

Dino commences
fence mending
reconciliation

Page 11



News: Lalong tasks Muslim Ummah on peace and love

Page 30

Sports: Super Falcons watch: US, Mexico lunch joint bid

Page 37

Business: Nigeria fails to meet gas export obligations - NLNG

Page 24

Sunday Standard



TRUTH EXALTS A NATION

FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1972

VOL. 13 NO. 796

SUNDAY, April 23, 2023

N250

e-mail:nigeriastandarddailynewspaper@yahoo.com

Metro focus

Mechanic
workshop
as hospital
for cars

Page 32



Suspended Adamawa REC nowhere to be found

Page 2

Adamawa Guber polls: Intrigues, power plays and implications

Page
10 and
31



I can't wait to go home

- Buhari

Page 2



10th NASS: APC needs opposition to create stability

Page 2

Nigeria could have produced the first female governor in its history. But the intrigues, manipulations and twists that characterised the Adamawa governorship election was more than meets the eye. Senator Aisha Dahiru aka Binani was at the center of the storm as she engaged in a fierce battle against incumbent governor Ahmadu Fintiri for the number one seat of the State. VICTOR GAI writes.

That resurgence of terrorism on the Plateau

RECENTLY, Plateau State was in the news albeit for the bad reason(s). Media reports had it that some communities in Mangu and Bokko local government areas of the state witnessed terror attacks. Coming at a time when the state was witnessing relative peace after several years of intermittent but constant attacks on several communities across local governments, these is not only sad and worrisome but calls for absolute condemnation.

PLAEAU, as the popular saying goes, is the "home of peace and tourism". Over time, the state has strived so hard to maintain that status hence, its accommodating nature to people from all walks of life. It is no exaggeration that it is the place to be as all peace loving people all over the world. However, the state lost its cherish innocence sometime in September 2001 when the Jos Metropolis was attacked and the famous Jos Main Market, said to be the biggest in West Africa got burnt by suspected terrorists.

SINCE then, it has been one attack, too many on several communities across the state. It can be said with certainty that virtually all the local governments in the state had had a douse of the devilish act of these terrorists. In the aftermath of these persistent and consistent attacks on the citizenry, the monumental losses recorded can only be imagined. The loss of lives and property is staggering.

WE condemn in the strongest terms such attacks on Plateau communities. It is quite unfortunate that an otherwise peaceful people are being subjected to harassment, intimidation, displacement and killings. To say that Plateau people have become refugees in their own land is an understatement. The litany of Internally Displaced Persons (IDP's) camps across the state is an attestation to this stark but disturbing reality.

IT seems to us that, government at all levels, but particularly at the national level, is helpless and hopeless in tackling the present sustained security challenges in the country. The attacks on communities in Benue, Southern Kaduna, Katsina, Zamfara amongst others follow similar patterns. The terrorists are busy and in a poll position to expand their devilish frontier. Something ought to be done to nip in the bud what has now become a nightmare to the ordinary Nigerian.

THE country cannot afford to loss the precious lives of its citizens due to the senseless, mindless and needless activities of people with satanic qualities masquerading as killer herdsmen, bandits and terrorists. Unequivocally, there must be deliberate and systematic efforts towards halting the descend into anarchy.

WE believe that, government should be proactive in handling this serious and delicate security challenge(s) confronting the land. It is not good enough to keep mouthing that the security apparatuses are on top of the situations once. Such ugly situation occurs. While it is reassuring, the repeat performance of same acts almost immediately after the initial attacks call for concern. The security agencies should be seen to be walking the talk.

IN an era where the use of information and Communication Technology (ICT) has become paramount the Nigerian security networks should key-in in order to make their work more faster and efficient for the benefits of Nigerians. In spite of the numerous advantage (s) of the Information and Communication Technology equipments individuals many all Nigerians should endeavour to be security conscious and wary of any suspicious happenings around them.

SECURITY is everybody's business hence government alone cannot and should not be saddled with the onerous duty of protecting live and property of its people. It is a collective task which collectively can be handled. Until that is done with all diligence, it is not yet Uhuru.

I can't wait to go home

- Buhari

President Muhammadu Buhari has said that he can't wait to go home after eight years of being President of Nigeria.

He said this at his final Sallah homage held at the Presidential Villa, Abuja on Friday.

The President described himself as being lucky, to have led Nigeria in various capacity - governor, minister, head of state and President.

He thanked the residents of Abuja for tolerating him in the last seven and half years.

"I can't wait to go home...I deliberately arranged to be as far away as possible from you people. I have got what I have asked and will quietly retire to my home town in Daura," the President stated.

He said he considered the Sallah celebration as a good coincidence to say goodbye and to "thank you for tolerating me for eight years."

President Buhari said "I am counting the days. Democracy is a good thing otherwise how can somebody from the other side be a president for two terms? My home town to Niger Republic is 8 kilometers.

I honestly consider myself very lucky, I was made a governor, minister of petroleum, head of state in uniform, then after three attempts, God through technology and PVC, I became president. I tried 2007, 2011 and 2015 and ended up at Supreme Court three times."

President took a swipe at those

who said they cannot get justice at the court, recalling that all Supreme Court justices in all the election cases he took to court were all from the North and Muslims and yet he lost.

He said thanks to technology and the permanent voters card (PVC), he was able to make it in 2015 to Aso Rock.

I think this is a very good coincidence for me to say goodbye to you and to thank you for tolerating me for more than seven and half years now.

I assure you, I have deliberately arranged to be as far away from you as possible not because I don't appreciate the love you've shown to me, but because I think I've gotten what I have asked and I would rather quietly retire to my hometown.

"Having been a Governor, Minister and the President twice, I think God has given me an incredible opportunity to serve as your president. And I thank God for that.

So, please whoever feels I have done wrong to, we are all humans. There is no doubt I hurt some people and I wish you will pardon me. And those that think that I have hurt them so much, please pardon me," he added.

Minister of Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Mohammed Bello, noted that in few weeks the President will conclude a very successful tenure.

He said under the Buhari administration, the FCT has witnessed tremendous

transformation infrastructure wise.

He thanked the president for appointing him as minister, saying it's one position he will cherish forever.

He described Senator Philip Auda as a bridge builder despite being in the opposition party.

The highlight of the event was the presentation of the giant Sallah greetings card to the president.

Chairman of Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), FCT chapter, Rev. Timothy Amakon, thanked God for using Buhari to transform the nation as well as to maintain peace and development of the country.

He prayed that God will continue to strengthen him even after his office leaves office to continue play the role of an elder statesman.

The cleric also prayed that God will help the incoming administration to continue the great work the Buhari administration.

He commended the Minister of FCT for the good job he has done and prayed that Christians and Muslims will continue to co-exist peacefully.

Executive Director Al-Halbbiya Foundation Adeyemi Faud, also confirmed that Christians and Muslims live peacefully in the FCT and commended the cordial relationship between residents of the federal capital of different religions.

Suspended Adamawa REC nowhere to be found

- INEC

THE Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) says it does not know the whereabouts of Hudu Yunusa-Ari, the resident electoral commissioner (REC) in Adamawa.

The Adamawa governorship supplementary election was conducted on Saturday following the declaration of the March 18 poll as inconclusive over alleged irregularities.

While the results from the supplementary election were yet to

be completely announced, Yunusa-Ari declared Aisha 'Binani' Dahiru, candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC), as the winner.

INEC subsequently declared the announcement null and void and summoned the REC to its headquarters in Abuja.

Speaking yesterday on a Channels Television programme, Festus Okoye, INEC national commissioner and chairman, information and voter education committee, said Yunusa-Ari failed to show up at the

commission's headquarters as directed.

He said the REC had not been picking phone calls and his location was unknown.

On whether Yunusa-Ari will be declared wanted, Okoye said that is the responsibility of the police.

"If they feel that his presence is absolutely needed during the investigation and he is nowhere to be found, it is their prerogative and discretion to declare him wanted," he said.

"We wrote to the inspector-general of police and secretary to the government of the federation. We have received a response from the inspector-general of police and they have already commenced an investigation.

We asked him to report to the commission on Sunday we didn't see him, we asked him to report on Monday we didn't see him. So up till this moment, he has not reported and we don't know his whereabouts," he said.

On whether Yunusa-Ari will be declared wanted, Okoye said that is the responsibility of the police.

"If they feel that his presence is absolutely needed during the investigation and he is nowhere to be found, it is their prerogative and discretion to declare him wanted," he said.

"We wrote to the inspector-general of police and secretary to the government of the federation. We have received a response from the inspector-general of police and they have already commenced an investigation.

My understanding is that the moment the inspector-general of police concludes the investigation regarding the REC and every other individual who is involved and a prima facie case is established against the REC, the file will be made available to the commission and the commission will begin prosecution of the REC."

10th NASS: APC needs opposition to create stability

-Lawan

SENATE President, Ahmad Lawan, has said the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) cannot do without other opposition in the National Assembly leadership to create stability and for constitutional amendments in the legislature.

He said this against the backdrop of the race to fill the principal officers positions in the National Assembly.

He spoke with State House correspondents after joining residents of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) for a Sallah homage to President Muhammadu Buhari at the Presidential Villa, Abuja on Friday.

Lawan, who expressed confidence that the opposition would not usurp the posts despite the configuration of the 10th National Assembly, in which parties other than the APC will have a strong presence, said it was wrong presumption that the ruling party is not united.

Asked whether he was worried that the opposition could spring a surprise usurpation of the posts, he said: "I don't think opposition parties are planning to usurp because it is presumptuous that the APC will not be a united party.

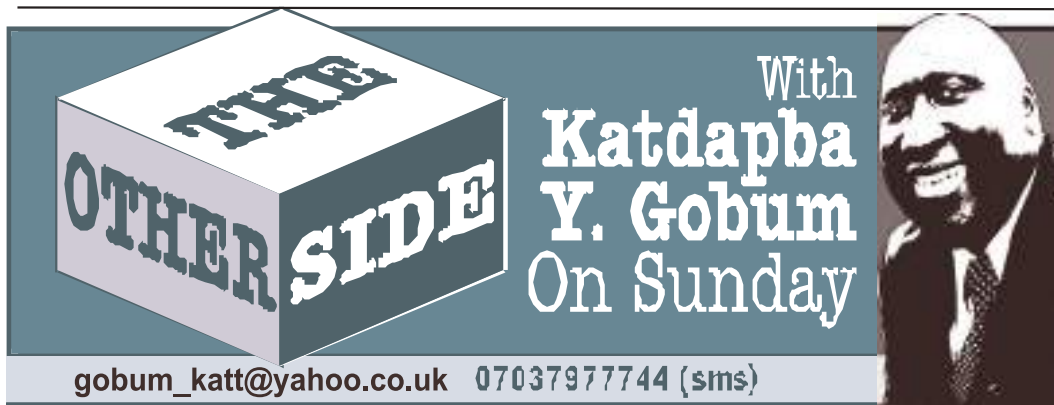
Asked whether he was worried



Lawan

that the opposition could spring a surprise usurpation of the posts, he said: "I don't think opposition parties are planning to usurp because it is presumptuous that the APC will not be a united party.

APC is a united party and the opposition party will simply work with the APC majority for us to have stability, because there is no way an opposition will decide who should be the speaker; it is our party and other leaders that will decide which zone or whoever, and the rest of us in the party will key in and of course the opposition would have no option but



With
**Katdapba
Y. Gobum**
On Sunday

gobum_katt@yahoo.co.uk 07037977744 (sms)

"There is trouble for the devil. No more time to waste. I haven't got much more time any more to waste. People say, the story of Nigeria is not good, you can't come back. I am going there. It is precisely because the story is not good and God has healed me and wants me back to be part of the solution".

I have had to change the title of this material several times. Each time I reach a decision on a choice, something keeps telling me that I have not studied the man enough to get the right title of a piece on him. Even for settling on this, I hope those who know him more than I do would forgive me for limiting him to just my angle.

If Most Rev Dr Benjamin Argak Kwashi OON were to be a politician today, he probably would have been a top ranking member of the People's Redemption Party (PRP). If one does not understand his trajectory, it may be difficult to come to terms with the man who has remained both as a social transformer and servant of the Most High.

Today, there are a lot of people that have travelled the long journey with him, and who deeply understand what his struggles are all about. His followership can be intimidating, even as they represent the level of his acceptance with people. For not being a politician of any persuasion, but being on side of the people; they are inclined to travel the same road; both in bad and good times.

How better could it be said; for if anyone forms an opinion about him on first value, such a person would have lost the essence of what he represents in Christendom and the totality of the struggles he has waged consistently.

Either way, writing about him could be herculean, more on account that one needs to get the facts straight about his person and mission. Truth is that, he is a man of many parts; therefore, setting the records in proper perspective about what he represents could save one the backlash of reproach; not only from him but of several others who follow his activities.

Knowing Most Rev Benjamin Argak Kwashi as any other person, it is only proper to understand the trajectory of his background and lives he has transformed since he elected to be a fisher of the souls of men.

Most Rev Benjamin Kwashi must be a student of liberation theology, and truly he is one proponent, that can be trusted always on such accounts; particularly given his proclivity to shoot from the hip without missing on matters that concern society and religion. And on several other issues that touch basically on politics, people and development.

If you say he does not suffer fools gladly, it is because he has been schooled in the best tradition of speaking to authority and insisting the best be given to the society. If you ever thought that he would see a wrong being perpetrated and then remain silent, it should be noted; he couldn't be the scion of Pa John Kwashi OFR, the late foremost northern Nigerian educationist.

No wonder, history kindly remembers his place in Christianity, education and discipline as second to none; for which many are today beneficiaries, and are engaged in several areas of human endeavour.

Kwashi: A priest as the people's voice



Kwashi

Without doubt, that has been replicated in the life of the man under review in more ways than one, as in his siblings.

To have an activist as a Minister of the Gospel, whose middle name, 'Argak' is testament to what he has continued to do since he answered the call to serve God. It cannot therefore be taken lightly, if lessons are to be drawn from his contributions to causes over the years.

Good enough, the tangent with which he has touched lives are so nuanced, that anyone who has followed him since he 'abandoned' a seemingly blossoming military career in 1976 'to follow a religious life' in the Church of Nigeria, would bow in obeisance to God faithfulness in his life and of many others. Some of those referred above were on the precipice of oblivion when God's mercies changed their course for good.

As soon as he came in contact with the light at age 18 and called at 21 to ministry, it is on record, the Lord enabled him run the course without turning back. After he was ordained as an Anglican Church priest in 1982, he served 'in several rural and urban parishes' transforming lives of those who may have been possibly 'considered as candidates' headed for damnation; yet, as it is known, the task of the fisher of men is to bring them to salvation, no matter how 'bad' they might have become.

Today, they have become what God designed them to be. There are many of such in several archdioceses and in other areas of human endeavour touching lives and transforming others found in the same situation as they were. Those who know would easily accept that had God not used him for that, they may long have

become history.

Talking about transformation, it cannot be doubted that Most Rev BA Kwashi had in mind Matthew 9:37-38, when he started to get young men and women realize they could play greater roles than waste away: "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

However, for those who know that for the 31 years of his episcopacy, one verse which has remained a recurring decimal on his lips whenever he has the opportunity to speak has been Matthew 6:33.

Realizing that, he went after the young and old in various communities of the state and outside; he fished them out to be used as vessels in the vineyard. Today, they are what they have become because they gave themselves to be used.

As it is usual of such situation, some of them who were derided and wondered if anything good could come out of their decision to renounce their former lives; they have today become shining lights in various dioceses and of other areas of human endeavours. You need to hear them recount what they used to be before they accepted the call. They melt hearts whenever they tell their story.

In 1992, he was consecrated as the first Bishop of the newly created Anglican Diocese of Jos. That set the tone for a total overhaul of doing things differently as the diocese has witnessed what became admittedly one of its high points. Since then, more glorious additions have been made without departing from the course. In 2008, he was enthroned Archbishop of Jos Province in the Church of Nigeria; and reelected on January 19, 2013 for another term.

Consider for instance, the recent foundation laying ceremony of the

Nenrit Secretariat of the diocese on March 27, 2023 and its implication for the church. It is planned that when it is completed on or before September this year, the secretariat will house the office of the Bishop and other diocesan officials.

Those who know the history of the Anglican Church in Plateau State may be quick to point out that before now the number of parishes could be counted on finger tips. It is no more; the number of planted parishes of the church has been on the ascendancy. Where else has it not been taken to on the Plateau?

Whether he was prepared for it or not, one of the first calamities that hit him and the church was in 1987. That year, his church and vicariate were totally burned during one of the riots by Muslim youth. He escaped by whiskers, thanks to God who wanted to allow him live for greater assignment ahead for the Anglican Church. That was manifested when he became Bishop in 1992.

During his 31st consecration and enthronement as Bishop in the Church of Nigeria and Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Jos anniversary this year, he announced to the consternation of the congregation, his retirement from the See of Jos and its administration from Jos Diocese with effect from September 30, 2023.

Naturally, I had asked: What then would he be involved for the rest of his life? No long rumination to make; he is entering a new phase of his ministry, which include taking care of about five hundred children and of his role as the General Secretary of the Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON).

Kwashi had said in an interview that "The conference is gathering momentum, not because of its numbers but because of the Spirit of the Lord and the consistency of putting the Bible at the center."

Kwashi replaced, Archbishop Peter Jensen of Australia, who served GAFCON in the role since its inception. Archbishop Foley Beach, primate of the Anglican Church in North America, is Chairman of the movement, having succeeded Archbishop Nicholas Okoh, Primate of all Nigeria, who retired in 2019.

The Zambiri Center, where himself and wife, Gloria would concentrate their efforts will become an area of priority for the gospel mission. The plan to take one thousand vulnerable and orphaned children has not stopped. Already, they have 'acquired lands for the project of primary, junior and high school with small scale skills acquisition center and bakery, farm and animal husband all on a vast land'.

To be fair, three institutions apart from the military, his family and his ideals for the struggle may have shaped his consistency in the word and given him direction to chart a course.

Kwashi has had both good and

bad times as a human being. Between 2020 and 2022, his world almost came crashing after he was diagnosed with liver and colon cancer, which had reached stage 4. His doctor in Jos recommended the United States where it was going to cost about three hundred thousand dollars or even more.

That took him to Roanoke USA where God did what no man can do. Indeed, He can heal and do miracles with or without medicine. In his account, this is the second. God 'works miracles not as a proof but as a result to reveal who He is'. In the words of Dr Paul Richard (his oncologist), 'Satan deserves to get more troubles from you Ben. Satan has done more havoc to the world, you must let people know'.

At this point, he was prepared for the worst; to return to his maker, and he meant every word; for what was the use of spending such huge amount when there are projects such as taking care of over five hundred children at Gidan Kauna in Jos?

To use such money, he had told the New Creation World Outreach Church, North Mankato, USA, 'I wanted to go home and rest with the Lord', saying 'this is the second cancer on my liver within three years. God has gone ahead to prepare men and women for the same job for His glory. I have no pains or any stress symptoms'.

He was healed of the debilitating cancer after nine months of intense treatment. Even with the bleak nature of what was found, his family, friends around the globe, the church back home and in the United States were on their knees interceding on his behalf until the miraculous happened.

He returned to Jos more dedicated and telling the world: If there was any 'mistake' those who prayed for him did, it was to get healed; for in the new status, the devil has got to know that he was in trouble because he will not rest in preaching the gospel. He said: We have a story to tell to generations to come, of the faithfulness of God. He has used you (meaning those who stood by him in various ways) in this journey for all you did to make miracle of my life happen'.

Together with Gloria, his wife, they have continued the ministry, knowing that 'God allowed me to go through this so I can stand here to tell you that your prayers are answered. If I create any more problems in the world, you are to be blamed, because you prayed. And believe me; I am going home, because my assignment is clearly cut out: There is trouble for the devil. No more time to waste. I haven't got much more time any more to waste. People say, the story of Nigeria is not good, you can't come back. I am going there. It is precisely because the story is not good and God has healed me and wants me back to be part of the solution.

He has indeed returned; and no one can deny it, he is gift and will remain a solution to many of Nigeria's problems until he returns home.



Change is the only constant thing

THERE is no doubt that change is the only constant thing. In Nigeria, prices of goods and services are always changing at the slightest opportunity. And when a price goes up, the law of diminishing returns does not apply to it. One could say forward ever and backwards never when referring to price hikes in Nigeria and one won't be far from the truth.

We are facing one of the hardest times in Nigeria. All my life, I have never experienced a 300 per cent price hike until the year before last. It is unbelievable that a bag of rice that used to sell at N7000 now sells for N40,000. Beans which used to sell for N300 now sells for N700. And because of high cost of palm oil, most of us now appreciate any food that can be cooked without palm oil or groundnut oil.

Yes, gotai and karkashi soup have become regular foods in most Plateau people's homes. We are not allowed to even enjoy garri soaked with groundnut and sugar to taste. No! It is now added to the rich man's exclusive reserve. Good garri now costs N500 per measure. The price of groundnut has also gone up to up to N900 per measure.

It beats one's imagination that in spite of the cry of Nigerians, government has concluded plans to remove subsidies from petroleum products. What this translates to is that the price of fuel will increase. This also means the prices of commodities will increase because anything that happens to fuel trickles down to influence prices of goods and services.

It reminds one of the biblical story of King Solomon's successor Rehoboam. When his subjects came to him to find out if he would treat

them fairly or follow in his father's path, the answer he gave them after the 3 days he had given them to come for his reply was that his father beat them with robe but he would beat them with scorpions...

We are lamenting the skyrocketing prices of goods and services now, wait until after the removal of subsidy. We are buying gas for N700 per kg. We might end up buying same for N1000. fuel which used to go for N165 per litre went as high as N350 recently during its scarcity. It is yet to drop below N200. We can only imagine what will happen if subsidy is removed.

As it always does, the price of everything automatically reflects the change. The question to ask is, can Nigerians carry another weight?

On top of everything-insecurity, crises, lack/poverty, corruption, rebellions, rancour, nothing seems to be coming easy. It is said that when the going gets tough, the tough gets going. However, even the tough is overwhelmed. The every day trials come in multiples. A few months ago, I used public transport to Terminus Market which is my best past time. Unluckily for me, I got carried away and before I knew it, it was some 20 something minutes to 7:00 pm. No body warned me that at such an hour-rush hour, it was survival of the fittest to board a NAPEP.

I was carrying 2 hefty bagco bags filled with foodstuffs. This slowed me down and there was no way I could jump into a NAPEP. One had no option but to stand aside as market men and women scrambled for transportation. If not for one's nephew that spotted me and gave me lift back to my office, I wonder what would have happened. That was then before the

time for keke's operation was reduced.

A few days ago, some of my colleagues in the office experienced a similar scenario. They had gone to do shopping and forgot that government has reviewed the working hours of NAPEP to 6 -6. By the time they realised that shop owners had started closing shop, and rushed to the main road, the place was full with commuters each scrambling for transportation, trying to go home.

They said all their actions dida not yield fruits. It was getting dark and the number of NAPEPs were thinning out. They could not trek home because their home is quite a distance from Terminus. A pick up van appeared at the nick of time and announced that he was going towards their way. He was their saving grace. Come and see how women wearing wrapper were jumping into the pickup van. It was pathetic, my colleagues said.

Eagle eye wants to still appeal to PLSG to review the laws on the activities of keke NAPEP. This was put in place to act as a form of control over the excesses of some NAPEP drivers during the crises that erupted in Jos some time ago.

Please, look at the suffering of the masses and extend the time of keke NAPEP operations to at least 7:00pm. This will ensure students who close by 6:00pm will get home without difficulty. Likewise market men and women. Remember, so many activities end at 6:00pm.

And consider the fact that this move has affected Jos' economic activities which was just picking up after the crisis. Consider it in the light of the rainy season. The masses suffer anytime it rains in the evening. Getting home always means trekking under the rain which could lead to sickness. We need more transportation around town to be provided by government if you still insist. This is another window for revenue generation.

It reminds one of the biblical story of King Solomon's successor Rehoboam. When his subjects came to him to find out if he would treat them fairly or follow in his father's path, the answer he gave them after the 3 days he had given them to come for his reply was that his father beat them with robe but he would beat them with scorpions...

NEWS

By JIDAUNA DARING

FEDERAL Commissioner, National Population Commission (NPC) Plateau State, Hon. Mrs. Celicia Dapoet has called on citizens of Plateau to avail themselves for counting during the forthcoming census in the country.

Dapoet made the call while declaring open a one day capacity building workshop for state Census Publicity Committee on processes and methodology of the 2023 population and housing census, held at the NUJ conference hall in Jos, last Thursday.

SUNDAY STANDARD reports that the selected participants for the workshop were drawn from media executives and critical stakeholders in the information sector of the state.

Dapoet appreciated the committee for taking the responsibility given to them after the inauguration with all forms of seriousness and also wished the participants a very fruitful deliberation.

She said that the census has not been conducted for over 15 years. She added the exercise is for the benefit of all Nigerians.

Dapoet also thanked NUJ, Plateau State Council for the good working relationship that is existing with the NPC in the state, particularly in the area of publicity.

Commissioner for Information and Communication, Plateau State, Hon. Dan Manjang who is also the Chairman of the committee appreciated NPC for finding them worthy to serve in the Census Publicity Committee. He assured the commission of

Avail yourselves for counting, NPC tells Plateau citizens



Dapoet

their readiness to do their best in the area of public enlightenment which the members all know its magnitude.

Manjang noted that the committee work given to them is for Plateau and Nigeria as a whole, since it is a national assignment.

He commended some of the media and religious leaders that have already keyed into the enlightenment programme. He described such efforts as a step in the right direction which needs to be sustained, so as to ensure smooth conduct of the exercise which remains very key to Nigerians.

Also in his remarks, NUJ Chairman, Plateau State Council, Mr. Paul Jatau

appreciated NPC for partnering with the media to ensure the success of the forthcoming census exercise. He added that as partners in progress, they would do everything possible as a council to see that its members give out good reports before, during and after the exercise.

Our correspondent reports that the workshop featured paper presentations; Census Mapping and enumeration Area Demarcation for 2023 Census by Priscila Jassu, Processes and Methodology for 2023 Census by Pam Deme, Technological Innovations in the Conduct of the 2023 Census by Dominic Bidas and Data Quality Management in 2023 Census by Jick Lawrence among others.

Sallah: Bello tasks Muslims on national unity, integration

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

AS Muslim faithful all over the world complete the 1444/2023 Ramadan fast to celebrate the Eid-el-Fitr, Kogi State Governor, Yahaya Bello has tasked Nigerians on ensuring unity and integration for the progress of the nation.

Bello also charged Muslims that they should endeavour to stick to the lessons of Ramadan which proffers solutions to some of the problems facing the country today.

Bello made the call in a statement by his Chief Press Secretary, Onogwu Muhammed, on Thursday in Lokoja, saying that the teachings of Ramadan were centered on humanity, kindness, peace and love.

The governor also urged all Muslims to ensure that the lessons they had learnt during the Ramadan season and their

act of devotion remained a consistent way of life even after the 29 days exercis.

Bello noted that Ramadan was a season of several teachings that centered on humanity, kindness, peace and love hence if these lessons were imbibed many of the problems in the country would reduce.

He also extended his felicitation to all Muslims all over, particularly in Kogi on the successful completion of the 2023 Ramadan Fast. The governor thanked God Almighty for keeping everyone who had witnessed the end of the Islamic holy month in strength and health.

He used the opportunity to again harp on the gains of our peaceful coexistence and

national integration as he calls on every Nigerian to offer prayers for the leaders most importantly as the country is preparing for the transition of government at the federal and in most states of the federation.

"I congratulate the Muslim faithful on the successful completion of the 2023 Ramadan fast and the celebration of Eid-El Fitr. The end of Ramadan does not signify an end to good deeds, tolerance and peaceful coexistence amongst the human race therefore, we must continue to imbibe the beautiful lessons learned during the holy month.

Nigeria's greater achievements as a nation lie in us being united and not allowing ethnic, religious and political party affiliations to divide us.

"The various sectional agitations would never emerge in the interest of anyone, instead we should collectively proffer solutions to the numerous ills of our nation through effective democratic participation, support and prayers for our leaders", he said.

Bello further restated the commitment of his administration to ensuring that Kogi and its people continued to enjoy the dividends of democracy.

This, he said, could only be guaranteed when the lives and properties of people were safe.



Bello

POLITICS

I've no fears about our democracy – Buhari

PRESIDENT Muhammadu Buhari says the future of democracy as a system of government is bright, adding that as he prepares to leave office in a little over a month, he feels satisfied and duly assured that Nigerians will defend the system against all threats.

Mr Buhari stated this while speaking to journalists shortly after observing the Eid prayer, marking the end of the 30-day Ramadan fasting by Muslims.

The president, who has been in power since 2015 when he was elected, will leave the office at the end of his second four-year tenure on 29 May.

He was a military head of state between December 1983 and August 1985.

"Nigerians appreciate the stability of democracy. The outcome of the elections, in which more than 10

governors failed to make it to the senate sent a clear message that ordinary Nigerians know the power of their votes and how to use it.

"Nigerians cherish democracy. They have shown their love for it and will defend it against real or perceived threats. They will continue to vote one way or the other depending on their preferences," he stated.

Mr Buhari assured that the 29 May handover date remains sacrosanct. "God willing, nothing will stop it," he added.

On his plans after leaving office, the president said he feels fulfilled that God had made it possible for him to



Buhari

serve two terms of four years each and looks forward to an orderly handover.

"I thank God for what He has done for me personally and for what He has enabled us to achieve.

"I am looking forward to returning to my town, to be as far away as I can from Abuja so that the incoming president will have the time and the space to take decisions without my distracting him," he said.

The Governor-elect, "I congratulate you particularly for your perseverance, self-discipline and piety all through the Ramadan. By faith, we trust that God Almighty has received your precious gifts and the intense prayers you have offered on behalf of our state and the whole nation".

The Governor-elect

By PETER TITLE

THE governor-elect of Plateau State, Barrister Caleb Mutfwang has felicitated with Muslim Ummah all over on their Eid-el-Fitr celebration and urged them to re-commit themselves to peaceful living at all times.

He equally noted that the 2023 Ramadan and Eid-el-Fitr are particularly of great significance because he said they have come within the nation's political transition period.

Barr. Mutfwang who disclosed this in a statement made available to journalists in Jos on Friday and signed by him, asked for fervent prayers as the country changes leadership batons come May 29, 2023.

According to the Governor-elect, "I congratulate you particularly for your perseverance, self-discipline and piety all through the Ramadan. By faith, we trust that God Almighty has received your precious gifts and the intense prayers you have offered on behalf of our state and the whole nation".

The Governor-elect

that, Hon. Rufus Bature also called on security agencies in the state and the country at large to be vigilant and ensure that peace and tranquility prevails throughout the Sallah celebration.

the fellowship of the celebration."

Sanda on behalf of his family members and staff of the Plateau State House of Assembly prayed for peace to continue to reign in Plateau State and for the people to prosper and progress in all things.

He urged the Muslim Ummah to use the period for sustained prayers for the country so as to overcome its challenges and also for a smooth transition into the coming administration.

The Speaker equally called on community and religious leaders to continually preach the gospel of peace, unity and love amongst their

Mutfwang rejoices with Muslim Ummah

He therefore passionately appealed to Muslims to heighten their prayers for Plateau State and Nigeria that all will go well before and after the inaugurations.

In addition, the state.

the fellowship of the celebration."

Sanda on behalf of his family members and staff of the Plateau State House of Assembly prayed for peace to continue to reign in Plateau State and for the people to prosper and progress in all things.

He urged the Muslim Ummah to use the period for sustained prayers for the country so as to overcome its challenges and also for a smooth transition into the coming administration.

The Speaker equally called on community and religious leaders to continually preach the gospel of peace, unity and love amongst their

state and nation, even as we share in the joy and

how important it is for our

state and nation, even as we share in the joy and

how important it is for our

state and nation, even as we share in the joy and

how important it is for our

state and nation, even as we share in the joy and

how important it is for our

state and nation, even as we share in the joy and

how important it is for our

state and nation, even as we share in the joy and

how important it is for our

state and nation, even as we share in the joy and

how important it is for our

state and nation, even as we share in the joy and

how important it is for our

state and nation, even as we share in the joy and

how important it is for our

state and nation, even as we share in the joy and

how important it is for our

state and nation, even as we share in the joy and

how important it is for our

state and nation, even as we share in the joy and

how important it is for our

state and nation, even as we share in the joy and



Mutfwang

APC felicitates with Muslim Ummah on Eid-El-Fitri celebration

THE All Progressives Congress, APC, Plateau State Chapter, heartily felicitates with the Muslim Ummah in Plateau State and the whole country on the auspicious occasion of this year's celebration of Eid - El-Fitri.

This was contained in a release signed by the APC State Publicity Secretary, Sylvanus Namang, and made available to SUNDAY STANDARD in Jos.

The statement adds that, coming at the end of a one-month long Ramadan fast which was a period of self

discipline and sacrifice, the occasion calls for solemn reflection on the lessons of the holy life lived by Prophet Mohammed.

According to the release, this year's celebration is unique coming in the wake of the transition programme where the nation is going to have a new set of elected leaders sworn in to pilot the affairs of our great country at the national and state levels.

The APC Chairman in the state, Hon. Rufus Bature, therefore, enjoins the Muslim Ummah to fervently pray for peace, unity and

stability of the polity and the nation.

He appealed to politicians to see politics as an avenue to serve and not to be served as is unfortunately the case in our setting.

The statement concluded

that, Hon. Rufus Bature also called on security agencies in the state and the country at large to be vigilant and ensure that peace and tranquility prevails throughout the Sallah celebration.

the fellowship of the celebration."

Sanda on behalf of his family members and staff of the Plateau State House of Assembly prayed for peace to continue to reign in Plateau State and for the people to prosper and progress in all things.

He urged the Muslim Ummah to use the period for sustained prayers for the country so as to overcome its challenges and also for a smooth transition into the coming administration.

The Speaker equally called on community and religious leaders to continually preach the gospel of peace, unity and love amongst their

state and nation, even as we share in the joy and

how important it is for our

state and nation, even as we share in the joy and

discipline and sacrifice, the occasion calls for solemn reflection on the lessons of the holy life lived by Prophet Mohammed.

According to the release, this year's celebration is unique coming in the wake of the transition programme where the nation is going to have a new set of elected leaders sworn in to pilot the affairs of our great country at the national and state levels.

The APC Chairman in the state, Hon. Rufus Bature, therefore, enjoins the Muslim Ummah to fervently pray for peace, unity and

stability of the polity and the nation.

He appealed to politicians to see politics as an avenue to serve and not to be served as is unfortunately the case in our setting.

The statement concluded

that, Hon. Rufus Bature also called on security agencies in the state and the country at large to be vigilant and ensure that peace and tranquility prevails throughout the Sallah celebration.

the fellowship of the celebration."

Sanda on behalf of his family members and staff of the Plateau State House of Assembly prayed for peace to continue to reign in Plateau State and for the people to prosper and progress in all things.

He urged the Muslim Ummah to use the period for sustained prayers for the country so as to overcome its challenges and also for a smooth transition into the coming administration.

The Speaker equally called on community and religious leaders to continually preach the gospel of peace, unity and love amongst their

state and nation, even as we share in the joy and

how important it is for our

state and nation, even as we share in the joy and

how important it is for our

state and nation, even as we share in the joy and

how important it is for our

state and nation, even as we share in the joy and

discipline and sacrifice, the occasion calls for solemn reflection on the lessons of the holy life lived by Prophet Mohammed.

According to the release, this year's celebration is unique coming in the wake of the transition programme where the nation is going to have a new set of elected leaders sworn in to pilot the affairs of our great country at the national and state levels.

The APC Chairman in the state, Hon. Rufus Bature, therefore, enjoins the Muslim Ummah to fervently pray for peace, unity and

stability of the polity and the nation.

He appealed to politicians to see politics as an avenue to serve and not to be served as is unfortunately the case in our setting.

The statement concluded

that, Hon. Rufus Bature also called on security agencies in the state and the country at large to be vigilant and ensure that peace and tranquility prevails throughout the Sallah celebration.

the fellowship of the celebration."

Sanda on behalf of his family members and staff of the Plateau State House of Assembly prayed for peace to continue to reign in Plateau State and for the people to prosper and progress in all things.

He urged the Muslim Ummah to use the period for sustained prayers for the country so as to overcome its challenges and also for a smooth transition into the coming administration.

The Speaker equally called on community and religious leaders to continually preach the gospel of peace, unity and love amongst their

state and nation, even as we share in the joy and

how important it is for our

state and nation, even as we share in the joy and

how important it is for our

state and nation, even as we share in the joy and

how important it is for our

state and nation, even as we share in the joy and

By PAULINE DALLONG

SPEAKER OF THE

Plateau State House of Assembly (PLHA) Rt Hon. Yakubu Yackson Sanda, has called on the Muslim Ummah in Plateau State and beyond to practice the virtues of love, unity and peaceful co-existence as professed by Prophet Mohammed (SAW).

He made this known in a goodwill message to the Muslim Ummah as they celebrate this year's Eld-El-Fitir, to mark the end of the Ramadan fast.

The Speaker said, "As the commemoration of this wonderful festival goes on, let us remember the virtues of love and unity that forms the basis

state and nation, even as we share in the joy and

how important it is for our

state and nation, even as we share in the joy and

how important it is for our

state and nation, even as we share in the joy and

how important it is for our

state and nation, even as we share in the joy and

how important it is for our

state and nation, even as we share in the joy and

how important it is for our



Sanda

state and nation, even as we share in the joy and

how important it is for our

state and nation, even as we share in the joy and

how important it is for our



Bature

SUNDAY POLITICS

Subversion of democracy in Adamawa

What played out last weekend in Adamawa State during the supplementary gubernatorial poll can best be described as attempts by desperate politicians to subvert democracy and undermine the will of the people. The electoral heist must be totally condemned in all its ramifications, EHI BRAIMAH writes.

IN the show of shame in broad daylight, the whole world was shocked to see the Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC), Hudu Yunusa-Ari, on television illegally announcing Senator Aisha "Binani" Dahiru, the candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC), as the winner of the election when results from 10 local councils were still being expected. How low can we get?

The electoral law does not recognise RECs to collate and announce election results in the states as that is the job of the Returning Officer. So, what Yunusa-Ari did was brazen, illegal and it could only have been inspired by an animal boldness of the worst kind.

Instead of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) summoning Yunusa-Ari to Abuja, he should have been arrested in Yola immediately and made to face the full wrath of the law. What happened next is even more shocking: Senator Binani, whom Yunusa-Ari declared illegally as the winner, read an acceptance speech, thanking the people of Adamawa State for electing her.

That was a lie from the pit of hell; she was not elected because she did not win the election. Binani is desperate to set a record as the first female governor in Nigeria but she has to be properly elected – not through the backdoor, subterfuge or illegality.

We may have seen bad behaviours displayed by politicians in the past but what Senator Binani and her enablers did at a time we are trying to improve on the electoral process takes the cake. How far will politicians go in the theatre of the absurd?

On top of this travesty, Binani approached a High Court in Abuja, seeking a judicial review in an attempt to stop INEC from voiding her illegal declaration as the "winner" of the governorship poll as announced by Yunusa-Ari.

I have never seen anything like this before. If we truly want to be honest with ourselves, politicians are the biggest threats to our democracy.

What the Adamawa REC and Binani have done should come with consequences; otherwise it will become a standard playbook for other politicians who do not have any sense of shame or higher purpose.

Because of Yunusa-Ari's egregious conduct, another national commissioner deployed to Adamawa for the supplementary poll, was beaten black and blue and then



Fintiri

stripped naked. It was clearly a case of the anger of the mob.

Yunusa-Ari appeared defiant on the day he made the illegal announcement in the presence of security personnel. He was confronted by onlookers in the room that he had no powers to announce the winner. He was also reminded that it was the holy month of Ramadan – the ninth month of the Muslim year, during which strict fasting, prayer and deep reflections are observed from dawn to sunset.

In his desperation, the Adamawa REC who has now been disowned by INEC set aside all the entreaties and spiritual injunctions. There must have been something in it for him to have taken such risk for a zero-sum game.

Before the supplementary governorship elections in Kebbi and Adamawa States, INEC had been in the eye of the storm. The reputation of the electoral umpire had taken severe beating arising from the previous elections in February and March.

INEC had the opportunity to redeem its image but, apparently, the likes of Yunusa-Ari with his gang of co-conspirators had other plans. There is now palpable tension in Adamawa State which could lead to a breakdown of law and order. This situation must be addressed immediately by the security agencies.

The position now is that INEC is working very hard to do damage control. Last Sunday, the electoral body announced that the REC illegally announced the winner which was declared null and void.

In order to calm frayed

nerves, INEC suspended the collation of results and the supplementary election. INEC's statement did not leave anyone in doubt. "The attention of the Commission has been drawn to a purported declaration of a winner in the Adamawa Governorship election by the Resident Electoral Commissioner even when the process has not been concluded.

"The action of the REC is a usurpation of the power of the Returning Officer. It is null and void and of no effect. Consequently, the collation of the results of the supplementary election is hereby suspended."

But INEC has a duty to the Adamawa people to conclude the process and announce the winner without further delay so that by 29 May, the winner would be inaugurated and sworn into office like his colleagues.

However, the facts of the matter must stand. Before the collation exercise was suspended on Saturday night, Binani was nowhere near winning the election as she was trailing Ahmadu Fintiri, the incumbent governor and candidate of the People's Democratic Party (PDP). By this time, results from 10 local councils had been announced.

Nigerians should disregard the announcement by Yunusa-Ari and allow INEC to conclude the process. In the meantime, no one has told us where Mele Lamido, the Returning Officer, has been hiding; he just disappeared into thin air.

Was he part of the plot to sabotage the will of the people of Adamawa State? Could it be



Dahiru

that the RO did not agree with the REC to announce Binani as the winner without results from all the 69 polling units?

The drama in Adamawa State happens in other states and it is a reflection of our inverted value system: we condone impunity without consequences and it has gone to great lengths to damage the moral fabric of society.

For example, why would a parent buy exam question papers for his/her children to gain undue advantage? The same parent will also join those accusing INEC of improper conduct of our elections. Isn't that hypocrisy?

This is the time INEC should bark and bite at the same time. It has acted well in this matter so far. After the meeting of its National Commissioners in Abuja which held on April 18 over the supplementary governorship election in Adamawa State, INEC resolved to write the Inspector General of Police for the immediate investigation and possible prosecution of Yunusa-Ari who, by the way, is a lawyer.

How can a lawyer superintend over such travesty and be the lead actor in a poorly scripted drama? What action is the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) going to take?

The electoral body will also write to Boss Mustapha, the secretary to the government of the federation (SGF), to inform President Muhammadu Buhari that his appointee, Yunusa-Ari, has been "unworthy" of the appointment as Adamawa State REC. His "unwholesome behaviour" should be reported by the SGF for further action.

We are all witnesses to the disgraceful conduct of

politicians even in their parties where there's complete absence of internal democracy. The Labour Party has also joined APC and PDP in poor housekeeping manners because if you have been following the political developments in Imo State, Labour Party has two factions (Ikechukwu Ukaegbu and Chibutu Isiguzo factions laying claims to the ticket) in the run-up to the party's primary to elect its gubernatorial candidate.

With parallel primaries, the factions usually end up in court because politicians are generally bad losers – everyone wants to win. How's that possible?

If party primaries are fraught with rigging and violence, what then should we expect at the state and national elections? Are they not the same people?

When the outcomes of our elections are poor, we are quick to blame INEC instead of desperate politicians and their supporters. What in the world was Yunusa-Ari thinking when he declared Binani as the winner of the Adamawa governorship poll? Was he expecting Nigerians to clap for him?

He should have emulated the Returning Officer in the Abia State gubernatorial election, Prof Nnennaya Oti, vice chancellor of the Federal University of Technology, Owerri (FUTO) which Alex Otti won. This amazing amazon refused to be intimidated even at the risk to her life; she stood her ground and the will of Abia voters prevailed.

But Yunusa-Ari couldn't because he sold his conscience for a mess of porridge.

SUNDAY POLITICS

It's too early to give up on Nigeria

Anyone who has been paying close attention to the turmoil in our political environment is aware of the confusion, the discussions, and even the current incidents. An image that challenges the presidential election on February 25, 2023, has been painted by the grim nature of Nigerian politics and the international arena. Anyone, voicing his own opinion starts the debates that will determine how Nigeria's democracy will develop in the future, writes ISAH ALIYU CHIROMA.

EMPATHY is a good quality especially when observing other people's viewpoints because it will help you understand what actually captured their attention.

Each voter has unique expectations when it comes to an election. No matter who wins the election, it is expected that the transition to new governments on May 29 would occur without a hitch. Though it seems that some are against this transitory stage—or perhaps not the stage itself—the process itself is in question. As we have seen over the past few weeks, there is a number of reactions around the nation that have grabbed notice. These reactions range from the LP presidential running mate Yusuf Datti Baba-Ahmed's interview on Channels TV, which resulted in a N5 million fine, to an LP fan who shouted that the president-elect should not be sworn in. All of those responses are accompanied by a variety of emotions as our democracy's future is being created, both practically and aesthetically.

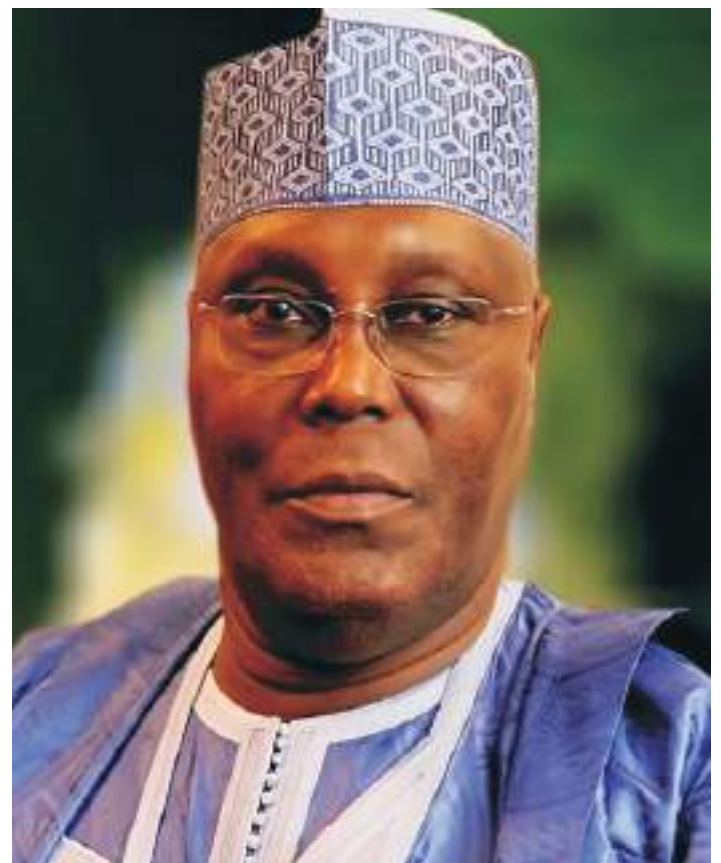
If an election is required, there must be a victor, and if there is a victor, the opposing party has legal avenues to demand his right from what he believes and appears. After putting all of this into place, famed Nigerian author and novelist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie—whom Chinua Achebe called “fully made”—suddenly published an open letter. She arrived completely prepared this time, complete with a letter addressed to Joe Biden, the American president.

Chimamanda raised the topic of why America is praising the victor of this awful election in her letter headed “Nigeria's Hollow Democracy.” She brought out various issues that cast doubt on the electoral process. Elections, she alleged, were frequently rigged, with predetermined “winners” declared as a convenience. The elections in 2023 were similarly manipulated and conducted in a way that belittled Nigerians' intelligence. She addressed a democratic nation like the United States with those comments and questioning why. She came to the conclusion that the United States shouldn't support a president-elect who was chosen through an illegal process if it values the rule of law so highly.

It seems unsettling that those statements would come from a



Tinubu



Atiku

well-known author like Chimamanda. I believe that many people's candidates did not succeed in the election, should they all raise alarm and disturb the atmosphere on their own interest? But her courageous attempt to share her opinion in a letter that might never make it to the president's desk is not the best cause of action for resolving the problem. Imagine we spot her at the trial, standing beside her candidate as we wait for the verdict, maybe then we can see a full supporter. This would have been the appropriate cause of action under the circumstances. While I don't think it was wrong for her to write those letters, the way she addressed them endangers our democracy. But what should be our utmost interest in the election, should it be our candidates, party or our democracy?

We had been persuaded that technology would protect the sanctity of votes, so she wrote in her letter, “I supported Peter Obi, the Labour Party candidate, and hoped he would win, as polls predicted, but I was prepared to accept any result.” It's difficult to concede loss when your candidate loses, especially when your hopes are high. However, Nigerian politics have undergone significant change over the years, and the course we're on to make history is more satisfying than where we started.

The outcomes of the 2023

general elections were unexpected. Many candidates lost their wards, local governments, or even their entire states as a result of political calculations, similar to how the incoming president's state was lost, President Muhammadu Buhari's loss of Katsina, Bello Matawalle losing Zamfara or the governors who lost their senatorial bids. It all came with some setbacks, one way or another, but the outcome decided who would prevail, proving that it was a war of wins and losses.

The enduring worth of the 2015 elections cannot be wished away, as the former presidential spokesman, Olusegun Adeniyi, stated in his book: “After all is said, regardless of whether the expectations of Nigerians who voted “Change” are met or not, the enduring value of the 2015 elections cannot be wished away: an incumbent president can be defeated, even in Nigeria. This is an important lesson for the current incumbent and a lasting victory for the Nigerian people”. The same will hold true for the elections in 2023; the outcomes may not match our expectations, but voters showed up to cast their ballots, and some did so successfully. But the crucial factor in our democratic politics is that the Nigerian voter became the supreme political authority as a result of the power of the vote, creating a larger sense of public



Obi

ownership of the political process. So, one way or the other, election must give voters what they wanted, through their choices that they made.

We must hold on to the factors that will determine how Nigerian elections will be conducted in the future and how our leaders will emerge as we stand among the throngs of people who want our democracy to be protected. Even if it doesn't support our decisions, we must maintain our capacity for optimism in the

midst of terror, brutality, and so much tragedy. The only way to respect our court system and demonstrate that you are a patriotic citizen is to give the legal system the opportunity to make judgements that may or may not favor your preferences.

If we have the patience, the verdict will come, the choices will be made, and our democracy's history will be written. A past that will always be a part of who we are and how we respond to the events that form our democracy.

SUNDAY PEOPLE

CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP FOR CENSUS PUBLICITY COMMITTEE

A One-Day Capacity Building workshop for State Census Publicity Committee on the processes and Methodology of the 2023 Population and Housing Census took place on Thursday at the NUJ Press Centre, Jos



Plateau State Commissioner for Information and Communication, Hon. Dan Manjang (left) with the NUJ State Chairman, Mr. Paul Jatau during the opening ceremony of the Census



PRTVC General Manager, Mr. Jeftha Jackden (right) with other Publicity Committee members



Federal Commissioner, National Population Commissioner, Hon. Cecilia Dapoet (left) presenting materials to Hon. Dan Manjang



National Population Commission, State Director, Mr. Felicia James Molpun (left) decorating the NUJ Chairman, Mr. Paul Jatau with the Census badge



Deputy Chief Imam of the Jos Central Mosque, Sheikh Ghazali Adam (left) with the NOA State Director, Mrs. Kaneng Hworo and others at the workshop



NPC, Head of Unit, Public Affairs Department, Mr. Jick Lawrence Joseph (middle) presenting census workshop materials to NUJ Chairman, Mr. Paul Jatau and Commissioner, Hon. Dan Manjang (left)



Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria, Highland FM General Manager, Patience Jatau registering on arrival at the ceremony



Cross section of workshop participants at the opening ceremony

PHOTOS: DANLADI DUK

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

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

FROM THE ASSEMBLY
With **PAULINE DALLONG**
 paulinedallong@yahoo.com

PLHA: As new faces prepare to take over



Azi



Akawu



Bukar



Kudangbenna

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

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

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

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

SUNDAY MAGAZINE



Mahmood



Fintiri



Binani

Adamawa Guber polls: Intrigues, power play and implications

Nigeria could have produced the first female governor in its history but the intrigues, manipulations and twists that characterised the Adamawa governorship election was more than meet the eye. Senator Aisha Dahiru aka Binani was at the center of the storm as she engaged in a fierce battle with incumbent Governor Ahmadu Fintiri for the number one seat of the state. VICTOR GAI writes.

THE battle has been won and lost but Nigerians are still at a loss about the power play that rocked the recent Adamawa governorship election.

The March 18 governorship election was declared inconclusive and a rerun was set for April 15. The top contenders were the incumbent Governor, Ahmadu Fintiri of the PDP and Senator representing Adamawa Central district, Aisha Dahiru.

But in a dramatic twist the All Progressives Congress (APC) candidate, Aishatu Dahiru (Binani) was declared the winner of the poll before the completion of collation of results. This is despite Fintiri was already having a comfortable lead.

The Resident Electoral Commissioner of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Hudu Yunusa, had announced Binani as the winner, even when the resumption of the collation of results scheduled for 11 am last Sunday was yet to start.

This was done by the REC and not the returning officer, as provided by the Electoral Act.

He allocated 221,303 votes to the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) candidate and the incumbent Governor, Ahmadu Umaru Fintiri.

The figures allocated to Fintiri represents 50 per cent shortfall of his initial score of over 400,000 votes.

The election had earlier been declared inconclusive, even as Governor Ahmadu Umaru Fintiri

leads with 421,524.

Declaring the polls inclusive, the returning officer, Prof Mohammed Mele said, the election was inconclusive because the cancelled votes exceeded the margin of victory.

When collation opened after the supplementary election on Saturday, the returning officer, Mele, after collating results from about 10 local government areas, adjourned further collation to 11:00 am on Sunday.

However, as early as 9:00 am, the REC in company with the Police Commissioner, Mohammed Barde, Director of the Department of State Services Commandant of Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps, announced Binani as the winner.

Not a few Nigerians, political parties and civil society organizations had criticised the manner in which Binani was declared winner of the elections, but the APC itself. As a matter of fact, the President-elect, Bola Tinubu had requested for an investigation of the Adamawa elections even as the general consensus was that of "a coup to democracy".

Fortunately, that coup did not stand as INEC eventually did the needful and today it is a victory for democracy and the rule of law as the eventual winner, Ahmadu Fintiri of the PDP was declared winner. In the final result as declared by the returning officer after the continuation of collation of results, Fintiri scored 430,861 votes to defeat Aisha Dahiru who scored 398,788 votes.

Despite the turnout of events, Nigerians are still shocked at the brazen abuse of the process during the elections by the INEC's REC and Binani herself. Nigerians are also calling for a probe of the process. Some are requesting for a 'judicial inquest' of the entire process and the reason is not far-fetched, such has never happened in the history of Nigeria.

A further probe of the character in the centre of the storm, Binani, could give an insight as to why the Adamawa election ended up controversially.

In fact, **SUNDAY STANDARD** investigation had shown that the controversy was climax of the long-standing power play and intrigues between political actors in the state and the centre.

But it would be worthwhile to know who the 'antagonist' in the epic power play is and what are her antecedents?

Aisha Binani is a 51-year-old politician born on 11 August 1971. She is a Nigerian politician serving as the Senator for Adamawa Central since 2019.

Binani was formerly a member of the House of Representatives representing Yola North/Yola South/Girei Federal Constituency as a member of the People's Democratic Party in the 7th Assembly (2011–2015)

She started her early school education at Kaduna and completed it at Gwadabawa Primary School, Jimeta Yola.

She went to the UK for her university education where she obtained a Higher National

Diploma in Electrical Engineering at the University of Southampton.

She is currently the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Binani was declared winner of the APC Adamawa governorship primary after polling 430 votes to defeat her closest contestant, Nuhu Ribadu, the pioneer Executive Chairman of Nigeria's Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), who got 288 votes.

In 2021 an appeal court sitting in Yola declared Aishatu Binani as the governorship candidate of the All Progressive Congress APC in Adamawa.

It has also been widely speculated, but it looks to be true, that she has a frosty relationship with Nigeria's First Lady, Aisha Buhari who happens to come from Adamawa. At the same time, it is clear that she received the support and goodwill of President Muhammadu Buhari.

For instance, in January 2023, when President Muhammadu Buhari visited Yola Adamawa State, to inaugurate a number of projects executed by the state government, he "technically" endorsed the candidacy of Sen. Aisha Dairu Ahmed Binani, as the Governor of Adamawa.

Buhari then said, electing Binani will broaden opportunities for women in the country as well as send a positive signal to the world about Nigeria's democratic

and leadership maturity.

The President who first made a stopover at the palace of the Lamido of Adamawa noted that he was not averse to providing moral support for Binani's success in the forthcoming polls.

He said, "I came to ensure my support to the candidate, Binani, and other candidates.

"We are here to ensure that Sen. Binani becomes the first female elected governor God's willing. Her election would speak volumes to Nigeria and the world through Adamawa State".

Then of course, the endorsement came shortly after she secured victory at the apex court which made her candidacy bonafide in the state.

Therefore, it would be safe to conclude that the endorsement by Mr. President could have boosted her confidence and above all over-bloated her ego going into the polls.

Besides that, she was being accused of undermining the First Lady Aisha Buhari, former Governor Jibrilla Bindo, Nuhu Ribadu, and other top party members in a bid to control the APC in the state.

Findings by **SUNDAY STANDARD** reveals that Aisha Buhari, in a bid to hit back (Binani), tried to frustrate her governorship ambition.

She had at one time prevailed on stakeholders to drop Sen. Aishatu Dahiru Ahmed (Binani) as the governorship candidate of the party, a Nigeria newspaper source revealed.

Continued on page 31

NEWS

Kogi Guber: Dino commences fence mending, reconciliation

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

IN less than 24 hours after the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Governorship election primary election in Kogi State, which produced Sen. Daniel Dino Melaye as the party's candidate for the November 11, 2023 election, Dino, as popularly called, has commenced fence mending moves with the view to further unite and strengthen the party as a formidable front ahead of the poll.

The governorship candidate is already engaged in reconciliatory talks and consultations with other contestants, leaders and party stakeholders in the state on ways to further position the PDP to win the November 11, 2023 election in the overriding interest of the people of Kogi State.

He assured that his fence mending train will berth at the residences of all the co-contestants, party leaders, stakeholders as well as senior citizens of the state within the



Dino

next few days as the task to rebirth Kogi State is a duty for all irrespective of creed, political affiliations or status. Senator Dino is laying emphasis on unity, peace, understanding and collective participation of all PDP

stakeholders as only a united PDP can effectively rally the people of Kogi State to put an end to the stranglehold of the vicious, corrupt, suppressive and retrogressive rule of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in the state

Presenting the olive branch to his co-contestants, Senator Dino stressed that the task ahead is an onerous one which requires the involvement, commitment, and contribution of all the stakeholders not only to rescue Kogi State from the calamitous APC but also to ensure purposeful leadership that will give the people a new lease of life, in the post Governor Yahaya Bello's anti-people administration. He urged all PDP leaders, well-meaning citizens and residents of Kogi State to join hands with him in ensuring that there is a rebirth of a new Kogi in which Kogites can have a breath of fresh air under a leadership that guarantees peace, unity, security, infrastructural development, mutual respect, rule of law and economic prosperity of the people

Senator Dino therefore implored the key leaders and critical stakeholders of the party to rise to the challenge of rescuing the good people of Kogi State from the yoke of bad leadership which is the hallmark of the administration of Governor



Cholera Outbreak: Nigeria registers 79 deaths, 1336 suspected cases

Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), has registered over Seventy-nine (79) deaths and a total of one thousand, three hundred and thirty-six (1,336) suspected cases of cholera in the country and it was the latest cholera situation.

Suspected kidnapper buries infant alive after collecting ransom

The Katsina State Police Command has arrested and parading a 30 year-old Abubakar Abdulaziz for kidnapping and burying an infant age 3 after collecting ransom from the family in the state.

According to the Katsina State Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO) in Katsina State, CSP Gambo Isa, the suspect entered the victim's compound at night and whisked him to an unknown destination and demanded for a ransom which paid to him, but still buried the child alive.

Woman reportedly sold her 18 months baby for #600,000

A woman, age 33 of Sango in Odo/Oga Local Government Area, Ogun State with the name, Olaide Adekunle, was arrested for allegedly selling her 18-month-old baby for N600,000 to offset her bank loan.

This came in a press statement signed by the Command Police Public Relations Officer, SP Abimbola Oyeyemi, and made available to **SUNDAY STANDARD** in Jos, the Plateau State capital Monday.

The PPRO disclosed that, the husband reported that his wife left home for Lagos on March 15, 2023, with their baby girl, but returned home without the baby and all efforts to know what happened to the baby proved abortive as the woman was unable to give any reasonable account of the baby's whereabouts.

Qua'an-Pan gets additional Divisional Police Office

The Management of Qua'an-Pan Local Government Council of Plateau State, has constructed a befitting Nigeria Police Force Divisional Police Office in the area to help curb criminal activities in the local government.

This is contained in the press statement signed by the Senior Special Adviser on Media, Publicity and Protocol, Hon. Mathias Yengoet Dajan, and made available to **SUNDAY STANDARD** in Jos, the Plateau State capital Wednesday.

Osinbajo warns elites against divisive rhetorics, religious bigotry

The Vice President, Yemi Osinbajo, has warned Nigerian elites against ethnic profiling, religious bigotry and the promotion of divisive rhetorics in the quest for power of Nigeria and priorities unity, cohesion and progress.

He gave the warning while delivering a lecture at the Course 45 of National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS) Kuru, Jos Plateau State saying, "there must be a deliberate policy backed by elites consensus which bars Nigerians from using the nation's diversity to negatively promote their personal ambitions.

****APC congratulates Plang, on his election as Senator-elect Plateau Central**

Plateau State Chapter of the All Progressive Congress (APC), has congratulated its Central Zone Senatorial Candidate, Hon. Diket Plang, for emerging as Senator-elect in the recently concluded rerun as INEC finally and rightfully declared him winner last week in Pankshin LGA.

This came in a press statement signed by the party State Publicity Secretary, Hon. Sylvanus Namang, and made available to **THE NIGERIA STANDARD** in Jos, the Plateau State capital Sunday shortly after the declaration by the Returning Officer, Dr. Jima Lar at the senatorial headquarters Pankshin on Saturday.

MOH inaugurates Advisory Committee on NTDs

PLATEAU State Ministry of Health, has inaugurated the State Technical Advisory Committee (STACON) on Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) to provide technical advice to Programme Managers and support the implementation of control, elimination and eradication of NTDs in the state.

This took place at the conference hall of Lamonde Hotel Jos, the Plateau State capital Thursday, where stakeholders from Federal Ministry of Health (FMOH), World Health Organisation (WHO), Christofel Blind Mission (CTM) and The Carter Centre (TCC) were in attendance.

World Health Day: WHO celebrates 75th anniversary

The worldwide age long health organisation popularly recognized as World Health Organisation (WHO), has celebrated its 75 years of existence in promoting good health, disease prevention and controlling mortality rate in vulnerable people ensuing the highest level of health and well-being.

This took place on the occasion marking the 2023 World Health Day in Jos, the Plateau State capital Monday, starting with a press briefing organised by the Plateau State Ministry of Health in collaboration with WHO and other partners who graced the occasion.

Compiled by **EZEKIEL DONTINNA**

Governorship election:PDP to inspect election material

From ANENE AIKE, Sokoto

GOVERNORSHIP Election Petition Tribunal in Sokoto recently acceded to request by Malam Sa'idu Umar and the PDP to inspect electoral materials used by INEC during the conduct of 18th March 2023 Governorship election in Sokoto State.

Malam Sa'idu Umar and the People's Democratic

Party (PDP) participated in the election and lost to the All Progressive Congress governorship candidate, Ahmed Aliyu Sokoto alleged that the election was flawed.

Malam Sa'idu Umar and the PDP are challenging the outcome of the election at the Governorship Election Petition Tribunal Sokoto.

The petitioners filed six ex parte applications praying to be granted access to inspect

sensitive materials that INEC used for the conduct of the governorship poll.

The chairman of the tribunal, Justice Haruna Y. Mshelia upon reading and hearing the motion paper with the sworn affidavits ordered that the application be granted.

That the 4th respondent (INEC), its agents and officials are directed

forthwith in a day by day sequence to allow the applicants or their representatives to inspect, scan, obtain the true copies of all polling documents and other electoral materials used in the conduct of the governorship poll in Sokoto on the 18th March 2023.

The INEC is also ordered to allow the applicants inspect and forensically analyse devices used during the governorship election in Sokoto on the 18th March 2023 and obtain information as exhibit for their cases before the tribunal.

The tribunal also ordered the INEC to comply with the order within reasonable time having regard to the time bound nature of the case.

Similarly, the Chairman of the Governorship Election Petition Tribunal in Sokoto, Justice Haruna Y. Mshelia has granted leave for the hearing of the application before the hearing season.

Pursant to the leave, a leave is further granted to the applicant to serve the 1st, 2nd, 3rd respondents by substituted means by pasting the petition and all other processes on the notice board of the tribunal or pasting them on the gate of the 3rd respondent (APC) in the Sokoto metropolis.

The service when effected is deemed to be properly served on the 1st, 2nd and 3rd respondent.

He also ordered that the Bailiff is to file affidavit of compliance with the orders.

Sanda condemns attack in Mangu, Bokkos

By PAULINE DALLONG

SPEAKER of the Plateau State House of Assembly, Rt. Hon. Yakubu Yackson Sanda, has called for the arrest and prosecution of perpetrators of the recent violent attacks in

some villages of Mangu and Bokkos Local Government Areas, which led to the loss of lives and properties.

The message was contained in a statement by the Press Secretary to the speaker, Sabastian Hommuk and made

available to the **SUNDAY STANDARD**.

The speaker who condemned the attack on the people of Marish in Bokkos and Murish, Kumbum districts and Jwak Mai Tumbi in Mangu, described it as barbaric and inhuman.

He however, commended the prompt action of security agencies that calmed the situation from escalating while calling for thorough investigation into the attacks, adding that all perpetrators must be made to face the law, no matter how highly placed they may be.

He added that the state government has made huge investment on security and peace as such, the state assembly will not fold its arms and watch enemies of the state returning it to the era of crisis.

Sanda while commiserating with those who lost their loved ones and properties, urged the people to remain calm and not take the law into their hands as Government is investigating the root cause of the attack.

He appealed to the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA), and other relevant agencies of government to reach out to the victims who are in dire need of relief materials.



Sanda

SUNDAY FEATURE

X-raying the current turmoil in Sudan

In the past few days, the violence between two rival armed forces in Sudan has been in the news across the globe. How did it get to this? What was the enabler? OBOLI AUGUSTINE, Writes

FOR close to three decades the Sudanese people have not known peace. It has been from one crisis to another, arising from desertification, scarce resources, regional disputes, and poor governance. Within the same period too, the country came under the grip of a benevolent despot in the person of Omar al-Bashir, who was shoved aside by a military putsch in April 2021.

Omar al-Bashir laid the foundation for the acrimonious relationship between the military and the paramilitary Rapid Support Force (RSF). Buoyed by selfishness and an overarching concern for his political survival, he created an army within an army. He intended to check on the military by empowering a private counterforce. But did that save him? The RSF was an offshoot of the Janjaweed militia used to prosecute the wars against the peoples of South Sudan and Darfur.

Using the Janjaweed, Al Bashir superintended the brutal Sudanese war between the Christian South led by John Garang and the Arab-Muslim North, which culminated in the independence of South Sudan on 9th July 2012, thus, making it the newest nation-state in the world. Surprisingly, the jinni of Sudan conflict never left the South, as they have been embroiled in conflict ever since.

This group of bitter and cruel fighters was also put to use in suppressing agitations in the Darfur region. The paramilitary group was led by Gen. Hamdan Dagalo, also known as Hemedti. Having served his paymaster well, despite public and international condemnation of his style and tactics in Darfur, Al Bashir elevated him to a General and rechristened the Janjaweed to Rapid Support Force (RSF) in 2013. That gave them a veneer of authority and the hell was let loose. Instead of operating under the shadow of the military, as a private army more or less, they assumed direct military powers and operated in consubstantiality.

Yet, Al Bashir thought he was protecting himself and perpetuating his authority for life. He failed to realize that the people are the strength of any government and not necessarily the stock of arms amassed or the size of the force to be unleashed to oppress and visit violence on them at the slightest threat to his authority. Legitimacy belongs to the people; it has been proven throughout history. The establishment of the National Guards as a counterforce to the army was one of the reasons Kwame Nkrumah was sacked in Ghana. President Al Bashir was



overthrown in 2021 by the combined efforts of the army and the RSF. Not minding the purpose for which Al Bashir has set up the RSF, the poor governance, suffering, and pains of the people forced the RSF to join forces with General Burhan, and allied with the people to remove the government. They had no other choice, anyway because the handwriting was on the wall.

But the inordinate ambitions of the two gladiators robbed the Sudanese people of the expected dividend from the people's revolution. Their collective nemesis out of the way, the military leader and RSF commander could only see an opportunity to self-perpetuate themselves and reneged on the call to return power to the civilian. Remember that Al Bashir was a General who came to power through the bullets but morphed from khaki to civilian attire. The infighting in the ranks of the coup makers was an issue of concern to all well-meaning Sudanese because it was a drag to the attainment of a civilian transition. Numerous protests were organized by the civil population to compel the military to honor the pledge to hand over power but

it was to no avail. Rather, the protesters were killed and maimed. Nothing changed.

Subdued, but inherent internal rivalry in the military camp was affecting the

governance and progress of the country. A semblance of a stable relationship was patched up leading to the signing of the agreement of cooperation between the contending powers, yet it did nothing to salvage the situation. A key element of the agreement was the integration of the RSF into the army. This doesn't seem to bode well with General Hamdan Dagalo, who sees it as ceding his enormous power to General Burhan, so he was hell-bent on frustrating the initiative that will render him irrelevant and put paid to his ambition of having a possible shot at the top.

Of note is that these two warmongers have since the 2021 coup been strategizing on how to consolidate power to their advantage. They had their foreign alliances. While General Burhan allies with Egypt and other Arab states, and have Egyptian military officers stationed in Sudan, General Dagalo has had close ties with Saudi Arabia and Russia. His RSF was part of the Saudi-led Arab coalition that intervened in the early days of the Yemen war. At the beginning of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Dagalo visited Russia and had a meeting with Yevgeny Prigozhin the leader of the Wagner Mercenary Group. Therefore, It may not be out of place to say that the military blowout in recent days may have been extraneously engineered.

Purportedly started as a coup by RSF,

one wonders what could have emboldened them to make the move, considering that they were likely to be outnumbered and outgunned by the army which enjoys superiority in terms of equipment and manpower. The RSF has no air force, so the army by implication maintains exclusive control of the airspace. Most of their early gains in the conflict have been reversed by the army and General Dagalo's whereabouts are unknown. A deal was brokered for a twenty hours truce but that seems not to be holding. An intense fight continues with both parties believing that the struggle is winnable. To the army, it is an opportunity to settle the RSF palaver ones and for all and say good riddance to bad rubbish, for Dagalo and his cohorts power beckons, and there is something to prove.

The chaos may have sounded a death knell to the hopes and aspirations of the Sudanese people. Residential areas are used as staging posts for some of the fiercest fighting, apartments have been hit by a mortar, and many civilians have been killed and wounded. Essential supplies in many areas are running out, water supply is down, and the prospect of an epidemic is looming. The people are distraught and the forlorn and refugee crisis looms.

Owning to the suffering of the innocent ones, who are always the victims of the action or inactions of the elites, we appeal to the Generals to sheath the sword and come back to the negotiation table to talk. Conflict in whatever form has no humanity. And this is not the time to find who is right and apportion blame, but the time for reason to prevail. Our ambition should not be achieved through the spilling of the blood of the innocent. All the external actors in this imbroglio should remove their monkey hand from the soup before it turns to the human hand.

The mistake of having an army within an army because of political expediency and individual preservation has been made but we should not dwell on it. The priority now is for the conflagration to stop and peace returned to Sudan. The U.S. and other major neutral powers should use their leverage to prevail on the warring parties to give peace a chance. Peace is priceless, and lessons have been learned.

The chaos may have sounded a death knell to the hopes and aspirations of the Sudanese people. Residential areas are used as staging posts for some of the fiercest fighting, apartments have been hit by a mortar, and many civilians have been killed and wounded. Essential supplies in many areas are running out, water supply is down, and the prospect of an epidemic is looming. The people are distraught and the forlorn and refugee crisis looms. Owning to the suffering of the innocent ones, who are always the victims of the action or inactions of the elites, we appeal to the Generals to sheath the sword and come back to the negotiation table to talk. Conflict in whatever form has no humanity. And this is not the time to find who is right and apportion blame, but the time for reason to prevail.

SUNDAY FEATURE

Covid-19 vaccine misinformation

Since the first confirmed case of COVID-19 in Nigeria, there has been an overwhelming amount of information on the social media, websites and the mainstream media about the virus. **TIMOTHY JOSEPH** writes.



THE increased access to information led to a proliferation in sources of information, with the consequence that it has enabled the spread of misinformation and fake news. Prior to COVID-19, the shortest amount of time it usually takes to develop a vaccine is roughly four years, the development and testing process for vaccines normally take many years, but the rush for a COVID-19 vaccine is unprecedented in its speed however, given the high rate at which people were dying from the virus it became necessary for scientists to look for a solution.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, there was an unprecedented rapid change in the use of digital media people became heavily reliant on the social media for information seeking and sharing as well as communicating with others. Information sources on the social media played a major role in impacting individual behaviors during the COVID-19 pandemic, including vaccination intention, social media could become a double-edged sword that leads to the dark side of social media usage, such as information overload, with the extensive amount of information circulating on the social media, it became difficult for the people to verify every piece of information.

Information overload on social media during the pandemic was categorized as a form of "Infodemic" which refers to an extensive amount of information about the COVID-19 vaccines that moves faster than the virus outbreak itself, Infodemic can be overwhelming and can trigger people's doubt about vaccine and vaccination programs. It occurs mostly during events or occasions, Infodemic spread in various ways such as in the market, on the Radio, or T.V, in some

cases the impact of Infodemics is more dangerous than the disease, because it causes public distrust, real harm to health, undermines social cohesion and it undermines public health events and disease outbreaks.

The highest misinformation campaign against the virus was among the people, for instance there was a series of shared posts on WhatsApp labeling the virus as a scam and the virus as magnetic, people also felt government were politicking with public health they claim that government were exaggerating the extent of the virus in order to siphon funds meant to tackle the virus, and that continued to spread a fishy feeling about compliance with government directives on vaccination. Social media has been one of the greatest means to spread misinformation and displeasure over an issue and we saw an explosion of fake tweets, Facebook posts and people trying to gain views and attention at the expense of national health.

Religious leaders in Nigeria were not left out of the misinformation theories they started peddling information of conspiracy about the origin of the virus, with a pastor referring to it as a microchip and a sign of the devil to control the people. The religious institutions become one of the best ways to inform large congregations of people because of the loyalty attached to the religious institutions. With the branding of the virus as Devil made and the sign of the antichrist, by some religious leaders Nigerians decided to distance themselves from the vaccine, some religious leaders even went as far as preaching science to explain the attachment of the virus to the 5G network.

Efforts to vaccinate the public have been hampered by a sizable minority of the population that is skeptical about

the safety, effectiveness, or the need of getting the vaccine. Skepticism surrounding the pandemic, though, did not begin with the vaccines. From the beginning of the pandemic segments of the public were skeptical about the safety or effectiveness of specific mitigation efforts, such as masks wearing, social distancing, the dangers of the virus, or that the virus even exist. None of this should have been surprising, studies have shown that a wide variety of science issues have shown that there are sizable portions of the public that reject or are always skeptical of the scientific or medical consensus, whether it is around climate change evolution or other scientific issues.

As of November 2021, over two hundred and sixty-two million confirmed cases of COVID-19 had been recorded globally, with over five million associated deaths and this led to huge psychological, sociological, and economical turmoil around the globe. In Nigeria, over two hundred and fourteen cases have been reported with more than two thousand deaths, at the peak of the pandemic in 2020, far-reaching measures such as extensive testing, nationwide lockdown, social distancing, use of face mask, and isolation of infected persons were put in place to curb the further spread of COVID-19. However, these measures were not enough to contain the spread of the virus and it was not easy to enforce among the general public.

In the absence of any specific treatment for COVID-19, vaccination is still one of the most effective means of preventing the disease. Despite the progress made by the development of safe and effective vaccines, there are still cogent issues that need to be addressed regarding COVID-19 vaccines, apart from misinformation,

disinformation, and anti-vaccine sentiments, there are numerous, carefully designed conspiracy theories around COVID-19 virus. Vaccine development is constantly challenged by political and religious considerations, this in turn fuels the seemingly retractable non-acceptance of the vaccine across the world, it has been reported that people who were fully vaccinated died of COVID-19 associated symptoms, which further deepens the public uncertainty about the safety and effectiveness of the vaccines. For the global eradication to be achieved, 70% of all humans must receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Data from the Nigerian Center for Disease Control (NCDC), indicate that over 26 million Nigerians are now fully vaccinated meanwhile, from 25th to 31st March 2023, new confirmed cases have been recorded in Nigeria, till date 266,665, cases have been confirmed, while 259,951 cases have been discharged and 3,155 deaths have been recorded in 36 states and the federal capital territory. Nigeria had aimed to vaccinate 40% of its over 200 million people by the end of the year 2021 and hopes to achieve 70% vaccination threshold for eliminating COVID-19 before the end of 2023.

The recent surge in COVID-19 cases and deaths in Nigeria and some other parts of the world have raised concerns. The quickly changing coronavirus has spawned yet another super contagious Omicron mutant that is worrying scientists as it gains ground in India and pops up in numerous other countries, including the United States of America. It is feared that the situation may lead to another shutdown, travel restrictions and mandatory wearing of face masks. This is particularly worrisome given the prevailing hesitancy among the health workers and the population who are most at risk of severe COVID-19 infection (the elderly and people with co-morbidities), who appears to be reluctant to take the jab. If the vaccination target is not met, the epidemic will persist, and continue to cause unnecessary loss of lives, which in turn has implications for the poor morbidity and mortality indices that already exist.

Health care workers should support the efforts of the media in debunking fake news and disinformation about vaccines by releasing useful and timely information regarding COVID-19 vaccines. Until we challenge the growing misinformation and disinformation in Nigeria, COVID-19 virus may continue to linger in our society. Public health will continue to be a challenge if we do not fight misinformation. The only way possible will be a combined effort of every Nigerian to debunk and encourage people to do the needful so we can put the pandemic behind us and move on with our lives. Until everyone is vaccinated, the threat of the pandemic will continue to be a challenge to our daily lives.

The ability to convey public health information is a key preparedness capability that public health agencies across the country will need to continue to implement in the course of time to support the COVID-19 vaccination campaign.

Timothy Joseph is of the Ministry of Information and Communication.

THESE days, I think about leaving Nigeria a lot. I keep wondering if the grass will be greener on the other side. I imagine a safer environment and a better life but I hear that life is not as rosy as contemplated for the Japaist. They say that some bank executives have turned to the job of care giving, feeding, and changing diapers of the aged... some of them are unfortunate enough to fall into the hands of old white supremacist. Unfortunately, people grow old, but racism does not. Consequently, they receive a mouthful of racial slurs for breakfast, lunch and dinner, garnished with spittle or stinking gunk to their faces... E mi?!. But guess what, Nigerians are still selling all they have, leaving their executive jobs to move abroad and do menial jobs due to many reasons and they are not hiding it. How did we get here?

I know how hard I work at developing my skill set but I would often wonder if finding a decent job abroad would be that easy. And so, I keep wondering. I ponder on staying in Nigeria and emigrating abroad. I would often wonder. Should I go abroad and become a caregiver and crude entertainment for racist (I am dark skinned) or should I embrace our collective Nigerian Stockholm syndrome? In view of recent happenings, I am slowly turning towards the Japaist divide. I mean this bill that is supposed to stop doctors from leaving the country for greener pastures until after five years of mandatory service. Mandatory service ko Jaga jaga service ni? Really? Show me a happy man whose freedom of free movement is restricted and who is held against his will.

What is the bill saying? That Doctors do not have freedom of choice or movement or that doctors are state property? Na government pay their school fees? how was this bill conceived in the first place? Una think am well so? Na doctor you wan do this one to because she or he does not want to be part of our national Stockholm syndrome anymore?

Before I continue, let us look at what Stockholm syndrome is in psychology. Britannica says: The Stockholm syndrome is a psychological response wherein a captive begins to identify closely with his or her captors, as well as with their agenda and demands. The Britannica speaks of this subject matter as follows: The name of the syndrome is derived from a botched bank robbery in Stockholm, Sweden. In August 1973 four employees of Sveriges Kreditbank were held hostage in the bank's vault for six days. During the standoff, a seemingly incongruous bond developed between captive and captor. One hostage, during a telephone call with Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme, stated that she fully trusted her captors but feared that she would die in a police assault on the building.

The most infamous example of Stockholm syndrome may be that involving kidnapped newspaper heiress Patricia Hearst. In 1974, some 10 weeks after being taken hostage by the Symbionese Liberation Army, Hearst helped her kidnappers rob a California bank. But it was during the hostage crisis in Iran (1979-81) that the Stockholm syndrome worked its way into the public imagination. The syndrome was also cited after the 1985 hijacking of TWA flight 847. Although passengers underwent a hostage ordeal that lasted more than two weeks, upon their release some were openly sympathetic to the demands of their kidnappers. Another example involved Westerners kidnapped by Islamist militants in Lebanon. Hostages Terry Anderson (held 1985-91), Terry Waite (1987-91), and Thomas Sutherland (1985-91) all claimed that they had been treated well by their captors, despite the fact that they had often been held in solitary confinement and chained up in small, unclean cells. Similar responses were exhibited by the hostages held at the Japanese embassy in Peru in 1996-97.

Psychologists who have studied the syndrome believe that the bond is initially created when a captor threatens a captive's life, deliberates, and then chooses not to kill the captive. The captive's relief at the removal of the death threat is transposed into feelings of gratitude toward the captor for giving him or her life. As the Stockholm bank robbery incident proves, it takes only a few days for this bond to cement, proving that, early on, the victim's desire to survive trumps the urge to hate the person who created the situation.

The survival instinct is at the heart of the Stockholm syndrome. Victims live in enforced dependence and interpret rare or small acts of kindness in the midst of horrible conditions as good treatment. They often become hypervigilant to the needs and demands of their captors, making psychological links between the captors' happiness and their own. Indeed, the syndrome is marked not only by a positive bond between captive and captor but also by a negative attitude on behalf of the captive toward authorities who threaten the captor-

captive relationship. The negative attitude is especially powerful when the hostage is of no use to the captors except as leverage against a third party, as has often been the case with political hostages.

By the 21st century, psychologists had expanded their understanding of the Stockholm syndrome from hostages to other groups, including victims of domestic violence, cult members, prisoners of war, procured prostitutes, and abused children. The American Psychiatric Association does not include Stockholm syndrome in its Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM).

The forgoing is from Britannica.com. Now back to our conversation. I believe that we have a better understanding of what Stockholm syndrome is. Metaphorically and psychologically speaking, Nigerians are suffering from one Stockholm syndrome or the

"Nigerian Stockholm syndrome" vs doctors

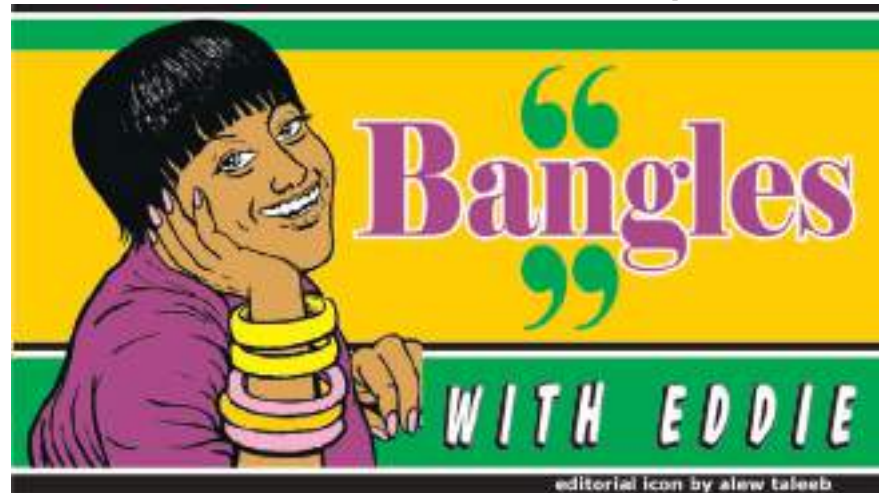


other in addition to our metaphoric collective Nigerian Stockholm syndrome. Most Nigerians would be out of this country in a rush if other countries lifted visa requirements and if free flights and accommodation were made available to all Nigerians. Most Nigerians feel like hostages in their own country. This is Nigeria, a country of great wealth where its citizens are compelled to live in abject poverty. This is our country, where civil servants are owed salaries for months on end and they are unable to leave their jobs because there is no social welfare system in place. They are faced with the devil and the deep blue sea and have to grudgingly settle for their jobs. This is our country, where the healthcare system is in shambles and a few of us who can afford it have to travel abroad for medical care and the ones who cannot are forced to contend with the fake drugs and quackery. This is our country, where insecurity give us all, post-traumatic stress syndrome

Our doctors, these are the people who have gone through years of rigorous training in the Universities at great costs to their families, who are eagerly waiting to reap the fruits of their labour. These are people who have spent nine years in the university due to incessant strikes and have to play catch up. These are the people who have to go on strike before their allowances are paid. These are people who are ill-equipped to do their jobs of saving lives and creating a culture of good health management in Nigeria. These are the people who work ungodly hours and then bend over backwards to do their jobs because they are outnumbered. A doctor who should treat a maximum of five hundred patients now has to treat five thousand patients. These are people who have sacrificed time with their own families to save lives. Where is the "thank you in this"? Did our representative's study for them, or did we pay their school fees or are we now in communist Russia or North Korea where the government has a say on individual choices and preferences?

Yes, brain drain. Is it only doctors that are leaving this country? If we look at the data, we will see that the brain drain is across all sectors. Nigerians are leaving this country in droves. Why are we focusing on doctors? Is it a witch hunt? Is it their fault that our national education policy is not oriented towards breeding more doctors? Is it their fault that the paycheck abroad is better than what is available in Nigeria?

What we are closing our eyes to is that it is not only the forgoing that are questions to be answered. Insecurity. This stares us in the face every day and doctors are not exempted or immune. A doctor was killed recently. There is no vaccine against insecurity. If a man feels insecure and you hold him against his will in that insecurity, you are guilty of giving him the Stockholm syndrome if he decides to unwillingly stay. Have we asked the doctors if they are ready



and then a couple of doctors in that hospital have been meticulously preparing to leave the country... Abeg, I do not want to be in these shoes! Do you know that doctors have emotions too? Why are you leaning so hard on their Hippocratic oath. Have you kept your own "democratic" oath?

So, you think that the doctors will bring their bedside manners to bear and give you good treatment and good drugs... laugh wan ki mi. Have you heard of wrong diagnosis, wrong prescriptions and wrong drugs? They can give you "good treatment" with all the wrong medication. They can also delay your treatment when it is an emergency. Doctors see people die every day and you would be stunned at how fast some of them recover. Some have seen it so much that they are desensitized. They are not moved by death anymore. Let us pray for good health, please o.

We can fly abroad for treatment, but doctors should stay here and do their work against their will. That one no be kidnap? This is psychological kidnapping because we are violating their rights to free movement, rights to employment of choice and rights to reside where they choose globally. Is this violation any different from kidnapping that we earlier mention? We, because na our representatives dey talk and we no dey talk to dem.

I always say that one should be careful when formulating policies and laws because such policies and laws could come right back and bite one in the nether region and the doctors will not be there with their bandages and cotton and bedside manners to fix it or they simply will make sure that it becomes a sore with tetanus. Just imagine... just close your eyes and imagine. Close ya eyes and imagine ya nether regions covered in sores. You cannot go for "sitting" again o. You will be so preoccupied with these sores that you will forget your legislative duties and powers. Wallahi, doctors have powers too and you will know this when you are at your weakest. You will see clearly, that next to God is doctor, better known as dokito in Nigerian parlance. If my doctor was a god, I would worship him. You are here playing with the tail of a lion. Ino

Our Nigerian doctors are some of the best in the world. Well respected people. You want to take them do yeye. Doctor na doctor, small or big. Think am again o. If this is a diversionary tactics from our serious national problems that are begging for attention, please let us bang that collective gavel and call our representatives to order. If this call for doctors to remain in Nigerian and not take up employment until after five years is meant for the masses, then let us start with bills that will make our hospitals as good as the ones abroad. The Doctor tries his best with his tools that are obsolete and analogue most of the time. Let us not give the dog a bad name so that we can hang it. Respect the rights of our doctors please.

This brings me to a very important point. Please, our legislators, withdraw this focus on doctors and pass a bill to empower our Nigerian traditional medicine. Yes, I volunteer to become a traditional doctor. I will go back to my grand aunts' traditional medical practice to learn and document. Excellent Traditional doctors. We have them and their medicine is superlative. I can tell you this because I have a very soft spot for herbal medicine. Sometimes, they work better because they do not act as palliatives, but address the cause of the ailment from its roots. Let us encourage complementary medical practices. Look at what the Chinese have done with theirs. They export their traditional medicine. Instead of developing our own, we want to hold our doctors to ransom as if we are kidnappers. No need. Our doctors have refused to join in our collective Stockholm syndrome like the rest of us because they understand it more than we do. Edo people say "Know your way no be curse". Doctors abeg make una no vex. Dem go think am again.

to give up their rights to freedom, the freedom of choice and the freedom of free movement and association? We want to restrict their movement because we have the power to do so. The interesting part is that the people pushing for these are the same people who travel abroad for treatment. If this is for the masses that is the wrong approach. Entice these young doctors with incentives and not force through the law. Fix the healthcare system and raise its standards to the ones you enjoy abroad.

The rights of doctors are being psychologically violated at the mention of this idea that they should not leave their country for greener pastures until after five years. To buttress this point let us look at the forgoing quotes from the universal declaration of human rights <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights> article 13 which says and I quote: "Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state. Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country".

It also says in article 23: "Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment. Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work. Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection. Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests". Article 4: "No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms". Article 7: "All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination."

Article 14: "Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution. This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations". This is what the United Nations Charter has to say. What does our constitution have to say? Let us ask those pushing this bill to practice what they preach O. You cannot make a law and break the same law. You cannot protect the constitution by violating the same, especially to the detriment of our doctors. Think am again o.

Let us imagine that the person that started this "wonderful" brain wave suddenly has a stroke and has to be rushed to the hospital for a treatment in NIGERIA in minutes or else he will die. His private jet is far for this emergency. Ah!

WE are continuing our series on Why Jesus Came. We talked about the fact and it bears repetition from Matthew 1:21 and Luke 2:11. We see the Angel Gabriel in two separate accounts announcing, or declaring to Joseph, Jesus' foster father and also to the angels of the Judean hillside, declaring Jesus' birth and also declaring His life mission.

In Matthew 1:21, the angel said to Joseph "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins". So we see that the word or name 'Jesus' was given to our Lord Jesus Christ intentionally or deliberately. And it means Saviour; it means one that saves people from their sins. In Luke 2:11, the encounter of the shepherds with the Angel Gabriel - "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." So we see the word 'save' in Matthew 1:21 and the word Saviour in Luke 2:11.

So Jesus was born a Saviour. The core anointing grace upon His life is salvation. He is a Saviour, everything about Him represents salvation. So the anointing upon Him is to save. First of all to save from sin, now you need to understand why the Bible majors on sin, because it says in Romans 3:23, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God..." and Romans 6:23 says, "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Now it is important for us to understand, sin is the gatekeeper for satanic affliction. Sin is what authorizes satanic affliction. I'm not just talking about the sins of commission, I am talking about a spiritual nature that came into the human race when Adam sinned and disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden. We capture that account in Genesis Chapter One and Genesis Chapter Two when God created Adam, put him in the Garden and instructed him not to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He said "...for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." (Genesis 2:17).

Now when Adam ate of that fruit, he did not die physically, first of all, it took his body 900 years plus to die physically, but something happened - spiritual death came in, which is separation from God. He became separated from God. He took upon himself the nature of the devil or the nature of sin and for that moment, he was separated from the blessing of God, cut-off from divine and heavenly privileges; and the Bible says, "all have sinned" (Romans 3:23). This implies that all humanity born of a woman, has inherited Adam's sin.

Jesus came as a Saviour to save us from sin; to pull us out of that pit of hell. Now it is sin that connects man to hell. Men do not go to hell because of what they do, they go to hell because

of what they are by spiritual nature. Every man has inherited sin. Every woman has inherited sin. Every human being has inherited that sinful nature. But the thing about this is that Jesus came to deliver man from that sinful nature. How? By becoming sin himself. That's why He came. He lived a sinless life. He went to the cross, and according to II Corinthians 5:21, "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

gospel for me to know you do not have to go to hell. And you do not have to live your life on this earth as a subject of satanic application.

Jesus paid a heavy price for you to be free spiritually, mentally, emotionally, physically and in your life. That is why we preach the gospel that when you hear and believe and decide to believe the words you are hearing, the anointing of God's spirit, the power of God will meet you where you are and bring you into the realities



He became our substitute for death



That is what theologians call of this great redemption. 'The Great Exchange'.

Jesus took upon Himself our sins though He was not a sinner, He took upon Himself our sins, He agreed for God the Father to transfer the sin supernaturally of the human race upon Himself. He became that sacrificial lamb, He took your sin. He took my sin on the Cross of Calvary and the moment He took our sin, He was forced to bear the judgment for our sin, and the judgment for our sin is death and the death is total separation from God and when He died on the cross, He went to hell spent three (3) days and nights there and effectively paid the full price for our sin(s).

Now the reason why when an individual accepts Jesus he/she doesn't go to hell anymore is because Jesus went to hell on their behalf. This is what is called 'substitution'. He took our place. And Hebrews 9:12 says, he obtained by His own precious blood an eternal redemption for us. Oh what a priceless redemption. That is why we preach the gospel dear listener. That is why we preach the

abundantly." Then 2 Corinthians 5:17-18 says, "...if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation..."

So the moment you accept Jesus as Lord and Saviour, the spirit of God is authorized to enforce Jesus' redemptive work, that sacrifice He made in your place, that sacrifice of substitution. He was your substitute; He died in your place so you do not have to die like that. The moment you accept Him as Lord and Saviour, the Holy Spirit is authorized to remove the nature of sin and put the nature of God, eternal life in your spirit. From that moment, according to Colossians 1:13, you have been delivered from the authority of satan and you have been moved to, translated or transferred into the kingdom of Jesus Christ, the dear son of His love in whom you have redemption, through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

The moment you come into Christ, you have come into the world of blessings. A world of redemption. We depicted it as Jesus being like a supermarket, full of goods and sections of goods in a supermarket. When you become born again, the supermarket belongs to you and all the goods in the supermarket are yours. Just like a supermarket has different designations and sections for different goods offered, so also is salvation in Christ. Jesus died for us on a general note to deliver us from satan's authority and to give us an eternal place in heaven, in His kingdom. But for the functionality of our lives, He is our Saviour in many other departments. We read it from Psalm 103, and I will read it again. Psalm 103:1 says, Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Verse 2 says, "Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits..."

Now these benefits are like the products of redemption:

- 1) Benefit number one - Forgiveness of sins
- 2) Benefit number two - Who healeth all your diseases.
- 3) Benefit number three - Who redeemeth your life from destruction.

That means satan has no right

“
So everything in salvation belongs to you, everything so to speak in the supermarket called salvation belongs to you, the only purchasing power is faith. It has been purchased for you already through Christ Jesus and what He did for you when He offered His life as a sacrifice for you, but now, it is your duty to receive or to take to yourself that which He has made available to you through faith.

to cut short your life before you are done with your assignment on this earth. Who crowns you with loving kindness and tender mercies. He sets the seal of favour upon your life. The Bible says in Luke 2:52 concerning Jesus, that "...Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." That means if you accept Jesus as your Lord and Saviour, you have a right to enjoy favour before men, open doors and opportunities in your life. The Bible says, in Psalms 103:5 that, "Who satisfies your mouth with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagles."

Now these cover on a broad level of our redemption in Christ. We also said in Matthew 1:21 that Jesus shall save His people from their sin. That word 'save' comes from the Greek word 'sozo'. It means to be rescued, it means to be healed, it means to be sound and whole in every area of life, it means to be kept safe, to be kept sound, to be rescued from danger and destruction, to be restored to full health, and to be preserved in this life.

INTERNATIONAL

Tunisia: Is democracy there being destroyed?

HOWEVER, the raiding of the headquarters of the opposition Ennahda party and arrest of its leader indicates that the country is being taken back to an illiberal form of rule, critics say.

How did Tunisia build a democracy after the Arab Spring?

In January 2011, Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali resigned as Tunisia's president and fled to Saudi Arabia, after failing to quell weeks of mass protests.

He had ruled the country as a one-party state for 23 years.

Tunisian leader forced from power

The incoming "transitional government" allowed new political parties, and free speech.

Several elections were held, in which the moderate Islamist party Ennahda (Renaissance) gained the most parliamentary seats but never won a majority. It had to share power with secular parties.

"After the revolution a new consensus emerged, in which the Islamist party and the secular ones agreed to work together to create new democratic institutions," says Riccardo Fabiani of the think tank, the International Crisis Group.

The parties put a new constitution in place, which gave new powers to Tunisia's parliament - the National Assembly - and gave democratic rights to citizens.

However, Melek Saral of SOAS, University of London, says the politicians failed to agree on how to set up a constitutional court.

"The court was needed to provide checks and balances

TUNISIA is the only country which overthrew an authoritarian ruler during the 2011 Arab Spring and went on to build a democracy.



Saied

on the government, and to guarantee human rights," she says.

"Not getting an agreement on the constitutional court was one of the main failures when setting up the democratic system."

The politicians who ruled after 2011 also failed to improve economic conditions and to create jobs, eroding people's faith in their new form of government.

A Pew Research Center poll suggests that while 70% of Tunisians supported democracy in 2012, only 48% still did in 2014.

"People expected democracy automatically to bring economic growth," says Intissar Fakir of the Middle East Institute. "When it didn't, they thought

that democracy hadn't paid."

How did President Kais Saied come to power?

Kais Saied was an expert in constitutional law who won the presidency by a landslide in 2019.

He said in his campaign that the democratic system was not working because the political parties in parliament had too much power.

Kais Saied is accused of amassing power for himself

"He pointed to himself as the man who could take the reins when everyone else was incompetent and corrupt," says Dr Yerkes of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

In 2020, the Covid pandemic severely damaged Tunisia's economy and overwhelmed its

health services.

"It caused a near collapse of state institutions," says Mr Fabiano, "and many people thought the presidency needed to be strengthened to take vital decisions."

In 2021, Mr Saied exercised emergency powers to sack the prime minister, close the National Assembly and suspend the constitution.

He said he was acting to "save the state" - a message which resonated with many Tunisians.

How did President Saied reverse democratic reforms?

After this he passed laws by decree. Several opposition politicians and journalists who criticised him were detained or jailed.

In July 2022, he won a referendum which allowed him to introduce a new

constitution.

Tunisia's parliament has been stripped of much of its power

This created a "super-presidency" and lessened the powers of the parliament and judiciary.

"[President Saied] has the idea that the president has a direct link with the grassroots, and rules in their name," says Mr Fabiani. "He thinks that parliament's role is to help him to do that."

"The National Assembly is now simply an advisory body for the president," says Ms Fakir. "They put forward ideas for laws which they think he might want to pass."

Mr Saied reconvened the National Assembly in March this year. However, fewer than 9% of voters turned out for the elections,

and many members refused to attend.

On 17 April, the leader of the opposition Ennahda party, Rached Ghannouchi, was arrested, accused of plotting against state security and making "inciting statements", while the party said its headquarters had been raided by police.

A judge has now ordered Mr Ghannouchi to be imprisoned - a move the US has condemned as "troubling".

Mr Saied has also attracted international criticism for demanding "urgent measures" to remove migrants from sub-Saharan Africa, saying they are part of a "conspiracy" to change the demographic composition of Tunisia (which is mostly Arabic and Muslim).

"He thinks his base will like him making black Africans a scapegoat," says Ms Fakir. "He blames them for the troubles the country is going through." There are widespread protests against President Saied's political reforms

President Saied unwound 10 years of building democracy in little over a year.

However, says Dr Yerkes: "You still have civil society groups and a media in Tunisia which can act as a check on his power, and there are still protests by the public."

"This is not the end of Tunisia's democratic story."

The next presidential election is in 2024. Even if Mr Saied wins another five years in power, he cannot serve for more than two terms.

INTERNATIONAL

Colombian President Petro meets Biden in Washington, DC

COLOMBIAN President Gustavo Petro has met US President Joe Biden on Thursday, as the two countries seek to confront issues such as climate change, migration and drug policy.

In a statement to the press, Petro called for economies across the Americas to move away from their reliance on oil, coal and gas, reiterating a pivotal part of his clean-energy platform.

"We have the greatest potential for democracy and freedom in the Americas, as well as the greatest potential for green energies," he said.

Biden, meanwhile, echoed Petro's call for greater cooperation between their two countries, particularly as the US and Colombia worked together to combat international drug trafficking. He also praised Petro for his "total peace" platform.

"I really want to thank you for your outspoken and strong commitment to peace and human rights," Biden said.

In a news conference earlier on Thursday, White House national security spokesperson John Kirby framed the US-Colombia relationship as a "true partnership" but also a question of domestic defence.

"Colombia and Colombia's future, their security, their prosperity, remains a national security interest of the United States, and during the conversation today, President Biden and President Petro will continue to make progress on these and many other issues," Kirby told reporters.

Earlier in the day, Petro posted a picture of his meeting with Democratic lawmakers Nancy Pelosi and Jim McGovern, calling them "great friends".

Colombia's neighbour Venezuela was one of the topics broached in Thursday's discussions, as the South American country continues to face an economic crisis and political instability.

Widely considered Colombia's first left-wing president, Petro has moved to reestablish relations with Venezuela after years of tensions under previous administrations. He has previously called for the US to ease sanctions against Venezuela, citing its troubled economy.

In front of reporters in the Oval Office, Biden praised Petro's government for accepting asylum seekers crossing from Venezuela to Colombia.

Millions of Venezuelans have left the country as they seek economic opportunities elsewhere. Washington and Bogotá reached an agreement last week agreeing to collaborate on an effort to crack down on irregular migration through the Darien Gap, connecting Colombia with its northern neighbour Panama.



Petro & Biden

peace talks and negotiations with the armed groups, in the hope of ending the conflict.

A June report by Colombia's Truth Commission had been highly critical of previous administrations' militarised approach to combatting drug manufacturing and trafficking, which the commission accused of prolonging the conflict and leading to human rights abuses.

It estimated that more than 450,000 have been killed in the fighting.

Colombia has remained the world's largest producer of cocaine, but it has partnered with the US on its global "war on drugs", a campaign of military intervention and aid to stamp out drug trafficking.

In the early 2000s, the US poured millions of dollars into the South American nation as part of a controversial initiative called "Plan Colombia", designed to target groups with ties to the drug trade.

But in a speech before the United Nations last year, Petro asked world leaders to acknowledge that "the war on

drugs has failed". He also announced in January that Colombia would no longer focus on eradicating coca farms.

However, Petro's plans for "total peace" in Colombia have faced challenges. Despite ongoing negotiations with organised criminal groups and remaining rebels, the country's internal violence has continued.

In late March, for instance, an attack allegedly carried out by the left-wing ELN rebel group killed nine Colombian soldiers in a blow to the peace talks.

But a report published in March by the Red Cross found that fighting overall between the government and armed groups had decreased. It welcomed Petro's efforts to promote negotiations.

However, the report also concluded the violence has continued to harm civilians, displacing more than 180,000 people in 2022.

A defence department spokesman said the Pentagon was continuing to work to "understand the scope, scale and impact" of the leaks.

Ukraine's Zelenskyy addresses Mexican congress, denounces critics

UKRAINIAN President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has called on Mexican legislators to support his country's fight against invading Russian forces, chastising those he accused of denying Ukraine's pursuit of peace.

"There are some leaders who have not visited Ukraine once and who have not seen what the brutal Russian aggression brought," Zelenskyy told the Mexico-Ukraine Friendship Group via video recently.

Some of those leaders, he added, sought to "achieve some sort of populism" by saying that "Ukraine is supposedly not ready to go for peace".

The speech was Zelenskyy's first address to Mexican legislators since Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

It came in the wake of controversial comments from Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, who attributed the war to "decisions made by two countries" — seemingly implicating Ukraine in Russia's decision to invade.

Lula walked back those remarks on Wednesday and denounced "the violation of Ukraine's territorial integrity".

Brazil has sought to position itself as a peace broker between Russia and Ukraine. Similarly, Mexico has indicated it would remain neutral in the ongoing war in Ukraine, refusing to join sanctions against Russia.

Ukraine, including a condemnation of Russia's attack in March 2022 and a text in October denouncing the "attempted illegal annexation" of territory.

In the speech, Zelenskyy thanked Mexico for its backing at the UN. But he pressed Mexican legislators to show "leadership" in pursuing peace and pushing Russia to withdraw its troops.

"Ukraine has already proposed to the Latin American community to organise a special summit and show its unity and position on important global principles of territorial integrity, peace and respect between peoples," he said.

Ukraine's Zelenskyy pledges push for victory. Zelenskyy's speech was broadcast before Mexico's Chamber of Deputies, the lower house of its legislature, at the invitation of the congressional friendship group composed largely of politicians from



Lopez

Cuban lawmakers vote in new five year term

CUBA's National Assembly has ratified another five-year term for incumbent President Miguel Diaz-Canel, in a move expected to result in few changes as the country struggles with an economic crisis and an exodus of citizens.

"We must assume this gigantic challenge without slowing down," Diaz-Canel, 62, said in a speech following his victory on Wednesday. He called upon his cabinet to "face up to obstacles and resolve inefficiencies" over the next five years.

Diaz-Canel won reelection with votes from 459 of the 462 legislators present. He first assumed the presidency in 2018 and has largely rejected proposed structural changes to Cuba's political and economic system.

"He has proclaimed himself a president of continuity when what the country is asking for, and even the agenda of the Communist Party itself, is an agenda of continuous change," Arturo Lopez-Levy, an analyst at the Autonomous University of Madrid, told the AFP news agency.

The legislators who voted to extend Diaz-Canel's mandate only recently faced elections themselves last month for Cuba's 470-member National Assembly.

Critics point out that Cuba's government does not allow opposition challengers. Half of the candidates in March's legislative election came from locally elected municipal assemblies, with the other half nominated by groups representing other segments of society such as labour unions.

However, all candidates are analysed by election committees

with ties to the Communist Party, which critics allege does not allow true opposition.

In recent years, the fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic and strong inflation has devastated the Cuban economy. Its gross domestic product (GDP) fell by 11 percent in 2020, and prices surged by 40 percent from January through October of last year, according to the Associated Press.

The United States has also had the island under a trade embargo since the 1960s, which critics say has contributed to its already dismal economic situation. The US, meanwhile, has defended its decades-long

sanctions on the basis of Cuba's human rights record.

Cuba's economic crisis, however, has pushed many citizens beyond what they can endure, with thousands attempting desperate trips to reach the US.

In 2022, the US estimated that about 306,612 Cubans — about 2 percent of the island nation's population — crossed its southern border with Mexico.

Video Duration 02 minutes 16 seconds 02:16 US migration policy forces Cubans on risky boat trips to Florida "If you're trying to leave Cuba, Nicaragua or Haiti ... do not just show up at the border. Stay where you are and apply legally from there," Biden told reporters from the White House in January.

with ties to the Communist Party, which critics allege does not allow true opposition.

In recent years, the fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic and strong inflation has devastated the Cuban economy. Its gross domestic product (GDP) fell by 11 percent in 2020, and prices surged by 40 percent from January through October of last year, according to the Associated Press.

The United States has also had the island under a trade embargo since the 1960s, which critics say has contributed to its already dismal economic situation. The US, meanwhile, has defended its decades-long

sanctions on the basis of Cuba's human rights record.

Cuba's economic crisis, however, has pushed many citizens beyond what they can endure, with thousands attempting desperate trips to reach the US.

In 2022, the US estimated that about 306,612 Cubans — about 2 percent of the island nation's population — crossed its southern border with Mexico.

Video Duration 02 minutes 16 seconds 02:16 US migration policy forces Cubans on risky boat trips to Florida "If you're trying to leave Cuba, Nicaragua or Haiti ... do not just show up at the border. Stay where you are and apply legally from there," Biden told reporters from the White House in January.



Diaz-Canel

US deploys more troops to Djibouti

THE United States is preparing to send a large number of additional troops to its military base in Djibouti in case of an eventual emergency evacuation from Sudan of American citizens.

Forces commanded by two previously allied leaders of

Sudan's ruling council began a violent power struggle last weekend that has so far killed more than 330 people, tipping a nation reliant on food aid into what the United Nations calls a humanitarian catastrophe.

"We are deploying additional capabilities nearby in the region for contingency purposes related to securing and potentially facilitating the departure of US embassy personnel from Sudan, if circumstances require it," the Pentagon said in a statement on Thursday.

Djibouti, a tiny nation of about one million people, has become essential to US operations in Africa and the Middle East. The US secured a 10-year lease for the base in 2014 and pays \$63m annually.

White House spokesperson John Kirby said President Joe Biden ordered the pre-positioning of military forces to be ready, adding he was closely following developments.

Kirby said there are no indications Americans are being targeted but it was a dangerous situation in Sudan. The best thing that can happen is for the two sides to lay down arms, abide by a ceasefire, and let humanitarian aid get to the people in Khartoum, he added.

The State Department previously told US citizens in Sudan to remain sheltered in place indoors. Washington does not provide numbers of US citizens living in or travelling to a particular country.

The US embassy in Khartoum also issued a statement on Thursday

saying because of the security situation and closure of the airport, "it is not currently safe to undertake a US government-coordinated evacuation of private US citizens".

The fiercest battles between the army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) have been around Khartoum, one of Africa's largest urban areas, and in Darfur, still scarred by a brutal conflict that ended three years ago.

Sudan's military ruler, General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, heads a ruling council installed after the 2021 military coup and the 2019 removal of veteran autocrat Omar al-Bashir.

Paramilitary leader General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, widely known as Hemedti, who analysts say may command more than 100,000 fighters, was his deputy on the council.

The latest violence was triggered by disagreement over an internationally backed plan to form a new civilian government. Both sides accuse the other of thwarting the transition.

A group of four countries known as the Quad — the United States, the United Kingdom, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia — have pushed international efforts to find a political solution in Sudan, along with the United Nations, the African Union and the African trade bloc, Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD).

Thousands of civilians have fled Khartoum and large numbers of people have also crossed into Chad to flee fighting in Darfur.

The United Nations refugee agency told Al Jazeera the "vast majority" of those who had crossed the border into Chad were women and children.

saying because of the security situation and closure of the airport, "it is not currently safe to undertake a US government-coordinated evacuation of private US citizens".

The fiercest battles between the army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) have been around Khartoum, one of Africa's largest urban areas, and in Darfur, still scarred by a brutal conflict that ended three years ago.

Sudan's military ruler, General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, heads a ruling council installed after the 2021 military coup and the 2019 removal of veteran autocrat Omar al-Bashir.

Paramilitary leader General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, widely known as Hemedti, who analysts say may command more than 100,000 fighters, was his deputy on the council.

The latest violence was triggered by disagreement over an internationally backed plan to form a new civilian government. Both sides accuse the other of thwarting the transition.

A group of four countries known as the Quad — the United States, the United Kingdom, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia — have pushed international efforts to find a political solution in Sudan, along with the United Nations, the African Union and the African trade bloc, Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD).

Thousands of civilians have fled Khartoum and large numbers of people have also crossed into Chad to flee fighting in Darfur.

The United Nations refugee agency told Al Jazeera the "vast majority" of those who had crossed the border into Chad were women and children.



'Music not enough to sustain Nigerian musicians luxury lifestyle'

In January 2022, the multiple award-winning entertainer Oladapo Oyebanjo, aka D'banj, was unveiled as one of the judges for the seventh season of the Nigerian Idol reality show. As a countdown to the show's premiere, the singer opened up to PREMIUM TIMES about his new career direction, his highly private life, and his new role as a Nigerian Idol judge. Excerpts:-

This is your first time judging a popular music reality show. How does this make you feel?

As an artiste on the move, I've had different offers through the years, but it's the first time I'm on a reality show as a judge, so that's interesting.

If you've had different offers, why Nigerian Idol? Why did you decide to choose this?

It's Nigerian Idol for me because first I'm Nigerian, and secondly, I think there's no better time than now because of the industry's growth. The industry's growth is such that we have to embrace what God has given us. This is a journey that some of us have been on for over a decade and have produced the kind of accolades the world recognises today. It's so important to grow the younger ones, to let them know that they are a part, and that's why there's no perfect platform other than the Nigerian Idol.

Earlier, you said it's so hard for you to say 'no' when people come to you with a request, now you would have a lot of people who would be physically begging you to pick them as a contestant during the audition, how do you intend to wiggle through that?

I know I said it's hard sometimes to say no, that's why if you know yourself, you will adapt to it. The reason is this, I believe that everyone has a chance in life, and if you don't encourage people, they will not get to the next phase. So even though we know we are looking for



only one winner, at least there are creative ways you can turn people down that even while they are going home, they are happy, they are looking out to say 'okay I no win oh, but I do better next time, and that's what I want to bring to the table. The truth is that I can't pass everybody but those that have to go through my vote. So I think there are crazy ways to pass your message that still leaves that visible hope, which I stand for.

Do You see yourself taking any contestants under your wings since a fellow judge, Obi Asika, would be working with the eventual winner?

I've already, actually in this season that's not sure for Obi Asika. We've already had those conversations, and we said that the best would be for us to have a joint venture, and I say this without any sugarcoating it. The current crop of contestants is one of the best talents I've seen, from not even Nigerian alone, globally. I've been listening to their voices, the way they swag, and most of them just come like, 'I've been waiting for this, and I will be waiting for you, even him, he knows he can't do it alone.

What, in your opinion, is an essential quality a star must have to emerge tops at the Nigerian Idol

I would like to say two things because, when you said what's the essential thing, firstly, people are coming to listen to you sing. It is essential to know how to sing to the best of your ability, but for the show, and you will know that when the judges are giving them advice, they would say, 'I don't think this song you chose works well with your voice.' So, I think it's essential for you to have a voice, but it's beyond the voice for you to be an idol. We are talking about your confidence, you have to believe in yourself, and that's what you will be selling to us because you cannot give what you don't have, and that's what I will be looking out for.

I stand to correct those who say, 'I'm looking for how great your voice is.' I'm looking for the next entertainer, and I'm looking for the next everything.

Away from Nigerian Idol, let's talk about your music career. What's new?

Well, let's say business, I love that. I tell people

Continued on page 26

Nigerian single female celebrities

The Nigerian entertainment industry has produced a lot of beautiful women who have established worldwide recognition and fame. But unfortunately, some of these Nigerian female celebrities are still single. Here are some Nigerian female celebrities who are still single.

Genevieve Nnaji



Genevieve Nnaji the red carpet goddess and top Nollywood actress is still single. She has not just made Nigeria proud but has also crossed over to Hollywood. Although she is a single mother but she is still very single. Genevieve Nnaji has a killer body and her legs are just super hot. She was born on 3rd May 1979 in Mbaise, Imo State in the south eastern part of Nigeria and grew up in Lagos, Nigeria. She is currently 40 years old.

She is the fourth child in a family of eight children. She was brought up in a middle class environment. Her father worked as an engineer while her mother worked as a teacher in Lagos State. She attended Methodist Girls College Yaba, before heading onto the University of Lagos to study Theatre Arts. In 1998, she joined the Nigerian movie industry (Nollywood) professionally and started acting movies at the age of 19 years old. Genevieve Nnaji is currently single.

Rita Dominic



Rita Uchenna Nkem Dominic Waturuocha popularly known Rita Dominic is a famous Nigerian award winning actress. In 2012 she won the Africa Movie Academy Award for Best Actress in a Leading Role. The 43 year old Nollywood star isn't looking a bit her age and isn't slowing down either, as she is one of the richest female celebrities in Nigeria. She was born on 12th July, 1975 in Mbaise, Imo State in the south eastern part of Nigeria. She is currently 43 years old. She is the youngest child in a family of four siblings. Rita Dominic is a member of the Royal family of Waturuocha of Aboh Mbaise local government area of Imo State, Nigeria. Her late parents were medical practitioners. Her father was a medical doctor and her mother was a nursing officer.

After her primary school education, Rita Dominic attended Federal Government College in Ikot Ekpene, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria and obtains her West African Senior School Certificate. After which she proceeded to University of Port Harcourt in Rivers State, Nigeria and graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Theatre Arts. In 1998, she joined the Nigerian movie industry (Nollywood) and acted in her first movie "A Time to Kill" a movie that brought her to limelight. Rita Dominic is currently single.

Continued on page 26

THE SLOW WORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Relationship

BY PINKY PANDEY

SUPPOSE your partner have always been affectionate but suddenly changes; you may wonder what to do when she pulls away.

You and your girl have always loved each other, but you notice she's been cold lately. You've tried to find the reasons for this attitude, but there was no answer.

Then, you begin to ask questions. What made her pull away? Should I give her space when she pulls away? What can I do to make her come back?

The truth is you aren't the only one in this emotional turmoil. Many men sometimes find out that their partner is pulling away, not knowing what to do when a woman pulls away.

Luckily, we have curated a list of things you can do when she pulls away.

What do you do when a girl pulls away?

One of the common questions people ask when a woman acts cold is what to do when she pulls away. If a girl pulls away, you should give her space when she pulls away.

Allow her to figure things out. Avoid pushing or pressuring her to spend time with you or communicate if she's not ready.

Instead, focus on your emotions. That can involve spending time with friends and family, engaging in hobbies or activities you enjoy, and practicing self-care to manage any stress or anxiety you may be feeling.

When your partner is ready to talk, it's crucial to have an open and honest conversation about your feelings and concerns. Listen to her, and communicate your thoughts and feelings respectfully and compassionately.

Also, Work together to find solutions and address any underlying issues causing her to pull away. Remember that every situation is unique, and it's best to

What to do when she pulls away



approach it with empathy, patience, and understanding.

What to do when she pulls away

When a woman pulls away, it can be a challenging and confusing experience for her partner. Feeling hurt, rejected, and unsure of what to do next is natural. However, you should know that everyone has reasons for withdrawing, and it's not necessarily a reflection of your worth as a person or a partner.

If this is you, here are ten things you can do to navigate the situation and reconnect with your partner.

Stay calm

Sometimes, when she pulls away, do nothing. Naturally, the first thing to do when she pulls away is to make her come back. However, it's crucial to stay calm and observe her. At this stage, she only needs a way for her situation to disappear.

If you desperately do something that will make her feel better, you

might make the situation worse; thereby making her pull further away from you.

It's only a matter of time before your partner talks about what she is going through. All you need to sail through this stage is to be patient.

Give her space and time

It's crucial to give her space when she pulls away. Giving your woman time to process her emotions and figure things out is the most mature thing you can do for her.

Respect her need for distance, and avoid bombarding her with messages or intruding on her space by trying to force her to talk. Instead, focus on your emotional well-being.

Avoid making assumptions

It can be tempting to assume the worst when someone pulls away, but this can be counterproductive and damaging to the relationship. Instead, try to approach the situation with an open mind and give her the benefit of the doubt. Also, try to understand her perspective before making any judgments.

Reflect on your behavior

While it's important to avoid blaming yourself for someone else's actions, it's also worth reflecting on your behavior and how it may have contributed to the situation. Consider your actions over the past few days or weeks.

Has she been complaining about your behavior in the past few days? Are there areas where you could improve your communication, emotional support, or willingness to compromise?

Focus on your interests

What to do when she pulls away? It may be time to focus on yourself. While giving your partner space and time or reflecting on your behavior, it's normal to feel disconnected from your partner. However, you can do something worthwhile in the meantime.

Use the time as an opportunity to reconnect with your interests and passions. Spend time engaging in hobbies, pursuing new skills or interests, or spending time with friends and family.

Be understanding

What to do when a woman pulls

away? When someone pulls away, it's best to be understanding.

You may want to get angry or see your partner as selfish but recognize that everyone has their own pace for processing emotions and that it may take some time to work through her feelings.

Practice active listening

You will help your partner a lot by practicing active listening. That involves giving her your full attention, asking open-ended questions to encourage conversation, and reflecting on what she's saying to show that you're actively engaged. **Seek support**

If the situation feels overwhelming for you, seek professional support. It could involve seeing a therapist, attending marital counseling, or contacting trusted friends or family members for guidance and support. Feel free to ask for help if you need it.

Be willing to compromise

In any relationship, compromise is vital. When she pulls away, be

willing to listen to your partner's perspective and find a middle ground that works for both of you. Compromising doesn't mean you are making your partner happy to your detriment.

Instead, it shows you want the best for your partner. For example, you can compromise by creating new ways of resolving issues and managing each other's expectations.

Stay positive and optimistic

It's easy to feel discouraged or hopeless when someone pulls away, but try to stay optimistic. Remind yourself of the positive aspects of the relationship, and focus on finding constructive ways to move forward. Be confident that she will be back to herself or at least have some explanation for you.

How do you turn the table when she pulls away?

You can turn the table around when she pulls away by communicating openly, giving her space, being kind and understanding, staying positive, working, and focusing on yourself.

Focus on yourself and take the time to reflect on the relationship and work on improving yourself. When she is ready, reach out and communicate openly and honestly to try to understand and address any issues.

Try to win her heart again

It's challenging to cope with a woman pulling away after showing you intimacy and affection. It confuses you and questions many things about her, yourself, and the relationship. Therefore, seeking what to do is expected when a woman pulls away from you.

This article has done an excellent job of clarifying that. From giving your woman space to process her emotions, supporting her, listening actively, and staying patient and understanding, there are so many things you can do to get back your partner.



THE SLOW WORLD

With *Henrietta Gonzuk*

Living

How he treats you is how he feels about you

BY SNEHA SINGH

HAVE you ever heard the statement, "How he treats you is how he feels about you?" Well, there is some truth to these words. Learn more about the statement in this article.

Action, they say, speaks louder than action. In a romantic relationship, you can say or promise anything, but your intentions are best passed across through actions.

In other words, how they treat you is how they feel about you. When a man treats you badly, it shows in their behavior towards you. Often, you may think it's best to treat him how he treats you.

Therefore, you must consider people's words, actions, and reactions. When someone loves you, they give you tremendous respect and value. They treat you in the most deserving manner.

If a man treats you otherwise but says he is trying his best, they don't deserve you.

In this article, you will learn more about the statement, "How he treats you is how he feels," or "people treat you how they feel about you," and everything about the treatment of a partner.

Also, we'll explore what happens when a man treats you badly and the signs he treats you like an option.

What does it mean when a guy treats you?

When a guy treats you, it can mean different things depending on the situation. Generally speaking, when a guy treats you well, it's a sign that he respects you and values your presence in his life.

Here are a few different ways that a guy might treat you and what those actions could potentially mean:

He listens to you

If a guy takes the time to listen to what you have to say, it could mean he values your opinions and wants to get to know you better. Active listening is an integral part of any healthy relationship, a positive sign.

He makes time for you

If a man prioritizes spending time with you and tries to schedule dates or hangouts, it shows that he values your company. This could indicate that he's interested in pursuing a relationship with you.

He is thoughtful and kind

People treat you how they feel about you. If your partner goes out of his way to do nice things for you, such as bringing you flowers or buying you your favorite snack, it shows that he cares about your happiness.

These small gestures can add up to create a positive and loving dynamic.

He is respectful

Respect is one of the qualities of a healthy relationship. If your partner treats you with respect and courtesy, it's a sign that they see you as an equal and value your feelings.

This could manifest in several ways, such as opening doors for you or refraining from making rude or inappropriate comments.

Of course, it's important to remember that everyone is different and may express their feelings and intentions differently. Some guys may be more reserved or shy, while others may be more expressive and outgoing.

Additionally, just because a guy treats you well doesn't necessarily mean he's interested in pursuing a romantic relationship.

Ultimately, looking out for signs he treats you like an option is essential, then communicating openly and honestly to ensure you're both on the same page.

How he treats you is how he feels about you

It is often said that "how he treats you



is how he feels about you," and this statement certainly has some truth. How someone behaves towards you can strongly indicate their feelings and intentions. Here are a few reasons why this is the case:

Actions speak louder than words

While someone may say everything right, their actions can reveal their true feelings.

For example, if someone says they care about you but constantly cancels plans or ignores your messages, it's clear that their actions do not match their words.

This behavior might make you say, "he treats me like an option." or "he doesn't treat me with respect."

Consistency is key

If someone consistently treats you with respect, kindness, and consideration, it's a good sign that they genuinely care about you.

On the other hand, if someone is hot and cold or sends mixed signals, it can be challenging to determine how they feel. It might cause you to ask, "Why does he treat me so badly?"

People prioritize what is important to them

If someone consistently makes time for you and prioritizes your needs and wants, it's a sign that they value your relationship. Conversely, if someone always puts other things or people ahead of you, it's one of the signs he treats you like an option.

It's important to note that everyone has different ways of expressing emotions; not everyone may show affection or care similarly. Some people may be more reserved or have difficulty expressing their feelings verbally. Additionally, it's possible for someone to treat you well but not be interested in a romantic relationship.

To truly understand how someone feels about you, it's crucial to have open and honest communication. If you need clarification about their intentions or if their actions are sending mixed signals, try to address these concerns and discuss where things stand.

Actions can strongly indicate how someone feels about you, but it's best to confirm these feelings through communication and mutual understanding.

15 signs he treats you the way you truly deserve

Regarding relationships, being with someone who treats you well and makes you feel loved and appreciated is essential. Unfortunately, it can be difficult to tell whether someone is genuinely interested in you or just going through the motions.

If you're unsure about whether your partner is treating you the way you

deserve, here are 15 signs that you're with the right person:

He listens to you

Indeed, people treat you how they feel about you, but a partner who truly cares about you will take the time to listen to what you have to say, whether it's about your day, your hopes and dreams, or your fears and concerns.

If your partner is always there to lend an ear and provide support, it's a sign that he values your feelings and opinions.

He makes time for you

Another sign that a man treats you accordingly is in his availability. Letting our relationships fall by the wayside is easy in a busy world.

However, suppose your partner consistently tries to spend time with you and prioritize your relationship. In that case, it indicates that he appreciates your presence in his life and wants it to continue.

He is thoughtful and kind

When someone treats you badly in a relationship, it shows in their character. Certain gestures can go a long way in a relationship, and a thoughtful and kind partner can make all the difference.

Whether bringing you breakfast in bed, popping up to check on you at work, or leaving a sweet note on your pillow, these small acts of kindness can make you feel loved and appreciated.

He is respectful

Do you sometimes think, "He does not treat me with respect."? Then, your partner isn't treating you right. Respect in a relationship helps to establish trust, security, and vulnerability.

A partner who treats you respectfully and courteously sees you as an equal, and values your feelings.

They also accept you for who you are without undermining your efforts. Whether opening doors for you or refraining from making rude or inappropriate comments, these actions show that your partner cares about your well-being.

He is honest

How someone treats you shows honesty. Honesty is crucial to any healthy relationship; you can trust a truthful and upfront partner.

Such a partner is honest about their feelings, and they own up to mistakes. Besides, a partner who values honesty will always have your best interests at heart.

He supports your goals and ambitions

In a world where everyone is in one competition or the other, support from your partner goes a long way.

A partner who encourages you to pursue your dreams and supports you in your endeavors is someone who truly



cares about your happiness and well-being. Whether attending your events or cheering you on from the sidelines, this support can help you achieve your goals and feel fulfilled in your life.

He apologizes when he's wrong

Do you want to treat him how he treats you? Then, wait a bit. Check how he apologizes after a fight. No one is perfect, and even the best partners make mistakes.

But a partner willing to apologize when he's wrong and make amends is someone who wants the relationship and to work towards a better future together.

He shows affection

Physical touch and affection are vital parts of any relationship, and a partner who is affectionate and loving can help you feel connected and secure.

Whether holding hands or cuddling on the couch, these small moments of physical intimacy can make a big difference in your relationship. **He communicates openly and honestly**

Communication is vital in any healthy relationship, and a partner who is open and honest with you can help build trust and strengthen your bond.

Whether it's discussing your feelings or working through conflicts, being able to communicate effectively is essential to a successful relationship.

He respects your boundaries

Boundary indicates the limit you consider acceptable behavior. When someone treats you badly in a relationship, they will continually/ cross limits.

However, a partner who respects and honors these boundaries is someone who values your well-being and autonomy.

For example, a good partner will respect your need for alone time or avoid pressuring you into doing something uncomfortable. Essentially, a partner who respects your boundaries is someone you can trust.

He is reliable

A consistent and dependable partner can be fresh air in a world where many people are flaky and unreliable. For example, a reliable partner shows up on time or follows through on commitments. Also, a reliable partner is responsible; you can count on them any day or time.

He takes responsibility for his actions

Everyone makes mistakes, but an emotionally mature individual must accept their wrongdoings. A partner who treats you right won't take time before apologizing after offending you.

He makes plans with you

Why does he treat you so badly? Maybe he doesn't want you in his plans. A man who knows your value will always

consider you in everything he does.

As far as he's concerned, you are part of his life, and nothing works without you.

He admires you

A man who treats you how you deserve knows what to say to make you smile or happy.

One way he does this is by admiring you and telling you you are beautiful, especially at a time when you feel your worst. Also, he continually looks for ways to make you feel good about yourself.

He discusses with you

One of the signs he treats you like an option is not discussing with you. When a man knows you deserve good things, he will always find ways to converse with you. For instance, if he returns from work, he tells you about his day and asks about yours.

More about how he treats you is how he feels about you

Here are some of the most commonly searched questions related to how people treat you is how they feel about you.

How can you make a woman feel loved and cared for?

To make a woman feel loved, show her affection through physical touch, verbal affirmations, and acts of service.

Listen to her, show interest in her life, prioritize spending quality time together, and try to understand her needs and desires.

Show her that you value her opinions, respect her boundaries, and always support her through good times and bad.

What happens when you treat a man how he treats you?

Treating a man how he treats you can result in a negative cycle of behavior and may lead to a toxic relationship. If a man treats you poorly, responding the same way is unproductive.

Instead, setting boundaries, communicating openly, and prioritizing self-respect are essential. If the man is unwilling to change his behavior, it may be necessary to reevaluate the relationship and consider ending it for his well-being.

Takeaway

How he treats you is how he feels about you. A man who treats you the way you genuinely deserve will communicate openly and honestly, make time for you, respect your boundaries, support your goals and dreams, show affection, be reliable, and accept you for who you are.

If you are in a romantic relationship with a man who exhibits these traits, you can be confident that you are being treated right. If you are concerned about how someone treats you or see signs he treats you like an option, you should go



Reality Bites

with Palang Kasmi
 peekembo@yahoo.com
 08036417305, 08095322786

Digit ALL innovation and technology for rural women

THE 2023 International Women's Day (IWD) has come and gone with the display of social media posts, quotes, and images celebrating the value of women.

There was also events to mark the day by various women groups and Non-governmental Organisations within and outside the country.

The International Women's Day 2023 theme tagged "DigitALL: Innovation and technology for gender equality" is aligned with the priority theme for the upcoming 67th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW-67), "Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls".

The theme is apt and the United Nations highlighted the need for inclusive and transformative technology and digital education.

The UN also highlighted the need for inclusive and transformative technology and digital education. It recognizes and celebrates the women and girls who are championing the advancement of transformative technology and digital education.

The IWD theme 2023 explores the impact of the digital gender gap on widening economic and social inequalities putting a spotlight the importance of protecting the rights of women and girls in digital spaces and addressing online and ICT-facilitated gender-based violence.

"Bringing women and other marginalized groups into technology results in more creative solutions and has greater potential for innovations that meet women's needs and promote gender equality. Their



lack of inclusion, by contrast, comes with massive costs: as per UN Women's Gender Snapshot 2022 report, women's exclusion from the digital world has shaved \$1 trillion from the gross domestic product of low- and middle-income countries in the last decade—a loss that will grow to \$1.5 trillion by 2025 without action. Reversing this

trend will require tackling the problem of online violence, which a study of 51 countries revealed 38 per cent of women had personally experienced", says the UN.

How digital innovations can impact the rural woman

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Naira redesign and cashless policy has not only

brought Nigeria's economy to it's knees but created cash crunch, making transactions a challenge for many Nigerians.

Women especially those that are rural- based and those without digital literacy are worst hit, because ongoing transactions are conducted through digital means.

Many women, who are petty traders are moaning under the scarcity of Naira notes and the inability to do money transfers to continue running their businesses.

Therefore rights groups, Non-governmental Bodies, and the relevant agencies need to target women to train and sensitise them on going digital even if it means getting an account and making e-transactions.

The UN says "A gender-responsive approach to innovation, technology and digital education can increase the awareness of women and girls regarding their rights and civic engagement".

"Advancements in digital technology offer immense opportunities to address development and humanitarian challenges, and to achieve the 2030 Agenda's Sustainable

Development Goals. Unfortunately, the opportunities of the digital revolution also present a risk of perpetuating existing patterns of gender inequality".

"Growing inequalities are becoming increasingly evident in the context of digital skills and access to technologies, with women being left behind as the result of this digital gender divide. The need for inclusive and transformative technology and digital education is therefore crucial for a sustainable future".

The United Nations marked the day with a high-level event on Wednesday, 8 March with an event that brought together technologists, innovators, entrepreneurs, and gender equality activists to provide an opportunity to highlight the role of all stakeholders in improving access to digital tools and be followed by a high-level panel discussion and musical performances.

In Nigeria, getting more women and girls to access digital innovations in line with the UN 2023 theme for IWD will empower them with the skills to cope in a digital economic era.



THE SLOW WORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Health

Health benefits of tropical garden egg

GARDEN Egg is a good source of dietary fiber and other minerals and vitamins such as vitamin B1, potassium, folate, manganese, magnesium, copper, Vitamin B6, niacin, and other secret nutrients. Read below.

Health Benefits Garden Egg: Promotes Weight Loss

Eating eggplant, especially the greenish type, is beneficial in weight reduction because they contain low carbohydrates and calories essential for weight management.

Overweight individuals who want to lose or retain their average weight can also add eggplant.

Rich in Antioxidants

Anthocyanins and flavonoids are essential and powerful phytonutrients and antioxidants in eggplants that help protect the body system and add many health-promoting benefits to the human body.

Anthocyanins are responsible for the deep purple color of eggplants and help prevent the development of cancer and other diseases that result in bacteria.

Anthocyanins found in eggplants possess antioxidant properties that protect the whole body system.

Rich in Vitamin B

Garden egg is a natural source of vitamin B's such as thiamin, niacin, B6, and pantothenic acid that helps the body properly use fat and protein; and positively contributes to the nervous system.

Vitamin B plays a vital role in promoting good health and well-being. It helps in brain development and also helps in making sure that the immune and nervous system works properly.

Regular eggplant consumption provides enough vitamin B needed by the body.

Promotes healthy bone

They contain many potent minerals such as folate, manganese, vitamin K, magnesium, vitamin C, and copper that help bone strengthening and general bone health.

Consuming eggplant is highly beneficial in preventing the risk of bone degradation and osteoporosis.

Garden egg also contains some iron and calcium aids in reducing the chance of osteoporosis, thereby keeping your bones strong and healthy.

Helps in digestion

Garden eggs are fibrous fruits that help in proper food digestion and control of bowel movement. Due to this fiber content in the fruit, they reduce constipation and improve digestion.

Garden eggs are one of the most significant sources of dietary fiber,



an essential element in any balanced diet.

Fibre aids greatly in gastrointestinal health and proper movement of the bowels. Consuming eggplants will contribute a lot to digestion and the consistent trend of bowels.

Good for Pregnant Women

These fruits contain minerals, vitamins, and other crucial nutritional properties during pregnancy.

The properties of garden eggs help pregnant women and unborn children with healthy situational conditions.

Garden eggs are also rich in folic acid, which benefits pregnant women. Folic acid protects infants from neural tube defects that do occur.

Garden eggs are rich sources of folic acid, making them a portion of excellent food and valuable dietary addition during pregnancy.

Prevents Anemia

The garden egg has been found to serve as a natural medicine for treating several health conditions such as bronchitis, colic (pain in the abdomen caused by obstruction of the intestine), stress relief, headache, and others if consumed daily.

Garden egg is a rich source of

iron, which helps them increase the red blood cell in the body, thereby aiding in fighting against anemia or deficiency in iron.

Garden eggs are also rich in copper, another vital component of red blood cells. Consuming garden eggs help make the red blood cells flow adequately through your veins, thereby causing a boost in strength and energy.

Prevents diabetes

Garden eggs, a source of soluble fiber and carbohydrates, can help control and prevent diabetes.

Foods that are rich in fiber and carbohydrates help in the regulation of blood sugar levels and glucose absorption.

It is an excellent food for people with diabetes, as it will go a long way in reducing and preventing type 2 diabetes.

Maintains blood pressure levels

Garden eggs contain a high amount of calcium, magnesium, potassium, and phosphorus. These minerals contained in it help in maintaining electrolyte balance in our body.

It aids in neutralizing sodium effects in the body, thereby controlling blood pressure levels.

An antioxidant in garden eggs

known as chlorogenic acid also helps reduce cholesterol levels in the body.

Therefore regular consumption of garden eggs helps maintain good blood pressure and cholesterol levels.

Prevents heart diseases

Garden eggs are rich in vitamin B1 and B6 (thiamin and niacin). These vitamins are essential in the body for proper heart functioning and cellular respiration. It's rich in potassium and also helps in blood pressure regulation.

Vitamin B1 deficiency leads to cardiovascular problems. Therefore, foods rich in vitamin B1 are vital in ensuring a healthy nervous system and improving the cardiovascular's proper functioning.

Vitamin B6 helps in maintaining a healthy nervous system. Consuming garden eggs can significantly help in preventing heart disorders.

Nutritional values of garden eggs where can it be found?

Garden Egg is an edible fruit that is commonly grown in the northern parts of Nigeria. However, it has other types/varieties, such as the Aubergines, a kind of eggplant in South Africa and Asia, and purple.

There are so widely different varieties that come in plain white colors.

These fruits serve as food in Nigeria furthermore some other West African countries. They can be eaten raw with groundnut or made as a sauce for eating boiled yam or plantain; garden eggs are eaten to supply the body with enough nutrients.

Side Effects

Garden eggs, when consumed excessively, have side effects. Pregnant women shouldn't drink this fruit regularly because of its diuretic nature, which can stimulate menstruation.

Consuming garden eggs regularly can also lead to acidity problems. Garden egg is a good source of potassium good, but there are side effects if taken excessively.

Too much potassium can cause vomiting and stomach upset. Excess fiber can cause diarrhea, constipation, and difficulty in nutrient absorption.

Garden egg belongs to the nightshade family plant, causing allergies like nausea, itchiness, rashes, and throat swelling. Therefore you should consume garden eggs moderately to avoid their side effects.

BUSINESS WORLD

Fostering food security and environmental sustainability

Addressing climate change is key to maintaining harmony in the symbiotic relationship that exists between man and nature. This is because that vital relationship is being threatened by the wider depletion of natural resources as well as the release of harmful substances across business operations and human activity. ASHISH PANDE writes."

CONSEQUENTLY, severe nature responses in the forms of extreme weather conditions, flooding, drought, and landslides amongst others continue to cause glitches in the food value chain, stoke poor health conditions in our cities, widen scarcity of water, increase desertification across regions, disrupt communities, and ruin valuable social infrastructure.

For instance, the United Nations (UN) reported that an estimated 55 million people around the world are affected by drought every year. According to the UN, within the next three decades, a quarter of the globe would be impacted by these severe climate reactions. The global body also revealed that the earth is presently about 1.1 °C warmer compared to previous centuries.

It also said greenhouse gas concentrations comprising carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, and certain synthetic chemicals are at their highest levels and rising faster. It warned that emissions must be put in check to achieve a 7.6 percent drop per year going forward to ensure the global temperature does not escalate to a level that is unbearable for everyone.

In the food value chain, the effects of climate change are telling. They lead to soil degradation which impacts crop yields adversely. Poor soil conditions and low harvests contribute substantially to food insecurity. Food production levels dive. Food prices subsequently skyrocket leaving many households short on valuable nutrients.

The World Food Programme (WFP) has even tagged the year 2023 another year of extreme jeopardy for those struggling to feed their families. This gruesome theme cast a shadow over the world as 345.2 million people are projected to be food insecure somewhere in the year.

The onus is on governments and businesses to act fast to avert this looming calamity. Investment in innovation that would stave off the realization of the scary extreme temperature and food insecurity projection is critical at this point. Olam Agri is a leading agribusiness transforming food, feed, and fibre, and we are taking measures to ease the pressure being piled on the global food system and the environment to ensure a safer and prosperous world for all.

As a leader in agriculture, we are investing in various innovative projects that can reduce carbon emissions and help preserve our environment. A fine example of our efforts to curb carbon emissions is the bold step taken towards sustainability at Olam Agri in Nigeria's new office building.

Located in the heart of Lagos' bustling industrial zone, we recently installed solar panning at the new office to increase the share of renewable energy,



promote the corporate goal of decarbonisation as well as obtain green credits for the edifice.

Of course, solar panning harnesses the power of the sun to generate electricity, provide clean energy and reduce operating costs. Currently, our building solar infrastructure generates an estimated 50 KW. It takes care of about 15% of the total energy required to power the office building. By installing the panning infrastructure at the office to support our energy consumption rate, we are significantly reducing the building's carbon footprint and contributing to a greener environment.

In addition to reducing carbon footprint, our Lagos office building will also be able to obtain green credits. These credits are awarded to companies and organisations that take steps towards sustainability and reducing their carbon emissions. The credits can be traded to offset the carbon emissions of other Olam Agri facilities in the country.

More, we are making a lot of progress in improving access to food and nutrition, farmers' lives, and sustainability practices, especially in lower-income and emerging countries in Africa. Early in the year, we partnered with the Nanyang Technological University, a leading global research college in Singapore, to craft innovative, sustainable strategies targeted at raising the resilience level of Nigeria's food value chain.

Through that partnership, we are sponsoring the Singapore Business Case Competition (SBCC) X African Challenge 2023.

The competition featured 34 teams comprising 135 undergraduates from over 11 universities which made presentations on climate-smart strategies to Olam Agri with a focus on how to improve Nigeria's agriculture sector, tackle climate threats, and address the topographic and systemic challenges impeding the achievement of food security. The winners of the contest won a \$1,500 prize in addition to an all-expense paid trip to Nigeria to implement their solutions.

As well, we have developed an industry innovation targeted at utilising agri-waste to produce a heat source useful for bakery operations. The innovation which is called 'the Gasifier', is a palm kernel oven which utilises palm kernel waste i.e., palm kernel shells to produce heat that powers baking ovens. This innovative biofuel provides a cleaner, greener environment.

All the sustainability efforts form an additional arm of the Olam Agri Seeds for the Future (SFTF) project, a signature corporate social sustainability vehicle. The SFTF also focuses on supporting farmers and farming communities, enabling wider education & skill development for young people in Nigeria, upskilling women bakers, promoting health & nutrition, and reducing carbon emissions in our operations.

Another example of our environmental sustainability effort is our strategic partnership with leading Nigerian university, Bayero University Kano (BUK) and the Kano State Government, where we donated 5,000 tree

saplings to BUK as part of a tree planting campaign geared towards offsetting carbon emissions and conserving biodiversity.

This was an important climate action aimed at achieving carbon neutrality and the net-zero targets on a larger scale and to ensure that the fuel emissions created by our fleet operations are to a large extent offset from the ecosystem.

Precisely, the reforestation, installation of the solar panning at our office, the investment in the SBCC X Africa Challenge, and the conception and development of the gasifier, amongst others, are a clear demonstration of our commitment to sustainability. We are hoping that this move will inspire other organisations to take steps towards making our environment liveable.

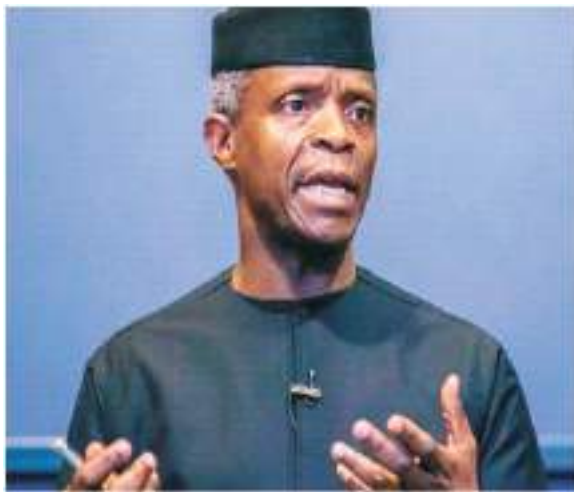
Pande is the country head of Olam Agri in Nigeria.

"The World Food Programme (WFP) has even tagged the year 2023 another year of extreme jeopardy for those struggling to feed their families. This gruesome theme cast a shadow over the world as 345.2 million people are projected to be food insecure somewhere in the year. The onus is on governments and businesses to act fast to avert this looming calamity. Investment in innovation that would stave off the realization of the scary extreme temperature and food insecurity projection is critical at this point. Olam Agri is a leading agribusiness transforming food, feed, and fibre, and we are taking measures to ease the pressure being piled on the global food system and the environment to ensure a safer and prosperous world for all."

BUSINESS WORLD

Osinbajo calls for energy growth

VICE President Yemi Osinbajo has stated that the country needed to accelerate industrialisation to lift Nigerians out of energy poverty. He said this at the just concluded the Nigerian International Energy Summit in Abuja. "Nigeria needs rapid industrialisation to lift our people out of energy poverty, which results in real poverty as the country prepares for energy transition," he declared. Osinbajo noted the place of a partnership between the government and private sector in putting structures in place for speedy economic development cannot be overemphasised. He urged stakeholders in the oil and gas sector to form alliances with the government to deliver gas, and other cleaner energy sources to the world. According to him, Nigeria and Africa are crucial to delivering sustainable energy of the future. During a session on 'Building Energy of the Future', the Deputy Managing Director of Deepwater TotalEnergies E&P Nigeria, Victor Bandle, said gas, solar and other cleaner energy were part of the future energy, adding that the company had launched projects to deepen its gas explosion and supply to the Nigerian market. "TotalEnergies has met its gas obligations to the Federal Government, and we have also launched onshore projects to continue to enable



Osinbajo

us to continue delivering sustainable has to the market," he said. Bandle added that 50 per cent of the company's more than 500 filing stations located across the country currently run on solar as part of its drive towards preparation for the energy of the future. The company, he said, also had plans of ending routine gas flaring before the end of 2023, adding that Nigeria must focus on investment to bridge the gap between its natural resources and delivering the products to the market for utilisation. The Managing Director of Nigeria Liquefied Natural Gas Limited, Dr Phillips Mshelbila, said the firm had been committed to delivering 100 per cent of its LPG into the local market because it believed in the Federal Government's future energy and how it can contribute to meeting the country's energy transition plan through gas. In his presentation, the

Chairman of Shell Companies in Nigeria, Dr Osagie Okubor, advised the Federal Government not to be too quick to abandon other sources of energy for just gas, as the country should focus on harnessing every available source of energy. "We should not be in a hurry to discriminate one source of energy from the other. We need to be broad-minded enough to harness all sources to the benefit of Nigeria and Africa. Yes, gas is important, but other sources such as solar, wind and others matter too so that we will be able to carry the younger generation along and be able to provide enough access to employment," he said. The 2023 NIES conference had the theme 'Global Perspectives For A Sustainable Energy Future'. Chief Operating Officer, Oando Energy Resources, Dr Alex Irune, said 80 per cent of the global energy growth will

Nigeria's oil, condensate reserves stand at 37bn

THE Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC) says the country's oil and condensate reserves stand at 36.966 billion barrels as at Jan. 1, 2023. This represents 31.060 billion barrels for oil and 5.906 billion barrels for condensate. The Commission's Chief Executive, Mr Gbenga Komolafe said this at the sixth edition of the Nigeria International Energy Summit (NIES 2023) with

the theme, "Global Perspective for a Sustainable Energy Future." Komolafe spoke on Thursday at the Upstream Forum tagged "Pivoting Upstream Petroleum Regulations and Investments," which dwelt on strategies on energy sustainability roadmap. He said the Associated Gas reserves was at 102.32 Trillion Cubic Feet (TCF) while Non-Associated Gas reserves was 106.51 TCF, making the total of 208.83 TCF of Natural

Gas reserves. He said the oil and condensate reserves declined to about 0.22 per cent compared to Jan. 01, 2022, adding that figures were attributable to low exploration activities and reserves revision arising from subsurface studies in 2022. On the other hand, the slight increase of 0.10 per cent in gas reserves over Jan. 1, 2022 reserves position was primarily attributed to the revisions arising from additional information from new wells, and field development studies. "The Commission, empowered by the PIA, has continued to drive the upstream industry's performance to grow reserves through deliberate oil and gas exploration, deep drilling, prospects maturation, appraisal, field studies and improved oil recovery. "Our efforts are beginning to manifest in our gas reserves position, and we expect similar manifestation in oil reserves in the very short term," he said. According to Komolafe, as a country, Nigeria boasts of 37.064 billion barrels of oil with a daily production of over 1.5 million barrels of oil.



Kyari

Nigeria Liquefied Natural Gas Limited has revealed that the country's major gas exporter - NLNG, was currently not meeting its gas export obligations to customers, not to talk of signing new long-term gas export contracts. It, however, pointed out that this was basically due to the grave level of insecurity around gas pipelines and wanton vandalism of gas infrastructure, which had crumbled the export of gas. Nigeria LNG Limited is one of the world's top 10 suppliers of LNG, and was incorporated as a Limited Liability Company on May 17, 1989, to harness Nigeria's vast natural gas resources and produce Liquefied Natural Gas and Natural Gas Liquids for export. The company is an independent Incorporated Joint Venture owned in the following proportions: Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited, 49 per cent; Shell Gas B.V. 25.6 per cent; TotalEnergies Gaz & Electricite Holdings, 15 per cent; and Eni International N.A. N.V. S.a.r.l, 10.4 per cent. Speaking on gas exports, during the last panel session on Wednesday at the ongoing 6th Nigeria International Energy Summit in Abuja, the Managing Director, Nigeria LNG Limited, Dr Philip Mshelbila, explained that Nigeria's gas supply decline grew worse in the last two

Nigeria fails to meet gas export obligations

- NLNG

Ye a r s . He stated that while competing nations such as the United States and Qatar were currently signing long-term contracts for gas exports, Nigeria was under force majeure, as it could not meet its obligations to customers, not to talk of signing new contracts. "Let me get specific around exports. We started this decline in gas supply, it really got bad within the last two years in particular. During that time we had COVID and we then had Ukraine-Russia crisis. "Demand has soured to levels we have never seen before. Prices last August were at record never seen before. This was the period we were having the lowest gas supply ever, so we could not be there to play in that market. "Coming out of that, contracts are now being signed with Qatar and the United States in particular, and a few other countries. LNG contracts are long-term contracts, so the biggest demand markets are locking themselves into 20-year, 15-year contracts," Mshelbila stated. He added, "But do you know what our status is? We are under force majeure, meaning we cannot meet our obligations to existing customers, not to talk of being able to sign up

new customers or new contracts. That's where we are!" On a couple of things the country should do to address this, he said Nigeria had got to fix the issue of insecurity immediately. "If we don't do it, then this becomes one of the paradoxes where we leave the security situation as it is and we start finding our ways around it. "That has to be fixed, (for) it will immediately unlock at least 30 per cent out of the 40 per cent gap that we have in NLNG, and also a lot of the gas that should have been coming into the domestic market," the NLNG boss stated. On could be done in the medium to long term, Mshelbila said it would be addressed by the Decade of Gas policy if it is implemented as captured in the document. He wondered the kind of paradoxes in Nigeria and called for the tackling of Nigeria's problems head-on. "Sometimes when I talk to my expatriate friends, I say Nigeria is a nation of paradoxes. Some examples, we produce a huge amount of crude and then we import the finished product. And rather than fix the problem fundamentally, and address those refineries, we built the biggest refinery in the world."

Economic expert urges Tinubu to be decisive

AN expert on economy, Mr Opeyemi Agbaje, has urged the President-elect, Sen. Bola Tinubu to be decisive in dealing with the prevailing security challenges when sworn in. Agbaje made the call while delivering a paper, titled, 'Crime and Insecurity: Understanding Nigeria's Socio-economic Crisis', at a media

parley organised by First City Monument Bank (FCMB) in Abuja. He said if the security challenges were not tackled, they would have cascading effects on socio-economic development of the nation. He observed that available data indicated that Nigeria was engulfed in an economic crisis, and thus needed a capable leadership to contain. Agbaje said that the subsisting security architecture was potent and only needed the political will to drive the entire process.

According to him, as long as there is a dysfunctional economy with weak leadership, crime rate would continue to rise. He added that to address the current economic quagmire, a mix of market and social policy was needed to move the country forward. In his welcome address, the Vice President, Corporate Affairs of the bank, Diran Olojo, submitted that an informed media would aid nation's growth and better the society. Olojo charged reporters on responsible journalism for the good of the citizenry and image of the country. (NAN)



Tinubu

ENTREPRENEUR WATCH

WITH CELESTINE D. ATTSAR

What's next for MSMEs in Nigeria?

Over the last decade, by its sheer resilience, the Nigerian economy has survived two recessions and a once-in-a-lifetime global pandemic. In addition, headwinds have manifested in the fallouts of global financial crises as well as new shifts in international arrangements which have sparked tensions and wars, such as the war in Ukraine. JUMOKE ODUWOLE writes.

FOR an economy such as ours that is heavily vested in agriculture, extreme weather resulting from climate change has exacerbated domestic tensions due to the scarcity of shared resources, even as these changes further undercut global harvests, lowering food production, increasing shortages, and causing prices and instability to rise.

As a whole, the global economy has been slow to resolve and adapt to these new conditions. Supply chains remain unreliable. Production is suppressed. Trade costs have increased. Political tensions spread. During this period, the nation's average economic growth has been positive, but not robust enough to translate into a significant improvement in the socioeconomic condition of the people.

Nigeria is home to over 36.9 million MSMEs, comprising 96.7% of all businesses in Nigeria. 67% of these businesses are youth-owned. MSMEs contribute over 45% to the country's gross domestic product (GDP), with 98.8% of them in the micro cadre. They account for nearly 90% of the jobs in the country. Therefore, as MSMEs grow, they create more jobs, which leads to prosperity for more, and less insecurity across the country.

With business climate reforms, our job is to unlock the constraints faced by these businesses and support them by making it progressively easier for MSMEs to start and grow their businesses so they can thrive and scale.

It is an undeniable fact that over the past two terms of the current Administration of President Muhammad Buhari, under the auspices of the All Progressives Congress (APC), unprecedented strides in the improvement of the nation's infrastructure stock have been made with the delivery of over 1,000 kilometres of roads and bridges, rail networks, airport terminals and more.

Importantly, for the first time in Nigeria, soft infrastructure was also prioritized with an ease of doing business intervention coordinated through the Presidential Enabling Business Environment Council (PEBEC) Chaired by His Excellency, the Vice



President.

The Council partners with stakeholders from all arms and levels of government and the private sector to reduce the cost and time of doing business by removing bureaucratic and legislative bottlenecks, facilitating access to justice, and enhancing transparency, particularly through

the use of technology.

The over 180 reforms implemented to date, with particular emphasis on six sectors/sub-sectors disproportionately populated by our youth, (agribusiness, creative sector, light manufacturing, tech, transport, and logistics, and decentralized power), have earned

us some level of trust from the private sector stakeholders as well as renewed credibility with informed international audiences. However, our work has not been without its challenges.

Building on this foundation, the President-elect, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu, and the Vice President-elect, Senator Kashim Shettima, are set to quickly and decisively address the most pressing constraints directly affecting MSMEs in the next Administration.

These challenges include insecurity, infrastructure deficit, inflation, and foreign exchange problems (now compounded by Naira scarcity) by improving productivity and trade facilitation, among other regulatory policy and implementation reforms.

We are aware that these challenges are manifold, but we are confident that they are not insurmountable. The antidote to insecurity, and to the type of Inflation we are currently experiencing, is increased productivity and competitiveness,

with stable, predictable policies - for example, a single, transparent foreign exchange rate for both domestic and foreign transactions.

The next Administration will urgently address fiscal, monetary, and trade reforms to effectively increase domestic production, thus serving to curb inflation, and to ensure better macro-economic stability by accelerating inclusive growth and job creation across Nigeria - key enablers for MSMEs to deliver prosperity for all.

In 2022, the largest contributors to Nigeria's GDP in the first three quarters were the Services sector, which grew by 7.1% mainly thanks to ICT and professional services, the Agricultural sector, which experienced weak productivity levels with a growth of 1.8%, and the Industrial sector, which remained in the contraction territory, posting negative growth of - 5.7% over the same period. Yet, these sectors are where the jobs are. They are, therefore, the top priority of the next Administration.

No modern economy has developed without a strong industrial base, and Nigeria is not likely to be different. Therefore, productivity and competitiveness are essential if Nigeria is to increase exports and take maximum advantage of the African Continental Free Trade Area through a strong industrial base. The next Tinubu-led Administration is already committed to aggressively supporting non-oil exports to earn desperately needed foreign exchange and revenue for the economy.

Till then, we shall continue to strive towards a reformed regulatory environment by deepening the implementation of Executive Order 001 on transparency and efficiency of public service delivery to businesses, which has recently been codified, along with other important reforms such as the legislation of a Single Window for trade facilitation, under the Business Facilitation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2023.

This Act will ensure the sustainability of existing reforms and act as a springboard for catalytic interventions in this area by the next progressive Administration. Then, we shall quickly extend bridges of collaboration based on mutual respect to our business owners so they can trust the process to grow with renewed confidence.

Clearly, the economic performance of any nation is directly linked to the pace of reforms. We shall prioritize proper coordination of our economic policy, and implement key reforms with intentionality in the short term to medium term and beyond.

Practically speaking, this will mean a single-minded pursuit of growth-promoting, employment-creating, and poverty-eradicating policies, with renewed vigour, as outlined in our manifesto "Renewed Hope 2023: Action Plan for a Better Nigeria".





'Music not enough to sustain Nigerian musicians luxury lifestyle'

Continued from page 18

this, music brings you into the room but what you do in that room is entirely up to you. So if you've read, which I know you have, you see that I've been more focused, especially when I became a family man. It's my sixth year in marriage, and ever since then, I've looked for different platforms that would keep my fame and family intact. So if you were to Google Jay Z or the wealthiest musicians in the world, you would see that only 10 per cent of their wealth is probably from music.

Does this mean the music will be secondary for you now?

No. I'm just trying to say that if you look at Kanye as a billionaire, Jay Z is a billionaire, and maybe he got like 100 million from music. The rest are from business and that is what Nigeria needs.

I was telling someone we need such a structure and the right merchandise. And then, of course, you can always make music. Music will forever be in me; I'm always going to release music.

Sometimes my people say you don't release music, but I attend shows, and when I do, they give me one hour to perform. I can't even perform all my songs in one hour. I cannot, even for three hours myself, but what can you do to give people to look up to.

We grew up not having anybody to look up to, but now the industry has us to look up to. These young crops of Nigerian musicians have so many role models. That's why we can tell them that 'if you are at your prime, it's high time you stopped doing stuff that you get paid peanuts for, you can partner with a brand that gives you a room where you can even begin to sponsor the next Nigeria Idol or Big Brother.

Does that mean that music is not as profitable?

No, I won't say that music is not as profitable, but music alone is not enough to attain that luxury lifestyle that musicians love.

You have your merchandise perfume line; recently you ventured into agriculture. How profitable are these ventures?

That's what it is all about. Having studied supermarket chains in Nigeria, I think we need to encourage more management in the industry. Nowadays, everybody wants to be famous, but the people behind that would help you manage things and say, 'Oh, you have a trending song now, but you can also have your merchandise.'

How affordable is your perfume line?

This retails for \$250 globally now.

Where do you stock it?

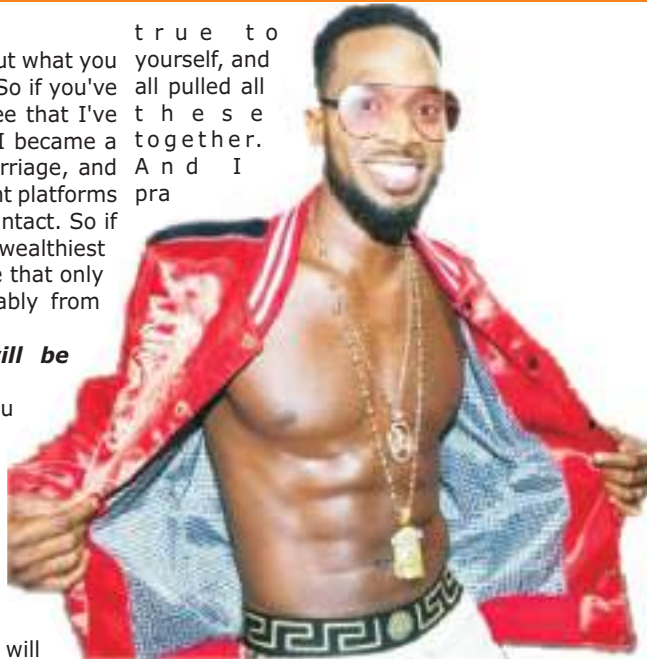
it's everywhere, gobuymore.com, you can buy it. My partners are from the UAE, and we will be doing a lot of promotions this year. We are partnering with Dubai tourism. In March, we would go and visit the factory, check the fragrances, meet the partners, to have that impact on the people.

And I know you will say \$250 is expensive, but trust me, for Gucci and all the rest that we already pay so much, it's the same thing we pay. So that's why I am saying that it is about time to start encouraging our products, because they have already accepted us, from the food, clothing, lifestyle, and even your clothes. So I'm looking forward to when an indigenous wine brand would endorse me.

You have been married for six years. What is the secret?

It is vital to me when I say that I got married when I got married, and also for the reason I got married. There are reasons people do stuff, and if you do it for the wrong reasons, it will affect you. For me, I thought I had reached that stage where I needed to form an empire, and for you to do this, you have to be stable, and then you have to be

true to yourself, and all pulled all these together. And I pray



yed to God a lot because the Bible says he who finds a wife finds a good thing, so I got myself my best friend, my best partner who understands and knows everything about me. So, yes, once in a while, you do miss all those days, but that's why I'm so happy that there's a difference between Oladapo Daniel Oyebanjo and Dbanj the Koko master, but when I get on stage anywhere, it's still the Koko master, it has not reduced. It (marriage) has not reduced the number of kokolets (ladies) that flock around me and rush to the stage. However, one has to be committed to one person, and that is what life is."

Would you allow your son to go into music?

Of course, my son if he wants to be a musician he is permitted, my daughter, on the other hand, I think she might already be a singer, you know I just celebrated her birthday, and she was dancing throughout, I think there is something there.

Are you challenged by the new crop of artistes we have now?

I love every one of them, and I think the industry is growing to such a level, which we've always prayed to have. And the issue is that they keep popping out, and they are all perfect so I won't say the word challenge. I'm not in competition with anyone. None of them will stand today and say I'm not a source of inspiration to their grace.

Is there any collaboration in the works?

Definitely

Is there any chance of you getting back with Don Jazzy or making music together?

If we are paid 'big' money. Somebody wanted to pay us last year (2021), but Don Jazzy moved it. He won't like that I said it was him, but that is the truth. We are all connected in a group, and they said we would do Mo'Hits Reunion, but I was out of the country then. But, Don Jazzy later said we should move it to 2022 to make it bigger. So, it is Don Jazzy you should ask. We are (still) friends."



Nigerian single female celebrities

Continued from page 18

Rukky Sanda



33-year old Nollywood actress and producer Rukky Sanda is one lady who has made her mark in Nollywood and is said to be one of the richest actresses in Nollywood. She was born on 23rd August 1984 in Ikorodu, Lagos State in the western part of Nigeria. She is currently 33 years old. She is a Muslim by religion. She was born in a polygamous family.

Her father married many wives. Rukky Sanda is originally from Ikorodu, Lagos State in the western part of Nigeria. She is very beautiful, creative, gifted, skillful and talented. She completed both her primary and secondary school education in Lagos State, Nigeria and obtained both her First School Leaving Certificate and West African Senior School Certificate.

After completing her primary and secondary school education, Rukky Sanda proceeded to Lagos State University and graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Banking and Finance in 2007. In 2004, Rukky Sanda joined the Nigerian movie industry (Nollywood) while still a student of Lagos State University. Rukky Sanda is currently single.

Cossy Orjiakor



Cossy Orjiakor who is popularly known as queen of boobs and butts is a famous Nollywood actress and producer. Cossy orjiakor who is currently in her late 30s is single and has no plan of settling down yet. Cossy Orjiakor who is a master degree holder in business Administration and a stunt businesswoman who is doing well for herself in business. Cossy Orjiakor is a Nigerian actress, singer, producer and a video vixen.

She came to limelight after featuring in a music video by Obesere. She is also controversially known for showing off her large bosoms at social events and music videos. She was born on 16th October 1983 in Anambra State, Nigeria and currently 35 years old. In 2015, she produced her first film, Power girls, under her production company Playgirl pictures. She graduated with a second class upper in Accounting and Management at the University of Nigeria Nsukka and obtained a master's degree from Lagos State University (LASU). Cossy Orjiakor is currently single.

SUNDAY FEATURE

Combating counterfeiting through product authentication

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development reveals that African countries are target destinations for counterfeit goods such as pharmaceuticals, foods and beverages. Unfortunately, the ultimate victims of counterfeiting are the consumers, who receive poor-quality goods and are exposed to health and safety dangers, writes *Salisu Sani Idris*.

In spite of the potential economic benefits of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCTA), there have been concerns by some stakeholders that it could lead to an increased rate of counterfeiting and dumping of substandard products.

No doubt, counterfeit products endanger health as consumers even death when they ingest fake food, drinks or drugs, or use counterfeit cosmetics.

Apart from the health and safety risks, industries worldwide also lose a lot to counterfeiters.

Products Authentication Mark (PAM) labels of the Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON).

Those losses, according to a report by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, not only affect the producers of genuine items but also involve social costs.

The World Customers Organisation believes that counterfeiting drains an estimated amount of 600 billion euros annually from the global economy.

To put it to proper perspective, this is equivalent to the loss of about five to seven per cent of trade in brand-name goods worldwide.

In addition, it is estimated that around 2.5 million jobs are lost due to counterfeiting across G20 economies alone.

This leads to a loss of tax revenue to governments, income loss to local manufacturers and loss of jobs in the employment that would have otherwise been generated.

It is estimated that trade in counterfeit goods is now worth more than five per cent of world trade.

Experts say that governments also incur large costs in destroying and prosecuting defaulters.

For instance, the Nigerian Copyrights Commission (NCC) says the country loses N918 trillion (\$3 billion) annually to the activities of pirates.

As of April 2022, the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) said that Nigeria has a 15 per cent of drug prevalence.

The Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON) estimates that about 75 per cent of auto spare parts in the country are fake.

Experts attribute the increasing wave of counterfeiting to advanced technology, increased international trade, emerging markets and an increased share of products that are attractive to imitate.



However, they say that concerted efforts are critical in combating the distribution of counterfeit goods in Nigeria.

Dr Abdulrasheed Yerima, National President, Nigerian Association of Small and Medium Enterprises (NASME), said such efforts are necessary to protect the society, economy and environment from the threats counterfeiting poses.

A consumer, Mr Fidelis Edeh, believes that due to the damages caused by substandard products, consumers must join in the fight against counterfeit products by consciously rejecting them.

"If counterfeiters must face stiff penalties, consumers must report illicit products/dealers to SON," Edeh said.

According to Ms Annabel Nkeruem, a public health analyst, consumers have a role to play in destroying counterfeit products and bringing their merchants to book.

As a regulatory body in charge of ensuring the maintenance of standards in local and imported products, SON said it is

demonstrating capacity in combating counterfeiting, fake and substandard products.

One of the ways through which the organisation is fighting the menace is by initiating the Products Authentication Mark (PAM).

According to Mr Tersoo Orgudwem, Director Product Certification, SON, the organisation introduced the SON Conformity Assessment Programme (SONCAP) to ensure that all imported products are of acceptable quality.

Orgudwem said for the international community not to assume Nigeria is creating a trade barrier; SON also introduced MANCAP for the locally manufactured goods in Nigeria.

"The world has become a global village, and Nigeria is part of that village, and we cannot run away from it, so we have introduced measures, particularly for imported goods.

"This ensures that Nigeria does not become a dumping ground for any other country. So, if they

want to trade with us, they should give us what they can use in their country.

According to Orgudwem, the consumer is fully involved in enforcing quality by scanning the PAM or sending a short message (SMS) to verify the product's status before purchasing a product.

According to him, PAM is designed such that the product has a stamp on it and consumers have the QR code either on their smartphones or there is a number on the stamp on the product.

"If you don't have an Android phone or an IOS phone, you can send the number of the product on the stamp to a toll-free code 281.

"And within five seconds, they will return a message telling you that the product is certified by SON and is good for use", he said.

According to Orgudwem, Nigeria makes up about 20 per cent of Africa's population, estimated at 220 million, making it a target market for both genuine and fake products.

Addressing the challenge posed by counterfeit products is a difficult task and an economist, Margaret Attah, says all relevant bodies should partner to ensure that the battle is won.

According to Attah, tackling counterfeit products successfully will massive benefit the economy because it will stimulate the growth of industries, attract investment and reduce unemployment.

While some stakeholders commend SON for initiating PAM to mitigate substandard products, others urge the government to ensure the prosecution of offenders.

The Director-General of SON, Farouk Salim, said the organisation was working with the National Assembly to amend its Act to make for more successful prosecution of counterfeiters.

"We are already working with NASS to amend the existing Act to increase the penalties such as jail terms for defaulters," he said. (NANFeatures)

NEWS

Thank you for tolerating me – Buhari to Nigerians

PRESIDENT Muhammadu Buhari has expressed gratitude to Nigerians for their patience during his eight-year presidency, which started in 2015.

Speaking on Friday, at the ninth and final Sallah homage by residents of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), led by the minister, Mohammed Bello, at the Banquet Hall of the Presidential Villa, Abuja, President Buhari, who noted that he must have hurt some people in the course of his duties, asked to be forgiven.

"Thank you for tolerating me...I consider myself lucky to have been a governor, minister and head of state and now president for two terms.

"I think this is a very good coincidence for me to say goodbye to you and to thank you for tolerating me for more than seven and half years now.

"I assure you, I have deliberately arranged to be as far away from you as possible not because I don't appreciate the love you've shown to me, but because I think I've gotten what I have asked and I would rather quietly retire to my hometown.

"Having been a Governor, Minister and the President twice, I think God has given us an incredible opportunity to serve as your president. And I thank God for that.

"So, please whoever feels I have done wrong to, we are all humans. There is no doubt I hurt some people and I wish you will pardon me. And those that think that I have hurt them so much, please pardon me", he appealed.

Earlier in his Eid message,



Buhari

President Buhari has scored his administration high in the just concluded elections in the country, enthusing that the elections were so transparent that some members of his party, the All Progressives Congress (APC), lost re-election

The President said that at no point did he interfere with the process in order to give unfair advantage to anyone.

President Buhari said that the peaceful outcome of the 2023 general elections "will go down on record as one of the proudest achievements of my administration in addition to our neutrality in the conduct of the elections."

He further explained that "the outcomes of the

elections were in line with my pledge to leave a legacy of free and fair elections.

"I'm proud that I have created a level playing field for all contestants regardless of party affiliation in order to produce a fair outcome for all.

According to the President, "free and fair elections are the only principles that give credibility to our democracy, because the subversion of the will of the people undermines democracy itself.

"The elections were so transparent that even members of the my own party were routed and unseated. At no point did I interfere with the process in order to give unfair advantage to anyone", he added.

The Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) has directed candidates for this year's Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) to proceed to print their examination notification slips.

This is contained in a statement by Dr Fabian Benjamin, Head, Public Affairs and Protocol of the board, and issued to newsmen on Friday in Lagos.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that a total of 1.5 million candidates would be sitting for this year's examination in 740 centres across the country.

"The Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) urges all candidates sitting for the 2023 main UTME, to proceed to print their examination notification slip from Thursday, April 20.

"The notification slip would contain their examination centre, time of examination, date of examination and other essential details necessary for taking the examination, which commences from Tuesday, April 25.

"To this effect therefore, all candidates taking the 2023 UTME are expected to print their examination notification slips on or before Monday, April 24, by visiting <https://www.jamb.gov.ng>, click on "2023 UTME SLIP PRINTING" on the menu bar, to know the time and venue of

2023 UTME: JAMB Candidates To Print Notification Slips



Adamu

their examination.

"Candidates are to also note that the information featured on the slip would enable them to easily locate their centres, before the examination.

"They are also enjoined to locate their centres before the day of their examination, to avoid arriving late at their respective examination centres," Benjamin said.

He warned candidates against going into the examination halls with prohibited items such as

wristwatches, calculators, flash drives and handsets, among others items.

Benjamin further enjoined candidates to note that the commencement time for their examination as contained in their notification slips, was sacrosanct.

"The board also want to restate its zero tolerance for examination malpractice and urges candidates to refrain from any ignoble act or conduct during the all Computer Based Test (CBT)," he said. (NAN)

Agency urges farmers to embrace climate smart agriculture

THE African Union Development Agency – New Partnership for Africa's Development (AUDA-NEPAD) has urged rural farmers to embrace climate smart

agricultural practices, to improve their yields and ensure food security in the country.

The National Coordinator and Chief Executive Officer, AUDA-NEPAD Nigeria, Princess Akobundu, gave the

advice at a one-week workshop on Climate Smart Agriculture, organised for farmers in Edo.

In a statement signed by Marcel Anyatonwu, Media Officer of the agency on Friday, Akobundu called on farmers to use the knowledge acquired for their personal, community and national benefit.

Ms Akobundu, who was represented by Zacchaeus Maxwell, Director, Planning, Development and Implementation, AUDA-NEPAD Nigeria, said the workshop was apt, adding that no nation could develop adequately if her citizens were hungry and poor.

"Agriculture has been used as an important instrument in eradicating hunger, poverty and all forms of malnutrition.

"It will be a key determinant for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals Agenda 2030 and African Union Agenda 2063," she said.

Also speaking, Olotu Yahaya, a guest lecturer from the Department of Agricultural Technology, Auchi Polytechnic, Edo said: "It is important to educate and equip farmers with modern and climate smart agricultural practices, considering the effects of climate change on agriculture".

Mr Yahaya, who spoke on the topic, "Climate Smart Agriculture and Food Security", added that when the practices are properly applied, farmers would witness great improvement in their yields as well as their

Court nullifies sections of CAMA 2020

A Federal High Court (FHC), Abuja has nullified some sections of the Companies and Allied Matters Act (CAMA), 2020 which were considered to infringe on the fundamental human rights of the Nigerian citizens. Justice James Omotosho, who struck out the sections in a judgment, held that the plaintiff, Mr Emmanuel Ekpenyong, had a locus standi to institute the suit on the subject matter.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that Ekpenyong, an Abuja-based legal practitioner, had in a suit marked: FHC/ABJ/CS/1076/2020, sued the National Assembly, Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) and the Attorney-General for the Federation (AGF) as 1st to 3rd defendants respectively.

In the originating summons dated and filed on Aug. 31, 2020, the lawyer prayed the court to determine whether he had the locus standi to institute the proceeding.

"Whether the provisions of Sections 839, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848

and 851 of the Companies and Allied Matters Act infringes on the plaintiff's right to thought, conscience, and religion as enshrined in Section 38 of the 1999 Constitution (as amended)."

Ekpenyong urged the court to further determine whether those sections infringed on his freedom of peaceful assembly and association as enshrined in Section 40 of the 1999 Constitution.

He also prayed the court to determine whether the provisions on the Administrative Proceeding Committee in Section 851 of CAMA, 2020 was inconsistent with the provisions of Section (6)(6)(b) and Sections 36(1) and 251(1) (e) of the 1999 Constitution.

He asked the court to determine whether the court had powers to grant mandatory injunctive reliefs against the defendants.

The lawyer, therefore, prayed the court to void the affected sections, having infringed on his fundamental human rights.

In a counter affidavit dated and filed Jan 20, 2021 by counsel to the CAC, Olasoji Olowolafe, the commission described the suit as "an abuse of judicial process."

According to the commission, the action is academic hypothetical and of no utilitarian value to the plaintiff.

CAC, which argued that the case was not backed by any credible evidence, prayed the court to dismiss it.

The National Assembly, in its preliminary objection, also contended that the suit was incompetent because pre-action notice was not served on them and that the plaintiff had no locus standi.

Besides, the AGF argued that the suit did not have a reasonable cause of action, while insisting that the plaintiff lacked locus to file the matter.

Ekpenyong, however, filed a reply on points of law, among others, to counter their arguments.

Delivering the judgment, Justice Omotosho held that under Article 3 (e) of the Preamble to the Fundamental Rights

(Enforcement Procedure) Rules, anyone could bring fundamental human rights matters on his own interest, on behalf of another person or even in public interest.

The judgment, which was delivered on Tuesday, was sighted on Friday by NAN.

According to the judge, under the new human rights regime, a court shall not dismiss a human right action for mere want of locus standi.

He, therefore, held that the plaintiff in the case had locus to institute the suit.

Justice Omotosho held that the powers granted to CAC to regulate and administer Incorporated Trustees in Nigeria under Sections 839, 842, 843, 844, Section 845, Section 846, Section 847, Section 848 of the CAMA 2020 had infringed on Ekpenyong's right to freedom of thoughts.

He also held that the sections infringed on the conscience and religion as enshrined under Section 38 of the constitution and freedom of peaceful assembly and association

SUNDAY NEWS

Buhari should assent to Nigeria Peace Corps Bill

THE Bill for an Act to Establish the Nigerian Peace Corps (NPC) passed by the two Chambers of the National Assembly is currently with Buhari for assent having been transmitted to him last week.

The Bill for an Act to Establish the Nigerian Peace Corps (NPC) passed by the two Chambers of the National Assembly is currently with Buhari for assent having been transmitted to him last week.

Justifying the need for Buhari to sign the Bill, Akoh explained that its entire contents, especially the functions contained in the Bill are a summation of inclusive empowerment programmes for the youth and on how to harness their innate potential for the overall tasks of nation-building.

According to him, the passage of the Nigerian Peace Corps Bill is not only timely, reassuring, and a renewed hope for the Nigerian youth, but also a pointer to the fact that the political elites are still very much conscious of the social challenges confronting the youth and therefore, passionate on proffering solutions to the challenges to same in order to place the youth in the front burner of our national life.

Akoh said to underscore the high level of acceptability of the Nigerian Peace Corps Bill, opinion polls conducted in 2017 by The Nation Newspaper, Naija.com, and Nigerian Television Authority (NTA-Good Morning Nigeria) revealed that 89%, 76%, and 97% respectively supported the establishment of the Nigerian Peace Corps.

He said: "Concerned with the increasing waves of unemployment and high level of poverty in the land, both past and present administrations initiated different intervention policies to mitigate these challenges.

Some of these initiatives are Subsidy Reinvestment Programme (SURE-P), You-Win, Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT), N-Power, Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP), Government Intervention Funds (GIF), Nigerian Youth Investment Fund (NYIF) and Social Safety Net (SSN).

It is a proven fact and incontrovertible reality that once these 'Financial Handouts' are no longer forthcoming or delayed in coming, these same youths go back to the streets on protest or quickly revert to social ills and unproductive preoccupations, and even sometimes back-lashing the Government.

However, it is advisable that a more robust, sustainable, and institutionalized approach be adopted to ensure the irreversibility of conditions and welfare status of our youths. In more developed economies, efforts are tailored towards the pre-occupation of the youths in productive ventures where they will be economically useful to themselves and the larger society.

This is in addition to engaging them in moral, citizenship, and leadership training aimed at character building and their valuable participation in nation-building.

In the United States of America, for instance, the American Peace Corps was created as an agency to promote World Peace and Friendship by training American youths as volunteers to perform social and humanitarian services overseas, including Nigeria. "The volunteers help communities in Developing Countries improve their Social and Economic conditions.

"The dynamic nature of insecurity in Nigeria today

- Commandant

requires role differentiation as a panacea to expertise in addressing security challenges. It also requires multi- sectoral, multi-lateral and multi-dimensional approaches to tackle.

In more advanced societies, Youth Based Organisations like the Nigerian Peace Corps, are established with the sole aim of engaging and pre-occupying the youths as a panacea to the social consequences of being unemployed.

"Similar organisations that exist in other parts of the world are: the American Peace Corps, Canadian Peace Corps, Bangladesh National Cadet Corps, Peace Officers Commission in China, Chinese Labour Corps, Lera Uniform Corps of Malaysia, Malaysian People Volunteer Corps, Production and Construction Corps of China.

All these are consciously and deliberately designed to empower and socially pre-occupy the youths so that their state of idleness won't be exploited adversely".

Akoh thanked the volunteers to perform social leadership and entire members of the 9th National Assembly for the unanimous support given to his Organisation all through the legislative processes leading to the eventual passage of the Bill for an Act to Establish Nigerian Peace Corps.



Buhari

PUBLIC NOTICE

CHRIST'S KINGDOM MINISTRY INTERNATIONAL

This is to inform the general public that the above named has applied to corporate affairs commission CAC Abuja for registration under part 'f' of companies and allied matter Act (CAMA 2020).

TRUSTEES

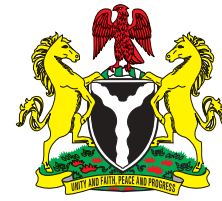
1. Apostle. Jerry Joshua Chairman
2. Micah Stephen. Member
3. Bar Musa Kadiri. Secretary.

Aim and Objective

1. To preach the gospel of Christ to all.
2. To encourage unity, love to mankind

Any objections to the registration should be forwarded to the Registrar General, Corporate Affairs Commission, plot 402, Tigris Crescent, Off Aguyi Itonsi Street, Maitama, Abuja within 28 days of this publication.

**Signed:
Secretary**



**GOVERNMENT OF PLATEAU STATE
MINISTRY OF LANDS, SURVEY & TOWN PLANNING**

No. 2 Joseph Gomwalk Boulevard, P.O. Box 2037, Jos-Plateau State

PUBLIC NOTICE OF REVOCATION

The general public is hereby informed that following the approval of His Excellency, the Executive Governor of Plateau State on the 7th February, 2023, all the under listed plots have been revoked for lack of development in line with the terms of grant.

By this notice, all legal rights hitherto held by the previous owners are by this notice extinguished.

No transaction shall be undertaken by all or any of the previous owners with respect to the plot(s) except with the authorization of the Ministry first had and obtained.

Revoked plots at Dong residential layout

| S/NO. | BLOCK | PL NUMBER |
|-------|--------------------------------|-----------|
| 1. | Block A – Plot 16 | PL 34440 |
| 2. | Block B – 7 | PL 34659 |
| 3. | Block E – Plot 9 | PL 34935 |
| 4. | Block E – Plot 5 | |
| 5. | Block F – Plot 4 | PL 32867 |
| 6. | Block I – Plot 9 | PL 27875 |
| 7. | Block I – Plot 10 | PL 34572 |
| 8. | Block I Rocky Area | PL 35034 |
| 9. | Block J – Plot 6 | PL 34278 |
| 10. | Block J – Plot 7 | PL 34201 |
| 11. | Block K – Plot 12 | PL 28792 |
| 12. | Block N – Plot 1 | PL 24034 |
| 13. | Block N – Plot 7 | PL 34374 |
| 14. | Block O – Plot 1 | |
| 15. | Block O – Plot 2 | PL 34823 |
| 16. | Rocky Area | PL 29440 |
| 17. | Block 11 ^B | PL 34733 |
| 18. | Block P – Plot 11 ^A | PL 33450 |
| 19. | Block T – Plot 8 | PL 9250 |
| 20. | Block T – Plot 9 | PL 34526 |

**Signed:
Management**

CHANGE OF NAME

I formerly known as **TONGKYAS CALEP**, now wish to be known and address as, **TONGKYAS CALEB**. All former documents remain valid. First Bank and general the public to please take note.

NEWS

Lalong tasks Muslim Ummah on peace, love

By PALANG KASMI

AS the Muslim ummah concludes the 2023 fasting period that ushers in the celebration of Eid el fitr, Plateau State Governor, Simon Bako Lalong has tasked them to imbibe love, tolerance and peace.

The Governor who is also the Chairman of the Northern Governors Forum has also congratulated the Muslim Ummah on a successful completion of the Ramadan fast and for being alive to witness another Eid el Fitr.

He gave the goodwill felicitations in a message Friday.

The Governor said the Ramadan period provided them an opportunity to carry out spiritual rejuvenation and acts of charity that are in tandem with the message of Prophet Mohammed.

"The celebration of Eid el Fitr is not only significant to Muslims alone but provides an opportunity for people of other faiths to share in the joy and essence of the moment", he said in message.



Lalong

According to the governor, "The event should help Nigerians to reflect on love, tolerance, peace and good neighbourliness which are virtues that are enshrined in the teachings of the two major

faiths in the country".

Lalong urged Nigerians to celebrate with vigilance and report any suspicious activity to the security agencies who have been fully mobilised to respond to any threat to peace and security.

By EZEKIEL DONTINA

PLATEAU State Commissioner of Health, Dr. Nimkong Lar Ndam, has encouraged caregivers known as "Hope Group Facilitators" in the state to develop confidence in those suffering from Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) because they hope and depend on them. He stated this Thursday when delivering his opening remark at a 2-day training of "Hope Group Facilitators" on Basic Lymphoedema Management, Psychosocial and Mental Health, Reorientation on Data Collection and Programme Strategizing organised by The Carter Centre in collaboration with the ministry, held at the conference hall of Jos-South LGA.

The Commissioner, represented by the ministry's Permanent Secretary, Engr. Gotan Benjamin James, said, "We are assuring you that as a ministry that has been working in collaboration with you, we will continue to offer more service that you need so that you will be able to offer more services to these clients because we believe that your success is also our success.

"This means that, you have a lot of work to do. These people are depending on you and

Develop confidence in NTDs clients - Health Commissioner



Ndam

their hope is on you. You people are actually the hope of these clients and you can be that to them only when you the caregivers allow them to develop confidence in you. But if there is no confidence in you, they will continue to run away.

"So, for that reason, I want to charge you to sustain what you are doing and continue to allow them to develop confidence in you. We cannot count how many of these people have committed suicide as a result of these diseases because they have lost hope. So, they are actually counting on you. As you sit here today, see it as part of your contributions and do as if you are doing it to God", he encouraged.

The commissioner however, commended journalists for the wonderful job they are doing in trying to create awareness that would reach communities. He called on them to help in creating more awareness so that these people would believe there is hope for them on the Plateau.

Earlier, the Director Public Health, Dr. Bunan Mawfwalun, represented by his deputy, Mrs. Elsie Rengkwari, called on the caregivers to be proactive and committed to what they have learned and ensure that they use it to fish out those

suffering from these diseases for them to have hope, because no knowledge is useless.

On his part, the Data Manager of The Carter Centre (TCC), Bulus Mancha, disclosed that the training was to equip caregivers and supervisors on the LF Morbidity Management. He said "We have a different approach to this training from others that we have been doing. This one brought in the mental problems that the clients have suffered.

"So, after this training, we expect that these caregivers will be equipped enough to help these clients both physically and psychosocially as well as economically so that they will be able to make both themselves and family happy without stigmatization and depression", he assured.

There were goodwill messages from the state Neglected Tropical Diseases Coordinator, Philemon Dagwa, the Deputy Director, Primary Health Care of Jos-South, John Zandi and Deputy Director Personnel Management of Jos-South LGA, Mr. Dong Silas Babuje, the representative of Council Chairman, Hon. Gideon Dung Dandareng, respectively.

Benue, Kaduna killings compound Nigeria's food crisis

THE recent killings by herdsmen in Benue and Kaduna - key crop-producing states - are worsening the plight of farmers who are already faced with a myriad of crises, threatening the country's food production.

The herdsmen attacked Agatu, Apa, Kwande, Guma, and Otukpo Local Government Areas of Benue and Zangon Kataf Local Government Area of Kaduna, killing and sacking farmers as well as destroying properties and farmlands.

Experts say the situation will worsen the country's food crisis and derail its plan to broaden the economy through agriculture.

Aondongu Saaku, chairman of the All Farmers Association of Nigeria (AFAN), Benue State chapter, said several agrarian communities have been displaced in Benue, with farming activities under threat in a state that produces over 10 percent of the food consumed in the country.

"This is the time farmers are planting in the state, and many have stayed away from their farmlands because of the numerous killings," Saaku said. "This will create a shortfall in food production in the state, and prices will surge further."

"We have over 2,000 farmers from Benue in IDPs now owing to the killings. The situation is pathetic, and the federal government is not doing anything about it," he added.

The security situation in Africa's most populous nation has been deteriorating in recent years and is more

intense in key crop-producing states, thus adversely affecting food production and causing a surge in imports.

Data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) show that the country spent N1.9 trillion in 2022 importing food, while growth in the sector slowed to 1.88 percent, its lowest rate in the last decade.

"Lots of farmers have abandoned their farmlands for fear of being kidnapped," said Ibrahim Kabiru, national president of AFAN. "Farmers should be able to carry out their farming activities without any form of fear and harvest without having to pay bandits. These are crucial in preventing a food crisis."

Agriculture is the sector that can revive the country's economy and generate revenue because of its enormous opportunities for job creation.

But to achieve this, farmers' income must be improved and commercial farming must be encouraged. "The killing is also affecting the income of farmers. If there is no income, there will be poverty," Saaku said.

The high rate of insecurity in the country has also continued to deter new agric investments in key crop-growing states while putting existing agribusinesses in constant peril.

Data from the NBS show that foreign direct investment in the agric sector hit \$95.8 million (N44.2 billion) in 2022, down 73.8 percent from \$366.07 million (N168.7 billion) in 2021.

Inflation is accelerating in

Africa's biggest economy, while humanitarian needs have intensified over worsening insecurity in the middle and northern states of the country.

High costs of inputs and the impact of climate change are hurting Nigeria's agricultural production, and any loss of farmland or harvest will play an even bigger role in worsening food insecurity in the country, experts say.

"We are already in a food crisis and can't afford to allow agricultural production to be hampered in any way," Folorusho Olayemi, lead consultant and chief executive of Sammorf Agro-Consult Limited, said.

Recently, the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) said 25.3 million people in Nigeria would face acute food insecurity from

Sallah: Bello tasks Muslims on national unity, integration

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

AS Muslim faithful all over the world complete the 1444/2023 Ramadan fast to celebrate the Eid-el-Fitr, Kogi State Governor, Yahaya Bello has tasked Nigerians on ensuring unity and integration for the progress of the nation.

Bello also charged Muslims that they should endeavour to stick to the lessons of Ramadan which proffer solutions to some of the problems facing the country today.

Bello made the call in a statement by his Chief Press Secretary, Onogwu Muhammed, on Thursday in Lokoja, saying that the teachings of Ramadan were centered on humanity, kindness, peace and love.

June to August 2023 lean season - a period when stocks are depleted and food prices reach their peaks.

The FAO 2023 report said that the state of insecurity in northern Nigeria plays a major role in the projected rate of food insecurity in the country.

"Acute food insecurity is mostly driven by the deterioration of security conditions and conflicts in northern states have led to the displacement of about 3.17 million people and are constraining farmers' access to their lands," FAO said.

Nigeria's March inflation rate quickened to a new 17-year high of 22.04 percent, while food inflation, which constitutes 50 percent of the inflation rate, accelerated to 24.46 percent in March from 24.35 percent in the previous month.

The governor also urged all Muslims to ensure that the lessons they had learnt during the Ramadan season and their act of devotion remain a consistent way of life even after the 29 days exercise. Bello noted that Ramadan was a season of several teachings that center on humanity, kindness, peace and love hence if these lessons were imbibed, many of the problems in the country would be reduced. He also extended his felicitation to all Muslims all over, particularly in Kogi on the successful completion of the 2023 Ramadan fast.

The governor thanked God Almighty for keeping everyone who had witnessed the end of the Islamic holy month in strength and health.

again harp on the gains of our peaceful coexistence and national integration as he calls on every Nigerian to offer prayers for the leaders most importantly as the country is preparing for the transition of government at the federal and in most states of the federation. "I congratulate the Muslim faithful on the successful completion of the 2023 Ramadan fast and the celebration of Eid-el Fitr. The end of Ramadan does not signify an end to good deeds, tolerance and peaceful coexistence amongst the human race. Therefore, we must continue to imbibe the beautiful lessons learned during the holy month. Nigeria's greater achievements as a nation lie in

us being united and not allowing ethnic, religious and political party affiliations to divide us. "The various sectional agitations would never emerge in the interest of anyone, instead we should collectively proffer solutions to the numerous ills of our nation through effective democratic participation, support and prayers for our leaders", he said. Bello further restated the commitment of his administration to ensuring that Kogi and its people continue to enjoy the dividends of democracy.

This, he said, could only be guaranteed when the lives and properties of people were safe.

SUNDAY MAGAZINE

Adamawa Guber polls: Intrigues, power play and implications



Continued from page 10

According to **SUNDAY STANDARD** sources, Mrs Buhari, who once convened a meeting of Adamawa leaders in Abuja, said, the only female governorship candidate in the country must be dropped.

She then directed all stakeholders to vote for a former Chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Mallam Nuhu Ribadu if the court demands a re-run of the primary election.

According to the report, the reason for the First Lady's opposition to Binani was because she (Binani) offended her by crossing over to the PDM in 2015 instead of remaining in APC to support her husband's presidential ambition.

Therefore, Binani was in the eye of the storm within the APC well before the elections with the perceived heavy backing of the federal might. Her overconfidence that she could ride on the federal might to power might have contributed to the controversies surrounding Adamawa's election.

Unfortunately, the PDP almost played the part of the sacrificial lamb or rather the scape goat were it not for power of the Adamawa people. In such an uncertain scenario, the will of the people usually settles it. That is a democracy power is to the people.

Meanwhile, the Independent

National Electoral Commission (INEC) has also played a crucial role in stabilizing the situation. It did that by ensuring that the process was concluded and washing its hands from the alleged compromise of the Adamawa elections.

The National Commissioner and Chairman, Information and Voter Education Committee, Festus Okoye, had reacted to a statement by a candidate of one of the political parties, accusing the commission of undermining the integrity of the process that produced Ahmadu Umaru Fintiri as Adamawa State governor-elect.

The accuser had alleged that the commission's personnel paid a discreet, nocturnal visit to the Government House in Yola, ostensibly with a view to compromising the outcome of the polls, a claim INEC strongly challenged.

Insisting that no such visit took place, Okoye said, doing so would have out rightly undermined the oath of neutrality sworn by staff of the commission.

He reminded the public that it has been a standard practice for the commission to deploy national commissioners or resident electoral commissioners from nearby states to support their colleagues during off-cycle elections, noting that it was not strange that the commission followed the pattern during the supplementary election in Ad-

amawa.

Okoye's statement read in part: "Ordinarily, the commission does not join issues with partisan actors, particularly where no evidence has been proven.

"To set the records straight, no such visit or meeting took place let alone the compilation of any purported list of collation and returning officers. Such a meeting would have been contrary to the oath of neutrality that we all swore to. Moreover, every conscientious observer would have noticed that the commission appointed and retained only one returning officer for the governorship election who also doubled as the state collation officer for the presidential election, (SCOPE).

"Like all returning officers nationwide, he was issued a letter of appointment by the commission and the Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC) in

Adamawa State was duly informed. The list of collation officers were also forwarded to the state with every page of the list personally endorsed by the chairman of the commission well ahead of the arrival of the national commissioners.

"Similarly, the same press statement created the impression that the national headquarters of the commission specifically targeted Adamawa State in its deployment of national commissioners and other officials with the sole intention of influencing the outcome of the supplementary election held on Saturday 25th April 2023 and sidelining the REC. Nothing can be further from the truth.

"For the record, it has been the standard policy and practice of the commission to deploy national commissioners, RECs and other staff from the head-

quarters or neighbouring states for supplementary or off-cycle elections where doing so is considered necessary.

"In the case of Adamawa State where supplementary governorship election was held in 69 polling units, two national commissioners were deployed while for Kebbi State involving 142 polling units, three national commissioners were deployed.

"Similarly, one national commissioner was deployed to Sokoto, Zamfara, Imo, Rivers, Ekiti and Ogun States. This has been the standard practice of the commission of which all RECs are informed in advance. Therefore, Adamawa State was not specifically targeted. In all other states, the RECs worked cooperatively with the national commissioners except in Adamawa State for reasons that are now obvious to all".

Similarly, the same press statement created the impression that the national headquarters of the commission specifically targeted Adamawa State in its deployment of national commissioners and other officials with the sole intention of influencing the outcome of the supplementary election held on Saturday 25th April 2023 and sidelining the REC. Nothing can be further from the truth. "For the record, it has been the standard policy and practice of the commission to deploy national commissioners, RECs and other staff from the headquarters or neighbouring states for supplementary or off-cycle elections where doing so is considered necessary."

METRO-FOCUS

Mechanic workshop as hospital for cars

By JIDAUNA DARING

THE idea which led to the discovery of motor car must have considered what its uses and relevance to the society. This was not a misplacement of idea, particularly in the transport sector across the globe.

In view of this, the importance of motor car as a means of transportation to the people is unquantifiable, looking at its numerous usages. In fact, due to the advent of cars, gone are the days that our fore fathers, when our forefathers were being subjected to long trekking, spanning days to cover long distances to reach their destinations, no matter the condition of the weather.

In fact, what is more astonishing, if one is to look back to those days, is the fact that one could perhaps see that people had passed through difficulties in life, when it comes to the issues of movement of humans and any kind of goods from one place to another.

Since there were challenges of advancement in technology, people had to resort to the use of horses or donkeys to move their goods or loads from one point to another. In fact, the people also subjected themselves to carrying or conveying some of their goods or loads on their heads and trekked with them, whether they were heavy or not, covering both short and long distances.

However, the discovery of motor-car by scientists, across the globe has swept away those horrific days of our fore-fathers. With these important development, many people that were blessed with financial resources have bought different cars as many as they could, either meant for commercial or private use.

Like most manufactured things, there are often challenges that rear their heads as a result of technical faults, whether in the engine or outside the engine. However, it is expected that when such unplanned things happen with a car, the car owner will of course need to get the attention or services of specialist mechanics that have certified mechanic workshop.

Therefore, an auto mechanic as the name implies, is someone that repairs customers' vehicles when they are faulty and brought into the repair shop. The mechanics work on everything from engines to belts, body of car, to brakes, etc.

Also worthy of note is the fact that the mechanics' work include diagnosing problems with cars/trucks and also performing repairs, maintenance regarding whatever problems discovered. This is to ensure that the car is fixed back as regards its technical faults.

Equally too, these mechanics as professionals know how to carry out diagnostics that would enable



them understand an issue properly. As experts, they know how to communicate with customers clearly and concisely. In this regard, "what is worth doing is worth doing well." This is because a good auto mechanic,

who stands for the truth, is someone who is trust worthy, honest and knows how to solve problems without any form of delay.

Speaking with **Metro Focus**, a mechanic with a mechanic

workshop around Jenta Adamu junction Jos, Mr. Adefemi Ajibi said that he finds joy in doing the work, since it brings food on the table of his family among others.

Ajibi told **Metro Focus** that he became interested in the mechanic work as a result of observing his late father. He recalled that he once told his father that the time was coming that he would be the one that would be repairing his father's car, which later became a reality because of the interest he has for the job.

He said that he started his apprentice's work 1986 where he spent four years to learn the work. Ajibi said that his personal motor mechanic workshop was open in 1990, and still remains functional.

Ajibi maintained that he has trained many people and he is still training more. He explained that all those that he has trained are doing excellently well and have also opened their own personal carriage in different states.

He disclosed that some of the challenges faced now is low patronage of customers compared to some years back. He noted that another challenge is that some customers after buying some spare-parts and fixing it for them, they leave with the promise without to pay after the work is successfully done for them but only a negligible number keep the promise.

Ajibi further emphasized that such customers' attitude has continued to affect his work and it is a setback to him.

He told **Metro Focus** that he believes in transparency in the course of rendering or providing services to customers at all times, and promised to sustain such tempo.

A commuter, who is a resident of Phototek, Abattoir Jos. Mr. Yusuf Sarki while sharing his experience on attitude of some mechanics said that some mechanics are fond of dismantling some cars and then abandon such to attend to another person's. In the process, some valuable items may get missing, leaving the owner of the dismantled car stranded.

Sarki said that he has discovered that most of the mechanics have developed the attitude of having divided attention while attending to customers.

He explained that another bad side of some mechanics is that some are fond of collecting money from the customers in the name of buying new parts, but would in the end, replace the old parts that were removed to maximize profit. He added that they sometimes remove some customers' car parts without their consent, and described such attitudes as ungodly.

SUNDAY PEOPLE

PPBA HOSTS CONSULTATIVE MEETING

The Plateau Peace Building Agency (PPBA) ICT Unit recently hosted a consultative meeting with selected stakeholders to present the upgraded official website of the Agency



Director General, Plateau Peace Building Agency, Mr. Joseph Lengmang delivering his speech at the meeting



Cross section of participants listening with rapt attention



Cross section of stakeholders listening to speeches



Agency's Director of Operations, Mr. Gayi Gayi responding to some issues at the stakeholders meeting



Some participants in a group photograph



One of the stakeholders Barr. Henry H. Longpoe making some remarks



PPBA Head of Communication, Mr. Kenneth Dakop making some remarks



PPBA staff and participants in a photograph after the stakeholders meeting

Photos: PPBA COMMUNICATION UNIT



Drive's protection

Who is a driver?

A driver is a person who operates an engine-powered motor vehicle with four or more wheels. This category of road users is enclosed because he operates from within the vehicle.

Before setting out

- I. Plan route and give enough time
- II. Do not use clothing and footwear that pose difficulties in operating the vehicle controls.
- III. Know where all the controls are as you will need them in the course of your driving.
- IV. Adjust seat, steering wheel, mirrors and headrest correctly for ease of control and clear view.
- V. Ensure vehicle has sufficient fuel before setting off.
- VI. Ensure vehicle brakes and lighting systems as well as other essential parts are functioning properly.
- VII. Do not drive under influence of alcohol, drugs or other harmful substances.

Note: Do not use phone while driving.

Long Distance Driving

- I. Always ensure there is fresh air in your vehicle to keep you awake and alive.
- II. Stop at a convenient place for ten to fifteen minutes after every four hours of continuous driving to rest and walk around to let blood circulate and feed your brain adequately.
- III. Have a co-driver for any journey exceeding ten hours.
- IV. Avoid fatigue, it is a silent killer.
- V. Do not drive if tired or sick.
- VI. Do not rely on drugs, coffee, kola nut, chewing sticks, etc. to stay awake.

Note: Ability to drive coordinate become difficult when under stress

Driver's Protection

Driver's protection mechanism in a vehicle include:

- Seatbelt, Airbags, Headrest, etc.
- I. Seatbelt: A seatbelt is a vehicle safety device designed to secure the occupants of a vehicle against harmful movement that may result during a sudden stop or collision.
- Note:**
 - a. Always fasten the seatbelt and ensure that everyone in the vehicle belts up.
 - b. Ensure seatbelt mechanisms are functional and kept clean always.
- ii. Airbag: An airbag is the vehicle occupant restraints system designed to provide the occupants with a soft cushioning and restraints during a crash event.

Note:

- a. Check to ensure the airbag is functional by watching out for indicator lights which comes on momentarily and goes out.
- b. Airbag saves lives, and also reduce head and chest injury in the event of a crash.
- iii. Headrest: Headrest are automotive safety features, attached to the top of each seat to limit the rearward movement of the adult occupant's head in the event of a

collusion. It prevents neck hyperextension in a crash which often lead to whiplash injury. Headrests are adjustable to suit the head position.

Driver's responsibilities to passengers

- i. Ensure that all passengers fasten their seatbelts.
- ii. ensure appropriate use of headrests.
- iii. do not overload the vehicles and/or goods.
- iv, do not cause discomfort to passengers with goods, music, offensive odour, etc.
- v. Ensure passengers embark and disembark at safe locations.

Driving Under Influence (DUI)

- I. Do not drive influence of alcohol, drugs or other harmful substances. They impair vision judgment, coordination and slow down reaction.
- II. Maximum permissible blood alcohol level for drivers is 0.5gms per litre or 0.05 degree of blood alcohol concentration (BAC).

Transporting Animals

I. Driver's Protection

A driver must take the following care while transporting animals in vehicle:

- I. Animals in vehicle should be kept under control.
- II. Ensure they do not disturb you while driving by keeping them secure at the back.
- III. Do not load livestock and passengers together.

Note: while on the highway, always watch out for unrestrained or unguarded herds or animals crossing the road.

Leading an animal

- i. Do not let pet animals out on its own.
- ii. Do not let animals into traffic.
- iii. While leading an animal on a road that has not footpath, walk on the left hand side and keep it close to edge.

Horse Riding

- i. When riding a horse, keep to the ride side of the road.
- ii. If riding a horse while leading another, still keep to the right and keep to the led animal on your right.
- iii. Avoid riding a horde on the highway or expressway.

Herding Live Stocks

- I. When herding live stocks, keep them under control at all times.
- II. When herding livestock alone or across the road, send someone ahead to look out for traffic at such places like bends, brow of hills, where other road users will not see in good time and lead them across when it is safe to do so.
- III. It is safety not to lead live stocks in the dark, but if it must be done, herdsman should wear reflective clothing, carry staff (stick) covered with reflective tape and lights in addition to white and red lights at the front and rear respectively.

NEWS

Eid el Fitri: Guber candidate, urges Muslims on prayer

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

THE candidate of the ruling All Progressives Congress for the November 11 Kogi State Governorship election, Alh. Usman Ahmed Ododo has urged Muslims across the country to continue to pray for the nation's peaceful co-existence

Alh. Ododo in a statement made available to Newsmen in Lokoja, on Thursday, congratulated Muslims on the successful completion of Ramadan Fast, urging them to imbibe the spirit of humility, love and sacrifice that the season represent.

According to him, his victory is one of the blessings of the Month of Ramadan.

The APC Guber Flag Bearer however, enjoined Muslims



Abdullahi

to imbibe the lessons of the be security alert and report season beyond the Holy suspicious movement month to earn them Allah's capable safeguarding blessings. threat to the security of

Ododo called on residents lives and property during of the state to watch out, the celebration.

Senate shifts plenary resumption to May 2

THE Senate has postponed its resumption in plenary to May 2, 2023.

The Senate clerk, Chinedu Francis Akubueze, announced the postponement in a statement on Friday.

The Red Chamber had, on April 5, adjourned sitting to allow lawmakers observe

the Easter and Eid-el Fitr Nigeria that the holidays and to resume resumption of the Senate Tuesday, April 25.

No reason was given for rescheduled from Tuesday, 25th April, 2023 to Tuesday, 2nd May, 2023.

Akubueze urged senators "All Distinguished to resume sitting in plenary Senators are by this notice on Tuesday, 2nd May, 2023 requested to resume by 10:00 am. sitting in plenary on

He said, "This is to inform Tuesday, 2nd May, 2023 by all distinguished senators 10:00 am prompt, please." of the Federal Republic of

Eid-el-Fitr: Cleric seeks improved Nigeria, advises President-elect

THE Chief Imam of Sideeqat Ahmad Megida Central Mosque Ikorodu, Nurudeen Abdul-Kadiri, has urged the President -elect to uphold justice and protect lives and property in his incoming administration.

Abdul-Kadiri made the plea at the Eid-el Fitr prayer held in Ikorodu, Lagos State on Friday.

The cleric stated that Allah said in the Holy Quran that he would not change the condition of any nation except the people were just and renounce all their evil ways.

"If all of us can stop our evil ways, Allah will fix Nigeria for us.

"My advice to the incoming government is that they uphold justice, protect lives and property, and unite the people.

"President-elect should ask Nigerians to go back to the basics because if we get it right at the level of the family, the society will be better for all.

"The incoming administration should make education and food affordable and available for the masses," he advised.

He urged Nigerians to "We need a leader that always remember leaders really has the masses in in prayers and support mind to help and care for them to succeed. them.

Abdul-Kadiri pleaded with "That is the kind of the Nigerian Muslims to leader that we need continue with the good presently and we believe deeds they exhibited the President-elect Sen. during the Ramadan Bola Tinubu will do that for our people.

The cleric urged Muslims "The situation is not good to allow God's enough but we have faith in consciousness to be the Allah that will make it driving force of all their better for us through the actions leader that we have

According to him, the elected," Oreagba said. primary purpose of Another preacher, Hajia Ramadan is to inculcate Zainab Moshood, urged the piety, pointing out that with Lagos State Government to this, the society would be improve on the traffic balanced and peaceful. situation in the state.

Prof. Ibrahim Oreagba of She said this was Pharmacology and necessary to reduce time of Toxicology Department, getting to work which she University of Lagos, said was affecting congratulated all Muslims productivity.

on the Eid-el-Fitr Alhaji Abdul-Fatai Salami, celebration after 29 days who also spoke, fasting during Ramadan. commended Muslims in Oreagba prayed to Ikorodu community for the Almighty Allah to continue large turnout to observe to bless Nigerians the Eid-el-Fitr prayers.

individually and Salami urged Nigerian collectively. leaders to have empathy

He said that there was on the less privileged urgent need for leaders people in the society that would transform the stressing that everyone economy for the good of all would give account of his or her deeds.(NAN)



SUNDAY FEATURE

Decentralizing Nigeria's power sector

When President Muhammadu Buhari announced constitutional amendments that aim to decentralize the country's power sector, it sent shock waves throughout the country as it brought up a rare opportunity to transform this long-suffering sector and make it fit for Africa's largest and most populous country, writes OLUDAYO OROLU.

NIGERIA'S power sector has been struggling for decades with electricity policy enforcement, uncertainty in gas supply, and constraints in its transmission system. All these challenges resulted in frequent and long Power cuts that put a strain on the economy and growth. According to a World Bank report, 85 million Nigerians don't have access to grid electricity. This represents 43% percent of the country's population, making Nigeria the country with the largest energy access deficit in the world.

The recent constitutional amendments pave the way for better access to stable, efficient, and sustainable energy throughout Nigeria, by cutting bureaucracy and opening the door to private sector investment as well as providing fiscal and regulatory independence to state governments.

For Nigeria to achieve desirable industrial growth and economic development, a strong, stable, and efficient national grid is still essential.

But, this decentralization of the power sector will need to be implemented carefully, to avoid fragmentation of laws, regulations, and standards, as well as avoid inequality between wealthier and poorer states, and most importantly, avoid corruption. There will also be a need for a long-term plan to develop a national grid that will support Nigeria to reach its power-producing potential and achieve economic and industrial growth.

A rough start

Nigeria's power sector is complex, and this has traditionally slowed down progress. The reason for this complexity is that the sector is controlled by different stakeholders, who each have their own objectives and their own models of working.

The upstream gas supply and power generation segment is controlled by both public and private sector players. Some generation plants are owned by the government, others are concessioned to private operators, or owned by a mix of government and private investors, and there are a few IPPs.

The transmission grid is 100% controlled by the federal government, while electricity distribution companies (Discos) are controlled by private operators (with a 40% stake retained by the government). There is no uniformity of purpose or objective among these players. Each stakeholder in the power sector does what they consider best and does it in silos, making it very difficult to reform this sector.

Funding is also a challenge. Private operators cannot raise debt by leveraging power assets without government approvals and public financing is limited for new investments, so the power sector has been locked at a standstill.

Prior to these amendments to the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the federal government had begun a series of activities aimed at liberalizing the power sector and creating a viable electricity market in 2013. Some bold steps have been taken, including the transformation of the old National Electric Power Authority (NEPA) into the Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) and the subsequent unbundling into different segments and firms, leading to the eventual privatization



Fashola

of the 11 distribution companies and some generation assets.

Between 2013 and now, the market has seen increasing roles by the different players in shaping the industry and creating a robust energy supply market. The Federal Government, supported by International Development Partners and the organized private sector, created a series of funding schemes and structures to attract investments into the sector, in addition to federal government budgets.

Still, the availability of a stable and reliable electricity supply has remained a big challenge for Nigeria. The Presidential Power Initiative (PPI) of President Buhari's administration, which was launched in July 2019 to resolve the power sector's challenges and create a sustainable path for ramping up capacity, has not been implemented as initially envisaged.

The project has largely been slowed down by the Covid-19 pandemic and the ongoing supply chain crisis which affects the equipment global manufacturing sector. However,

through the PPI, certain critical equipment – power transformers and mobile high voltage Substations (first of its kind in Nigeria) have been delivered. When installed and commissioned, these would provide immediate relief to the transmission grid network and enhance power evacuation capacities.

With the removal of the power sector from the Exclusive legislative list of the Constitution to the Concurrent legislative list, sub-national State governments can now adjudicate over specific areas of this sector. This change could result in the transformation that will enable Nigeria's power sector to finally reach its full potential.

What does the new constitution amendment imply?

Following the changes to the constitutions, sub-national State governments can now design, create, and implement electricity supply markets within their sub-regions. The new law empowers states to create laws that cover the generation, transmission, and distribution of electricity to areas not

covered by a national grid system within the state and establish any authority for the promotion and management of electric power stations.

However, the laws have not changed the statutes of existing federal agencies and private operators like the National Electricity Regulatory Commission, the Transmission Company of Nigeria, and electricity distribution companies (Discos).

There are clear advantages the new laws provide. State governments are now able to legislate local laws that will facilitate investments in electricity supply projects in their domains; create laws against energy theft and prosecute offenders, an issue that has overwhelmed Disco operators for many years; and legislate on mini and microgrid projects, energy fuel sources, including the use of small gasoline-generators to minimize carbon emissions.

By this, State governments should execute sustainable energy projects that will help Nigeria achieve 2050 net zero emission targets. Implementation of mini and

microgrid projects will improve Access to electricity in rural and unserved areas. This will improve the quality of lives of inhabitants, enable the creation of direct and indirect jobs, and reduce rural-urban migration.

To maximize these advantages, state governments should strive to collaborate with existing agencies and operators in the sector. The costs of building new or separate power evacuation and distribution network assets could make such projects less commercially viable.

It is important to streamline regulations in the sector to avoid new bottlenecks that will slow down project implementation. A situation where all 36 states set up their own regulators, in addition to NERC, would likely create additional bottlenecks for investors. The uneven distribution of energy fuel sources such as gas is another area that will affect states' abilities to execute large power projects.

For Nigeria to achieve desirable industrial growth and economic development, a strong, stable, and efficient national grid is still essential. Nigeria's installed generation capacity is currently at ~14GW and its grid network capacity of about half of that is not sufficient to support Nigeria's ambition of being an industrialized nation. Nigeria's landscape is a mix of the coastal and tropical rainforest in the South, where most fossil fuel potentials are deposited.

Read also:

Why power is unstable in Abuja – AEDC

It also has a northern region with high solar irradiation, wind, and hydro potential. The situation makes a strong case for the continued existence of a national grid that will maximize the availabilities of fuel sources in the different regions, to create a leveled cost of electricity that is affordable for the citizens and industries.

It is therefore important that, while the states would be focusing on small captive decentralized power supply systems, there must be a longer-term plan to ensure the operating efficiency and effectiveness of the national grid.

The Presidential Power Initiative (PPI) is conceptualized to champion and coordinate all intervention projects in the sector to ensure alignment and targeted results accomplishments in the national grid. Both Federal and State governments should ensure the successful implementation of the PPI. Phase 1 of the project seeks to resolve the grid network issues, while phases 2 and 3 aim at further increasing the grid network and generation capacities.

Siemens Energy's portfolio of products, systems, and solutions are suitable to support both the Federal and sub-national authorities to fulfill their electricity supply targets. In addition to the fit-for-purpose technologies for renewable energy, embedded and captive power solutions, and small and large-sized grid-scale projects, Siemens Energy has over over 50 years of experience in Nigeria delivering quality and time-tested projects and a local organization populated by top-quality Nigerian experts.

Orolu, FCA, is head of Business Development, Siemens Energy Nigeria

SUNDAY SPORTS

Would Barcelona really play Messi in midfield?

By Thomas Hindle

The Blaugrana want to bring the PSG star back to Catalunya, but there doesn't seem to be a clear plan on where he might fit into the line up

If Lionel Messi does indeed do what a large sector of football fans want him to and returns to Barcelona this summer, the response will likely be immense. Shirts will fly off the shelves, tickets will be snapped up in seconds, and Barca will be tipped to defend the Liga title that they are about to secure.

But then, reality will hit. For all of the benefits of Messi returning, where, exactly, does he fit into this Barca side?

This is a young team that relies on its energy and defensive work rate. The Blaugrana do have attacking talent in the form of Robert Lewandowski and Ousmane Dembele, but they are on the way to a La Liga title win thanks in the most part to their rigid defending and tactical discipline.

Messi is the best to ever do it, but he is not a particularly good defender, and forcing him to stick to one singular position would be an immense waste of his talent.

So, Barcelona will have to do what all Messi-led sides have done, and adjust around the Argentine star. The good news is, they have tactical flexibility all over the pitch, and the odds are that the rest of Xavi's side would sacrifice personal interests without question.

But equally, Barca have something good going and a workable system that doesn't seem conducive to Messi's addition. They reportedly want Messi to play in midfield, which would mean adjusting arguably the most efficient part of Xavi's system — tinkering with their key to success.

Regardless of where he plays, there will have to be some changes, and **GOAL** has taken a look at where Messi might fit at Camp Nou...

This would be a tricky one. Barcelona's strength this year has been in the harmony between their midfield quartet. Indeed, with Sergio Busquets and Frenkie de Jong operating in a modified double pivot, and Gavi and Pedri playing further forward, Xavi has found a way to get four major talents into his side in a practical way.

And yet Barca reportedly want Messi to play somewhere in midfield should he return to the club.

There is no guarantee that Xavi will keep the same system regardless, and he would, in



Messi

fact, be misguided to do so. However, playing Messi in midfield would mean sacrificing one of the harmonious four.

Messi would likely play a similar role to that of Pedri, operating in the right half space and functioning as an attacking midfielder. But would Xavi be willing to bench the Spain superstar?

Still, if the manager is reluctant to change his system, it's where Messi would most comfortably slot in.

Xavi has also relied on a 4-3-3 at various points in the campaign, deploying two relatively traditional wide men who create chances for Lewandowski through the middle.

It has brought mixed results so far, with Barca becoming overly reliant on right-winger Dembele — who tends to be more dependable than a rotating cast of options on the left.

Indeed, the predictability of the formation was part of the reason the manager opted to switch his system to a 4-4-2. However, it might be the most obvious plug-and-play fit for the Argentine.

Messi, although he has gone through many different tactical switches throughout his career, is still at his best when receiving

the ball in the right half-space and cutting inside onto his left.

So, asking him to start on the right of a 4-3-3 does indeed make sense. It would require Dembele to switch to the left, and probably demand Jules Kounde to provide more width from right-back, but getting Messi the ball in his preferred spot is still a key to success.

Argentina found at the World Cup that playing three defensively-minded midfielders behind him allows Messi to work his magic in the final third, while also alleviating responsibilities off the ball. Barcelona can do much the same here, especially if Busquets stays to occupy the defensive midfield role.

There are some issues, though — mostly the fact that Messi will naturally sort of wander away from the central position he's supposed to start in. But this is also perhaps the best possible set up for creating chances in the final third.

Xavi has, after all, flirted with the idea of using Dembele as more of an inside forward than a touchline winger, and his connection with Lewandowski is only getting stronger.

This wouldn't look anything like a 'traditional' two-striker

formation, but having two more recognised advanced forwards in front of the Argentine could work wonders.

Barcelona had to adjust to life without Lewandowski at the start of 2023 after the striker picked up a silly suspension. And although Xavi's side never really developed a coherent attack in his absence, the Blaugrana still managed to squeak out wins without their star striker.

In an ideal world, Barcelona won't have to think about how to compensate without Lewandowski for the next couple of seasons. He will inevitably be one of the first names on the teamsheet, and a crucial piece if Barcelona are to achieve more European success.

But should such a situation arise where he is not available, then Messi could occupy a more central area and create for Barcelona's goalscoring wingers.

He can no longer put in the yards like in his false nine glory days under Pep Guardiola's tutelage, but Messi still has a fundamental understanding of the position. Meanwhile, the quality on either wing should give Messi plenty of options to combine with.

It would be a nightmare for

opposing centre-backs, too. Even a less mobile, 35-year-old Messi can still wreak havoc floating between the lines.

This is effectively the role he plays for Paris Saint-Germain at the moment. Messi floats around somewhere beyond PSG's midfield four, while Kylian Mbappe sits on the last man. Meanwhile, everyone around the pair moves in unspecified directions.

And it works for the Parisians. Messi has been criticised by PSG fans this year for his lack of defensive effort and often scapegoated for their poor form, but he has still scored 15 and added 14 assists in 26 Ligue 1 appearances.

Working in such a spot won't be as easy in La Liga. The game is more compact, more ruthless, and there is less of a fear factor from defenders who have already played against the Argentine — albeit with mixed results.

It is also worth noting that Lewandowski is not Mbappe. The striker would have to act more like a target man in this scenario, and probably be dragged out of his preferred central role to accommodate for Messi's roaming. Still, it's one to consider.

SUNDAY SPORTS

Super Falcons watch: US, Mexico launch joint bid

The United States Soccer Federation and the Mexican Football Federation have jointly announced their intention to submit a bid to co-host the 2027 FIFA Women's World Cup.

Newsnow said that, this would mark the third Women's World Cup held in the United States and the first in Mexico.

The 2027 FIFA Women's World Cup will be the second tournament with 32 nations after the upcoming 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup in Australia and New Zealand. This summer's event will be the first Women's World Cup with multiple hosts and the first in the southern hemisphere.

The United States previously hosted the Women's World Cup twice, in 1999 and 2003.

U.S. Soccer President Cindy Parlow Cone, who was a key part of the USA's 1999 FIFA Women's World Cup championship, **stated** that "Hosting the 2027 Women's World Cup provides us an incredible opportunity to cap off two historic years of World Cup soccer in the Concacaf region, helping us continue to grow the game among our confederation associations."

Yon de Luisa, President of the FMF, added that "It is with



Super Falcons

pleasure that we are teaming up again with the U.S. Soccer Federation in the pursuit of this World Cup for our region, which will undoubtedly be historic."

The bid for the 2027 FIFA Women's World Cup follows the joint hosting of the 2026 FIFA Men's World Cup by the United States, Mexico, and Canada, which is shaping up to be the largest, most impressive, and highest-attended World Cup in history.

The host for the 2027 FIFA Women's World Cup is expected to be named by the FIFA Congress on May 17, 2024.

Overall, the joint bid from the United States and Mexico to co-host the 2027 FIFA Women's World Cup holds great promise for the continued growth and

development of women's soccer in both countries and the region.

It is an exciting opportunity for Nigeria's Super Falcons, who have never missed an edition of the FIFA World Cup.

The Falcons' best result at the World Cup – reaching the quarterfinals – was achieved in 1999 when the United States first hosted the Mundial.

USA 2003 did not turn out so well for Nigeria as the Falcons lost all their three group games, scored zero goals, and conceded eleven.

The Super Falcons, however, remain Africa's most successful women's soccer team, having won the continent's Women's Cup of Nations a record 11 times.

Thomas Tuchel hit out at Clement Turpin and Allianz Arena's pitch after Bayern Munich's Champions League draw with Manchester City on Wednesday.

Goal said that, Pep Guardiola's side eked out a 1-1 draw in a hostile Allianz Arena to secure a 4-1 aggregate victory over Bayern Munich which saw the English side progress to the Champions League semi-finals. Known to be an animate figure on the sidelines, Tuchel pushed his limits on Wednesday evening and was eventually sent off by match referee Turpin after a second booking in the second half.

After the game, Tuchel did not spare the rod on Turpin and hit out at the match official: "Two things weren't at the level today:

Tuchel blasts referee after exit

the pitch and the referee. I would give him a 6 (worst possible rating), from his first to his last decision, I didn't even see the foul in the penalty he gave us."

Turpin, brandished five yellow cards in the first half and another straight red to Dayot Upamecano for a last-man challenge on Erling Haaland, but an offside call from VAR saved the French defender from going down the tunnel.

Moreover, the start of the game was delayed after the referee found his earpiece to be malfunctioning.

After being knocked out of the DFB Pokal and the Champions League, Bayern Munich have all their attention on Bundesliga which they lead by two points. In their fixture, they will make a trip to Mainz on Saturday with the aim to get the



Tuchel

Saliba 'not progressing as quickly' as Arteta hoped

Mikel Arteta says that he does not know if William Saliba will be fit to play for Arsenal before the end of the season.

BBC SPORT said that, the

22-year-old centre-back has missed four games since he picked up an injury in the Gunners' [penalty shootout defeat](#) in the Europa League to Sporting Lisbon in March.

"With William we have to wait a little bit more," the Arsenal manager said.

"He is not progressing as quickly as we had hoped. It is a bit delicate."

Arteta added: "We want to be very certain when we push him that he is ready to absorb the load and with the risk we would take at the moment that is not possible to do."

Rob Holding has played in Saliba's absence and Arteta was asked if he was concerned that the France international, who has made 33 appearances this season, may not feature again this year.

"I don't know, it's a bit early to do [predictions]. Probably next week we are going to have more certainty."

"There is some evolution, he is doing more activity, but he is not there yet to start to throw him on the pitch at the level that the sessions demand to compete in this league."

Arsenal play Southampton at home in the Premier League on Friday night following draws against West Ham and Liverpool, in both of which the Gunners gave up a two-goal lead.

Forward Bukayo Saka missed a penalty in the draw with West Ham with the chance to make the game 3-1.

"He [Saka] loves responsibility but he puts a lot on his shoulders as well. Again, if he had any doubt about how much people love him, respect him and admire him at the club, I think he had a very overwhelming reaction from everyone in the building."

The 21-year-old England forward is set to continue taking spot-kicks for Arsenal, with Arteta saying: "Yes. If not, I will go on the pitch and throw him the ball to make sure he takes the next one."

Guardiola concerned about third straight semi-final

Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola has opened up on his fears about his team after they moved a step closer to the treble.

Goal said that, City saw off Bayern Munich 4-1 on aggregate on Wednesday to book their place in the semi-finals of the Champions League and a clash with holders Real

Madrid. Guardiola's side remain on course to win the treble this season but the manager says their success is taking its toll on his players.

"We are exhausted. I don't know how we recover to play against Sheffield United [in the FA Cup semi-final]. Now is a tough moment for the game on Saturday," he told *BT*

Sport. "Three years in a row in the semi-finals of the Champions League. We struggled in the first half. Upamecano broke all the lines down our left side and we struggled with Coman. We were fortunate before the penalty miss, they had one or two chances and anything could happen but we defended really well."

Manchester City will play 13 more fixtures in all competitions if they reach the FA Cup final and beat Real Madrid to set up a showdown with either Milan or Inter in Europe's top competition. Manchester United remain the only English team to win the treble but City will fancy their

chances of emulating that achievement in the current campaign.

Guardiola will be expected to rotate his side when they take on lower league opposition next time out. Manchester City return to action against Championship side Sheffield United in the semi-finals of the FA Cup on Saturday at Wembley.



SUNDAY SPORTS



Rafael Nadal has won the French Open 14 times

Nadal does not know when he will return from injury

RAFAEL Nadal says he is in a "difficult" situation as he does not know when he will return from his injury lay-off.

BBC SPORT said that, he was initially ruled out for six to eight weeks with a hip injury but has now not played since 18 January.

Nadal confirmed he will miss the Madrid Open, which starts on 25 April, and there is doubt over his participation at the French Open in May.

"The injury still hasn't healed," the 36-year-old Spaniard said.

"I can't work out what I need to compete. I was training, but now a few days ago we decided to change course a bit, do another treatment and see if things improve to try to get to what comes next," he explained in a video posted on his social media channels.

"I can't give deadlines because if I knew I would tell you but I don't know. This is how things are now."

Nadal, who won his 14th French Open title last year, was diagnosed with a tear in his left psoas muscle after losing in the second round of the Australian Open in January.

The 22-time Grand Slam winner added: "I have no choice but to try to have the right attitude throughout this time, try to give myself the opportunity to compete in one of the tournaments that remains of the clay season and I have no choice but to work and be with the right mentality."

The French Open starts on 28 May.

Meanwhile, Olympic champion Belinda Bencic says she will miss both Madrid and Rome's clay tournaments because of "discomfort" in her hip.

The Swiss said she was struggling with the injury throughout the WTA Tour's United States swing, despite still making the

Charleston Open final. Bencic said she has taken the decision to help her be 100% fit for Roland Garros.

Raducanu thrashed in 59 minutes by Ostapenko

EMMA Raducanu's first clay-court match of the season ended in a one-sided defeat by former French Open champion Jelena Ostapenko in Stuttgart.

BBC SPORT said that, the British number one struggled to deal with ferocious hitting from the Latvian and lost 6-2 6-1 in 59 minutes.

Having reached the quarter-finals of the event last year, Raducanu's exit means she will drop down the rankings from her current place of 68.

Raducanu skipped Great Britain's Billie Jean King Cup defeat to France last week to prepare for the clay-court swing but was completely outplayed after being given a tough opening draw.

The 2021 US Open champion won the first game but was overpowered by her opponent's heavy hitting as she lost the next five on the way to giving up the opening set.

Having held serve at the start of the second, Raducanu moved to 0-30 on the 2017 French Open winner's serve but from

there Ostapenko won 16 points in a row to ease into a 4-1 lead.

The 2017 French open champion hit 26 winners to Raducanu's six.

Elsewhere, Spain's world number 31 **Paula Badosa**

TIGER Woods has had "successful" ankle fusion surgery following his recent withdrawal from the Masters.

BBC SPORT said that, the 15-time major winner pulled out during the third round at Augusta after re-aggravating a heel pain problem.

He had an operation on Wednesday in New York to correct an arthritis issue from a previous ankle fracture.

Woods is now a huge doubt for next month's US PGA Championship being held at Oak Hill Country Club in Rochester from 18-21 May.

The US Open in Los Angeles starts on 16 June while The Open begins on 20 July at Royal Liverpool, where Woods won the most recent of his three Claret Jugs in 2006.

"Earlier today, Tiger underwent a subtalar fusion procedure to address his post-traumatic arthritis from his previous talus fracture," said a statement on Woods' social media channels.

"It was performed by Dr

Woods has 'successful' ankle surgery

Martin O'Malley at HSS Sports Medicine Institute in New York. He has determined the surgery to be successful. Tiger is recovering and looks forward to beginning his rehabilitation."

The ankle problem is the latest in a line of setbacks for Woods, who feared his leg would have to be amputated because of the serious injuries he suffered in a car accident in

Los Angeles in February 2021.

He made the cut at the Masters earlier this month, but was six over par after seven holes of his third round, sitting last of the 54 remaining players, before the injury forced him to withdraw, amid cold, wet and windy conditions that delayed play and would have left him needing to play 29 holes on the final day.



Barcelona open: Norrie beaten by Musetti in last 16

BRITISH number one Cameron Norrie was beaten in the last 16 of the Barcelona Open by Italian Lorenzo Musetti.

BBC SPORT said that, the seventh seed Norrie, 27, controlled the first set and had openings in a tight second but Musetti fought back to win 3-6 6-4 6-1 in the clay-court event.

At 4-4 in the second set Norrie moved to 15-40 on Musetti's serve, but missed the break-point chances and had his own serve broken in the next game.

British number two Dan Evans plays Russian Karen Khachanov later.

Musetti, the 21-year-old world number 20, has achieved his best

career results on clay and beat Novak Djokovic at the Monte Carlo Masters last week in a run to the quarter-finals.

That run was ended by compatriot Jannik Sinner, who he will face again in the quarter-finals in Barcelona.

Sinner beat Japanese 16th

seed Yoshihito Nishioka in three sets while second seed Stefanos Tsitsipas eased past Canada's Denis Shapovalov 6-3 6-2.

Meanwhile at the Bavarian International in Munich, Alexander Zverev was beaten 7-6 (7-2) 6-4 by Australian world number 82 Christopher

by world number 40 Emil Ruusuvuori of Finland.

Norwegian third seed **Casper Ruud**, last year's French Open finalist, beat American Ben Shelton 6-2

7-6 (7-1).



Raducanu was playing for the first time since going out of the Miami Open in the first round after defeat against Bianca Andreescu

SUNDAY SPORTS

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 as "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.



Don't beg foreign players, Udi urges NFF

FORMER Super Eagles midfielder Duke has backed the Nigeria football, (NFF) decision not to beg foreign based players to represent the Super Eagles.

Udi lauded the decision during Brila FM's breakfast show, No Holds Barred with fellow former Nigerian International Infeanyi Udeze.

The former 3SC and Grasshoppers midfielder argued national pride should inform any players decision to represent the national team and not necessarily the incentive in it.

He advised that 'begging' players to represent the national team would mean forcing them and it would become counterproductive.

"Nigeria has an abundance of talent, who want to represent the country and they are good enough to play. We will not miss those who have opted to take their talents elsewhere".

Meanwhile, England captain Leah Williamson will miss this summer's

Women's World Cup after rupturing her anterior cruciate ligament.

An Arsenal statement read: "Leah was

substituted in the first half of the game at Leigh Sports Village and underwent further assessment on Thursday

to determine the extent of the injury.

"Leah will now begin a period of rehabilitation and is set for an extended

spell on the sidelines. She will undergo surgery in due course.

"Everyone at Arsenal will be supporting Leah

throughout the journey ahead and we would ask that her privacy is respected at this time."

Burnley boss Vincent Kompany shock move in EPL

BURNLEY boss Vincent Kompany has emerged as a surprise new contender to become next Chelsea manager after Julian Nagelsmann is ruled out of the running.

Former Manchester City defender Kompany began Friday as a 25/1 outsider for the Stamford Bridge job but has been backed in to as short as 6/1 with some firms after Chelsea were reported to have dismissed a move for ex-Bayern boss Nagelsmann.

Kompany is in his second job in management at Turf Moor, following an unsuccessful spell at Anderlecht in Belgium, and has led the club to an immediate Premier League return.

They will be crowned Sky Bet Championship

winners with victory against QPR on Saturday.

Ex-Tottenham boss Mauricio Pochettino remains the market leader as a heavy 1/4 favourite to take the Blues' reins.

Nagelsmann had reportedly been unimpressed with the club's courtship of other managers and wanted a more straightforward appointment.

He had not been the preferred candidate of the hierarchy during the search despite being one of the first names to be linked with the job following Graham Potter's removal, and talks between the parties have now ended for good.

Former Spain boss Luis Enrique, an early favourite for the job after impressing club officials in his first face-to-face meeting, dropped out of

consideration last week.

It is understood the club were put off by demands

made by the 52-year-old, Interim boss Frank Lampard, who has lost all four matches since being

appointed two weeks ago, is still expected to be

in charge of the team until the end of the season.

She suffered the injury during Arsenal's 1-0 defeat at Manchester United in the Women's Super League (WSL) on Wednesday.

The World Cup, which is

being hosted in Australia and New Zealand, starts on July 20.

England head into the tournament as European champions after Williamson led them to Euro 2022 glory in her first campaign as skipper last summer.



Kompany