion good for the face?

Yes, daily application of onion extract or juice on your face helps remove dark spots. The vitamin C-rich vegetable is your nature-inspired remedy to reduce redness, fight acne breakouts, and brighten your skin by rejuvenating your skin.

What does an onion do to skin?

Here's what makes an **onion good for skin** – they are enriched with sulphur, and a mix of vitamins A, C, and E. This helps dry out your complexion, giving you reduced signs of ageing and a brightened,

BUSINESS WORLD

Corporate governance and gender equity in workplace

Essentially, corporate governance is a method through which companies are managed to attain a set purpose. It determines who has the power and responsibility, and who makes the decisions to regulate business operations and values. Corporate governance, an important part of corporations' environmental, social, and corporate governance (ESG) policy, is a set of tools that guide management and boards in addressing the challenges of running a business more effectively. [Nneka Idam](#) writes.

THE importance of gender equity and inclusive corporate governance in today's organizations cannot be overstated. On a global scale, substantial reforms are taking place to empower women while advocating equity in the upper echelons of organizations' leadership.

Recently, the conversation around women's empowerment, fairness, and equity moved beyond gender inequality – a societal issue that often presents itself in subtle yet damaging forms ranging from unequal pay, the disparity in promotions, to sexual harassment and more. In line with this year's IWD themed #EmbraceEquity, the paradigm has shifted. The IWD 2023 took the awareness a notch higher, focusing on equity and its impact, whilst promoting the cause for why equal opportunities no longer depict fairness.

For context, equality means everyone, or a group of people should be given the same resources or opportunities but, equity implies that each person has different circumstances, and allocates the exact resources and opportunities needed to reach an equal outcome. In practice, women should not only be given an equal chance but to be truly fair, considering their capacity and reality.

In fact, breaking the glass ceiling in the workplace is more difficult for women in the corporate world largely dominated by the male gender but, thanks to the annual campaign of the IWD and other women rights organizations creating the room to breaking biases against women. Regardless, many women have been quite inspiring, breaking barriers despite the disparity and 'it is a man's world' factors; record numbers of women are climbing the ladder to career success, setting good precedence and reference points for the younger generations to follow.

Women are increasingly taking on leadership jobs that were formerly reserved for men. It is becoming evident that gender barriers are harmful to the progress of any civilization and offer men an unfair edge. Corporate governance, on the other hand, is a crucial issue that can influence women's professional advancement.

At ND Western Limited, the company's corporate governance is deliberate in ensuring it creates an enabling environment for all, including women to excel in their roles. For instance, in 2020, the Chief Executive Officer of ND Western, Eberechukwu Oji, with a view to empowering women staff of the company, founded the ND Western Women's Network.

Mr. Oji was inspired by the need to drive inclusion and diversity within our workforce and bring visibility to our focus group whilst

developing women for leadership to become a Think Pad for NDW Management. The ND Western Women Network is empowered to create opportunities that support, enrich, and inspire ND Western women to a competitively advanced professional and personal level.

Since its inception, the Network has continued to raise the bar through its four Impact Areas which include;

- The Individual: Developing each member's leadership potential.
- The Network: Sharing life experiences & lending support as a group.
- The Organization: Be a soundboard & drive innovation inward.
- The Society: Impacting lives of communities within our operational

Without the support of the management of ND Western, such a laudable initiative would not have seen the light of day. According to the saying, "if you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together," it is past time for women to be given equal opportunities in the workplace, and more organizations should consider establishing platforms like the ND Western Women Network to empower more women.

Gender inequality is a year-round topic at NDW, beyond just Women's Month. The organization ensures that women are given equal opportunities for growth throughout the year, from recruitment and selection to training and development, and

strives to create an inclusive workplace. ND Western also emphasizes the importance of providing women with equal opportunities for career growth. NDW recognizes that as women, we have different circumstances as opposed to men, and provides us with the same amount, even more resources and opportunities needed to reach the desired goals of the organization.

Truly, women across the world face stereotypes and discrimination but I think it's important for us all as women not to see ourselves as the weaker sex first or automatically accept the bias against us. Our work, skills, and attributes should speak for itself, and we should also aim at reaching the top and filling positions all round and not just what we've been taught to believe is 'suitable for a woman'.

As women, we should see

"In fact, breaking the glass ceiling in the workplace is more difficult for women in the corporate world largely dominated by the male gender but, thanks to the annual campaign of the IWD and other women rights organizations creating the room to breaking biases against women. Regardless, many women have been quite inspiring, breaking barriers despite the disparity and 'it is a man's world' factors; record numbers of women are climbing the ladder to career success, setting good precedence and reference points for the younger generations to follow. Women are increasingly taking on leadership jobs that were formerly reserved for men. It is becoming evident that gender barriers are harmful to the progress of any civilization and offer men an unfair edge. Corporate governance, on the other hand, is a crucial issue that can influence women's professional advancement."



BUSINESS WORLD

Timipre Sylva resigns as oil minister

TIMIPRE Sylva has resigned as Nigeria's minister of state for petroleum resources to contest for Bayelsa State governorship again on the All Progressive Congress party (APC) platform.

According to Reuters, Sylva handed his resignation letter last week to President Muhammadu Buhari, the federal minister for petroleum, and stopped coming to the office.

"They said he would be seeking the ruling All Progressives Congress ticket to run for Bayelsa governor in party primaries scheduled to take place on April 14," Reuters said.

As a candidate of the People's Democratic Party, Sylva won the 2007 Bayelsa State gubernatorial election and succeeded Goodluck Jonathan, who became Vice President.

He served as governor of Bayelsa for one full term between 2008 and 2012. At the time, he was a member of the People's Democratic Party, which was then in power at the federal level but is now in opposition.

Sylva's opponent in the 2007 election, Ebitimi Amgbare of the Action Congress, legally challenged his victory. Although the Bayelsa State Election Petitions Tribunal upheld Sylva's election,



Sylva

Amgbare took the matter to the Appeal Court in Port Harcourt, which overturned the Tribunal's decision and nullified Sylva's election on April 15, 2008.

The Appeal Court's five justices were unanimous in their decision and ordered that Speaker Werinipre Seibarugo be sworn in to replace Sylva as acting Governor, with a new election to be held within three months.

A new election was held on May 24, 2008, and Sylva, again running as the PDP candidate,

was overwhelmingly elected with 588,204 out of about 598,000 votes. However, on January 27, 2012, his tenure was terminated by the Supreme Court with an acting governor appointed to oversee the state until the election of February 2012.

President Buhari appointed Sylva on August 21, 2019, as the Minister of State for Petroleum Resources. He oversaw major reforms in the oil sector, including passing legislation that overhauled the sector's fiscal regime to spur

FERTILISER statistics provider, Africa Fertiliser, has revealed that the official fertiliser imports to Nigeria increased by 65 per cent to 706,922MT in 2021 from 429,303 in the previous year.

The disclosure was made recently during the fertiliser statistics overview for Nigeria (2017-2021) held in Lagos.

The overview, a partnership between AfricaFertiliser and the International Fertiliser Development Centre had in attendance major fertiliser manufacturing companies in the country, including HortiNigeria, Dangote Fertiliser, Golden Fertiliser, OCP Africa, FEPSAN, among others.

According to AfricaFertiliser, there was a restriction on forex on fertilisers and a ban on imported NPK 15-15-15 in Nigerian from the fourth quarter of 2018, which affected importation in 2019.

It said Nigeria currently imports raw materials to enable the local NPK industry.

It added that there was a restructuring in the modalities of the PFI in 2020, from the allocation process to demand-driven based on capacities (finance, ability to blend) of fertiliser companies.

The number of blending plants was also said to have increased from 31 in 2020 to 52 at the end of 2021.

Speaking on the progress made within the Nigerian fertiliser industry in the last seven years, Senior Fertiliser Market analyst at AfricaFertiliser, Samuel Ali,

Nigeria's fertiliser imports rise by 277.619MT

said that much of the policy summersaults that negatively affected the industry in the past was a result of a lack of reliable data.

He further stated that much progress had been made with regard to Nigeria's goal of achieving self-sufficiency in fertiliser production with the investments made by the government and private sector players in recent years.

He said, "If you observe the industry critically, we struggled to get information before now, but now you can just go to the AfricaFertiliser website and get all the information you need."

"Year in, year out, we validate these statistics that show us how we are doing in imports

and how we are doing in consumption. So, the fertiliser imports that have increased, we are talking about the raw materials.

"That is the raw materials used for local production — MOP and DAP, which are used for local blending."

According to him, it means that there is more demand for raw materials, which is why the imports of these raw materials are going up.

"If there is no demand for more NPK fertilisers to be produced, these raw materials will not be requested in the first place. Nigeria is gradually moving to that point where it does not require any NPK component to be imported," he explained.



Abubakar

Nigerians purchase one million air conditioners yearly

THE Federal Government has warned that Nigeria will not be a dumping ground for air conditioners and refrigerators with energy efficiency ratio that are below internationally acceptable minimum energy performance standard.

This came as the United Nations says Nigerians purchase about one million air conditioners every year.

Meanwhile, the Federal Government told the Nigeria Customs Service, Standard Organisation of Nigeria, and other relevant agencies, to be alive to their responsibilities, stressing that the influx of substandard cooling appliances posed danger to the climatic conditions across the country.

This came as the United Nations Environment

Programme announced that over one million air conditioners were sold annually in Nigeria, adding that this was eating deep into the finances of Nigerians with respect to energy bills.

Speaking at the National Stakeholders' Consultative Workshop on Energy Efficient and Climate-Friendly Cooling in Nigeria, the Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation, Adeleke Momara, said the enforcement of laws should be intensified.

After listening to a presentation by the UNEP Programme Management Officer, Brian Holuj, on the magnitude of pollution caused by the influx of substandard cooling devices imported into Nigeria, Momara charged the NCS and SON to be alive to their duties.

"I listened to your presentation and certain issues were raised in it. There is the issue of monitoring and enforcement of protocols. Often times, we have beautiful policies and laws, but it is not the beauty of the policy, guideline or law that matters. It is the zeal for implementation that is most important."

He said the workshop, which was organised by the Energy Commission of Nigeria and UNEP, was aimed at promoting energy efficiency best practices in the cooling sector in Nigeria.

Momara said UNEP officials flew into Nigeria to support the country's transition from inefficient cooling appliances to the most efficient ones in line with Nigeria's commitment to mitigating climate change challenges.

He said, "It is a fact that Nigeria is the largest market in Africa, and this also applies to the cooling sector. With the current growing population, combined with improving lifestyle, urbanisation and rising global warming, Nigeria will continue to experience growing demand for air conditioners, refrigerators and other cooling devices."

"Thus becoming one of the fastest growing air conditioners and refrigerators market in the world. Unfortunately, most of the air conditioners utilised in the country have an energy efficiency ratio below

- UN

internationally acceptable minimum energy performance standard.

'Nigeria can generate \$1bn from leather export'

NIGERIA may generate over \$1 billion by 2025 from the leather, cotton and garments sector, the Nigeria Export Promotion Council (NEPC) has said.

Speaking at the stakeholders' engagement forum and exhibition in assessing the opportunities and challenges in the leather, garment and apparel industry,

Centre, FCDO inaugurates digital community

THE Policy Innovation Centre (PIC) of the Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG) has inaugurated a Digital Economy Community of Practice (DECoP) to drive inclusive growth and sustainable development in Nigeria digital ecosystem.

The event held in Abuja, Thursday, is in partnership with the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) to identify and boost the capacity of key digital players, and engender inclusive public-private sector collaboration.

Prof. Isa Pantami, Minister of Communications and Digital Economy, said the 2020-2030 National Digital Economy Policy and Strategy was built on eight implementing pillars.

"This is just an effort to ensure total inclusion, we are trying to cascade digital economy to reach our states."

Dr Osasuyi Dirisu, Executive Director, PIC, emphasised the need to bridge digital divide through cross-sectoral

NEPC's Executive Director, Mr Ezra Yakuza, said the industry could increase its earnings to about 70 per cent in the next few years.

He said this was also expected to curb the rate of unemployment. Represented by the Deputy Director, Product Development of the council, Mr Macherpson Fred,

he said one of the sectors identified with huge untapped potential is manufacturing/industrial.

"Statistics showed that over two decades, Asia dominated the global garment production, with China leading the pack as the largest manufacturer and exporter of apparels and garment with an export turnover of about \$26.41 billion," he said.

He explained that the leading manufacturing hub like China chase after apparel and garment exports to gain global market share, reduce unemployment and diversify its economy. Ditt some African countries like Ghana, Ethiopia and Kenya have taken the lead in the export of apparels and garment.

Yakuza noted that these calls for concerted efforts not to overlook this latent sub-sector but rather explore and harness the vast opportunities in its fold as it has the possibility of creating millions of jobs, reducing the pressure on the nation's foreign reserves and opening practitioners to global wealth.

"NEPC has been at the forefront of assisting and promoting the development of export-oriented industries/sub-sectors towards boosting export activities that would expand the country volume and value of non-current export for sustainable inclusive economic growth," he added.



Adebayo

BUSINESS WORLD

Group to equip youths through undergraduate entrepreneurship

Undergraduate Alumni Foundation, An initiative to better the lives of African youths and empower them financially known as Undergraduate Alumni Foundation (UAF), has been launched across universities in Nigeria and Africa in general, writes SAM WILSON.

IN the last few decades, Africa has faced a myriad of challenges as a continent, including food scarcity, an increase in unemployment, graduates roaming the streets looking for jobs not even remotely connected to their courses of study, inflation, insecurity and others.

Despite all the hard times, we've also seen some good times with great youths taking up the mantle of leadership, grabbing opportunities to make the economy better and making a living for themselves.

Founder, UAF, Mr Oseyomon Ighodaloh said the organisation is aimed at youthful inclusion in society across Nigeria and Africa.

"The idea behind the foundation is to empower undergraduates with the necessary skills and tools needed to propel them to greater heights while answering the age-old question 'what next' that most graduates have after their higher academic studies.

"The UAF provides undergraduates with this support as a way to curb unemployment, accelerate economic wealth and social value, and encourage economic growth.

"This is because we believe our universities and colleges are the building blocks for Africa's next solid entrepreneurs, world leaders and global shapers with the potential to grow and shape the economy."

He added: "The foundation has several components, including a funding/business grant programme, a mentorship programme, an annual business event, a food drive and an accommodation drive, which are explained in detail on our official website, www.undergraduatealumnifoundation.org.

Ighodaloh also informed that the foundation takes a cue from the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by



dabbling into SDGs 1 (no poverty), SDG 2 (zero hunger) and SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth).

"Our vision is to be the foremost organisation driving economic growth and development among Africa's undergraduates, raising successful business owners and entrepreneurs, who will generate social and economic wealth by contributing to the economy through the private sector."

In his illustration, Ighodaloh said: "Imagine an undergraduate attached to a successful professional (mentor) in his field,

with a mandate to groom the undergraduate until he/she becomes successful in the respected field.

"Now imagine this successful candidate compelled to do the same for another undergraduate and the system repeats itself in successive cycles. Now, imagine the number of success stories we will be celebrating after two, three or five years."

He further explained that this system can be likened to the 'Igbo apprenticeship system', where a more experienced businessman adopts and trains a

novice to become a successful business crop.

Ighodaloh, who is also a philanthropist and businessman, hinted that the system also reflects one of the foundation's core beliefs, 'UBUNTU' – I am because we are. Here we believe that truly, it takes a village to raise a child.

"As members of the general public, your participation is required in several aspects as the foundation opens its doors to its first recipients in the year 2022 and it will begin with three major aspects. One, the UAF Business funding scheme for undergraduates features a non-refundable seed grant open to them in the first school we would be starting with.

Second, the UAF Mentorship scheme and third, the Undergraduate Business Conference (UBC).

He said contributions in terms of financial support and publicity are highly needed and would be well appreciated.

The foundation bases some of its principles on 'giving back' to the system which is why its doors are open to donations from individuals, alumni, organisations and lots more.

Through the student assistance scheme, the foundation is looking to have impacted at least 50,000 students in the next five years.

In addition, the foundation hopes to absorb at least 10,000 students into its entrepreneurial

and mentorship programme in the next five years.

"After a series of deliberations, the team has come to a consensus agreement that our target for beneficiaries shall be undergraduates that are in Year 1-3 (for a 4-year course) and Year 1-4 (for a 5-year course)," says the founder.

Ighodaloh said it is to enable the undergraduates to benefit from their studies and also participate in this initiative.

"The task ahead is enormous. We call on successful professionals in all walks of life to join the initiative as volunteers and mentors.

"On donations, however, the general public is encouraged to donate to their alumni institutions as we plan to have this initiative across all institutions of the federation. However, more information on how to donate will be provided to the general public via our website and social media channels."

The foundation aims to transform the private sector, making more room for the inclusion of undergraduates in the employment terrain and turn reducing the rate of social vices that youths engage in as a result of unemployment.

Ighodaloh said: "Together, I believe, we can help raise the next Elon Musk, Bill Gates and Folorunso Alakija towards a better economy."

Source: The Guardian

"Now imagine this successful candidate compelled to do the same for another undergraduate and the system repeats itself in successive cycles. Now, imagine the number of success stories we will be celebrating after two, three or five years. He further explained that this system can be likened to the 'Igbo apprenticeship system', where a more experienced businessman adopts and trains a novice to become a successful business crop. Ighodaloh, who is also a philanthropist and businessman, hinted that the system also reflects one of the foundation's core beliefs, 'UBUNTU' – I am because we are. Here we believe that truly, it takes a village to raise a child."



'My message is love in whatever I do'

Continued from page 18

couldn't get away from real music and soul music at the end of the day.

What is your greatest musical achievement?

I would say to still be here, to still be relevant in the eyes of the people. We make music. We don't try to make hit songs. The people decide that for us. We just sing from out hearts and whenever the song reaches the people they decide that. I'm just enjoying the moment. Enjoying being alive. And to make the music I want



to make and to touch people across the world, whether it's just ten people that are tuned in to me or it's a million, or a billion. We are just making music that makes sense.

If you were stuck on a deserted island and could only bring two albums, which albums would you bring?

That would be hard to decide, to be honest with you. I don't think I would bring any of mine because I don't know how I would manage. There would be too many love songs. I would want some inspiration to go on because it's a desert island. I don't know. It's hard. There are so many albums that I love and respect. It would have to be more than two.

What's your favorite movie?

I'm just getting into movies. I just watched the best series in the entire world: Breaking Bad. I think they need to have a part 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7. I'm just getting into movies and especially series. Breaking Bad is really different and it makes me think a lot. I like when things are unexpected. You see things and you don't know what's next. That's what I love about them. It keeps me wondering, what is coming next. Everything around me gives

me inspiration.

What was it like growing up in Stepney, St. Ann?

Life was good. It's not a rich community or I didn't grow up in one of those kinds of families but I'm happy I was born and raised that way. I think the values that my parents and my community at large kind of put out, that is what is keeping today and keeping me busy and trying to stay in the right lane and do the right thing. I give thanks and praise. Stepney is somewhere where if I want to relax my mind and just go back to the roots and keep connected to the roots. That's where I have to go back to. I love my family. Most of my family is there. I always have to go back home but, it's beautiful. My community is like a family community. It's somewhere that no matter how far I go in the world I can't forget.

Do you have a favorite song on the new album?

It's hard to decide. I have between fourteen and fifteen songs that are going to be on the album. I see every one of them just like how a parent would look at a child. None is more special. I don't have none that I can say, this one is more special than this one because all of them are from the heart. It would be unfair to judge one and say this is the best one. I will allow the people to decide which one is their favorite of the best one. I made an album. I don't want anybody to take away one and say this one is not, especially this third album.

Do you remember your first performance?

Yeah, I remember that clearly. I go to church. I'm a church boy. Growing up, I remember the first time performing was at my church, Stepney Tabernacle Church. I was humming the lines of Amazing Grace, Sánchez version, inside of the church. That was the first time singing, and then from there it was just a nonstop thing for me. I didn't see a music career at that age. I just saw it as fun. People said that I have a talent, even back then I didn't take it seriously. It was probably in high school that I started taking it seriously.

Thank you for your time.

Blessings



Influential black musicians of all time

Continued from page 18

including Little Richard, Johnny Cash, Elvis Presley, and Chuck Berry.

Ray Charles



Ray Charles is widely regarded as the musician who combined soul and country to create a new sound of blues and R&B. Charles became one of the first black musicians to be granted full artistic control by a mainstream record company while he was with ABC. Charles is a 17-time Grammy Award winner among many other accomplishments.

Aretha Franklin



Aretha Franklin, "The Queen of Soul", will go down in history as a remarkable musician, as well as a key figure in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. Her hit song "Respect" served as an anthem for both the Civil Rights Movement and the Women's Rights Movement. In 1987, she was the first female artist to be inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of fame.

Jimi Hendrix



Jimi Hendrix pioneered new music technologies and redefined the role of guitar in popular music. His unique sound, extraordinary technique, and staggering stage presence influenced many guitarists that came after including Stevie Ray Vaughan, Prince, and Joe Satriani.

SUNDAY FEATURE

2023 elections and the consequences of 'Obidience'

FOR proper context, Nigeria's current political landscape is predominantly controlled by two major parties, APC and PDP. This two-party dynamics has been prevalent since 1999 when Nigeria adopted democracy. Political contests in the country have always been between a ruling party, a major opposition party (or at most two) and other minor opposition parties in the background. Until 2015 when the marriage between CPC and ACN was consummated, major opposition parties were largely representative of regional voting blocs.

The 2015 merger was borne out of the realisation that Nigeria's presidency cannot be won by the sole or combined agencies of popularity, resource strength and sectarian influence. It could only be won by a concerted effort at forging alliances and establishing demographic balances that can assure transnational political cooperation. The APC achieved that in 2015 and was resultantly able to displace the political hegemony that PDP represented at that time.

Contrastingly, 2023 election was defined by the opposite of the events of 2015. Instead of consolidating the strength of the PDP, which is Nigeria's major opposition party, it was hit by a wave of fragmentations as seen with the emergence of Kwankwaso's New Nigeria People's Party (NNPP) and Peter Obi's Labour Party (LP). These supposed third forces went ahead to seize political influence from the grip of the PDP in some of their strongholds and cost the party tremendous political capital.

The rise to prominence of Labour Party constitutes the biggest misfortune for not only PDP, but all Nigerian opposition parties. Peter Obi, who was Atiku Abubakar's running mate in the PDP in 2019, defected from the party in protest against the party's refusal to zone the presidential ticket to the South. Some reports suggest that Obi also got an early signal that Atiku would not be picking him again as his running mate. These, reports suggest, were his major reasons for defecting to Labour Party.

Obi's candidature started as a representation of the general agitation for good governance in Nigeria. His Labour Party provided a political platform for Nigeria's huge population of angry and aggrieved youth, especially those with affiliations (both active and passive) to the leaderless #EndSARS movement through which mass protests against the government were held in southern states and some North-central ones in 2020. Obi sparked a consensus among these young people who formed the 'Obidient Movement' and became the driving force for his campaign.

The second agitation that Obi symbolised is that of a southern presidency. There's this widely held assumption that Nigeria's presidency is subject to a nationally-binding power rotation arrangement. Hence, after eight years of the President Muhammadu Buhari administration, the people that hold this assumption expected a seamless rotation of power to the South, particularly to a Christian southerner. Although this assumption is flawed because zoning is strictly subject to the peculiar political dynamics of individual political parties in Nigeria, APC's zoning arrangement favoured the South.

As a result, agitation for the PDP to also zone their presidential ticket to the South became louder. But the party's zoning arrangement did not favour a southern presidency. This is because for the 16 years of PDP rule, 13 years were administered by a southern presidency while only three years were administered by the North. Jonathan by contesting in 2011 and 2015 (even though he lost)

The 2023 presidential election served as a test not only for Nigeria's democratic credentials but also as a conduit for certain political figures and their supporters to rekindle deep rooted prejudices and sentiments. The political atmosphere was shrouded in sturdy fabrics of ethno-religious and regional schisms that weaponised our diversity and prevented many from adequately contemplating the consequences of such divisive inclinations with respect to our politics and democracy. Abdulhaleem Ishaq Ringim writes.



sought to fulfill another eight uninterrupted years of a southern presidency. Hence, it was only fair that a northerner also contest for two consecutive elections (whether he wins or loses).

The APC eventually settled for a Muslim from the South-west and the PDP, a Muslim from the North-east. Peter Obi of the Labour Party was seen to be the only hope of achieving a power shift to a Christian southerner and he became a symbol for this agitation which he proudly embodied and radiated.

The third symbolism that Peter Obi's candidacy represented is that of a politico-religious crusade. Although PDP's ticket had Atiku, a Muslim from the North-east and Okowa, Christian from the South-south; his candidacy was still invalidated by the agitators of a southern presidency. Unfortunately for them, the APC decided to settle for a ticket that had a presidential candidate that is a southern Muslim (which in itself is less preferred by this group of agitators) and a running mate that is also Muslim from the North-east. This Muslim-Muslim configuration was strictly borne out of APC's desire to attain unmatched political advantage in relation to the demographic factors that define Nigeria's politics. This was considered politically blasphemous and became the final recipe needed to start a political war against all Muslim candidates, irrespective of the faiths of their running mates, like Atiku.

Resultantly, the ethnic and religious aspects of the factors that strengthened Peter Obi's candidacy relegated that of advocacy for good governance to the rear and he became a symbol for multi-dimensional identity politics that was successful in polarising the country's politics along ethnic cleavages and religious schisms.

From the outset, the impossibility of fulfilling the constitutional requirement of securing not less than

25% of votes cast in at least 24 states including the FCT was glaringly obvious for Peter Obi, not to talk of securing the highest number votes. He knew he could only go as far as securing the states in the South-east, some states in the South-south, one or two states in the South-west and North-central and some fraction of votes from Christian-dominated constituencies of the core North. Notwithstanding, the Obidient Movement-backed "Ellu P" jettisoned traditional political structure-based mode of political mobilisation that is usually deeply penetrative in favour of radical media approaches. And he chose to deliberately and unapologetically ride on ethno-religious sentiments at the expense of fostering transnational politicking.

Regrettably, the idea of politics as a game of consensus and compromises and an exercise in trans-demographic consensus building, which is critical in Nigeria's democratic context, was noticeably suppressed in favour of politically motivated ethno-religious sectarianism. This portended profound political ramifications with severe potential repercussions for Nigeria's quest for national unity and cohesion.

A man whose performance as governor of Anambra state was mediocre at best; who was a beneficiary and product of the supposed "evil political status quo" as a former member and vice presidential candidate of the PDP; who was fingered in the Pandora papers for operating secret overseas companies in tax havens in a manner that violated Nigeria's laws; who was overly simplistic in his articulation of the solutions to the myriad of problems facing Nigeria and who is popularly known for his rendition of incorrect statistics and incongruous analogies of development stories; was elevated to political sainthood in a short period of time solely because he represented certain sentiments.

It was as though there was an epidemic of selective amnesia!

Social media platforms became tools for political mob actions against supporters of other candidates and political parties by the members of the Obidient movement. One had to either join them in embodying their bandwagonist tendencies or risk being vilified and tagged an enemy of development. A section of Nigeria's media incessantly portrayed him as a political messiah who had all the solutions to Nigeria's problems and painted all other candidates as Nigeria's major problems and impediments to progress and development.

But even with all these factors conspiring in his favour, he lost as expected, polling third with 6.1 million votes and securing 25% votes cast in just 16 states. This expected loss is not without dire consequences for Peter Obi as a person and the constituencies whose interests he was seen to be representing.

Specifically, he has been tagged as an agent of a politico-religious crusade that was blatantly furthered by the church and would never be trusted by Nigeria's Muslim population without whose votes he can never smell the scent of Aso Rock. As I inferred in another article, "the religious and ethnic colourations of the factors that influenced his relative prominence and gave him a comparative advantage in this election would be same that would mar his chances in future elections. Hardly would he ever get the chance to command protest votes like he did this time around because of APC's Muslim-Muslim ticket. He is basically done".

Secondly, his candidacy and eventual loss at the polls did as much harm to his political career as it did to the general Igbo presidency agitation. Unlike the PDP where a South-eastern presidency was possible in four-eight years

especially with Atiku who promised to personally lead this charge, APC's South-western presidency with Tinubu which is likely to run for eight years assures a rotation back to the North for another eight years in line with the party's zoning arrangement. This makes it 16 years of South-western and northern exclusive presidency. All courtesy of Peter Obi, the South-east has been rendered incapacitated in the quest to securing the presidency for the next 16 years unless a significant disruption of the status quo is experienced which is not expected due to the lost opportunity that was not utilised in the 2023 elections.

Thirdly, the parochial tendencies of the members of the Obidient movement (especially the Igbo) as deeply embedded in the manner through which their campaigns (of self-righteousness and entitlement) were fostered have widened ethnic intolerance and further compromised the possibility of a sustainable socio-cultural handshake between Igbo and Hausa as well as the Yoruba. This seems to be exacerbated by the subsisting manner in which some Igbo supporters of Peter Obi have continued to stereotype the Hausa/Fulani by tagging them as terrorists and Yoruba as rascals even after the elections. Interestingly, same set of people have started to complain of victimhood (what they like to term 'Igbophobia') which most consider self-inflicted — what a juvenile attempt at ad hominem!

As overbearing as the implications of Obidience to Nigeria's political and socio-cultural prospects may seem, it still presents us with an opportunity to learn significant lessons which are essential for the rectification of the fault lines that have been further emboldened by their misadventure. As stated in the opening paragraphs of this article, it is now clear that Nigeria's presidency can never be won by the sole or combined agencies of popularity, resource strength and sectarian influence. Neither can it ever be won through political mobilisation methods that are entirely fueled by sentiments and emotions, irrespective of the strength of the media power behind their propagation.

Winning presidential elections in Nigeria requires building bridges across the nation's demography and evoking transnational consensus on the need to stand on a candidate's mandate. Expression of excessive entitlement and self-righteousness in the quest for securing power by a people only breeds resentment and isolation. Dexterity in political bargaining and deliberateness in playing this game of consensus and compromises is what is required in order to succeed in this exercise in fostering transnational alliances.

As for political parties, the events of the 2023 presidential election have further proven the fallacy of the third force in Nigeria. As posited in my article titled 2023 Elections: Nigeria and the Third Force Fallacy, "the formation of APC in 2014 has greatly stalled chances for the emergence of any other strong coalition or third force movement" that is capable of dislodging a ruling party. Unless APC disintegrates, it will take a strong alliance of opposition parties just as the ACN, CPC and a section of APGA and ANPP did in 2013 to end the reign of the ruling party.

In the end, 'Obidience' has proven to be a lost cause with grave long term consequences on our political and socio-cultural fabric. We must never allow such misadventure to befall us again.

NEWS

DSS confirms arrest of criminal gang in Kogi

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

OPERATIVES of the Department of State Services, DSS, has confirmed the arrest of a six-man criminal gang, including a retired Army colonel, terrorising the Lokoja-Abuja Road.

The six-man gang, which includes a retired army colonel, A. U. Suleiman and a lawyer, M.K. Aminu, was intercepted at Gegu Beki along the Abuja-Lokoja Road during an operation by DSS operatives in conjunction with other security agencies on Sunday. The DSS Public Relations Officer, Dr Peter Afunanya, who confirmed the arrest of the gang in a statement made available to our correspondent, said the service also got some arms and ammunition as well as cash, during the raid at Gegu Beki and other locations in the country.

He said: "The Department of State Services hereby informs the public that it carried out a joint operation with sister security agencies in Kogi State on 26th March 2023. During the operation, the security team intercepted a six-man criminal gang at Gegu Beki, along the Lokoja-Abuja Road.

"While the gang includes Col AU Suleiman (rtd), Barr. MK



Bello

Aminu, Kabir Abdullahi, Isah Umar, Kadir Echi and Adama Abdulkarim, items recovered from the members are: one pump action rifle, four cartridges; one AK47 empty shell and the sum of N11,030. "On 25th March 2023, Service operatives apprehended 20-year-old suspected notorious kidnapper, Haruna Adamu at Fotta village in Gombi LGA, Adamawa State. At the point of arrest, one AK-47 rifle, one magazine and four rounds of 7.62mm live ammunition were recovered from the suspect.

"On 23rd March 2023, one Aminu Ibrahim, a suspected

gunrunner was arrested along Kubwa Expressway, Abuja by the Service operatives while on his way from Nasarawa State to deliver 432 rounds of 7.62 x39mm calibre ammunition concealed in a four-litre gallon of palm oil to a bandit in Niger State. The sum of N21,400 was also recovered from the suspect.

"Earlier on 22nd March 2023, Babangida Ibrahim, an arms courier to bandits in Zamfara State was apprehended along Bukuru in Jos South LGA, Plateau State. Recovered from him were 468 rounds of 7.62 x 39mm ammunition and the sum of N21,090.

From DORCAS PANKYES, Abuja

AIR Marshal Elson Moyo, Commander of the Air Force of Zimbabwe (AFZ), expressed his country's desire to explore technical assistance from the Nigerian Air Force (NAF) in the areas of research and development, unmanned aerial vehicle technology as well as operation and maintenance of F7 and Mi-35 aircraft.

This was contained in a statement by Air Commodore Ayodele Famuyiwa, Director of Public Relations and Information Nigerian Air Force.

The identified areas for collaboration, according to Air Marshal Moyo, are of common and peculiar aviation interests to Zimbabwe and Nigeria, whose air forces operate some similar aircraft.

The Zimbabwe Air Chief noted that the NAF within a short time has recorded remarkable feats in its transformation effort to develop indigenous capacity.

This, he said, provides a motivation for the AFZ to look inward as part of efforts to address the technical challenges arising from sanctions imposed on his country, which has limited the AFZ ability to acquire basic aircraft parts and other technical aids necessary for operational efficiency.

Air Marshal Moyo also commended the NAF for its support it gave to AFZ in the past, acknowledging the high quality training given to the first batch of Zimbabwe pilots

AFZ to explore technical assistance from NAF



Amao

trained in the 1980s by the NAF, which he said informs the decision by AFZ to seek for improved synergy and collaboration with the NAF, with respect to capacity development.

Meanwhile, the Chief of Air Staff, Air Mshl Oladayo Amao has stated that the NAF is ready to forge mutually benefitting partnership with the AFZ. Air Mshl Amao made the remarks, while welcoming to the Commander AFZ to Headquarters Nigerian Air Force (HQ NAF).

The CAS stated that the NAF is currently in partnership

with many countries, including African countries, and is willing to partner with others who will seek collaboration with the Service; noting that improved synergy among African countries is the solution to many of the challenges, including security, facing the continent.

Air Mshl Amao further stated that collaboration which would be in the areas of training, technical assistance and technology transfer will boost the capacity of African countries to be self-reliant and dependent in driving progress and development on the continent.

Air Mshl Elson Moyo is on a week-long visit to Nigeria, during which he will be visiting some NAF units, including the North East.

NGO to empower 3000 mothers, caregivers

By DORCAS PANKYES, Abuja

A humanitarian intervention focused on providing integrated food, nutrition sanitation and protection services in Nigeria's north-east region will empower over 300,000 mothers and caregivers. The intervention aims to enhance dietary practices, home-based malnutrition screening skills, provision of high impact lifesaving nutrition interventions (such as early identification and referral of acute malnutrition cases for treatment), and micronutrients supplementation to prevent infections among children. These interventions are

aimed at improving the survival of children affected by conflict.

Funded by the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) of the UK Government, the Multisectoral Integrated Nutrition Action (MINA) project is being implemented by UNICEF and other partners in 24 Local Government Areas of Borno and Yobe states till March 2025.

With approximately 1 in 4 children aged 12-23 months not vaccinated, the North-east region has one of the highest numbers of unvaccinated children in Nigeria, according to the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey and National

Immunization Coverage Survey (MICS-NICS 2021).

Data from the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene: National Outcome Routine Mapping (WASH NORM 2021) shows that four per cent of the population in Borno and two per cent in Yobe have access to safely managed drinking water. Up to 1.1 million people across the region still practice open defecation, a risk factor for malnutrition and stunting in children.

The project leverages a bouquet of essential services and community structures to provide integrated essential services for children, including birth registration and immunization services, nutrition counselling, cash transfer support, establishment of vegetable gardens, market-based sanitation and hygiene interventions, mothers' groups, nutrition mobilisers and WASH Committees.

Critically, the highly successful mother-led Mid-Upper Arm Circumference programme is being expanded while roving midwives will be deployed to hard-to-reach areas to improve the nutrition status and overall wellbeing of the most disadvantaged children.

"The first 1000 days of life of a child is an unmatched window of opportunity. UNICEF is grateful for the support of the FCDO to invest early in the lives of some of the most vulnerable children in the world," said Cristian Mundaate, UNICEF Representative in Nigeria.

"It is heartwarming that through the capacity building and empowerment approach of this project, thousands of

children will benefit from this intervention in the long term," said Cristian Mundaate.

Police rescue 13 abducted victims

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

THE Operatives of Kogi State Police Command attached to the Quick Response Unit have rescued 11 males, two females who were kidnapped at a hotel in Eleite area of the state along Ajaokuta Road on March 25, 2023.

The development was sequel to the order by the Commissioner of Police, CP Akeem Yusuf, that efforts must be put in place to ensure that all victims were rescued unhurt.

Spokesman of the Command, SP William Aya in a statement made available to journalists in Lokoja recently, indicates that "the operatives of Quick Response Unit led by the Commander, SP Obafemi OJO promptly swung into action through a credible intelligence and located the kidnappers' hideout in a forest around Zariagi-Kabba Junction. On sighting the police, the hoodlums engaged them in a gun duel.

According to him, owing to the superior firepower of



Alkali

the police, the hoodlums were forced to flee with varying degrees of injuries, while thirteen kidnapped victims were rescued unhurt. One AK47 magazine containing six rounds of ammunition was recovered from the scene".

He said that the Commissioner of Police commended the operatives for their bravery and diligence.

He urged members of the

public, particularly the adjoining communities to be on the lookout and report anybody seen with bullet wounds to the nearest security formation or agencies.

He further enjoins the good people of Kogi State to continue to cooperate with the police and provide credible information on the activities of criminal elements so as to curtail their acts in the state.



Farouk

NEWS

Dangote cement donates N5m to FRCN

From **AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja**

THE Dangote Cement Plant Plc has donated N5 million to Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN), Kogi Prime FM Station, towards educating and enlightening the public on daily activities in Nigeria.

Mr Jaiprakash Gungune, the Plant Director of the company, presented a Cheque of N5 million to the corporation as part of Dangote Cement's contribution towards the relocation of the Transmitter Hall of Radio Nigeria Prime FM Station to Mount Patti in Lokoja.

Gungune said that Dangote was into all sectors of the economy to make life more meaningful for Nigerians, hence the partnership with the radio station.

"Dangote company through its Corporate Social Responsibility had invested in all sectors of the economy by empowering lives across the nation.

"It's our candid desire as a company to continue to partner with Radio Nigeria to inform the public of more opportunities available in Dangote Cement PLC, Obajana, as well as numerous ways lives are being impacted," Gungune pledged.

Responding, the Zonal



Dangote

Director, North Central Zone of FRCN, Alhaji Haruna Idris, thanked Dangote for its generosity and support to the Kogi FM station towards fulfilling its mandate in the state.

Represented by the General Manager of the station, Alhaji Adeiza Momoh-jimoh, the Zonal Director, described Dangote's fulfilment of its pledge to the station as "apt" and "encouraging."

"I wish to reiterate here that Radio Nigeria is poised in its obligations to partner with

individuals, organisations as well as government entities to fulfil its mandate of educating, entertaining and enlightening the public," Idris said.

Our correspondent reports that the Radio Nigeria Prime FM Station, Lokoja, had held a programme last year in its quest to relocate to Mount Patti for a better signal and coverage of Kogi and beyond.

Dangote had, during the programme, pledged to support the station with some financial assistance to help it

PROFESSOR Dauda Tanko of the Federal University, Lokoja, has given an assurance that Nigeria stands to gain a lot from the Wildlife/Biodiversity Policy in boosting its economy.

He stressed the need for the federal government to review the policy strategies adopted to achieve conservation of natural resources for sustainable economic development and other goals in Nigeria. Tanko, a Professor of Wild Conservation and Ecology, Federal University of Lokoja, Kogi State, North Central Nigeria, made the call on Thursday while delivering the 11th Inaugural Lecture of the university.

The title of the lecture was "Biodiversity Conservation for Sustainable Economic Development In A Post-COVID-19 Era: Dress It And Keep It, For This Is The Whole Duty Of Man."

The erudite academic said that the call became necessary because: "It is clear that the policy strategies adopted to achieve conservative of natural resources development and other goals have failed."

He also stressed the need for a workable policy in such sub-section of the economy to check hunger which is ravaging the land and poverty fast overtaking the country, as Nigeria is leading the world poverty secretariat as its headquarters.

The professor also expressed concern that insecurity remained the order of the day, ravaging the lives of the innocent seasons and making conservation activities almost impossible.

"Further to this, the rural areas and the rural economy remain under-developed and lacking in every facility necessary to improve the welfare and well-being of the rural dwellers," the lecturer, whose immediate and extended family members witnessed the occasion added.

He suggested that government and the policy makers should partner with

Don harps on gains of Wildlife/Biodiversity Policy

From **AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja**



Adamu

the local communities, noting that "there are useful things they know about the ecosystem that others do not."

According to the academician, since most communities in the country are deeply and profoundly knowledgeable about their ecosystems, which can be exploited for national economic development, "we must tap from knowledge to make progress."

He expressed optimism that if made use of, suggestions would help Nigeria to attain self-reliant economy and facilitate the achievement of the biodiversity conservation goals for its sustainable economic development.

In his address of welcome, the Vice Chancellor of the university, Professor Akinwumi Olayemi, said that the Inaugural lectures being organized by the institution had reflected in quality of collaboration between the university, other universities as well as other organisations in the country.

"Collaboration has been the driving force in increasing competence and promoting

our academic culture, leading to the 11th Inaugural Lecture," he said.

The Vice Chancellor, who noted that he had touched all the areas of his 10-point agenda in the first two years of his administration, expressed commitment to maintain the pace and meet all expectations. Our correspondent reports that highlights of the occasion include presentation of award of plaque by the university to the lecturer among others.

Born in 1970 and the last of the six children of Tanko Moroko Sankey and Mrs Zandika Maria Tanko, both of blessed memory in Kaduna State, Professor Tanko is a graduate of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Kaduna State.

The occasion was attended by many members of the university community and those of the larger community. Using the recently restored two constituencies of Agasha and Mata, the All Progressives Congress (APC) won 23 seats, ten was won by Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) while one seat was won

INEC issues Certificate of Return to Governor-elect

From **TERESE TUHWA, Makurdi**

THE Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has presented Certificates of Return to the Benue State Governor-elect, Reverend Father Dr. Hyacinth Iormem Alia and his deputy Barr. Samuel Ode.

Addressing the people before commencement of the event, the INEC Federal Commissioner in charge of Communication and Voter Education,

Barr. Festus Okoye said the exercise was in compliance with the commission's provision that winners in any electoral contest are expected to be issued with Certificate of Return within a period of fourteen days after they have been declared elected.

He said "the commission will continue to uphold the sanctity of the ballot", adding that the electoral umpire shall continue to ensure that only votes of the people

will determine who governs them.

According to Okoye, the commission was the commission of Nigerian people, a public trust and its allegiance was only to the citizens of the country and the constitution.

The federal commissioner who congratulated all those who have been elected into various offices, urged them to see the entire state as their constituency and citizens of the state as those who they have been elected to serve.

Earlier, the Benue State INEC Resident Electoral Commissioner, Professor Samuel Egwu said the commission was poised to operate within the confines of the law.

Barr. Okoye presented Certificates of Return to the Benue State Governor-elect, Reverend Father Dr. Hyacinth Iormem Alia and his deputy, Barr. Samuel Ode while Professor Samuel Egwu presented Certificates of Return to 33 members of the Benue State House of Assembly-elect.

Out of the 33 members of the House incl

Incoming lawmakers promise people oriented legislation

From **TERESE TUHWA, Makurdi**

MEMBERS elect for the 10th Benue State House of Assembly have expressed readiness to embark on people oriented legislations that will better the lots of their constituents.

Some of the incoming lawmakers who spoke to **SUNDAY STANDARD** at the Precious Event Centre Makurdi during the issuance of Certificate of Return by Independent National Electoral Commission said having been in the trenches with the people over the years, they have a better understanding of the yearnings and aspirations of their constituents and will initiate legislations that will bring succour to them.

Member -elect for Gboko East state constituency Hon. Mrs. Becky Orpin (APC) told our correspondent that she

will prioritise legislations that will engender good governance especially for the women while her counterpart from Gwer East state constituency, Hon. Elias Audu (APC) said his victory was an opportunity to contribute his quota to the development of the state.

He said he will redefine legislation, prioritise people's welfare through affordable quality education, farm inputs for improved agricultural production.

The member-elect maintained that he will initiate a legislation that will provide enabling environment for "nobody to become somebody in the near future".

In his interaction, member-elect for Okpokwu state constituency, Rt. Hon. Anthony Agom (PDP) said his second coming as state parliamentarian will afford

him the opportunity to touch areas that he has not been able to touch since according to him, his constituents have not been where they supposed to be.

He argued that there will be no issue of party affiliation while in the house for legislative business but will rather support any bill that will bring succour and positive changes to Okpokwu state constituency in particular and Benue State at large while those that will be anti people will be opposed, fought and roundly rejected.

His counterpart from the recently restored Agasha state constituency, Dr. Boniface Iangba Ortese (APC) told our correspondent that he will leave no legislation untouched to ensure the return of over 80 percent of his constituents to their ancestral homes who he said are currently living in different



Yakubu

NEWS

Court sacks newly sworn-in Taraba PDP Chairman

From VICTOR GAI, Jalingo

THE Federal High Court Jalingo has granted an interim injunction restraining the acting chairman, People's Democratic Party (PDP), Taraba State chapter, Abubakar Bawa from parading himself as chairman of the party.

The case had Inuwa Bakari as plaintiff and the PDP, Abubakar Bawa and INEC as defendants.

The presiding judge, Justice Bala K.M Usman, in granting the prayers of the applicant, restrained the second defendant, Abubakar Bawa from acting as chairman of the PDP Taraba State chapter pending the hearing and determination of the motion on notice.

The order reads: "that an order of interim injunction is hereby granted restraining the 2nd defendant, Abubakar Bawa from acting, carrying out functions and parading himself as the chairman of the People's Democratic Party, Taraba State chapter pending the hearing and



Arioola

determination of the motion on notice.

"An order is made restraining the 1st defendant from taking any step(s) that may negatively affect the membership right of the plaintiff as the acting chairman of the first defendant".

Abubakar Bawa, who is the Special Adviser (Political Affairs) to Governor Darius Ishaku,

was last week sworn-in as acting chairman of PDP Taraba State chapter, triggering reservations on the constitutionality of the act.

The aggrieved party, Inuwa Bakari, the erstwhile Vice Chairman of the party took over in acting capacity after Agbu Kefas (now Governor-elect), ran as governorship aspirant of the PDP.

INEC presents Certificate of Return to Governor-elect

From JOHN FWAH Kaduna

THE Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), on Friday, issued Certificate of Return (CoR) to Kaduna State Governor-elect, Senator Uba Sani and his Deputy, Dr Hadiza Sabuwa Balarabe.

Similarly, INEC had also issued Certificate of Return to the elected members of the House of Assembly.

Speaking shortly after receiving the Certificate, Malam Uba Sani thanked the Almighty for witnessing the important day in his life.

He appreciated the good people of Kaduna State for giving him the mandate to run the affairs of the state, saying

that he would be the servant of the people with utmost responsibility and fear of Allah.

Senator Uba Sani assures that every part of the state would enjoy dividends of democracy. "Either you voted for me or not you will be given sense of belonging irrespective of religion, ethic and political affiliation", he said.

Senator Uba Sani solicited the support and co-operation of all citizens of Kaduna State to achieve his Seven Point Agenda which includes safety and security, upgrade of infrastructure, strengthening of institutions, trade and

investment, agriculture, investment in human capital development among others.

The Governor-elect who commended INEC for its dedication and commitment in the discharge of its duties, also appreciated security agencies for maintaining law and order during the election.

He called on his fellow contestants to join hands with him in moving the state forward. Sen. Uba Sani further congratulated all members of the House of Assembly-elect and enjoined them to work toward the development of the state. National Electoral Commission in charge of Kaduna, Plateau, Nasarawa and the FCT- Mohammed Kudu Haruna presented the Certificates of Return to the Governor and Deputy Governor-elect while the Administrative Secretary of INEC, Kaduna State, Mohammed Ahmad Mashi presented the Certificates of Return to the 29 elected State House of Assembly members.

Exco commiserated with the Grand Patron of the Zone, Governor of Nasarawa State, His Excellency Engr. Abdullahi Sule, over the death of his son. They also commiserated with the Chairman of Kogi State Council of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Adeiza Momoh Jimoh, over the death of his wife as well as Chairman of the FCT Council, Comrade



Mahmood

From VICTOR GAI, Jalingo

TARABA State Governor, Darius Ishaku and Governor-elect, Col. Agbu Kefas (rtd), have both agreed that "stomach infrastructure" was the best policy for Taraba State.

Both parties spoke on Wednesday in Jalingo in the aftermath of the presentation of Certificates of Return to Governor-elect, Col. Agbu Kefas and 24 members of the Taraba House of Assembly by INEC.

When asked on how the incoming administration could sustain his strides in infrastructure, Ishaku simply said he noticed that Tarabans appreciated "stomach infrastructure" than physical Infrastructure and urged the incoming government to focus on the former.

"I will tell the incoming government to concentrate more on stomach infrastructure than physical Infrastructure because I discover that the people appreciate stomach infrastructure than the infrastructure itself," Ishaku stated.

He also called on all other aspirants and Tarabans to support the incoming government in order for it to achieve its objectives.

"I call on all the other aspirants to come together and

Gov-elect pledges to pursue "stomach infrastructure"

give support to the Governor-elect, Col Agbu Kefas (retired), so that he can move the state forward. I remember doing the same in 2015.

"I also call on all Tarabans to come together to give support to the new government so that they can succeed. I want to assure them that the PDP government will do far more than we have done," he added.

The Governor-elect, Agbu Kefas also re-echoed Ishaku's position and promised to pursue "stomach infrastructure alongside other areas of development.

"Just as His Excellency Governor Darius Ishaku said, we are going to look into

security, unity, education, health, agriculture and stomach infrastructure.

"Our people are still alive, instead of building physical Infrastructure and we have unhealthy and dead people," Agbu stated.

Meanwhile, 23 members of the 24-member Assembly were presented with Certificates of Return with the exception of one, representative of Karim 2 Constituency where a supplementary election would be held on a later date.

By party spread, the PDP has the majority with 14 seats, APC has seven seats, NNPP has two while the SDP has one.



Ishaku

Livestock empowerment programme inaugurated in Sokoto

From ANENE AIKE, Sokoto

LIVESTOCK empowerment value chain programme for the needy has been

inaugurated in Sokoto State where the state Zakat and Endowment Commission in collaboration with Qatar Charity Abuja Office started with 8 families picked from among the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) of Gandhi Areas of Rabah Local Government Area of the state, Sokoto as a new project.

Mallam Muhammad Maidoki, Emmanule Ogbeche and members of the council on the death of its Member Mrs. Blessing Adewole. Benue State Government was commended for providing an enabling environment to hold the meeting.

I'll not honour any loan taken after election

- Gov-elect

KANO State Governor-elect, Abba Kabir Yusuf, has again warned all subsisting and prospective lenders to the state government to stop forthwith.

A statement by Chief Press Secretary to the governor-elect on Friday night, Sanusi BatureDawakinTofa, said effective from March 18 to May 29, no lender (domestic or international) shall approve and issue any loan facility to the state government without the express consent of the incoming administration.

Recall that the Governor-elect had on Thursday issued a similar statement where he directed a Public Advisory to all individuals, groups and organisations to stop ongoing construction in public places immediately

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According to the statement, any such loan facility approved and issued to the Kano State Government between the date of election and the date of swearing-in without explicit knowledge and consent of the incoming administration will not be honoured by the new administration;

"All subsisting lenders to the Kano State Government shall take notice that all terms and conditions for all existing loan facilities shall be renegotiated by the new administration guided by the utilization audit/review of each loan facility," the statement said.

"This advisory is made in the public interest, please."

the Executive Chairman SOZECOM, in his speech appreciated the founders for the initiative saying that the system was a new model which would immensely impact on the lives of many people towards ensuring sustainable Communities.

He also stated that the Zakat Commission, Sokoto do not have enough words to thank the Qatar Charity's numerous interventions to its people, particularly the less privileged among the communities.

He said the day's project is like many others benefited in Sokoto State, adding quickly that it is a value chain model system that will enable a sustainable family empowerment.

He also urged the benefiting families to always remain patient and determined, because livestock business requires a lot of dedication to become sustainable.

In his address, Dr Hamdi Alsayed, the Executive County Director, Qatar Charity Abuja Office, Nigeria, said the initiative was to assist the needy society to become self reliant.

He said the first batch of 40 cows were to be distributed to eight families, where each family benefited with five cows, bags of animal feeds and other materials required for livestock rearing.

He also stated that the cows will be artificially inseminated to be able to produce milk in commercial quantity for dairy production.

When accosted, one of the beneficiaries, Malam Altine Dan-Sale, who cares for a family of 14 members, appreciated the donors, while assuring that he will take good care of the cows gotten by his family.

SUNDAY MAGAZINE



Cash crunch and the Nigerian populace

Continued from Page 10

nationwide indefinite strike and picketing of Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) offices across the country over the scarcity of Naira notes. It had planned, to begin the nationwide sit-at-home indefinite strike from Wednesday, March 29, 2023, and picketing of CBN's headquarters and its state offices across the country over the cash crunch that had brought untold hardships to Nigerians and businesses.

At the end of its National Executives Council (NEC) meeting on Tuesday, March 28, 2023, leaders of NLC however gave the CBN two weeks to normalize the money supply nationwide especially in the rural areas. The NLC in a resolution further disclosed that, the NEC in session after extensive discussion, reviewed the under currents of the current cash crunch across the length and breadth of Nigeria. The NLC's NEC noted that the scarcity of

cash is the consequence of the CBN's currency redesign policy.

It noted that the meeting assessed the level of availability of cash in all parts of Nigeria to take a decision on the planned nationwide strike and picketing of the CBN offices. The NLC's NEC resolved that the CBN has made significant efforts to curb cash scarcity in Nigeria thus to some extent complied with the demands of NEC that availability of cash has noticeably improved in the major urban centre in Nigeria. But in rural communities and towns, cash scarcity seemingly persists, that banks have continued to ration access to cash, thus limiting financial transactions across the country.

According to the NLC's NEC, "It does appear that normalcy have not completely been restored as long queues are still visible to allow cash flow seamlessly, as before the unfortunate policy. To this end, NEC in

session decides to suspend the proposed nationwide strike planned for Wednesday, March 29, 2023 since there is significant improvement in the availability of cash. All workers and affiliates are hereby requested to demobilize and stand down every action towards the strike".

It further stated that, the CBN should ensure that total normalcy is restored to cash availability within the nation in the next two weeks. NLC would embark on nationwide strike without warning if the cash situation de generates, instead of return to normalcy. A joint committee of NLC at national and state level is hereby setup to monitor sustainable compliance by CBN towards ensuring that the cash crunch finally comes to an end.

By and large, this sad cash crunch episode is a big dent to the image of Nigeria before the international community while the latest redesign and rebranding of the Naira may

aply be said to be a case of heroic failure "(apology to the late political science professor, Ali Mazrui), the reversal to the old currency is simply a policy surma sault. Despite the seeming reprieve of the situation as a result of understanding between the Nigerian Labour congress (NLC) on the issue, the crisis is not yet over.

Already, there are ten (10) filed contempt charges against the Federal Government and the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), according to media reports The Nation, Saturday 11, 2023). The states, Kaduna, Zamfara, Kogi, Ondo, Ekiti, Katsina, Ogun, Cross River, Lagos and Sokoto are set to challenge the non-compliance to the Supreme Court judgment of March 3, 2023. Though the dust seem to be settling, there is still crowd on the horizon. Interestingly, majority of the states that are willing and ready for this challenge are from the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC).

What went awry? Is there disconnect? It simply means that, there was either misformation, disinformation, mistrust or sheer mischief.

In a democracy, consultation and dialogue are key towards successful policy-making processes. Evidently, this was visibly lacking. It is equally embarrassing that the blame game took the centre stage in this sordid saga. While Godwin Emefiele and his Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) were adamantly insisting on the policy, the presidency was equally busy in refuting some insinuations. It is hope that a lot of lessons must have been learnt from this policy drama.

In the face of this cash crunch challenge and the trauma people passed through, government should exhibit sensibility, responsibility and responsiveness. While the saga lasted, businesses suffered people go borrowing where and when it is available, hence, a little palliative in whatever form would not be out of place.

METRO-FOCUS

Even classy ladies now wear 'Okrika'.

By HOSEA NYAMLONG

THE history of fashion design is dated back to ancient Rome and ancient Egypt. In these cultures, clothing, and fashion were status symbols. Those who were wealthy would wear expensive and stylish garments that were colorful, while the poor would wear neutral colors.

However, during the era of the early ancient Roman Empire, women wore modest long dresses, and men wore togas. A toga was a symbol of Roman citizenship.

The evolution of modern-day fashion started with a boom in the 80s and 90s, leaving room for even more expansion into the early 2000s and beyond. This boom in fashion allowed for fashion to have no rules or guidelines.

Allowing free experimentation with different styles and trends like the grunge style of the 90s. Grunge fashion is characterized by durable and timeless thrift store clothing, often worn loosely to promote androgyny.

In Nigeria, the origin of 'Okrika' clothes, popularly known as second-hand clothes can be traced back to the 1950s and 1960s. It was the time when Nigeria started its journey on the path of independent living. It was the time that Nigerians started becoming attracted to the white man's culture. They tried in every way to be like them. They embraced their way of living, the way they dressed, etc. And since the one within their reach was *okrika*, they went for it. For quite some time, this type of clothing has been the most demanded in the country.

METRO FOCUS focused its searchlight on how young supposedly classy ladies within Jos and Bukuru metropolises patronize second-hand clothes more than ready-made clothes.

A survey by the METRO FOCUS at the various second-hand clothes markets in the Jos metropolis revealed that the traders have started recording higher patronage as the Central Bank of Nigeria, CBN, has released old N1,000, N500, and N200 notes in its custody to deposit money banks.

METRO FOCUS reports that many women, mostly classy ladies now love to mix their clothing with second-hand clothes instead of strictly ready-made clothes. Some of the markets visited include Terminus, Miango Junction, Katako, and Bukuru which are known for various grades of second-hand clothes that cut across all gender.

It was gathered that some residents of Jos have said that they prefer second-hand clothes because they are more durable compared to new ones usually obtained in boutiques.

A cross-section of residents interviewed by METRO FOCUS correspondent said that second-hand clothes are cheaper than new ones. Miss Blessing Haggai, a student at the University of Jos, said she patronizes second-hand clothes because they are cheaper than new ones.

Haggai explained that as a student, she can only afford second-hand clothes due to her meagre income, noting that the price of new ones is usually on the high side.

"I patronize second-hand clothes because they are within my



purchasing power; they are affordable".

While one Mrs Rose Albarka, a working-class lady with one of the private organizations in Jos said that she patronizes second clothes because of their uniqueness.

"One rarely finds similar second-hand shirts or pairs of trousers around as the case with new ones. I hate it when I wear a shirt and see another person putting on the same

thing I am wearing," she said.

MallamAbukakar Sani, a dealer of second-hand clothes in one of the popular markets in Jos said that he prefers to sell women's clothes than men. He said that what is sustaining him today is the selling of ladies' clothes because they like fashion and they are willing to trend with the latest fashion and they want to look different and unique, he said

A civil servant who would not

want his name in print said that the new clothes produced in Nigeria are mostly inferior in quality, as they are easily worn out within a short time. According to him, second-hand clothes are the best so far, because of their durability and how affordable they are. "I only sew native clothes, not English wears", he said.

METRO FOCUS gathered that more ladies are getting more

comfortable with secondhand fashion. However, it was gathered that the price depends on the quality and the brand. It's a modern business today that keeps gaining popularity among citizens.

A visit to the popular Terminus Market, Ahmadu Bello way, particularly on Sundays, would tell you the rest of the story that sellers of all kinds of second-hand clothes have taken over the market with their products.



SUNDAY PEOPLE

INEC PRESENTS CERTIFICATE, PRESIDENT AND GOVERNORS ELECT

The Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC, recently presented certificate of return to the President, Vice, Members of the National Assembly, State Governors and members of the State Houses of Assembly that were elected during the 2023 General Election. Photographs below as monitored by The Nigeria Standard Newspapers. Photo-Editor



Benue State Governor-elect, Rev. Fr. Hycinth Lormem Alia (left) presenting his certificate of return to the Paramount Ruler, HRM Prof. James Lorzua Ortse Ayatse at his palace



Engr. Abba Kabir Yusuf (left) Sen. Rabiu Kwankwaso (middle) and his deputy after receiving their certificate of return in Kano State



Borno state Governor, Prof. Umara Babagana Zulum displaying his certificate in Maiduguri



Enugu State Governor-elect, Mr. Peter Ndubuisi Mbah (right) receiving his certificate of return



Taraba State Governor-elect, Agbu Kefas (left) receiving his certificate of return at the INEC Headquarters, Jalingo



Delta State Governor-elect, Rt. Hon. Sheriff Oborevwori (left) with his certificate at Asaba the State Capital



Sir Siminalayi Fubara, Governor-elect of River State (2nd right) his wife, Governor Wike in a group photograph after receiving the certificate



Jigawa State Governor-elect, Alhaji Umar Namadi (2nd right) in a photograph after receiving his certificate of return



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How to maintain your car brake system

THE braking system is a vehicle's most important safety item. It is therefore important to know how it works and how to maintain it in order to prevent road crashes. A quick guide will help you understand the working of your car brake system and maintenance tips for your brakes.

How your car brake system works

Cars have brakes on all four wheels that are operated by a hydraulic system. The brakes are either a disc type or drum type. Many cars have four-wheel disc brakes although some have discs for the front wheels and drums for the rear. Since the lion's share of stopping a car's forward momentum relies more on the front brakes, the more effective disc brakes are deployed on the front wheels. Less expensive drum set up provides adequate but more cost-effective assistance in halting a car's motion.

The car brake system works specifically in this manner:

Your foot pushes the brake pedal and the force generated is amplified several times by mechanical leverage. It is then amplified further by the action of the brake booster.

A piston moves into the cylinder and squeezes hydraulic fluid out of the end. Hydraulic brake fluid is then forced around the entire braking system within a network of brake lines and hoses.

Pressure is transmitted equally to all four brakes.

The force creates friction between brake pads and disc brake rotors which is what stops your vehicle eventually.

How to maintain your car brake system

Routine and preventive maintenance can help you save money. You do not have till something goes wrong before visiting professional mechanics for routine checks. When your vehicle undergoes the annual state inspection, your brakes are reviewed for roadworthiness. Here are some steps in maintaining your car brake system that will enhance its performance and longevity:

Monitor your brake fluid levels and carry out a check once in every three months. Brake fluids should be replaced every two

years or after every thirty thousand (30,000) to forty thousand (40,000) miles.

Brake discs should be changed when necessary depending on your driving style and environmental conditions. Change your brake discs at similar intervals for a normal car. Sports car brakes should be changed after every twenty thousand (20,000) miles.

❖ Bleed your brake lines to get any air out of your system. This means that your brakes will be pumped while someone watches the bleeder valve and closes the valve when brake fluid begins to flow through.

Have your brake pads and rotors inspected to ensure that they are in optimum working condition. If your brake is worn down badly, it is time to replace the brake pad without delay.

Testing your brakes

Every time you use your vehicle, you should check that your brakes are working. Check them when the vehicle is stationary before you move off and check them again when the vehicle is moving.

❖ The stationary test: Check that the brake pedal moves freely and gives a firm positive pressure. Check that the handbrake fully secures the wheels.

❖ The mobile test: make sure that the brake system is working under running conditions. Test the foot brake as soon as you move off. You only need to do this test once if you are in the same vehicle all day, provided you have no reason to suspect the performance of the brakes. Always consider the safety and convenience of other road users before doing a mobile test

Normal braking

Braking should normally be progressive and increased steadily:

Gently take up the initial free movement of the pedal.

Increase the pressure progressively as required.

Relax pedal pressure as unwanted road speed is lost.

Release the pedal just before stopping to avoid a jerking halt.

Note. A vehicle with a faulty braking system is a crash looking for where to happen. A stich in time saves nine.



NEWS

Shendam will be considered as partners, stakeholders

From **DORCAS PANKYES, Jos**

THE Plateau State Governor-elect, Barr. Caleb Mutfwang has assured Shendam Local Government Area that it would be critically considered as partner and stakeholder in his administration. He said he knows what Shendam has gone through for the last seven to eight years.

He disclosed this on Friday when the Shendam Local Government delegation led by Hon. Johnbull Shekarau former Deputy Speaker, House of Assembly Plateau State and former member Representing Shendam Mikang Quan'pan Federal Constituency.

Mutfwang described the leader of the delegation as a friend that is more than a brother. He promised to demonstrate that friendship in considering Shendam.

He admonished the delegation to continue to look for ways to unite the state. And reminded them that "the journey is one of unity, as such, lets continue to do everything possible to rebuild and unite the state.

"The journey forward is a journey of unity, the journey forward is a journey of brotherhood so I want to encourage you please. I beg of you, let us continue to do everything that we can do to put ourselves together because

there is strength in unity."

"I want to assure you that every society that goes well is the society that ascribes for unity", he said.

Barr. Mutfwang promised to extend development to Shendam. He therefore urged them to unite their leaders in order to bury their difference because whatsoever one sows, he or she will one day reap it.

"If you sow seed of division, division will await you. Let's be people that sow good seeds that unite, seeds that rebuild, and seeds that lead to greatness and I pray that this will be the spirit of a new Plateau."

Meanwhile, to the Zenith Bank delegation, the Governor-elect said he will count on banks like Zenith Bank to succeed. He expressed his gratitude to

- **Mufwang**

the management and staff of Zenith Bank.

Mutfwang said the bank has made significant contribution to the growth and development of Plateau State. He added that "we look forward to more of such engagements in the days ahead. Even in the situation that Plateau State has found itself today, we can count on Zenith Bank as partner in progress to be able to change the narrative of the state".

Earlier, the leader of Shendam Local Government Area delegation, Hon. Johnbull Shekarau, assured the Governor-elect of their support.

They felicitated with the Governor-elect for his victory at the polls and pleaded with the Governor-elect to engage them in his



Mutfwang

Group calls for release of retired colonel

From **AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja**

A socio-cultural group, the Igah Progressive Association (IPA) in Olamaboro Local Government Area of Kogi State, has called for the release of Col. A. U. Suleiman (rtd) who was allegedly arrested by the Department of State Services (DSS).

The DSS had in a press statement said it arrested a criminal gang that terrorises the Lokoja-Abuja Road users in a joint operation on Sunday night, including Col. A. U. Suleiman (rtd) and five others.

A statement signed by the National President and Secretary of Igah Progressive Association; Comrade Ekele Godwin Gowon and Elder Daniel Anyebe, respectively, they called for thorough investigation into the allegation, describing Col AU Suleiman (rtd) as "a

proud worthy son of Igah community in Olamaboro LGA of Kogi".

"Col AU Suleiman is a proud worthy son of Igah community in Olamaboro Local Government Area of Kogi State. His antecedent as a philanthropist is unequal in the annals of history in Kogi East and the entire Kogi State.

"It is on record that the retired Col AU Suleiman is a man of integrity with reputable character, who recruited many into the Nigerian Army during his service years.

"He has supported many less privileged citizens financially for economic independence as a retiree and active politician who once contested the governorship of the state.

"His hurried hurl into detention and criminalization without thorough investigation is a breach of his fundamental human rights to fair hearing. "The retired Col in his fragile age of over 70 years, sacrificed on political altar is worrisome.

"We call for his release to enable him attend to his medication while we enjoy the authority to undertake a thorough investigation without bias," the group said.



Bichi

SUNDAY FEATURE

Nigeria's future and the danger of intolerant youths

It is often said that if any country should have the taste of per minute troubles like Nigeria, it will collapse with a speed of light. That being said, the future of Nigeria is still dangling with the dangers of the uninformed lads across the length and breadth of the country. OGUNTOYE OPEYEMI writes.

HAVING access to information ought to be an added advantage to a number of people but unfortunately, that has caused a seamless trouble for people of this country. In 2020, when some citizens in the course of a protest demanded for the reformation of the Nigeria Police, the level of heat received by the Nigerian government was so enormous. This ranged from the rigorous physical protest to online campaign in and outside the country.

While those campaigns were ongoing, a frontline EndSARS influencer (Doctor) who is based in UK wrote on his twitter page 'I heard according to UN Constitution any protests that reaches 30days will make UN intervene in that country' and that tweet with nearly twenty thousand retweet, contributed to the continuous and aggressive protest in Nigeria.

Surprisingly, none of the educated folks with access to the tweet could paste the message on google to authenticate the post. Although that wasn't the first time misinformation and fake news would be spread in the country, the truth is that the magnitude of attacks the nation witnessed during the EndSARS protest and yet, survived was huge.

There is no law to the effect that one cannot choose or pick a side, be it at work, family or political gatherings, neither is this freedom of choice a crime

The question therefore is, can the nation continue to survive the numerous attacks from its citizen who are hell bent on enforcing their unfounded personal opinion on it?

In 1932, Bonnie Elizabeth Parker and Clyde Chestnut Barrow, well-known criminal couple started terrorising the towns in the United States of America by robbing, killing and maiming. They headed the popular gang robbery, stealing money and foods from banks, restaurants, gas stations etc.

They told the people a version of their story, convinced them that they robbed only from the rich and not the poor. Their activities and mayhem continued for two years and during that period, the people of America worshipped them, which made it more difficult for the government's Special Task Force to locate them.

As a matter of fact, on a particular occasion when the couple went for shopping in one of the cities, the whole town came out rejoicing and hailed them until they left the town. Eventually, when the law caught up with them and they were killed, over fifty thousand American citizens attended the burial ceremony of the couple.

Clearly, Bonnie and Clyde were able to garner pity and fame from the people by taking advantage of the fact that America was going through depression in those years. This is similar to the situation in Nigeria which went through series of economic crisis from 2019 till earlier this year.

From a serious rise in inflation, Covid-19 pandemic to EndSARS protest, the country had battled with a whole lot of issues which made certain persons come out like saviours as Bonnie and Clyde did in America. One among many is the product marketing of the Labour



party presidential candidate, Mr Peter who was sold as a new kid in the block. No doubt, Mr. Obi is eligible to contest the last general election.

However, if history is well researched, some of the quality ascribed to him should have been trashed. We should not forget that he was a two-term Governor of Anambra state under APGA before he cross-carpeted to the Peoples Democratic Party, where he was appointed as an Economic Adviser by the Goodluck Jonathan led administration.

Also, as at the time he indicated interest in the race, his name had not been cleared from the Pandora Paper. More interesting, at the one-year anniversary of Mr Charles Soludo, the Executive Governor of Anambra State, he mentioned that the same Anambra State which Mr. Obi governed is the erosion capital of the world and the state is shrinking due to the previous governments' inability to construct perfect roads with drainages.

It should only be obvious to even a blind man that Mr. Obi appears cool and perfect on a face value whereas in reality, he is more like bad goods packaged and sold.

In the build up to the presidential election, some of the prominent religion leaders lend their voices in the campaign, for or against the current government. Pastor Poju Oyemade who happens to coordinate the yearly political discuss in the country via 'The Platform' had invited the candidate of the Labour Party, Mr. Obi on countless occasions which made him a bit popular as some of his usual magical solutions to Nigeria penetrated the heart of his audience. In one of the events, Mr. Obi claimed that he wears only one wristwatch, which portrayed him as

being economical and frugal.

The Platform afforded him a great deal of image branding for Mr. Obi but unfortunately, this could not continue late last year when the pastor made a personal observation on the political dynamics of Nigeria. Some of the pastor's choice of words didn't go down well with the uncontrolled mob garnered by the leading candidate.

Pastor Poju was verbally attacked, threatened and eventually bullied to delete those statements from his official twitter handle. Questions started to well up in the hearts of people who could think for themselves and those who aren't swayed with the online rhetoric's and biases on why people should be bullied for having a diverse opinion on issues.

Then, it went far more with various online attacks on the General Overseer of the Redeemed Christian Church of God, Pastor Adeboye whom they insisted must make his political stance known otherwise he is automatically one of those responsible for the problems of the country.

Notwithstanding that the General Overseer ignored all the threats,

the one of 20th February 2023 by a Jnr. Lambo who demanded that if the church doesn't make a bold statement, he would remove sound equipment and lighting he donated to the church caught the attention of many.

Oftentimes, you will wonder if truly the country is a religious nation as being portrayed in the world. Research shows that the country has over 85 million Muslims and 80 million Christians, (that's more than 82% of the country) worshipping God every weekend.

In about a week to the election, many Nigerians decide to come to the country to exercise their civil responsibility to vote since the National Assembly hasn't passed the law to enable Nigerians in the diaspora to vote from their end. As Nigerians trooped into the country from different destinations to vote for their preferred candidates, many supporters of Mr. Obi went on to attack those who indicated on their page to vote for another candidate, wishing them bad luck on their journey etc. Celebrities like Olawale Brymo and Toyin Abraham

were made to go through hell.

Then, you start questioning if any of the holy books teaches us to be that vile and wicked against one another. One can truly imagine if some citizens of this country aren't anarchist, with the ways and manners they address issues. Amazingly, there is no law to the effect that one cannot choose or pick a side, be it at work, family or political gatherings, neither is this freedom of choice a crime.

As funny as it may sound, the overzealousness and flagitious actions of the young people can be excused but what could be said of elder statesmen? It was a bit shocking to everyone when Chief Ezeife Chuckwuemeka made a bold statement on Arise TV that the President-Elect won't be sworn in on May 29.

In fact, it took the intervention of the TV host for him to retract his statement. We cannot continue to live in a country where everyone issued threat on issues they feel not satisfied with, when alternatives methods are multitudinous.

Obviously, we can't have a peaceful nation when the elders in our society who ought to direct the young ones on a better path are already entrenched in bigotry and hate. Now, the anger in the land has been systematically built over the years with only the exclusion to a weapon, which is like holding the nation from exploding from within.

The question then is, if our citizens ignore the message from the revered men of God and other sane elders but only listen to the hate poured out from some elders, where do we go from here? The painful part is that the hate inside some Nigerians within and outside the country continues to fester because how do you explain the cases of citizens of this country who had relocated more than a decade and are happy funding insurrection in the country?

Where do we go from there? What are the chances that Nigeria will continue to survive this internal attacks from its unpatriotic citizens who are hell bent on seeing things only through their prism but none other person. How do we wake up the brilliance and curiosity of every Nigerians to verify fakes news which they can smell on their own.

One would think that the 'Change Begins with Me' campaign the introduced by the Ministry of Information in 2016 would go a long way in addressing this. However, the implementation was a bit shoddy. It therefore seems the government needs to get back to the drawing table, to enlighten its citizens on crucial responsibilities for a greater Nigeria.

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SUNDAY SPORTS

Conte: How 16 volatile months at Tottenham unravelled

Antonio Conte's tempestuous Tottenham tenure has come to an end after a predictably volatile 16 months in charge, but with none of the silverware the club gambled on when appointing the Italian. ALEX BYSOUTH writes.

TAKING a job in November 2021 which he had initially turned down in the summer, Conte delivered Spurs Champions League football and was backed in the transfer market - albeit not to the extent he would have liked.

But he failed in cup competitions and, off the field, suffered the tragic loss of three close friends, as well having to undergo gallbladder surgery himself.

The 53-year-old's relationship with the club then moved beyond repair when he delivered a remarkable tirade following the draw at Southampton, in which he branded his players "selfish" and criticised the club's culture over the past 20 years.

Here's how Conte's short but stormy stay in north London unravelled.

Conte arrives at Tottenham on 2 November 2021 as a serial winner, but only after initially spurning a move to north London in the summer when talks broke down about becoming Jose Mourinho's successor.

Instead, Conte replaces Nuno Espirito Santo and proclaims he is happy to be back coaching with a "Premier League club that has the ambition to be a protagonist again".

Having penned an 18-month contract, the Conte era begins with a 3-2 Europa Conference League win over Vitesse, before a goalless draw at Everton and a first Premier League win as Spurs boss over Leeds United.

But when his side suffer an embarrassing defeat by Slovenian side NS Mura in Europe, Conte delivers a telling assessment in which he says there is "an important gap" between Spurs and the top teams, his side's level is "not so high" and he is not a "magician".

Conte's monologue has the desired effect as his team go unbeaten for the rest of the year and appear in decent form until a trip to Stamford Bridge for the Carabao Cup semi-final first leg.

Spurs limp to a 2-0 defeat causing Conte to emphasise the gap between the teams, effectively calling Tottenham a mid-table club and asking for patience.

Spurs also lose the second leg but maintain Conte's unbeaten start in the Premier League with an incredible comeback at Leicester, as Steven Bergwijn scores in the 95th and 97th minute to secure a 3-2 win.

That undefeated streak comes to an abrupt end with another loss to Chelsea the following week that sparks a three-game losing run in the league - the



Antonio Conte arrived at Tottenham in November 2021, following the sacking of Nuno Espirito Santo

first time Conte has lost three league games in a row since his days managing Atalanta in 2009.

But the Italian responds by masterminding another dramatic 3-2 victory at Manchester City, this time thanks to Harry Kane's 95th-minute winner.

Spurs head to Burnley four days later seemingly full of confidence only to suffer a 1-0 defeat that leads a frustrated Conte to question his future: "I came here to help the club and if the problem could be the coach I'm ready to go, no problem."

Burnley 1-0 Tottenham: 'If the problem is the coach I'm ready to go' - Conte

Conte claims his outburst was strategic and Spurs, despite losing to Middlesbrough in the FA Cup, hit goalscoring form in the Premier League - putting four past Leeds and Aston Villa and scoring five against both Everton and Newcastle.

A blip in April puts Arsenal in pole position for fourth spot, but

Spurs beat their north London rivals 3-0 during the run-in and, after Mikel Arteta suggests Conte's side could still lose at Norwich on the final day, Tottenham produce an emphatic 5-0 win to seal a Champions League place.

Conte says the achievement is as good as winning a trophy and appears committed to the club.

Tottenham's owners announce a £150m investment, with Richarlison, Yves Bissouma, Ivan Perisic, Djed Spence, Clement Lenglet and Fraser Forster all joining in the summer.

Norwich 0-5 Tottenham Hotspur: Top four finish tougher than title at Inter Milan - Conte

Tottenham begin the new season with a 4-1 win against Southampton and fight back to draw 2-2 at Chelsea after Kane's 96th-minute equaliser - their boss shows his passion on the touchline and a fiery handshake leads to a bust-up with Thomas Tuchel that ends with them both being

dismissed.

Spurs' unbeaten start is tempered by defeat at Sporting Lisbon in the Champions League and then wiped out by a 3-1 loss to Arsenal, as Conte continually refuses to address his future.

The Italian then suffers the loss of three close friends in four months. First, Spurs mourn the death of fitness coach Gian Piero Ventrone in October following an illness, while Conte also loses former team-mates Sinisa Mihajlovic and Gianluca Vialli to leukaemia and pancreatic cancer respectively.

In February, after an FA Cup win at Preston, Conte feels unwell and has to have his gallbladder removed in emergency surgery in Italy.

Spurs beat Manchester City in his absence but suffer a 4-1 defeat at Leicester on his return, then lose 1-0 in their Champions League last-16 first leg at AC Milan, with Conte advised to stay in Italy to spend more time recovering.

'I see selfish players' - Conte furious after what proves to be his final game with Spurs

Spurs begin the month fourth in the league and, despite playing increasingly negative football, have hopes of progressing in the Champions League and FA Cup.

Conte, recovering in Italy, watches on as his much-changed side limp out of the latter in a 1-0 defeat by Championship outfit Sheffield United that proves a turning point for many fans.

A week later, Conte is back in the dugout as Tottenham draw 0-0 against AC Milan on the back of another uninspiring performance to exit the Champions League, with Conte suggesting to Italian media he could be sacked before the end of the season.

Spurs beat Nottingham Forest 3-1 at home but then surrender a 3-1 lead to draw at Southampton, sparking a furious and emotional 10-minute rant from the coach in which he calls his players "selfish" and says they "play for themselves", while also questioning the club's mentality.

It is a tirade that splits opinion, with some insisting the Italian is only telling the truth, but it proves to be a point of no return for Conte at the club as on 26 March his turbulent spell at Tottenham is brought to an end.

Conte claims his outburst was strategic and Spurs, despite losing to Middlesbrough in the FA Cup, hit goalscoring form in the Premier League - putting four past Leeds and Aston Villa and scoring five against both Everton and Newcastle. A blip in April puts Arsenal in pole position for fourth spot, but Spurs beat their north London rivals 3-0 during the run-in and, after Mikel Arteta suggests Conte's side could still lose at Norwich on the final day, Tottenham produce an emphatic 5-0 win to seal a Champions League place.

SUNDAY SPORTS

Ogunbote optimistic about Shooting Stars recovery

GBENGA Ogunbote, the Chief Coach of Shooting Stars Sports Club (3SC) of Ibadan, says his team is on the road to recovery with Wednesday's win over Plateau United Football Club.

Newsnow said that, Ogunbote, while reflecting on their 3-2 win, expressed optimism that they would get better if they could win some more matches very soon.

"We now have the confidence to play and things can get better for us if we can win three to four matches in a row," he said.

Sporting Tribune reports that Shooting Stars defeated visiting Plateau United of Jos in their 2022/2023 Nigeria Professional Football League (NPFL) Group A Match Day 11 fixture.

In the game played at the Lekan Salami Stadium in Ibadan, the visitors took the lead in the 25th minute after a long throw-in by Daniel Itodo was converted into goal by Yakubu Adams.

Samuel Ayanrinde's brace in the 44th and 52nd minutes swung the game 3SC way, while Ghali Falke scored in the 60th minute to increase the tally to 3-1.

Jimmy Iteji reduced the tally in the third minute of the final added time.

Ogunbote commended 3SC players for their commitment and dedication on the field of play, even as he admitted that



Ogunbote

the players were under pressure after they conceded in the first half.

"They are already trying to get it right. There was a free flow of balls during the game. But when you are not winning, it takes off your confidence.

"However, the important thing is, there is nothing too special other than we are trying to get it right and things will soon improve," he said.

Meanwhile, Fidelis Ilechukwu, the Chief Coach of Plateau United, has blamed the team's loss on their goalkeeper, promising to work

more on their defence line and goalkeeper.

"We believed we would return to Jos with something, but at the end of the day it turned out to be another way round and that is football for you.

"Our hopes of finishing among the top three in the league are being affected with this kind of a loss, but anything can happen at the end of the day.

"We will continue to put in our best in every game," he said.

BRUNO Onyemaechi has been named Boavista's Player of the Month for March after a series of standout performances for the club.

The young defender played a vital role in the team's games against Arouca and Famalicao, making several crucial tackles, interceptions, and ground duels.

Newsnow said that, despite Boavista's 3-0 defeat to Sporting Lisbon, Onyemaechi showed great resilience and played a strong game in the team's subsequent loss to Famalicao. His contributions on the offensive end, including accurate crosses and key passes, were also a key factor in the team's performances throughout the month.

In addition to his club success, Onyemaechi's impressive form was

Eagles defender wins Boavista's award

recognized with a call-up to the Nigerian national team for their back-to-back games against Guinea-Bissau in the 2023 Africa Cup of Nations qualifiers.

Although he did not feature in either match, the call-up was a significant accomplishment for the 23-year-old defender.

Despite receiving his first international call-up in the lead-up to the friendly against Portugal in November, Onyemaechi is yet to make his debut for the Super Eagles.

Nevertheless, his recent performances for Boavista have caught the attention of fans and scouts alike, and he will be eager to continue his

impressive form as the team faces Maritimo in their upcoming match.



Onyemaechi

Agoye blames fatigue for Sunshine Stars 1-1 draw

SUNSHINE Stars' Head Coach, Edith Agoye, has blamed fatigue on the part of his players for his side's inability to win on Wednesday in the Nigeria Professional Football League (NPFL).

Newsnow said that, Sporting Tribune reports that hosts Sunshine Stars drew 1-1 with visiting Doma United of Gombe at the Ondo State Sports Complex in Akure.

Yusuf Ibrahim put the home side ahead in the 13th minute before Doma United equalised two minutes later in the Group B match day 11 fixture.

Agoye, while reflecting on the match, said the game was



Sunshine Stars

not easy "considering the long trip we had returning from the week 10 game against Wikki Tourists on Sunday in Bauchi.

"It was not an easy game for both sides. It was a very strenuous one. Definitely, fatigue was a factor in the game.

"It was a good game though, as we had an advantage by scoring first. But we allowed them to come back into the game straight away. That was the turning point, and we pushed and pushed. We had several goalscoring chances, which we couldn't convert.

"But we have to commend the effort of the players. We didn't take our chances, but we will redouble our efforts and look forward to the next

game," he said. He however refused to blame his defenders for the draw, saying "the team lost together".

The Head Coach of Doma United, Akinade Onigbinde, on his part said they won because his game plan succeeded.

Onigbinde said Sunshine Stars had picked a point during their meeting in league's first half on their home ground.

"I am happy we were able to pick a point too on Sunshine Stars' home ground, even though our plans were to win the game in Akure."

Sunshine Stars are now fifth on the log with 17 points, while Doma United are sixth on the log with 16 points.

NFF explains support for NAIJA Super 8

THE Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) has explained why it endorsed NAIJA Super 8, a privately-organised off-season club football competition.

Newsnow said that, the NAIJA Super 8, which will involve two clubs from each of the six geopolitical zones of the country, is billed to hold in Lagos from June 17 to 25.

Speaking at the unveiling ceremony in Lagos, NFF Secretary General, Dr. Mohammed Sanusi, said: "I must thank Flykite Productions for coming up with this initiative. When they came to meet us about it two weeks ago, we looked at it and discovered it is a programme that is in line with the vision of

Nigerian football. We endorsed it.

"Some people came to ask why we endorsed the Naija Super 8 when there is the Super 6 for NPFL. They are not the same. It is likely we see some Academical teams in the Naija Super 8. It is entirely different from the NPFL Super 6," Sanusi stated.

Flykite Productions, organisers of the NAIJA Super 8, have also dismissed suggestions that the tourney is competing with the Nigeria Professional Football League (NPFL) Super 6.

In a statement, yesterday, Flykite Productions explained that there is no division higher than the NPFL in the domestic game and suggestions that

NAIJA Super 8 was in competition with the elite division-backed Super 8 were wrong and inappropriate. They also noted that NAIJA Super 8 is open to clubs across divisions and not solely for NPFL sides, which owe their elite-level status to promotion and avoidance of relegation.

"The NPFL remains the top division in the domestic game, and there can be no competition whatsoever between NAIJA Super 8 and NPFL Super 6.

"There is the possibility of NPFL clubs participating in NAIJA Super 8, but clubs in the division are not the only ones to which the tournament is open.

"What NAIJA Super 8 aims to

do differently is to give football fans opportunity of making additional contributions to the football ecosystem by voting for teams that will participate in NAIJA Super 8, which seeks to complement NPFL Super 6 by providing additional opportunities for clubs.

"Some of the teams may end up being NPFL clubs. Some, almost certainly, will come from other divisions," the statement said.

"Osimhen is at Haaland's level"

FORMER Argentina and Napoli striker Roberto El Pampa Sosa believes Super Eagles striker Victor Osimhen is on the same level with Manchester City striker Erling Haaland.

Newsnow said that, Osimhen has had an incredible season at Napoli. The Super Eagles star is having his best season since he moved to Europe. Osimhen has registered 25 goals and five assists in 28 appearances for the Partenopeans this season.

His goals have been important as Napoli currently sit on top of the Serie A table, 19 points above second-placed Lazio.

Also, his four goals have helped to propel Napoli to the quarterfinals of the Champions League for the first time in the club's history.

Retired Argentine striker



Osimhen

Sosa has been impressed with what he has seen from the former Lille man. And he believes Osimhen is at the top of his game alongside Manchester City star Haaland,

who has 42 goals in 37 appearances this season.

"It's essential to play in Serie A. I find it hard to say Osimhen is not good technically," Sosa said per Napoli Magazine.

"The first game against Roma comes to mind. Without technique, the goal he scored would have been impossible. Osimhen is the future of football, he will win many titles. He is at Haaland's level."

Osimhen has attracted interest from abroad, with Manchester United, Chelsea, Arsenal and PSG all linked with the 24-year-old hitman. But Napoli would demand at least €120million before they let their star man leave.

The Super Eagles striker has 21 goals in Serie A this season. If he keeps firing on all cylinders till the end of the season, he could become the first Nigerian to win the highest goalscorer in the Serie A.



Director-General, Lagos State Sports Commission, Toyin Gafaar Bolowotan (left); Chairman, Sokoto State Football Association, Alhaji Mohammed Nasir Saidu and NFF General Secretary, Dr. Mohammed Sanusi

SUNDAY SPORTS



Russian men's world number six Daniil Medvedev (left) and Belarusian women's world number two Aryna Sabalenka will now feature at Wimbledon

Wimbledon 2023: Russian, Belarusian can compete as ban lifted

Russian and Belarusian players will be able to compete at Wimbledon this summer after the All England Club lifted the ban it imposed last year.

BBC SPORT said that, the players be able to feature this year "subject to competing as neutral athletes" and complying with certain conditions.

They were banned in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the support provided by Belarus.

"We continue to condemn totally Russia's illegal invasion and our wholehearted support remains with the people of Ukraine," said AELTC chairman Ian Hewitt.

"This was an incredibly difficult decision, not taken lightly or without a great deal of consideration for those who will be impacted."

The decision also covers other British events held in the run up to Wimbledon, most notably the tournaments at Queen's and Eastbourne.

Outside of Wimbledon and other British events, players have been able to compete on the game's professional tours as neutrals - including in the other Grand Slams - whereas Wimbledon and the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) were fined for the bans imposed last year.

The AELTC said its decision for the 2023 championship was made after discussion with the UK government, the LTA and international stakeholders.

The AELTC and LTA said they stand by last year's position but that without changing their stance this year, the tennis' two main professional tours, the men's ATP and women's WTA would have cancelled the LTA's membership.

As a result, Queen's, Eastbourne and other British grass-court events would not have been staged, damaging British tennis organisations financially.

Russian trio Daniil Medvedev, Andrey Rublev and Daria Kasatkina - who are all in the top 10 of the men's and women's rankings - are among the high-profile names able to play this summer.

Belarusian women's world number two Aryna Sabalenka, who won the Australian Open

earlier this year, will also now feature.

Players and their support staff will have to sign neutrality declarations in

order to compete.

Punishments for breaking the declarations will range from fines to expulsion from the tournament.

Miami open 2023: Rybakina reaches final

Carlos Alcaraz and Elena Rybakina remained on course for the rare 'Sunshine Double' by progressing at the Miami Open.

BBC SPORT said that, Tenth seed Rybakina reached the women's final by beating world number three Jessica Pegula 7-6 (7-3) 6-4.

World number one Alcaraz brushed aside American ninth seed Taylor Fritz 6-4 6-2 to make the men's semi-finals.

They are bidding to become the eighth man and fifth woman to follow victory at Indian Wells with the Miami title.

Kazakhstan's Wimbledon champion Rybakina, who beat Aryna Sabalenka in the Indian Wells final last week, has now won 13 consecutive matches.

She will play Czech Petra Kvitova or Romania's Sorana Cirstea in

Saturday's final.

Defending men's champion Alcaraz, who must win the title to stay top of the rankings, will play Italian Jannick Sinner in the last four on Friday - the two played a five-hour epic quarter-final at last year's US Open.

It will be a sixth meeting between the pair - the Spaniard leads the head-to-head 3-2 - in what is seen as one of the best burgeoning rivalries in the men's game.

"I [am] happy to play against him again because I look forward to these kind of matches," Sinner said. "I feel like he makes me a better player."

In the other side of the men's draw is former world number one Daniil Medvedev, who continued his fine form with a straight-set win over American qualifier Christopher Eubanks in the

Andy Murray and Cameron Norrie are among 10 British players named in the line-up for the Cinch Championships at Queen's Club this summer.

Five-time champion Murray, 2021 finalist Norrie, Dan Evans and Jack Draper are in the singles, while Neal Skupski, Joe Salisbury, Lloyd Glasspool and Jamie Murray will play doubles.

Alfie Hewett and Gordon Reid will feature in the wheelchair draws.

The pre-Wimbledon tournament takes place from 19-25 June.

Men's singles world number one Carlos Alcaraz will make his debut at Queen's while defending champion Matteo Berrettini, Taylor Fritz and Frances Tiafoe have also confirmed their participation.

Berrettini defeated world number 12 Norrie in three sets in 2021, before defending his title against

Murray, Cameron among players at Cinch Championships

Serbia's Filip Krajinovic last year.

In Alcaraz, Skupski and Hewett, the line-up includes the current world number one in the singles, doubles and wheelchair rankings.

Three-time Grand Slam champion Murray, who is the only Briton to win the

Queen's title in the Open era, said: "It's always a great week at the Cinch Championships, playing at the Queen's Club with British fans.

"Obviously I have a lot of special memories there so I'm really looking forward to returning this year."



Andy Murray is a five-time champion at Queen's Club

Russian Andrey Rublev], or I play against Andrey or Daniil, it's never easy because we know each other pretty well and we are good friends outside of the court."

Medvedev, the 2021 US Open champion, has won 22 of his past 23 matches and beating Eubanks enabled him to reach the semi-finals at a fifth

straight ATP event.

After winning consecutive titles in Rotterdam, Doha and Dubai, Medvedev was beaten in the Indian Wells final by Alcaraz.

In the women's draw, Kvitova beat Russia's Ekaterina Alexandrova 6-4 3-6 6-3 in their rain-delayed quarter-final to reach the Miami semi-finals for the first time.

Woods designed course to host Championship

Alexander Mexican golf course designed by Tiger Woods will host the 2023 World Wide Technology Championship.

BBC SPORT said that, the 15-time major champion designed El Cardonal, located at Diamante Cabo San Lucas, based on the courses he grew up playing in southern California.

The par-72, 7,300-yard course - which overlooks the Pacific Ocean - opened in 2014.

The World Wide Technology Championship was previously held at Mayakoba, on Mexico's Riviera Maya.

In 2007 it became the first PGA Tour event to be contested outside the United States or Canada, but the agreement with Mayakoba ended in 2022.

The 2023 edition of the tournament will take place in the autumn.

Meanwhile, Laura Muir and Jemma Reekie have split from coach Andy Young after quitting a training camp in South Africa.

Both athletes resumed training at Loughborough last week, with Young now back in Scotland.

Under the guidance of Young, Muir, 29, has won Olympic 1500m silver, world 1500m bronze, two European titles and five European Indoor golds.

Fellow Scot Reekie, 25, finished fourth in the 800m at the Tokyo Olympics in 2021.

"UK Athletics (UKA) can confirm Laura Muir and Jemma Reekie have made the decision to part ways with their coach Andy Young," a statement said.

"Both athletes would like to thank Andy for his commitment and support over the years.

"They are now focused on making decisions around their support network and



Woods

coaching set-up for the future and will not be making any further comment. UKA staff are continuing to support the athletes during this time."

Two days ago, after a newspaper reported a 'falling out', Young, who started working with Muir in 2011, told BBC Scotland: "There was no bust-up. I think you would find the girls were worried about my health if you spoke to them.

"Felt I wasn't looking after myself properly, maybe thought pressure was getting to me. I'd say they were reading too much into it."

Muir and Reekie are working towards the World Championships in Budapest in October and the Olympics in Paris next summer.



Elena Rybakina and Carlos Alcaraz both won the Indian Wells singles titles two weeks ago

Klopp makes £100m transfer amid warning



Klopp

Chelsea transfer news: The Blues are set to compete with Liverpool in the market over the summer with an overlap in targets.

Jürgen Klopp has warned Chelsea that his Liverpool side will be active in the transfer market over the summer. The Blues look set to continue their heavy spending approach under Todd Boehly and could find their targets overlapping with the Reds throughout the off-season.

One key position that is high on the priority list for both teams is a central midfielder. Liverpool had been linked with making a big money move for Enzo Fernández over the winter but the new owners at Stamford Bridge acted quicker to get it across the line before competition for his signature gained momentum.

Brighton's Moisés Caicedo is also admired by both teams. The star England duo Jude Bellingham and Declan Rice are also big targets for the two clubs. These could all be put in jeopardy though with Champions League qualification unlikely for Graham Potter and proving to be a massive challenge for Klopp.

Nevertheless, the German boss has confirmed that there are plans to make key reinforcements at the end of the campaign. He wasn't being drawn into whether the club would ever sanction a league record challenging £100m offer though.

"We never speak about these kind of things. We will spend in the summer - that's what I can say," Klopp explained. "The club will spend in the summer, definitely. For who and how many and stuff like this, there's nothing to say."

Klopp was also asked about Mason Mount, who

has been heavily linked with a move to Anfield. The two-time Chelsea player of the season will be allowed to depart from SW6 this summer if he doesn't agree to signing a new long-term contract at the club. Reports suggest it could take up to £70m to sign him.

"That's actually the only thing that we do during the international break [plan for next season]. Apart

from having a few days off, we don't plan training sessions as I don't know who is coming back or when so we do that," he said.

When asked if there had been any plans on signings, he added: "It was good, on the player side I'm positive, I would say. But it's talks, not decisions. But we are busy, as you can imagine."

Liverpool travel to Chelsea on Tuesday night.

Manchester City reach 1,000 goals under Pep Guardiola

Ilkay Gundogan's strike against Liverpool brought up the incredible milestone. We break down the first thousand goals from Guardiola's time in Manchester.

Manchester City kept up the pressure on league leaders Arsenal with a comprehensive 4-1 win over Liverpool on Saturday. City are going for their fifth Premier League title in just six seasons and reached a major milestone during the win.

Under the Spaniard's leadership, Manchester City have now scored a thousand goals in less than seven seasons.

Ilkay Gundogan's 53rd-minute strike brought up the milestone for Guardiola's City and Jack Grealish secured the victory with number 1,001 with 15 minutes to go. Guardiola has transformed English football since his arrival and his sides have racked up some truly astonishing number in that time.

City's 'Centurions' of 2017/18 hold the record for the most goals in a single Premier League season with 106 in 38 games. They also boast the best goal difference in a Premier League campaign, finishing that season on +79. However the following year they scored even more in all competitions, plundering 176 goals.

Throughout his time at the club Guardiola has been blessed with some of the finest attackers in world football and he has taken many of them to new heights. Sergio Aguero became City's all-time record goalscorer

during his time in charge and it is no surprise to see that the Argentine also ranks number one under Guardiola.

City have been the dominant force in the Premier League during Guardiola's time in Manchester and they boast a domestic record up there with the very best in English football history.

However his team have struggled to translate that dominance into continental success, managing just a single appearance in the Champions League final.

"I've said many times, just one team has won the Treble because it's so difficult," Guardiola said, when asked about it ahead of the Liverpool clash.

"That's why we don't think [about it]... We have this game then a long week and then a tough schedule."

The only English side to win all three major honours in a single season was the Manchester United side of 1998/99. City still have a chance of repeating that

REAL Madrid are coming into a new era soon, with several established stars expected to be coming towards the end of their times at the club.

Karim Benzema, Luka Modric and Toni Kroos are three of the few players left from the glory days of the mid-2010s at Real Madrid, which saw three Champions League titles won in succession under the stewardship of Zinedine Zidane.

However, all three are likely to be parting ways in the coming years, and they are all out of contract this summer. However, Benzema is expected to stay, but it remains to be seen what happens with Kroos and Modric, especially when taking into account the possible arrival of Jude Bellingham.

The Borussia Dortmund star is Real Madrid's top target this summer, and would slot into their midfield seamlessly next season, likely replacing one of Kroos or Modric in the regular starting line-up.

However, should Real Madrid fail in their attempts to sign Bellingham, who has also been heavily linked with Manchester City and Liverpool, Diario AS have reported that Gabrí Veiga will be their "Plan B" signing.

Veiga has been one of the emerging stars of this season in La Liga, and especially of

Real Madrid look to sign Veiga alongside Jude Bellingham?

recent weeks. The Celta Vigo youngster has been in excellent form, notching nine goals and three assists in 25 appearances.

Veiga has been linked with Real Madrid in recent weeks, and previous reports have stated that Los Blancos is his preferred destination this summer. With a release clause of just €40m, could both Bellingham and Veiga join this summer?

Both players are fairly similar, although Veiga tends to play more offensively, while Bellingham tends to be a box-to-box style of player. In essence, they should be able to play well together, if given the opportunity.

With Modric and Kroos coming towards the end of their times, Bellingham and Veiga could be their long term replacements, and being 19 and 20 respectively, they fit

perfectly into Florentino Perez's transfer policy.

With players like Camavinga, Tchouameni and possibly Bellingham behind him, Veiga could thrive at Real Madrid, and continue on the excellent form he has been showing at Celta. Club officials at the reigning European champions should be looking to sign him this summer, even if Bellingham joins.

Veiga would likely be a rotational option immediately, similar to the role that Dani Ceballos currently occupies. The latter is set to be offered a new contract, which could impact Veiga's potential playing time.

There is a question mark over paying €40m for a player that would just be a rotation option at best during the opening spell at Real Madrid. However, with the potential Veiga has, he could turn out to be an absolute bargain.



Veiga

Uefa asked to review treatment of traveling supporters

Uefa has been asked to look into the treatment of England fans who attended last week's 2-1 Euro 2024 qualifying win over Italy in Naples.

Bus issues were followed by four ticket checks at the heavily-policed Diego Armando Maradona Stadium.

England fans told the BBC they were charged at by police and struck with batons when trying to enter the ground.

After the match, Three Lions supporters were kept in the stadium for an hour after full-

time.

The England Supporters Travel Club, run by the Football Association, said in an email to fans: "We know many of you are unhappy at what went on, both before and after the game against Italy."

"We have received some very detailed accounts since the match and share many of the concerns and frustrations."

"On Monday, we met with a representative from the travelling UK Policing to hear their view and discuss the

circumstances. They too faced a very challenging situation, as did our staff on the ground."

"The Football Supporters' Association has also raised significant concerns."

"Taking all of this into account, we are asking Uefa to conduct a review of what happened on Thursday night. We will keep you posted on how this unfolds."

England recorded their first victory in Italy since 1961, with Harry Kane becoming the nation's all-time record goalscorer in the win.

"We appreciate the time you give, and the expenses incurred in following England," the ESTC continued.

"Our paramount concern is your safety and wellbeing. We work hard to make sure travelling to watch the team is as enjoyable as possible."

"On this occasion it was not, despite the months we spent planning while working in good faith with the authorities in Naples."

"We are sorry that what should have been a wonderful occasion watching our first win in Italy since 1961 was not, for many of you."



England fans inside Napoli's Diego Armando Maradona Stadium



April 2, 2023

Man City thump Liverpool, put pressure on Arsenal

MANCHESTER City maintained the pressure on Premier League leaders Arsenal by shrugging off the absence of the injured Erling Haaland to outclass Liverpool with a magnificent display at Etihad Stadium.

City's 42-goal striker was ruled out with a groin injury, but Pep Guardiola's reigning champions demonstrated their all-round strength by coming from a goal down against a Liverpool side who have made life so difficult for them in the past, to run out convincing winners.

Liverpool caught City with a counter-attack after 17 minutes to take the lead, Diogo Jota making the break before Mohamed Salah applied a thumping finish.

City responded in devastating fashion with the outstanding Jack Grealish, who made a crucial intervention on Salah when Liverpool had the chance to double their lead, crossing for Julian Alvarez to equalise after 27 minutes.

Alvarez was the creator as City went ahead 53 seconds after the break, his raking pass finding Riyad Mahrez, who crossed for Kevin de Bruyne to slide home from close range.

John Stones delivered a masterclass in an unaccustomed role which saw him advance into midfield but also drop back into defence when required, and with City in total control Ilkay Gundogan added the third after a goalmouth



Manchester City winger Jack Grealish has more Premier League goal involvements against Liverpool than he does any other opponent (7 - 3 goals, 4 assists)

skirmish. Grealish deserved a goal and it duly arrived in the 74th minute when he timed his arrival perfectly to turn in De Bruyne's cross as Liverpool ended beaten and bedraggled.

When Grealish was substituted to a standing ovation late on, he fully deserved the accolade after a performance of the highest class.

The 27-year-old England winger tormented Trent Alexander-Arnold,

delivered an equaliser on a plate for Alvarez and then scored the fourth goal that gave the scoreline a more accurate reflection of City's supremacy over Liverpool.

Among all of his contributions, the lung-busting run to chase back and block Salah as the Egyptian raced clear with the option of setting up Jota was vital. Seconds later he was playing in Alvarez and City were level.

Grealish has grown into his

role at Manchester City and clearly has the faith of his manager, who embraced him in a bear hug as he left the field.

Even stripped of Haaland, City were scintillating and gave a graphic demonstration of the gap that has opened up between them and Liverpool, who have been the only side to provide them with serious opposition in the title race

in recent years.

The stylish performance of Stones, spending time breaking up attacks and spraying passes around in midfield to show what a naturally gifted footballer he is, showed that Guardiola's side have many strings to their bow and this was a huge reminder to Arsenal that they will not give up their title without a fight.

Liverpool have been the shadow on Manchester

City's shoulder in the title races of recent times now they are simply a shadow of the side that chased a historic quadruple last season.

Jurgen Klopp's team may occasionally show their former selves, like in the 7-0 demolition of Manchester United, but too often this season they have been mediocre and now they face a fight to finish in the top four.

The midfield pairing of Jordan Henderson and Fabinho look tired and vulnerable and Virgil van Dijk has lost much of his old authority at the heart of the defence.

Alexander-Arnold had another dismal 90 minutes and Andrew Robertson, his full-back partner on the other side, did not fare much better. Both were left exposed and City took full toll.

Much is made of Liverpool's pursuit of Jude Bellingham but even if they are successful against opposition from many of Europe's elite, the idea that the brilliant teenager will cure all their ills is a delusion.

Klopp looked, in turns, furious and bemused at Liverpool's rank bad defending, lack of intensity and the manner in which they were over-powered - but given their previous form this season, he should not have been that surprised.

Messi likely to rejoin Barcelona

LIONEL Messi's possible return to Barcelona this summer is gaining traction, with reports this week suggesting that the club's hierarchy have pressed ahead with plans to sign their former superstar.

Messi's contract at Paris Saint-Germain expires at the end of the season, and a renewal is looking increasingly unlikely, despite it reportedly being close earlier this season.

According to Achraf Ben Ayad, Barcelona are making plans for Messi's return, one of which will involve his reclaiming the number 10 shirt. Ansu Fati currently wears 10, but his own future in Catalonia is far from certain.

Fati's future has been the cause of speculation this week, following comments from his father over his son's lack of playing time under Xavi Hernandez this

season. However, Fati himself is reportedly happy at the club, although it's unknown whether taking the number 10 off him will affect that stance.

Barcelona have been desperate for Messi to return, ever since he left two years ago. They could be getting their wish this summer, although it is far from a done deal.



Messi

WORLD SEARCH Answer the clues and search for the word

E	K	S	H	M	J	W	I	L	L	I	A	M
I	L	P	E	A	K	S	R	B	M	T	S	A
S	J	G	E	L	K	A	N	E	M	I	T	L
M	O	R	R	I	S	C	I	U	O	V	E	A
A	I	E	H	P	T	B	D	E	P	F	N	I
N	K	E	G	R	Q	R	Y	D	A	X	O	K
E	U	C	A	B	G	A	N	F	T	U	C	A
A	V	E	S	E	B	I	H	N	R	W	L	K
C	L	A	J	X	Z	M	D	P	I	C	A	N
M	O	R	O	C	C	O	Q	T	C	S	F	M
Z	R	Y	S	Q	V	H	O	B	E	C	O	A
L	J	N	E	Y	G	P	B	F	A	N	X	Z
A	I	B	R	A	H	I	M	O	V	I	C	A

- Clues**
1. Sandy.....(6) American Polevaulter
 2.Mihambo (7) German long jumper
 3. Sadio.....(4) Liverpool/Senegal striker
 4. Host country of the 2022 Africa women's Nations cup
 5. Musa.....(7) Nigeria's head tennis coach
 6.Troost-Ekong (8), Super Eagles captain
 7.Pesiero (4) Super Eagles coach
 8.Motsepe (7) CAF president
 9. Where the Olympics started (6)
 10. Plateau.....(5) Jos based basketball team
 11. Nigeria's Junior national football team (9)
 12.Warriors (8) Maiduguri football outfit

By IBRAHIM T. LOT