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TRUTH EXALTS A NATION

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Nigeria's May 29th handing over: Anxiety grips citizens

In less than two months, Nigeria, the most populous black nation in the world will experience another transition with the incumbent President, Mohammed Buhari transmitting power to the President-elect, Asiwaju Ahmed Bola Tinubu who won the presidential polls last February,



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Sunday Standard

Editorial

Let's check Nigeria's descend to anarchy

There is no doubt that Nigeria has descended to the point it must make concerted efforts to check its descend to anarchy. It is regrettable that recent ethnic profiling reached its crescendo in the just concluded general elections, particularly with reports emanating from Lagos and Kano States.

The states were reported to have singled out a particular ethnic group for attack because of their affiliation to certain political parties. Unfortunately, this resulted into deliberate attacks on lives and property and of businesses by hirelings which led to wanton loss, but more importantly of the violation of their constitutional rights of association. Some of them were disenfranchised and even threatened on account of their political preferences during the elections.

It is sad that in Lagos, the Igbo were seen as a threat to the Yoruba while accusing them of political interference in their affairs during the just concluded presidential elections. It was the same situation in Kano State where religious profiling became pronounced, which almost led to the introduction of a 24 hour curfew in the state.

It is unfortunate that in a multi-ethnic nation like Nigeria with diverse cultures and religions, it is disheartening that we have not used our diversity to our advantage; rather, deliberate actions are often taken by the different groups that are capable of plunging the country into instability and unrest, a situation which has the nation has tried unabatedly to avoid to no avail.

Walking down memory lane, we should be reminded of the gory details of the Nigeria civil war of 1967 to 1970 which claimed over 3 million lives and property wasted all over the regions. The pains of brothers taking arms against each other for those years can only be imagined if victims recount their ordeals. Several years after, the scars are yet to be healed.

For those who may not have known the details except on the pages of books, ethnic profiling in Rwanda in 1994 where over 800 lives were lost in just 100 days should send signals that political bigotry of power thirsty politicians who have no regards to world best practices have reason to think twice before they act. Had the Tutsi and the Hutu any regard for each other, the division that tookplace would have been avoided.

We dare say that targeting a particular group for attack like the Lagos incident and the group in the north under the auspices of "Arewa Youth" giving a dateline to a particular ethnic to leave the north; as it cannot guarantee its safety is reprehensible and cannot be accepted. It is the right of every Nigerian to live anywhere they choose to, so long as they live in harmony and peace with their hosts.

Apparently ethnic and religious profiling has gross consequences for stability of a nation and this can breed intolerance and fanatical hatred. Therefore, elections should not divide the people; rather it should be a vehicle towards building trust to achieve national unity and cohesion.

The act is highly condemnable, even as we call on political leaders to speak to their supporters and members from making inflammable utterances that are capable of inciting a section against another. As such we call on government to arrest and persecute the players of these extreme views and also guarantee the safety of citizens by ensuring that they live in peace and harmony with one another.

NEWS

IGP orders massive security checks across Nigeria

Inspector-General of Police, IGP Usman Baba, has ordered in-depth security checks and patrols of all public spaces and essential government assets.

The IGP has also reassured Nigerians of the police's commitment to ensuring the safety and security of all citizens and visitors to the country during the Easter celebrations.

He particularly ordered all state commissioners of police and their supervising zonal assistant inspectors-general of police to ensure efficient deployment of police personnel and operational assets to areas of likely security

threats within their respective areas of responsibility.

Usman Baba equally charged all supervising officers that intensive and proactive visibility patrols should be carried out at all worship centres, train stations, highways, motor parks, airports, waterways, recreation centres, banks and other financial institutions while taking necessary precautions to ensure a crime-free and peaceful environment for religious, cultural and other socio-economic activities and boost the confidence of the general public.

Force PRO, CSP Olumuyiwa Adejobi, said in addition, the IGP directed that all officers and men deployed for these duties to be

properly supervised to ensure professional and courteousness to law-abiding citizens but firm and ruthless to criminal elements who might want to take the advantage of the festive period to perpetrate their unholy and criminal acts.

While felicitating with Nigerians and the Christian community in particular on the commemoration of the crucifixion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the IGP appreciated the citizens for their support and urged them to continually cooperate with the police and other security agencies by providing prompt and actionable information that would help in the prevention and detection of crime.

China has more on Covid-19 origin-who

The World Health Organization said Thursday it was sure China had far more data that could shed light on the origins of COVID-19, demanding Beijing immediately share all relevant information.

"Without full access to the information that China has... all hypotheses are on the table," WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said in Geneva.

That's why we have been asking China to be cooperative on this," he said, insisting that if Beijing does provide the missing data "we will know what happened or how it started".

More than three years after COVID-19 first surfaced, heated debate still rages around the origins of the pandemic.

The issue has proved divisive for the scientific community and even different US government agencies, which are split between a theory that the virus jumped naturally to humans from animals and one maintaining that the virus likely leaked from a Wuhan laboratory — a claim China has angrily denied.

Late last month, new evidence emerged that raccoon dogs, known to be able to carry and transmit viruses similar to the SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes Covid, were at a market in Wuhan when the disease was first detected in humans

The researchers who unexpectedly stumbled over the genetic data say that it supports — but cannot definitively prove — the theory that the virus originated in animals, possibly first jumping over to humans at the market.

Maria Van Kerkhove, WHO's technical lead on COVID-19, told journalists that the new information provided "clues", but no clear answers, insisting that the data "collected in January and February 2020, more than three years ago" should have been shared long ago.

"Without information, without data to make a proper assessment, it's very difficult for us to give a concrete answer. And in the present time, we don't have a concrete answer of how the pandemic began," she said.

But she voiced certainty that China's "incredible scientists" had conducted far more studies and collected much more data that could be relevant in the search.

"We know there is more information that's out there," she said.

"We need scientists, public health professionals and governments to share this information. This is not a game.

In an editorial in Science

magazine published Thursday, Van Kerkhove said she believed China had data that it had not shared including on the wild and farmed animal trade at the Wuhan market, the testing of humans and animals in Wuhan and across China, and operations of labs in Wuhan working on coronaviruses.

Lab audit data exist and have not been shared, for example," she wrote, demanding that China share all data on the SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes COVID-19 "immediately".

Tedros stressed the vital importance of getting to the bottom of the mystery, pointing out that determining COVID-19 origins could help avert future pandemics.

And with nearly seven million deaths officially registered in the pandemic — with the real toll believed to be several times higher — he said there was a "moral imperative".

We need to know the answer, beyond reasonable doubt."

Adopt Kalu as consensus candidate, Lamido tells Tinubu, APC



Lawan

Dr Bashir Lamido, leader of Arewa Summit International, a Northern Think Tank, has said that Nigeria needs a trailblazer like Senator Orji Uzor Kalu to emerge as the 10th Senate President to help stabilise the country.

He called on the President-elect, Asiwaju Ahmed Bola Tinubu and the All Progressives Congress to adopt Kalu as the consensus candidate ahead of June 13 Senate inauguration.

According to him, the combination of the Senate Chief Whip as the Senate President, Kashim Shettima and Ahmed Bola Tinubu as Vice President and President respectively would help save the country from drifting to a divided state.

Lamido in a statement personally signed by him on Friday warned the ruling APC not to field a Northern Muslim as the 10th Senate President for peace and national stability.

He also urged other aspirants for the position of the Senate President, especially from the South-East geopolitical zone, to step down and rally round the

current Chief Whip of the Senate to emerge unopposed.

Bashir maintained that this was necessary as "the country is in big trouble and only a Senator like Orji Kalu is needed to work with the President-elect, Bola Ahmed Tinubu and his Vice, Kassim Shettima to stabilise the country.


"I am a Northern Muslim and a passionate Nigerian. We must support the President-elect, Senator Bola Ahmed Tinubu to succeed as our new president. In doing so, it is important we have a Senate President that understands the country; this is where Senator Orji Uzor Kalu should come in. He should be supported to emerge as the next Senate President to support Tinubu and Shettima in the interest of our dear nation.

Senator Orji Kalu fits the bill to lead the Senate as its presiding officer in the next dispensation from all material angles. He has the competence, capability and capacity to mobilise, coordinate and provide the much needed leadership that delivers results for effective legislative governance and oversight for the country.


"Senator Orji Kalu understands the needs and aspirations of all regions of the country. He hails from the South-East, was educated in the Northern Nigeria city of Maiduguri, Borno State and built his businesses in South West city of Lagos.

As Governor of Abia State from 1999 to 2007, he had aides from across Nigeria's ethnic groups. Currently as Senate Whip and Senator representing Abia North Senatorial District, Abia state, his aides cut across all ethnic groups and religious divides.

Senator Kalu is cosmopolitan in outlook, adept at managing Nigeria's creative diversity and has strategic leadership traits that deliver results. He is the committed patriot that we need at this point of our nation's history. It is important for Senators-elect across the party lines to support, vote and elect Senator Orji Uzor Kalu as the next Senate President," he stated.



With
Katdapba
Y. Gobum
On Sunday



gobum_katt@yahoo.co.uk 07037977744 (sms)

"The rain started to beat us when we saw those contenders as representing the interests of certain tribes above others. Those tribal cleavages alienated the others regarded as working against them. The development gained currency to the extent that governors and their tribal followers saw the opportunity of being in governance as 'our turn' to be in charge".

IN the few weeks preceding the gubernatorial and state Houses of Assembly elections, a new wave of campaign became commonplace. For many, it clearly showed signs of desperation for supporters of office seekers during elections; even as many thought rightly that the state had entered a dangerous stage; for which it needed to be healed of.

This development, to all sane people, was an abysmal decline to what a state should not be. The young and even the old became protagonists of an old evil practice, which should have long been laid to rest, to pave way for nation building. Religious voices gladly wore the toga of the division that sadly was apparent in most centers; with lots of their followers queuing behind them.

With this, indications became rive that we may have further sunk down the ladder as we did in 2015 and 2019. Those of you who recall the scenarios, and if you do an analysis of both, you may come to the conclusion that, we are in need of leaders, who can give us direction, strength and courage to accept one another in times like this.

The propaganda started in the week during which the International Women's Day was being celebrated, nothing of that sort should have reared its ugly head. But the heart of man is desperately wicked to fathom what has been conceived to be unleashed against each other. It is ridiculous to think that 'for the sake of politics, some people in Plateau State don't even want you to shake hands with Muslims. It bears asking where this satanic gospel is found in the Bible.'

The proponents of the dangerous posts on the new media waited until the week of elections to prosecute the propaganda war. Most of them, young persons, and even the older ones interested in being heard; but importantly to inflict pains on the camps of the candidates joined the fray to exert their pound of flesh. Truly, says a commentator, 'the cheapest thing is to take sides and be hypocritically blinded to your own faults'. No wonder, the social media army fantasises what took place 'as a Netflix series'.

However, if they enjoyed stocking the embers of hatred and ethnicity, the older ones stood by to encourage them carry it to outrageous limits. A nation whose elders have remained ethnic champions would continue to pass the traits to as many young people as they come across over the years. No nation can be built, when its leaders stand and watch without reprimanding the young ones if they go astray to sheath their swords.

Except it can be proved, the parties sadly did nothing to stem the tide of descend into the infamous challenges that came from the bellies of their followers on different new media platforms. Even in some of their terse press statements, it appeared as if to say: 'We know what is happening, however, just keep the fire burning until we achieve victory, then we can return to ask for forgiveness'.

Truth be told, the bold temerity couldn't find expression if the leaders did not embolden their acts.

Plateau and the evil spirit of tribalism



Nentawe

The later developments that allegedly revealed those behind the conspiracies say a lot of what many had thought. The only remedy is for the revelation made to go beyond just those in Propaganda Plus who read the press conference text; it will serve a purpose if Plateau people know the facts behind their actions, particularly as the land needs forgiveness and healing.

The question to ask is: Was there no mechanism for the parties to have checkmated the activities of their followers? It is possible to claim they don't know them, but it will be hard to say they don't know what they were canvassing for. The party hierarchies couldn't have claimed ignorance, even as it follows that leaders from the entire divides looked the other way, while the propagandists had a field day casting aspersions and vilifying the contenders and their parties.

If you must know, the intensity of the 'battle' was in the camps of the APC and PDP, while the LP maintained a rather 'questionable' silence, but using its Internal Affairs Directorate machinery to pound the gubernatorial contenders and to ward off the attacks by fighting APC and PDP's 'original sins' allegedly committed in the past against the state.

However, though sadly, many citizens had expected the intervention of those whose words could have a telling effect on the state. That failed to come and the media became the bastion for the amplification of the wrong voices, which became the fuel which increased the conflagration that was ignited to change the perception of the people for and against the parties and the top contenders.

For some of the radio and television stations, newspapers and blogs, many of their readers and listeners, if not for the fear of their regulatory bodies breathing on their necks on account of the content of what they came out with, they would have done far worse than they did. In fact, rather than being on the side of caution, most of them became the devil's advocate by taking side openly. And even at that, there were several



Mutfwang

pieces of materials and broadcast, which were largely a disappointment, as it was evident they knew what they wanted to achieve while it lasted.

Those who read the statements made either on radio and or contributed to certain discussions at social event centers were imbued. Come to think of it, the candidates whether from APC, PDP, LP, PRP or NNPP, they are all grounded individuals. The parties that gave them legitimacy to their emergence fully knew what they can bring to the table. Whether, one participated in creating statements that discredited anyone of them, we are all living with the consequences of the seed, unless we take the honourable way out: Seek forgiveness from one another and start afresh in unity.

The damage manifested in various forms, but it was the effects of what some of the older persons had long sown in the hearts of the younger persons that reared their ugly heads. It was natural for the wrong signals to manifest before the day of election. Had the right seeds been sown over the years, we would have become accustomed to celebrating and appreciating those who would seek to lead the state.

In fact, the history of the state is often replete with the choice of one strong candidate; where the older ones had pointed and anointed. Such a decision on one of the strongest contenders was difficult to have a dissenting voice; so long as it made sense that such a choice would accommodate the interests of the state. That has never been for some years, thus paving the way for numerous conversers who had conflicting interests, that cannot pass the test for governing the state.

The rain started to beat us when we saw those contenders as representing the interests of certain tribes above others. Those tribal cleavages alienated the others regarded as working against them. The development gained currency to the extent that governors and their tribal followers saw the opportunity of being in governance as 'our turn' to be in charge.

That 'turn' became the harbinger for the hatred of others; sadly however, it opened the doors for



Dakum

another tribe from other zones to wait for their turn also. Given, they turn the situation to favour themselves at the detriment of the larger majority; and to be candid, nations cannot make meaningful development so long as from the bowels of their contributions they are fired by selfishness. Truth is that, it has been established that the sound of tribalism is selfishness.

Plateau is a state largely divided by ethnic sentiments. Once you are not with any of the indigenous tribes, one is registered as an enemy of the group. For those who should know, that was not mentioned with Joseph Dechi Gomwalk or Solomon Daushep Lar. The military administrators while they lasted used the tribes against one another to their advantage.

The numerical ethnic strength appears to be a disadvantage to the state; what with over 50 ethnic groups. No matter their sizes, for some decades have remained in the hands of ethnic champions, who further balkanized the tribes to be hostile to one another during moments that should unite the state. For instance, over 21 years, the state has been under intense pounding, losing lands and its people; only a few tribes rose challenging what was happening to those whose people were being killed.

Let me conclude with a piece Simon Kolawole wrote titled recently: 'A nation in need of peace builders': 'We need a peaceful country before we can talk about progress and prosperity. You cannot even be talking about justice without the peace. Comfort for the tree is comfort for the bird. If the tree is inhospitable, the bird will not perch at ease. It is in the interest of the bird for the tree to be cosy and comfortable. I wish those stirring strife can understand this fact of life. If you sow discord and instability, neither you nor your family will know peace too. The desire to propagate hate may look intoxicating now but when the consequences hit, there will be no medals to be distributed. Therefore, the protagonists and antagonists will do us a world of good by beating a retreat.'

'I pray day and night for Nigeria to

have more peacemakers than rabble rousers. Peace-building seems to be going out of fashion. We now appear to have entered an era when those who should promote peace, mutual respect and understanding are the ones stoking the fire of hate and strife — all because of the political emotions of the moment. People who should call hate mongers to order and make genuine efforts to help heal our wounds are the very ones pouring fuel on the naked fire. Some are doing it openly and brazenly while others are at the backend engineering things, with their hands barely hidden. The penalties for this mischief, borne out of desperation, will sadly not spare anyone.

'Nigeria urgently needs peace builders — old and young, men and women, southerners and northerners — irrespective of "tribe and tongue". Desperate and unconscionable demagogues and ideologues are on the rampage and are rapidly expanding their fan base and reach. Go on social media and you will understand what I am saying. We need a new army of peace builders to counter this disturbing affliction. We need Nigerians who are determined to work for the peace and progress of Nigeria without regard to ethnicity, religion and political affiliation. We need them to step up to the plate not just to dilute but also to overwhelm the hate-mongering and ethnicity-baiting.

'Today, I plead with well-meaning Nigerians to raise their voices and drown out the noises of those currently working overnight to pitch 'Ngas, Berom, Gamai or Mwaghavul or any tribe' against each other in the name of politics. It is time to break the monopoly of hate mongers. Warning: if you choose to be a peace builder, there is a price to pay: you may be accused of being politically correct or sitting on the fence. Refuse to be blackmailed by the merchants of strife. Above all, people are free to demand justice if they feel aggrieved. People can support any candidate they like. But nobody has a right to provoke or attack others because of their choices. We must put our primordial emotions in check for the greater good'.



Taming the monster

THERE is a lingering problem, a global problem which seems to be claiming more and more people as it assumes a monstrous nature. It is cancerous in nature and loves to recruit more people on a daily basis. Yes like Satan's mission, it goes around like a hungry lion looking for who to devour. And like wild fire, it is very destructive. Leaving only waste, pain and death in its wake.

Some people became hooked by the monster due to youthful exuberance, peer pressure and or quest for experiment. But for Daniel, a young promising undergraduate, he was lured into it and unfortunately it has cost him its education and responsible friends. On top of it, he has been blacklisted as an ex-convict due to the influence of the monster.

So many vices are perpetrated under the influence of this monster. When it takes over somebody it takes control. No wonder some of the recruits say they need the monster to boost their confidence, make them bold and courageous. And in that condition, they feel they can do anything good or bad. They can murder, steal, kill, rape, beat to death, maim and commit unprintable crimes, when the monster possesses them.

Narrating their ordeal with their younger brother who is a recruit, Halima, a friend said he has taken the nature of the monster himself. "He is now a nocturnal person who keeps very late night and wakes up very late-(from 10:00am). Halima says he roams around the house with red shot eyes and easily snaps at his younger ones. For that reason, they are all in dread of him."

Halima said her brother eats like he is eating for himself and the monster that controls him. And no matter the hour he comes back everyday, he heads straight to the kitchen where he eats anything he can lay his hands on. "Because of him, we can't keep our soups in the kitchen but in our parents room", Halima lamented. "We have learnt the hard way that at times like that it is the monster in control and he can do and undo; which includes making eba and eating straight from our pot of stew", explained Halima.

One of the attributes of the monster that manifests in the recruits is that it turns a good boy/girl bad. This nature does not only manifest itself when they are possessed by the monster. It showcases itself when they need the monster but lack the money to get it. A friend whose brother has been a recruit for the past 10 years said "We can't keep anything valuable in the open, my brother who is an ardent lover of this monster, would take anything he can lay his hands on and sell it at a give-away price to enable him to have access to the monster."

Recounting how much the family has suffered in the hands of their brother, my friend said "He has sold our phones, new sets of food flask, wall clock, flower vases that is apart from his own belongings. His room is now bare. Unfortunately, he has started selling our

own shoes, clothes even weave-on caps," my friend lamented.

Theirs is so bad that the doors to their rooms- girl's rooms and parent's rooms now have sophisticated locks as if they are living with criminals. Even with that, she said "One can't go to the toilet or bathroom and leave one's door open, it may be one's undoing. Even something like bedsheet could be taken and sold cheaply to give my brother access to that monster."

Most of the monster's recruit turn to stealing to patronise it because there is no responsible parent that will continue giving his child money when they know the child will use it for something destructive.

Another family is today licking its wounds because their child who is the monster's recruit has smeared the family name with shame. Their relative who got married about a year ago had left most of the gifts they got in one of their rooms because they couldn't take everything with them to Lagos where her husband resides. She came back recently to get her things, and was shocked at what she saw. Nobody needed to be told what happened to her gifts. Her cousin had been selling off her gifts at a give-away price to give him access to the monster. He was caught only twice. The family never knew he continued stealing his cousin's gifts. More than half of the gifts were gone. The parents insisted to make up for it somehow even though the niece refused. The sad thing was that the thief was unrepentant.

My problem is, we all know the root cause of this problem. It is weed, cannabis, (coke) cocaine. Some of these drugs are sold on street corners and the community knows those involved. But we don't take it serious until our children- our very own become victims and we start suffering from things mentioned above.

We often forget that if we don't do something, we will suffer the consequences all the same. Our streets will be unsafe. Thieves, rapists, armed robbers, will abound and operate without remorse under the influence of drugs.

You may be among the categories of parents whose children are addicts and yet live in self denial, refusing to take them to rehabilitation centres. Their problem is : 'What will people say?' What about what is the best in this situation. A good number of these children have slapped their parents or beaten them under the influence of drugs, incurring curse for themselves.

You could be an onlooker who seems nonchalant towards what is happening around you. Whether we like it or not, we are all victims. One person's actions or inactions affect us all.

The ball is in our courts parents to draw our children close and lead them on godly paths. Spend quality time with them and pray together.

Government on its part should be proactive and give the society legislatures that will serve as deterrent against sell and intake of illicit drugs. Please we must act fast to salvage the

NEWS

Police parade 20 suspects terrorizing Gombe

WILLIE ATTAH, Gombe

THE Police in Gombe has paraded no fewer than 20 suspected criminals who have been terrorising residents of Gombe metropolis in the past few weeks.

ASP MahidMuazuAbubakar, Police Public Relations Officer, Gombe State Police Command, while parading the suspects, said the Command under CP OquaEtim succeeded in arresting the notorious criminals following the co-operation by the public in informing the Police about the activities of the criminals.

Four among the suspects, ShamsudeenSalisu, Dino Abdullahi, Abdurahman Abbas and YushauAlhassan were arrested for criminal conspiracy, house trespass, theft and being in possession of dangerous weapons.

According to the Police report, "On 1/4/2023 at about 11:00 am, a formal complaint was received from one AbdulhafizIliyasu of Herwagana QuartersGombe that a group of Kalare boys who specialize in entering people's houses to steal their properties entered his house on 31/03/2023 at about 2 am and carted away his laptop and other items.

The next day the said complainant relayed information to the men of Operation Hattara that the said suspects were seen in their hideouts. The men of Operation Hattara rushed to the scene and raided the said compound and arrested the above-named suspects and the following exhibits were recovered, four cutlasses, two knives, two fabricated master keys, one HP laptop, two itel keypad handset phones, one constructed ax and wrappers".

The Police report also said that one Garba Shehu, Haruna Saleh and SulaimanBakura were

arrested while 12 others sustained a serious injury who are at large for to his head and robbed him criminal conspiracy and of his motorcycle. The attempt to commit victim called for help and culpable homicide in they were pursued, Tabra Quarters. arrested and beaten by

The Police report some angry mob. revealed that, on A team of policemen 1/4/2023 at about 10 pm, successfully rescued both a formal complaint was the victim and suspects also received from one the victim and suspects Abubakar Umar of Tabra hospital for medical Quarters Gombe that attention, where they were more than 15 Kalere boys treated and discharged. came to his house armed The investigation is with dangerous weapons ongoing and the case will and inflicted injury to his soon be charged to court. hand by using a machete. Exhibit recovered was The men of Operation theBoxer motorcycle red in Hattarasuccessfully colour.

Another set of suspects arrested for being in possession of dangerous weapons are; Sadiq Muhammed Sani, SadiqGarba, Usman Samaila, AbubakarBala, Abdullahi Bashir, Huzairu Ibrahim and Mohammed Inuwa.

The Police report said on 3/04/2023, men of Operation Hattara while on visibility patrol arrested the above-named suspects at different locations in their hideouts. Their hideouts were raided and the following exhibits were recovered; six cutlasses, one knife, and one axe. The investigation is still on and the case will soon be charged to court.

The PPRO expressed the appreciation of the Commissioner of Police to the good people of the state for their usual cooperation and further admonished them to continue to be law-abiding citizens as the Command will ensure that criminals have no hiding place in the state.

He said the Command can be reached through the Police emergency number 08150567771/ 09165472923 or via their NPF rescue me application for prompt action.



ASP Mahid Muazu Abubakar, PPRO, Gombe State Police Command, briefing newsmen on the arrest of 20 suspected criminals in Gombe.

POLITICS

New leadership takes over LP, National headquarters invaded

THE crisis rocking the Labour Party deepened on Thursday as seven members of the National Working Committee, announced the replacement of the suspended chairman of the party, Julius Abure, with the National Vice-Chairman (South), Lamidi Bashir Apapa, as the acting chairman of the party.

Speaking after an emergency meeting held at the party's secretariat in Abuja, Apapa said the NWC members acted on the judgement of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) High Court which restrained Julius Abure from parading himself as the National Chairman of the Party.

Apart from Abure, the court also restrained three other officials of the party over alleged forgery.

The presiding judge, Justice Hamza Muazu, also ordered that the originating processes of the court be served on the restrained officials — Abure, the National Secretary, Umar Farouk Ibrahim; the National Treasurer, Oluchi Opara; and the National Organising Secretary, Clement Ojukwu.

The judge held that the ex parte application for interim injunction restraining the four officials by aggrieved members of the LP before the court has merit and granted same.

The acting chairman Apapa revealed further that NWC also reviewed the suspension of party members and exco that have earlier been suspended by the party leadership.

The three other officials restrained were also replaced by Alhaji Saleh Lawal- acting national secretary, Rawland Daramola- acting treasurer, and Prince Reuben Favour — acting organising secretary.

"The NWC equally reviewed that recently there are some cases of suspensions that were badly handled. And this National Working Committee meeting as reviewed them, and the suspension all over are hereby reviewed and the officers are reinstated.

'I will prioritise industrialization, establish Inland Port'

APC Governorship Aspirant in Kogi state, Dr. Sanusi Ohiare has declared that if given the opportunity, he will prioritise industrialization of the state and establishment of Inland Port in Lokoja, the state capital.

Dr. Sanusi gave the hint in Lokoja recently, while speaking at the ongoing Media Parley organised by the Nigeria Union of



Abure

"With effect from now, the so called officers whose the court had barred should not parade themselves as officers of the party until cases against them are treated or handled by the party", Apapa stated.

He equally denied the allegation that the party has been invaded by the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC), saying the current leadership believes extensively in the presidential candidate of the party, Peter Obi.

Earlier, Abure, however, had in a statement, raised an alarm accusing APC of using thugs and a detachment of the Nigerian Police Force to invade the party's headquarters in Abuja.

Abure stated that the invaders who are armed reportedly pulled down the fences, burglaries, doors and window to have access to the Secretariat and in the process sacked workers and party members who were at the Secretariat.

He added: "Though, I was out of town but information has it that the agenda of the invaders was to

inaugurate an illegitimate executive which has been chosen for them by their sponsors.

"This incident is coming days after a similar invasion in our Imo state Secretariat which up till now is still being occupied by the agents of the Imo state government.

"Only yesterday, our presidential candidate, Mr. Peter Obi through the Presidential Campaign Council alerted Nigerians of plot to hound him out of the country over APC's covert plot in collaboration with some security agents to frame him up allegedly on matters bothering on treason.

"Labour Party is only a political party which is contesting for power. The Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC having conducted election ranked us third, a position we have rejected and have approached the Tribunal to contest. That is our only offence.

"We therefore call on President Muhammadu Buhari to call his party, the APC to order and also rein then in from using unorthodox means to suffocate political structures in Nigeria".

especially for the youths.

Ohiare also promised to set up "Kogi Works" to galvanise efforts aimed at industrialising the state and boost the productivity of the people to an optimal level.

According to him, he would ensure the dredging of River Niger and Benue to boost activities at the proposed Inland Port in Lokoja to ginger various businesses.

On transportation, the aspirant said, he would ensure that the services of the Itakpe Railway Corporation is extended to Abuja to facilitate the movement of people and goods.

The aspirant while speaking on the Ajaokuta Steel project, he would collaborate with the federal government to make the project becomes a reality with the attendant social and economic benefits to the state.

According to him, he would build more schools, with emphasis on science and technology in training graduates who would combine intellectual and

From VICTOR GAI, Jalingo

THE caretaker chairman of Ussa Local Government Area of Taraba state, Hon. Abershi Musa has blamed his resignation to the killings in his area.

Musa tendered his resignation letter to the governor on Wednesday amidst wanton killings in the area by suspected herdsmen.

"I write to notify you of my voluntary resignation as caretaker chairman of Ussa LGC with effect from today 5th April, 2023," Musa stated in a letter addressed to The Executive Governor of Taraba State, Darius Ishaku.

In an interaction with journalists after the resignation, the former council caretaker chairman explained that the inhuman attitude and the inaction of the governor over the continued killings by herdsmen in Ussa was the reason behind his decision.

He said he could not watch as chairman of the council while his people are being killed without a solution.

"The inhuman attitude of governor Darius Ishaku over the killings of my people in Ussa Local Government by herdsmen is the reason why I have tendered my resignation letter as a caretaker chairman of the local government. I am not hungry so, i can't be chairman while my people are being kill and nothing is done about.

"I don't want to be seen as a compromise in the situation. I want my integrity to be maintained because my people already know who I am.

"When the situation started months ago, I quickly informed the governor through phone conversation but no action was taken toward ending the killings. At a joint security meeting again,

LG chair leaves office due to Taraba killings

I drew the attention of the governor but he has up till as we speak, refused to respond or take action to end the killings.

"My people are being killed on a daily basis for reason best known to the killers and their sponsors and Governor Ishaku have refused persistently to comment.

"Just this week, 15 people were attacked and killed, the palace of (Kwe Ando Madugu), the 3rd class chief of Lisam chiefdom was also attacked and destroyed by angry youth who believed that I and the chief have the capacity to stop the Fulani attack in the area but are not doing so.

"It is not all about me being chairman. It's all about the people, the poor masses of the local government. How can I be chairman and watch helplessly when my people are being killed?

"I didn't beg for the appointment, the governor called me and I gave him condition that the appointment must be the type that I will touch the lives of my Ussa people.

"Even at the joint security meeting, I told the governor that we can not condone any killing in Ussa because, our people must farm this year. Farming is the only source of my people's earning, they didn't farm last year due to herdsmen attacks and they

must farm this year to live.

"It doesn't matter whether i am chairman or not, all I want is to stop the killings and let my people farm.

He also suspected that the attitude of the governor towards the plight of the people may be politically motivated since he lost massively in the area at the last general elections.

"Several questions are being asked on why Governor Ishaku has refused to take any action on the continued killings in Ussa. The citizens are saying may be it is because Ussa Local Government did not vote for the governor in the last senatorial election but I think as a politician, you don't expect certain percentage of votes from people and if the game turns the opposite then the people automatically become your enemies. But if that is the case, has the governor forgotten so soon that the same people gave him massive votes in 2015? I think if that is the governor's reason then, he is not a politician and is purely inhuman of him.

"I am already discussing with stakeholders on how to stop the situation so, I wish to appeal to people of the local government to remain calm and distance from any action that would spark more trouble in the area,"



Ishaku

Niger Governor Elect Inaugurate Transition Committee

From MATHEW JWANTU, Minna

THE Niger State Governor elect Umar Mohammed Bago has inaugurated a 71 Member independent Transition Committee mandated with the process of taking stock of all the outgoing prospects, liability, access and advised the incoming government accordingly.

Umar Mohammed Bago during the Inauguration of Transition and Secretariat committee held in Minna, Niger state capital, said it will make their findings clear to the public so that upon their exit too, they shall be judged accordingly.

He maintained that, "our intention is very clear, not negative or personal, but in the interest of Nigerlites because posterity will surely judge us." adding that in

the committee chairman, Malam Suleiman Ndanusa express satisfaction with the calibre of the membership and assured to work within its terms of reference to ensure justice to the assignment.

Ndanusa noted that they will take all stocks so as to review the some of the last dispensation policies that have worked and those ones that didn't work and advised accordingly.

He maintained that they will ensure in making Niger state very competitive and a leading state by taking advantage of the state proximity to FCT Abuja hence to modernized and industrialized the state to enhanced youth employment and engagement.



Ohiare

SUNDAY POLITICS

Nigeria's democracy: Metamorphosis of activists, democrats

Nigeria's democratic history, unarguably, is chequered. When Nigeria became a sovereign country in 1960, she showed great promise that her democracy would stand the test of time given the type of politicians, who played politics then. CHIEDU UCHE OKOYE writes.

THOSE politicians possessed intellectual heft, political ideologies, moral probity, sagacity, and political vision. At that time, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo, Tafawa Balewa, Mathew Mbu, Anthony Enahoro, Nwafor Orizu, and others dominated the political space. And Nnamdi Azikiwe's NCNC and Tafawa Balewa's NPC formed a political alliance with Alhaji Tafawa Balewa becoming the Prime Minister of Nigeria while Nnamdi Azikiwe emerged as the president of Nigeria, a ceremonial head.

Unfortunately, the first republic was truncated by a military putsch on January 15, 1966, which led to the thirty-month Nigeria-Biafra civil war. Then, we had the military interregnum, which lasted from 1966 to 1978, after which the second republic was birthed in 1979.

In the second republic, Balarabe Musa, Jim Nwobodo, Sam Mbakwe, Alhaji Shehu Shagari, Melford Okilo, Joseph Wayas, Obafemi Awolowo, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Ambrose Ali, and others contested for different elective posts. And the leading political parties at that time were NPN, NPP, GNPP, PRP, and UPN.

But the first republic and the second republic had one common similarity: as Alhaji Tafawa Balewa was clandestinely helped to become our prime minister in 1960 by the British imperialists so was Alhaji Shehu Shagari installed in office in 1979 by the king makers in Nigeria. They were not the best political leaders in Nigeria at the time the leadership of Nigeria was entrusted in their care.

So when the beret boys sacked the government of Alhaji Shehu Shagari in December 1983, it was not unexpected. His government was characterized by political ineptness, massive corruption, and lack of political vision. So RTD Gen. Muhammadu Buhari threw many of the second republic politicians into jail after setting up a military tribunal that tried them for corrupt enrichment. And Muhammadu Buhari, who ruled Nigeria with iron fist based on military decree, was ousted from power in August 1985.

The second wave of the military hiatus, which started in 1983, save for the brief period when Chief Ernest Shonekan held sway as our national leader, ended in 1998 with Chief Olusegun Obasanjo emerging as the president of Nigeria.

Before then, the June 12,



Enahoro



Awolowo

1993 presidential election, which was adjudged the freest and fairest presidential election in our political annals, was, presumably, won by Chief MKO Abiola. But that presidential poll was annulled by Ibrahim Babangida, who formed an interim government and installed Chief Ernest Shonekan as its head.

But Sani Abacha, who had vampiric, sanguinary, and thieving tendencies shoved Ernest Shonekan's interim government aside and clamped MKO Abiola into jail for declaring himself the President of Nigeria. His arrest and detention of Abiola set the stage for the fight for the revalidation and restoration of Chief MKO Abiola's stolen political mandate. The Yoruba political elite and their sympathisers, which included the Igbo folks, formed NADECO as a platform for the fight for the restoration of MKO Abiola's stolen political mandate.

But Sani Abacha killed some members of NADECO, who opposed his incarceration of Abiola and plot to transmute

to a civilian president. Notable among those killed by the Abacha junta were Mrs Kudirat Abiola and Pa Rewane. Abacha's crackdown on members of NADECO forced many of them to flee abroad for safety.

When, in 1998, Sani Abacha and Chief MKO Abiola died one month of each other, Abacha's successor, Abdulsalaam Abubakar, conducted a general election, which saw Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, a former prisoner of conscience, becoming the President of Nigeria in 1999. Since then, and till now, we have been enjoying democratic government, uninterruptedly.

Now, as the political leadership of Muhammadu Buhari is seen as a failure, millions of Nigerians from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds want to see his back. Based on the indices and metrics for judging good political leadership, his political leadership of Nigeria is a failure. His political administration, which failed to pass muster, is the worst in our political annals.



Balewa



Azikiwe

To make matters worse, his bloody reign, have been administration conducted a postulating that the election general election that did not was free and fair. They have meet the minimum acceptable queued up behind Ahmed International standards. Bola Tinubu, the president-elect, and the beneficiary of the February 25, 2023 malpractice and violence marred and marked the presidential election.

But it is ironical that some defenders of the February 25, 2023 presidential election fought ceaselessly, tirelessly, and fearlessly for the revalidation of the MKO Abiola's stolen political mandate. And their efforts yielded positive result. Can anybody gainsay the fact that the emergence of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo as our president in 1999 was an appeasement of the indignant Yoruba people whose son, chief MKO Abiola, was denied the presidential seat in 1993? The above question is a rhetorical question, the answer to which is well-known to us.

Not taking cognizance of those ugly incidents of electoral malpractice and violence, which tainted the credibility of the February 25 presidential election, some democracy activists, who earned their pips as activists during the heady days of the Sani Abacha inglorious and has put the factors of his

SUNDAY POLITICS

YOUTHS laudably declined to be bystanders or only good for tuggery, overlooked carrots. The reasons are not far-fetched. Since birth, the masses have been over-exploited, shattered and remain victims of leadership fiascos – from one inept, egotistic, corrupt government to another. Thus, with the review of the Electoral Act expected to change the narrative, there high hopes that their votes would count.

Unfortunately, the first segment of the elections; Presidential/National Assembly elections held on 25th February, 2023 left them upset following hitches here and there. International observers too couldn't hide their discontent. The public disapproval manifested patently in the Governorship/House of Assembly elections held three weeks after through voter apathy.

By the result announced by the chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Mahmood Yakubu who doubled as the Chief Returning Officer for the presidential election, the candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Bola Tinubu emerged the winner while Atiku Abubakar of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Peter Obi of Labour Party (LP) emerged second and third position respectively.

In Nigeria, the population of uninformed, impoverished class who don't understand the essence of election, yet mobilized to participate without orientation or knowing the implications is massive

Among disturbing controversies, Tinubu scored less than 25 percent votes in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) which is emphasized in the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended). The two runners-up firmly rejected the results despite the certificate-of-return issued to the president-elect, and accordingly, respectively filed petitions at the Presidential Election Petition Tribunal (PEPT).

The 25 percent votes in FCT has remained contentious with different interpretations. So, amongst the tasks for the PEPT is to objectively, prudently give a distinct direction on Section 134 (1)(b) of the 1999 Constitution over the status of the FCT vis-à-vis presidential election. By Sec 298 CFRN, the FCT is the seat of the government of the federation with liaison offices of all the 36 states operating actively with the workforce.

By this, FCT has equitable representation of all the states in the country, and therefore, if a demand by the drafters of the Constitution for a meagre 25 percent vote for presidential election is made, objectively, it isn't outrageous but rational.

For instance, Section 131 (a) supra requires a person seeking for the office of the president to be a citizen by birth. Realistically, any fit and upright citizen aspiring to become the nation's president should be able to garner a meagre 25 percent votes in the Federal Capital Territory.

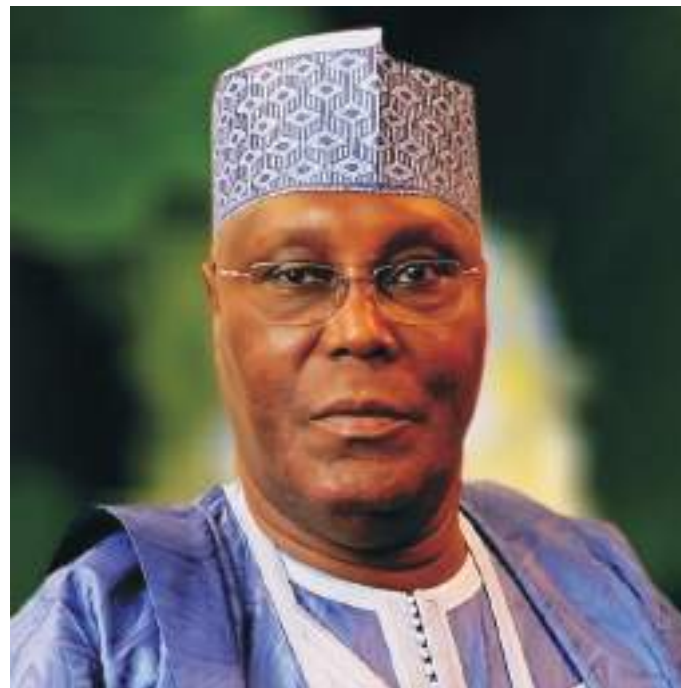
Thus, Section 134 (1)(b) of the Constitution should be given its literal interpretation for the purpose of presidential election, and sustain 25 percent votes in FCT as a peculiar requirement. It injures no one rather strengthens the society. It is absurd to argue that FCT only operates equally as any of the thirty-six states of the federation when in contradiction, FCT doesn't have a state legislature unlike the states. This feature alone has clearly placed a peculiar status on FCT. In all climes, the office of the president comes with sensitively peculiar features.

Nigeria's 2023 presidential election: Matters arising

Since the return of Nigeria's democracy in 1999, the society has never witnessed the fervour stirred up for the 2023 election due to the assent of the Electoral Act 2022 by President Muhammadu Buhari. For the first time, the masses were resolute to choose their leader, shunned personal interests for national interests, CARL UMEGBORO writes.



Tinubu



Atiku



Obi



Kwankwaso

In the United States of America, for instance, the Electoral College which supersedes the popular votes only exists on presidential election and doesn't apply in states' polls which shows the standing to secure the office of the US President. American leaders understood that the popular votes alone may lead to uncontrollable disaster considering that people with low-intelligent quotient exist globally, and may subjectively be influenced to queue behind a de facto undeserving person. Such a class of persons exist everywhere, and shouldn't be near public office as delicate as the office of the president in public interest notwithstanding de jure status.

In Nigeria, the population of uninformed, impoverished class who don't understand the essence of election, yet mobilized to participate without orientation or knowing the implications is massive.

Irrefutably, there's a difference between an economically viable population that contributes to economic growth and indolent

population. Thus, curing such a lacuna is vital. De jure and de facto qualification should exist side by side. This is the idea behind the US Electoral College in overriding popular polls.

Another critical issue that will determine the fate of Nigeria's democracy at the PEPT is the seeming discrepancy in the massive voters that turned out and participated in the election but by the record presented by the umpire, the huge number seemingly developed wings and flew to perhaps 'Damascus'.

A question to INEC; Is it realistic to have the huge number of zealous voters that participated in the 2023 election numerically dropped below the previous elections which were marred by apathy? This suggests that something is wrong somewhere.

By the apathy encountered just three weeks after; in the Governorship/House of Assembly election, the country's democracy is under a serious threat, and masses have apparently lost confidence again in the electoral system, which

the implications are unpredictable. Their opening grievance was expressed by apathy during the Governorship/House of Assembly elections.

Now, the only hope to assuage the bitterness, hopelessness and disappointment in the air over the poorly conducted election in absence of the Electoral College as practiced in America is for the judiciary to demonstrate clearly that it is indeed the last hope of the common man. Earlier, the concept of the US Electoral College was blurred but after Nigeria's 2023 presidential election recently, the logic manifested overtly.

The 'Electoral College' concept exists to checkmate foreseeable blunders like manipulating the system to produce a de facto unfit person. The reason is simple – the president is the face of any country. Perhaps, Nigeria will have to borrow a leaf from America's concept. This resuscitated brazen act of impunity with ...'Go to court' may lead to anarchy.

Presently, the society is tensed up and may not condone any further

absurdity, thus the judiciary can remedy the looming chaos by unyieldingly acting as truly, the last hope of the common man. Furthermore, there's a dire need for accelerated hearing on the presidential election petition. Apparently, the 2023 presidential election ridiculed the progress of the nation's democracy, and as a redress, the dictum laid down by Lord Hart, the then Lord Chief justice of England in the case of Rex v Sussex Justices (1924) 1KB 256 that "Justice must not only be done, but must also be seen to be done" should overtly manifest.

The judiciary is duty bound to save the nation from imminent collapse by resolving the imminent calamity urgently with the 'national interest' approach considering that the cardinal object of democracy is for the people to freely elect their leaders, not by manipulation or intimidation.

Umegboro is an Associate, Chartered Institute of Arbitrators [ACI Arb], public affairs analyst and social advocate.

SUNDAY PEOPLE

LALONG SWEAR-IN NEW JUDGES

Plateau State Governor, Rt. Hon. Simon Bako Lalong (CON) recently swore-in 5 Justices in the State Judiciary and Customary Court of Appeal at the Lady Victoria Gowon Multi-purpose Hall, new Government House Rayfield, Jos



Governor Lalong (CON) congratulating Justice Mary A. Izam after taking the oath of office as a Judge in the State Judiciary



Justice Ashahabu Suleiman Wase (left) being presented appointment letter by Governor Simon Bako Lalong (CON) of Plateau State



Former Chief Judge of Plateau State (2nd left) with other retired justices at the swearing-in ceremony



Plateau State Governor, Rt. Hon. Simon Bako Lalong (CON) delivering his speech



From left are, Grand Khadi of the Sharia Court, Justice Umar Ibrahim, President CCA, Justice Blessing Lyop Dalyop and the Emir of Kanam, HRH (Dr.) Muhammad Babangida Mu'azu Muhammadu



Cross section of members of security personnel in the state



Cross section of invited dignitaries at the ceremony



Governor Lalong (CON) in a photograph with the newly sworn-in judges

PHOTOS: DOPPA'S OFFICE GOVERNMENT HOUSE, RAYFIELD, JOS

IT is no longer news that the turn of events at the Plateau State House of Assembly has taken another dimension, barely less than two months to the end of the ninth assembly. Last week, the state woke up to the news that a Plateau State High Court sitting in Jos had reinstated Abok Nuhu Ayuba as the legitimate speaker. Recall that following his impeachment in 2021, the former speaker and some members who felt dissatisfied with the whole procedure challenged the process at the court of law.

Finally, after almost two years on the case, Justice Nefisa L. Musa in her judgement of Monday 3rd April, reinstated Rt. Hon. Abok Nuhu Ayuba as the speaker while directing that all his entitlements be paid in full. She declared that "the removal of the 1st defendant Rt. Hon. Ayuba as Honourable Speaker of the Plateau State House of Assembly was in violation of the provisions of Section 92(2) (c) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as altered and Order 7 Rule 14 of the Plateau State House of Assembly Rules 2001 and therefore, unconstitutional, null and void and of no effect".

Also, "that the election of the 2nd defendant in the person of Rt. Hon. Yakubu Yackson Sanda as the Speaker of the Plateau State House of Assembly on the 28 October, 2021 is in violation of the provisions of Section 92 (2) (c) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as altered and Order 7 Rule 14 of the Plateau State House of Assembly rules. Therefore, it is invalid, unconstitutional and null and void".

She added that the provision of Order 7 (14) of the Plateau State House of Assembly rules which must be strictly adhered with before the removal of a speaker were not complied with, thereby rendering the removal of Ayuba null and void. Justice Musa therefore granted a perpetual injunction restraining Rt. Hon. Yakubu Sanda from parading himself as speaker and awarded a fine of twenty million naira against the defendants. She also granted a mandatory order directing the state assembly to recognise Rt. Hon. Abok Nuhu Ayuba as the legitimate speaker.

Meanwhile on the very day the judgement was passed, the House Majority Leader and Chairman Committee on Information who is also the member representing Mikang constituency, Hon. Naalong Daniel Gapyil briefing the media denied knowledge of any court judgement on the reinstatement of the former speaker Abok Ayuba, describing it as mere rumour. The majority leader categorically stated that no letter on the matter was served to him, the clerk nor Sanda. He also made it clear that even if there was any, the House will be appealing the judgement and asking for a stay of execution.

To make good their threat, Rt. Hon. Sanda alongside other members from the APC have gone ahead to file an appeal

against the court judgement. The notice of appeal dated 4th April, 2023 reads "the appellants being dissatisfied with the decision of the High Court of Justice, Plateau State sitting in Jos in suit No. PLD/J585/2021 contained in the judgement of Honourable Justice N.L Musa delivered on 3rd April, 2023 do hereby appeal to the Court of Appeal upon the grounds set out in paragraph 3".

It further states that "the learned trial judge erred in law when he entertained the claimants suit and entered judgement in their favour in spite of the fact that the suit was incompetent which robbed the trial court of jurisdiction to



On Plateau Assembly leadership saga



Abok



Sanda

entertain same. That the 1st defendant, Rt. Hon. Abok Ayuba in the suit before the trial court did not challenge his removal from office as speaker of the Plateau State House of Assembly".

The appellants further said that their ground was predicated upon another judgement errors, when the judge dismissed their preliminary objections. It read, "the learned trial judge erred in law when he refused to entertain the notice of preliminary objection filed by the 13 defendants challenging the jurisdiction of the trial court to entertain the claimants suit but rather dismissed same hearing on it". The notice further said that "the 1st and second respondents, Rt. Hon. Abok Ayuba, the Commissioner of Police, Plateau State Command and the Commandant Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, are all affected".

In the midst of all the controversy trailing the state assembly, the reinstated Speaker, Rt. Hon. Abok Nuhu Ayuba resumed office even as he presided over last Tuesday's plenary. He came into the

assembly complex at about 9: am in company of some members of the PDP. The members are Hon. Pirfa Tyem, representing Langtang North North constituency, Hon. Timothy Dantong representing Riyom constituency and Hon. Dalyop Fom Gwottson representing Jos South constituency. Meanwhile, the day's sitting was attended by nine members both from the APC and PDP with the clerk, sergeant at arms and other officials of the House in attendance.

In his welcome address after being away for close to two years, Rt. Hon. Abok Ayuba said, "I want to welcome back all Honourable members and staff of the House to a normal plenary. The plenaries will start from where it stopped eighteen months ago". The agenda for the day ended with the adoption of the report on a "Bill for a Law to Establish a Plateau State Social Investment Programme (PLASSIP), and Other Matters Related. After all debates and contributions on the bill, it was passed for third reading as the speaker adjourned sitting to Wednesday, 5th April.

Since Tuesday's sitting presided by the reinstated Speaker Rt. Hon. Abok Nuhu Ayuba, there has



Daniel

been a heavier presence of joint security personnel in and around the assembly complex. The ever busy road linking the Terminus area through the House of Assembly has been barricaded up to Plateau Specialist hospital. This according to a personnel

who did not want his name mentioned is to forestall any break down of law and order. As of now, all legislative businesses have been put on hold with no activity going on, except for some few staff seen around the premises.

SUNDAY MAGAZINE



Buhari



Tinubu



Mahmood

Nigeria's May 29th handing over: Anxiety grips citizens

In less than two months, Nigeria, the most populous black nation in the world will experience another transition with the incumbent President, Mohammad Buhari transmitting power to the President-elect, Asiwaju Ahmed Bola Tinubu who won the presidential polls last February. BULUS GAMBO WRITES.

IN the aftermath of the presidential elections, most Nigerians accused the Chairman of the National Independent Electoral Commission, Prof. Mahmood Yakubu of allegedly rigging it in favor of the All Progressives Congress (APC) Presidential Candidate and former Lagos State Governor, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu. Most of these political gladiators, stalwarts and concerned citizens of the nation had further alleged that INEC fell short of its anticipated obligation through the open violation of the Electoral Act so as to give the undue victory to the former Lagos State Governor. Though the disputed outcome of the results has forced the two major contenders, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar of the Peoples Democratic Party, (PDP) and Peter Obi to seek for legal redress at the Presidential Elections Tribunal. In their separate petitions, the two presidential candidates give evidences suggestive of the fact that Tinubu should not become the next president of the federal republic. Unimaginably, unfolding developments on the polity is suggestive of the fact that the nation may be going through one of its dramatic transition period ever imagined in the annals of the nation's history. Since the declaration of this results for instance, there have been several protests in some states of the federation in condemnation of the presidential result urging the INEC chairman to resign from his post after failing to deliver when it matters most.

During one of such protests,

Scores of young demonstrators under the aegis of National Youth League for Defence of Democracy on Thursday called for the immediate arrest and prosecution of the Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission, Prof. Mahmood Yakubu, over the manner he conducted the 2023 general elections.

The protesters also urged the President, Major General Muhammadu Buhari (retd.), to put in place an interim government before he leaves office on May 29.

Addressing newsmen at the Unity Fountain in Abuja on Thursday, Convener of the group, Dr. Moses Paul, described the polls as one of the worst in the annals of Nigeria's electoral practice.

Paul called on the president to annul the elections, set up an interim government and appoints a new INEC chairman to conduct fresh polls. He said, "We are here particularly to address the greatest crime that has happened in the history of Nigeria. People were killed in Kano and some shot in Rivers. We have seen the greatest inhumanity happened in Lagos State in the course of this election.

"We have two demands. We are asking the President of this country to arrest immediately and prosecute the Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission, Prof. Mahmood Yakubu, who has committed the greatest fraud in the history of humanity; we need him arrested and be prosecuted.

"Our number two demand is

that we are asking for an interim government be put in place. We are saying that because we do not want President Muhammadu Buhari to continue; his tenure is ending; so, as a father he should put in place an interim government so that the interim government will now appoint another INEC chairman who will conduct a free and credible election and produce a befitting President for our country."

This sad development is not only threatening the peaceful coexistence of the country as an indivisible entity but casting a shadow of doubt as to whether the handing over ceremony may not be truncated after all.

Just recently, the President-elect, Asiwaju Bola Tinubu had raised the alarm over plots by some aggrieved partisans to truncate the transition process, particularly his expected swearing-in on May 29.

Tinubu in a statement by his Director, Public Affairs and Minister of State Labour and Employment, Mr Festus Keyamo SAN also warned the presidential candidates of the Peoples Democratic Party PDP, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar and that of the Labour Party LP, Mr Peter Obi against taking to the streets while also pursuing their cases in court.

In the statement issued Saturday in Abuja, the President-elect noted that those who have taken to the streets protesting against his mandate are fixated on having an Interim National Government ING. Part of the statement reads; "We have watched with great concern the condemnable activities of some

persons and groups who are desirous of truncating our democracy.

"For reasons best known to them, these persons have remained embittered that Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu was declared winner of the 2023 General Elections. Repeatedly, but unfortunately, these misguided individuals have called for either the cancellation of the results or that the President-elect should not be inaugurated on the 29th of May, 2023.

"We wish to reiterate and emphasise that these positions are not in tandem with our constitutional provisions or our electoral laws. We would have taken these as mere wishful thinking, however, because of their implications for national security and public order, we have therefore considered it necessary, if not expedient, to call them to order.

"We are aware of the intentions of those engaged in these treasonable and subversive acts. We also know those involved in the many plots being contrived to undermine the transition in particular and democracy in general. They are fixated on an Interim Government. They have done it in this country before and it threw the country into avoidable crises for many years and they want to do it again. They are bent on delegitimizing the new government. Some have made treasonable insinuations and openly called for military take-over. It is for these reasons that they are desperate to incite the people against the incoming Government.

"It is perplexing to see that

those contesting the results want to be in the courts and on the streets at the same time. However, if their intention is to truncate the inauguration of the President-elect and Vice-President-elect, they should immediately bury the thought. It is gratifying to note that the President has set in motion steps for the actualisation of the swearing-in ceremonies. In this regard, the Presidential Transition Council has remained focused and committed to its Terms of Reference in respect of organizing a hitch-free handover".

The statement noted that on many occasions after the declaration of Tinubu as the winner of the election, his public speeches and utterances have centred on reconciliation, forgiveness and a greater vision for Nigeria.

It added that the President-elect knows those who are sponsoring violent protests against his mandate as well as their sponsors from within and outside Nigeria and shall be working closely with the security agencies to apprehend them and bring them to book

"He has pledged fairness as the basis for his present and future engagements. He has unequivocally stated that he would not accord favour to those that supported him, and neither would he mistreat those who did not vote for him. This is statesmanly and patriotic. We all watched the President-elect as Governor of Lagos for eight years. He never undermined any person or tribe. He championed

Continued on page 31

NEWS

Police arrest 70 year old for raping minors

THE Police Command in Adamawa has arrested a 70-year-old man, Usman Ibrahim, for allegedly raping two minors in Yola-North Local Government Area.

Suleiman Nguroje, the spokesperson of the police in the state, said, in a statement on Saturday, that the victims were a four-year-old and a seven-year-old, who live on Ajiya Street, Jimeta.

"Adamawa state police command, on April 4, apprehended a 70-year-old man for raping two minors at Jimeta, Yola North local government area.

"The suspect is said to have lured the two victims into his room, a close distance from the victims, and took advantage of them while on their way to a lesson class and



IGP Alkali

had unlawful carnal knowledge of them.

"The incident was reported to the Divisional Police

Headquarters, Jimeta, by the father of the victims, having observed unusual pains from the kids while urinating," he stated.

Mr Nguroje further stated that preliminary investigation so far reveals that the suspect is a father of three and now leaving alone after he separated from his wife 10 years ago.

He added that the commissioner of police in the state, Afolabi Babatola, has ordered the officer in charge of the Family Support Unit of the State Criminal Investigation Department (CID) to take over the investigation and ensure it is prosecuted diligently.

The commissioner advised members of the public, particularly parents, to be very watchful of their kids against criminal-minded elements who are roaming about seeking whom to take advantage of and report suspicious characters to the Police.

NANS tasks authority on rescuing abducted students

THE National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS) has appealed to authorities concerned to use all means to rescue university and secondary school students from their abductors.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that two female Microbiology students of Federal University, Gusau, Zamfara and another 10 female secondary school students of Kachia LGA in Kaduna State had been in captivity.

Mr Vanessa Kwere, the Deputy Coordinator, Inter-Campus Affairs of NANS Zone A, made the appeal in a statement issued to NAN in Birnin Kebbi on Saturday.

Kwere issued the statement after NANS delegation met with the management of the university shortly after the union's Zonal Convention held in Jigawa recently.

He pointed out that the call became imperative in view of the fact that the abducted students were under the care of government, hence they remained the property of government.

Kwere said: "We were notified of the sad news regarding the abduction of two 200 level female students of Microbiology Department, Federal University, Gusau.

"It is indeed a really heart touching incident, we had to stop by to pay a solidarity visit, to also sympathise with the institution on this incident.

"We urge the students to remain calm and keep praying for the safe return of their friends and sisters."

According to him, the union met with the school management, including Prof. Ahmad Galadima, the Acting Vice Chancellor, who is also the current Deputy Vice Chancellor of the university; Dean Students' Affairs, Prof. Lawal Sa'ad; Deputy Dean, Student Affairs, Dr Tagba as well as the Chief Security Officer.

Kwere said during the meeting, they discussed how the incident happened and the strategies being currently applied by the institution to rescue the abducted students.

"The meeting was presided over by the pioneer Students' Representative Council (SRC) and President FUBK, Comrd. Usman Ladan-Fakai, and

attended by several NANS officials.

"Present at the meeting include Comrd. Vanessa Enoch Kwere, the Deputy Coordinator Inter-Campus Affairs Zone A, and Comrd. Danialu Bello Mailafiya, the Director Special Duties NANS Zone A. And a number of stakeholders from Sokoto, Kebbi, Zamfara axes," he said. The deputy coordinator noted that the Dean Student Affairs had enlightened them on the efforts made by the university to guarantee the safe return of the abducted students.

He said the acting VC also assured them that the university was doing its best to maintain security within the institution, assuring that frantic efforts are

being intensified to rescue the abducted students.

In a related development, the union expressed deep concern over the abduction of about 10 female students of Kachia LGA in Kaduna State, who according to preliminary report, were students of Government Secondary School, Awon.

"It is very disheartening to learn about this incident, despite still in worry of the two 200 level female students of Microbiology Department, FUGUS, abducted at their Hall of residence.

"We are in constant turmoil because of this reoccurring incidents, our governing bodies have failed to protect us from such menace, students no

longer feel safe in their institutions or anywhere at all.

"Predicaments like this are what discourages and interferes with the educational process of Nigerian students, looking at most of this cases, victims always turn out to be females, we're fragile beings who are abducted, tortured and explored.

"We students' representatives demand a serious and immediate intervention from the Federal Government and all relevant security bodies, it is our right to feel safe wherever we are," he pleaded.

Mutfwang engages minister on favourable terms for mining

Plateau State governor-elect, Caleb Mutfwang, has engaged Minister of Mines and Steel Development, Olamilekan Adegbite, on ways of fashioning out favourable terms for mineral exploration and mining of abundant natural resources in Plateau, as he prepares to hit the ground running on May 29, 2023.

Mutfwang met with the minister in Abuja, following the high expectations of Plateau citizens, who are anxiously looking forward to a smooth transition from the Lalong administration to the refreshing incoming government.

He noted with joy that the strategic engagement with critical stakeholders in the economic sector was aimed at putting in place the necessary spring-board for the smooth takeoff of his administration.

The governor-elect, in a statement, appreciated the minister for his hospitality and warm reception accorded his team, and said the courtesy visit was aimed at fostering mutual and healthy working relationship with the ministry in securing a safe and favourable terms for mineral exploration and harnessing of abundant resources the state is endowed with.

Mutfwang, who expressed strong determination of

running an integrated people-centred administration, said he is poised toward ensuring that Plateau people benefit from the natural resources God deposited in the land.

The minister, Olamilekan Adegbite, in his response, recognised the immense contributions of Plateau State in shaping Nigeria's solid mineral sector and expressed strong desire to partner with the state on mineral exploration.

He said the ministry would be willing to assist in promoting Plateau mining potentials when the incoming administration takes charge fully on May 29th, 2023.

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Mutfwang



Buhari sacks NIPC boss

PRESIDENT Muhammadu Buhari has sacked Saratu Umar as the executive secretary of the Nigeria Investment Promotion Commission, ending a crisis that has pitched the sacked boss against her senior officers and affected the operation of the commission.

Presidential spokesperson Femi Adesina disclosed the sack on Thursday. He did not state the reason but had exclusively reported allegations of incompetence and mismanagement against Saratu Umar.

It was gathered she recently shunned an invitation to appear before a ministerial panel on the affairs of the NIPC under her watch. The Independent and Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission is also investigating Ms. Umar for alleged corruption.

IGP orders tight security during the Easter celebration

The Inspector-General of Police, (IGP) Usman Alkali Baba, has reassured Nigerians of the Nigeria Police Force's commitment to ensuring the safety and security of all citizens and visitors to the country during the 2023 Easter celebrations.

He ordered in-depth security checks and patrols of all public spaces and essential government assets.

Baba also ordered state Commissioners of Police (CPs) and their supervising Zonal Assistant Inspectors-General of Police (AIGs) to ensure efficient deployment of police personnel, and operational assets to areas of likely security threats within their respective areas of responsibility (AoRs).

He equally charged all supervising officers that intensive and proactive visibility patrols should be carried out at all worship centers, train stations, highways, motor parks, airports, waterways, recreation centers, banks, and other financial institutions while taking necessary precautions to ensure a crime-free and peaceful environment for religious, cultural and other socio-economic activities and boost the confidence of the general public.

Gunmen abduct paramount ruler in Pankshin

GUNMEN have kidnapped the paramount ruler of the Mshipin Nation in Pankshin Local Council of Plateau State, His Royal Highness (HRH), Sunday Dajep.

Investigation revealed that the incident occurred at Chip Community in Pankshin on Wednesday night. A family source told newsmen that gunshots were heard at the palace of the monarch at about 11:00 p.m., where he was discovered abducted.

The Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO) of the State Police Command, Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP), Alfred Alabo, confirmed the incident.

He said the investigation into the incident is ongoing to ensure that the traditional ruler is rescued unhurt, and the culprits arrested and prosecuted, according to the law.

Meanwhile, there has been no communication between the abductors and the family.

Fuel subsidy: World Bank gives palliatives

THE World Bank has granted the Nigerian government \$800 million to put up a comprehensive palliative scheme for its citizens, before the removal of fuel subsidy by June 2023.

The Minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning, Zainab Ahmed, revealed this on Wednesday, shortly after the Federal Executive Council (FEC) meeting presided over by President Muhammadu Buhari.

According to Ahmed, the Nigerian government has resolved to end fuel subsidies by June, and, hence, has begged subsidies the impact less stressful for the citizens.

Man lynch for stealing watermelon

FOUR people have been arrested for allegedly torturing a suspected watermelon thief to death in Bauchi State.

The state Police Public Relations Officer, Ahmed Wakil, disclosed this on Friday in a statement made available to journalists.

He said the deceased was caught for allegedly stealing seven watermelons valued at N2,000 from a farm in Dallaji village, Tudin Wada ward, in the Warji Local Government Area of Bauchi State.

Wakil, a Superintendent of Police, said, "On March 29, 2023, around 10 am, one Ado Sanya (40), of Dallaji village, Tudun Wada ward, Warji LGA, reported at Warji Divisional Police Headquarters that on the same date, around 1.20 am, one Ibrahim Hashimu criminally trespassed into the farmland of one Mohammed Garba, of the same address and stole some watermelons.

"His hands were tied with a rope as he was beaten with sticks by Mohammad Daluta (24); Ibrahim Mahmud (22); Bashir Mahmud (18); and Abdullahi Mahmud (22); all males of the same address.

Advocates of Interim Gov't are Mischievous

THE Defence Headquarters (DHQ) has said that those calling for the interim national government were being 'mischievous', warning the proponents of the idea against the unconstitutional venture.

The Director, of Defence Media Operations, Major General Musa Danmadami, fielding questions from journalists on Thursday after the biweekly update on Armed Forces of Nigeria operations between March 23 – April 6, 2023, said the military would always defend what the constitution says.

He said the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) had conducted elections and declared a president-elect which the military recognises.

Compiled by HOSEA NYAMLONG

SUNDAY FEATURE

Insecurity: The task before incoming administration

Nigeria would on May 29 2023 have a new leadership that will steer the affairs of this country for the next four years. The new administration would inherit some humongous challenges especially in the areas of national security which the country has been contending with for over a decade. Apart from dousing the misgivings generated by the conduct of the presidential election, the incoming administration has a bigger challenge of finding solutions to the multiple internal security challenges in all the political zones of the country.



THESE include insurgency and terrorism, banditry and kidnapping, pipeline vandalism and massive oil theft as well as killings and violent separatists' agitations.

Although the country's Armed Forces in conjunction with other security agencies have been conducting operations across the country to decimate the various security threats, the new administration no doubt would be confronted with the urgent need to totally decimate criminals, dominate the environment and restore peace and order across the length and breath of the country.

This means that the incoming government must urgently search for funds to prosecute the insurgency, restore civil authority, resettle displaced persons, address the causes that gave rise to insecurity and properly manage the thousands of insurgents and their families who surrendered to military authorities well.

So far, so well

Luckily for the incoming government, there have been lots of successes recorded in the fight against insecurity in the country through joint military operations involving the Army, Air Force, Navy and other security agencies.

For instance, the tempo of military operation under the Joint Task Force Operation Hadin Kai (OPHK) in the North-east has led to mass surrender of Boko Haram and ISWAP terrorists as well as their family members to troops in different fronts. Available record revealed that more than 82,000 terrorists and their

families surrendered as at the end of 2022, while hundreds of terrorists were killed or captured in various operations in the region.

Military authorities confirmed that about 900 arrested terrorists are awaiting prosecution and thousands of others including terrorists' commanders, collaborators and logistics suppliers were killed in land and air operations by the Nigerian military.

In the Niger Delta region, for instance, the military joint task force, Operation Delta Safe (OPDS) had in 2022 destroyed 37 militant camps and over 1,883 illegal oil refining sites in the region.

According to the Commander, (OPDS), Rear Admiral Aminu Hassan, 699 suspects were arrested in the effort to secure the operational environment for oil and gas companies and ensure safety of citizens.

The operations helped to save the nation over N53 billion worth of crude oil, diesel, kerosene and petrol and recovered 90 assorted illegal weapons and large calibre ammunitions.

Areas of concentration

In spite of recent military successes in all regions, including the North-west where prominent bandits were eliminated, the incoming government should focus on enhancing intelligence gathering and sharing, including leveraging technical and communication aspects of

intelligence in support of the Armed Forces.

Although the Chief of Defence Intelligence, Major-General Samuel Adebayo recently said the Defence Intelligence Agency had successfully dominated the threat environment with a combination of special intelligence operations and non-kinetic activities, the government should push them to take more measures to deny enemies of Nigeria the cohesion and capabilities to operate.

They should therefore be empowered and equipped to enhance tactical and technical intelligence drive on all frontiers to sustain the gains recorded and further secure the country.

The new administration will also have to devise ingenious ways to manage the thousands of insurgents who voluntarily surrendered to military authorities, as well as support the thousands of displaced people returning to their homes, especially in the North-east after years of exile.

It is also imperative for the government to sustain the ongoing community-based reintegration of deradicalised insurgents to ensure sustainable peace in the country.

Emphasis on military response to the profound security and political challenges confronting the country will not provide the desired outcome.

Amnesty and negotiations should continue to be pursued to mitigate the conflicts, especially where military actions failed. The 2009 amnesty programme for

militants in the Niger Delta region should guide the administration in that regard.

The Deradicalisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (DRR) of insurgents through Operation Safe Corridor started in September 2015 should also be given prominence.

Need for novel approach

So far, more than 2,000 repentant members of Boko Haram and ISWAP have been rehabilitated, deradicalised and integrated into the society with tremendous success. According to the National Centre for Counter Terrorism in the Office of the National Security Adviser, transforming those who took up arms into normal civilians is crucial to ending violent extremism.

National Security Adviser (NSA), retired Major-General Babagana Monguno also said at a workshop organised by the centre in Abuja on Amnesty Management, Deradicalisation and Community-Based Reintegration that there should be greater focus on preventing radicalisation of young people by violent extremists.

Monguno agreed that the DRR would fundamentally re-establish state control, secure stability and initiate a process leading to sustainable development of the country.

He however cautioned that rushing to grant amnesty would be counter-productive to national security if there are no established policies and legislations, national ownership

and coordination mechanism for the amnesty programme.

"Thus, the cooperation of communities is unavoidable in the quest for government to consolidate on the gains of ongoing Counter-Terrorism Operations while measures to win the hearts and minds of the population are critical, and gradual resettlement and reintegration of affected communities is crucial for success.

"This involves military, political, civil social, economic and humanitarian interventions, implemented within a multi-stakeholder platform," the NSA said.

The NSA said government, its partners and other stakeholders have been successfully implementing the DDR strategy developed in collaboration with International Organisation for Migration.

Thus, the incoming administration should strengthen the programme, including mechanisms to monitor the beneficiaries reintegrated into the society.

It is therefore imperative that in pushing its security agenda, the incoming government should source for new funding for the defence sector and develop solutions to underlying causes of insecurity in the country, which should include tackling extreme poverty, access to education, healthcare and justice as well as unemployment. (NAN)

SUNDAY FEATURE

VIOLENT extremism portends severe costs for the world, especially Africa. Terrorism committed through violent extremism cost Africa \$14 billion in economic costs in 2016 alone, even though 18 African countries spent more than \$259 billion between 2007 and 2016 to fight violent extremism and terrorism. Still, terrorist attacks fuelled by extreme religious and political beliefs have barely subsided in Africa.

In June 2021, armed men killed over 160 people during a village raid on Solhan, Burkina Faso; violence linked to Islamist groups surged by more than 22 percent between 2022 and 2023, respectively, comprising over 6,859 terrorist events. These gory incidents are part of the many continuing cases of terrorism and violent extremism in five context-specific African areas: the Sahel, Somalia, Lake Chad Basin, North Africa, and Mozambique.

To defeat violent extremism, African governments and policymakers must work seamlessly in a concerted effort that safeguards all African peoples' peace, welfare, and security.

To defeat violent extremism, African governments and policymakers must work seamlessly in a concerted effort that safeguards all African peoples' peace, welfare, and security. This article will examine the varied ways by which violent extremism can become a thing of the past in Africa through much-needed strategic imperatives:

Combating Terrorist Financing (CTF)

Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen, more commonly known as Al-Shabab, is a Salafi jihadist military organization primarily based in Somalia and maximally operational across East Africa. Al-Shabab makes about \$100 million annually from illicit revenues generated through piracy, arms smuggling and trafficking, extortion of local businesses and individuals, collection of illegal fees, and facilitation of underhand trades, amongst many others. Al-Shabab uses a lot of these monies to finance terrorism in East Africa and worldwide. In 2009, the group officially pledged allegiance to al-Qa'ida, a global Islamist militant organization it supports, by spending \$24 million yearly on weapons.

We must identify and truncate their extensive monetary networks to defeat Al-Shabab and other similar extremist organizations. In October 2022, the United States Department of Treasury officially designated seven financial facilitators of Al-Shabab and placed them on a watchlist, including Abdullahi Jeeri, Khalif Adale, Hassan Afgooye, Abdikari Hussein Gagaale, Abdi Samad and Abdirahman Nurey. However,

The imperatives of overcoming violent extremism in Africa

Violent extremism refers to the actions of people who use violence to achieve ideological, religious, or political goals. Some notable extremist groups who use violence, instability, and civil disorder to achieve ideological, religious, and political goals include the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), Boko Haram, The Taliban, and Al-Shabab. ADEBAYO ADELEKE Writes.



African leaders can cooperate between African governments with international organizations and citizens must holistically address the root causes of conflict and violent uprisings by restoring the financial networks of terrorist organizations in Africa.

Security experts have dimensions of trust in African communities. advocated that combating terrorist financing (CTF) can be The UNDP is not alone in achieved through various legal advocating this message of and administrative measures. rebuilding trust between From a legal perspective, African governments and citizens. In the countries can implement The book "Trust: The Social Virtues International Convention for the and The Creation of Society," Suppression of the Financing of Francis Fukuyama, a renowned Terrorism (1999) while also political scientist, stated that the enacting domestic legislation to ability to trust and work with ensure the criminalization of others is necessary for economic offences related to the financing success. For Africa, Fukuyama's of terrorism. Administratively, words couldn't have been more African governments can poignant; trust between embark on a unique financial governments and citizens is a investigation, asset freezing, crucial ingredient for building asset seizing, and confiscation of healthy, safe, and stable terrorism-related assets while communities in Africa. strengthening regional partnerships against terror trust in Africa is not a cakewalk.

Strengthening governmental trust with local communities

The United Nations Development Programme president or parliament. But to (UNDP) has reiterated that defeat terrorism across Africa and strengthening the trust between put insecurity to bed, this must governments and citizens is change. African political leaders essential for building civil must restore the trust between tranquillity and achieving citizens and their governments to sustainable peace in conflict- a healthy level, as it will aid ridden African regions. The government's efforts and peace- Programme confirms that loving citizens in fighting confidence remains an integral extremism and terrorism. African component of democratic governments can build trust by societies. Any attempt at upholding the end of their social shortening the trust deficit contract with their citizens.

This can be done by employing the taxes paid by the citizens for national development and social investment purposes, eliminating corruption, improving resource governance, communicating soundly, promptly, and earnestly, strengthening election integrity, and eliminating pre-election and post-election violence, amongst many other governmental imperatives.

Once African governments sustainably implement these measures, social trust in local communities will increase, and violent extremism will decline as most African societies will move against it in the same direction.

Developing robust and mobile defence capabilities

A non-negotiable part of winning the war against violent extremism in Africa involves robust investment in the defence capabilities of many African countries, given that the security systems of many African countries remain grossly incapable of fighting and ending terrorism.

While the United Nations recommends that governments should ensure one police officer for every 450 citizens, the African reality is brazenly disobedient of the UN recommendation. Kenya has one police officer for every 1,150 citizens; Tanzania has one police officer for every 1,298 citizens, while Ghana retains one police officer for every 1,200 citizens. Officers in many African

countries need to be more funded and equipped. Little wonder many citizens in Uganda and other African countries now pay for their guards since the public security system is unreliable.

When it comes to sophisticated security systems, many African governments are deficient due to corrupt practices, which remain a long-standing bane against investments in robust and agile defense technologies. Nigeria's \$2 billion arms scandal, popularly known as "Dasukigate," remains a credible example of why violent extremism persists in many parts of Africa since the weapon-grade systems needed to embark on counterinsurgency efforts have been embezzled.

To fight violent extremism, African governments must start to embark on large-scale purchases of the sophisticated weaponry needed to fight terrorism, and it must embark on the drive as a matter of national emergency.

Conclusion

Violent extremism remains a raging issue across many African regions, from across the Sahel, Somalia, Lake Chad Basin, North Africa, and Mozambique. To properly win the war against religious, ideological, and political fundamentalism, African governments must implement the suggestions above. I believe this will play a crucial role in restoring peace across Africa by helping to end violent extremism and other related tendencies.

POLITICS vs Governance. We tend to confuse the meaning of these two words sometimes. There are many politicians who do not know how to govern but they still represent the people who voted them into power. However, the quality of these representations are less than expected, in fact disappointing. This is because they cannot give what they do not have, and we hardly sit down to reflect on the meaning of politics and the meaning of Governance before casting our votes. What do they mean? what are their differences? how do they relate and why is it important for us to consciously educate ourselves about the two? The elections are around the corner. Political literacy is imperative if we intend to make wise choices with our franchise and if our votes will bring the much-needed change.

The two words have a wide range of definitions. Let us go with the Merriam-Webster dictionary. It defines politics as follows: "The art or science concerned with guiding or influencing governmental policy, the art or science concerned with winning and holding control over a government, political actions, practices, or policies, political affairs or business especially, competition between competing interest groups or individuals for power and leadership (as in a government), political life especially as a principal activity or profession, political activities, characterized by artful and often dishonest practices, the political opinions or sympathies of a person, the total complex of relations between people living in society, the relations or conduct in a particular area of experience especially as seen or dealt with from a political point of view, office politics, ethnic politics and playing politics". When I checked the thesaurus for the word politics for its synonyms, it said the following: "This word isn't in the thesaurus, but here's the dictionary definition: Politics. If you are looking for a different word in the thesaurus, try one of the spelling suggestions below or search again. Politic, polemics, politesse, policies, poutices".

On the other hand, Merriam Webster describes Governance as follows: the act or process of governing or overseeing the control and direction of something (such as a country or an organization). Government. The synonyms of governance are as follows: administration, authority, government, jurisdiction, regime (also régime), regimen, rule. Other words related to Governance are, reign, dominion, power, sovereignty supremacy, sway, command, leadership, direction, management, regulation, superintendence, supervision, autocracy, dictatorship, domination, hegemony, mastery, oppression, subjugation, tyranny, the act or activity of looking after and making decisions about something. The Synonyms for governance are administration, care, charge, conduct, control, direction, government, guidance, handling, intendance, management, operation, oversight, presidency, regulation, running, stewardship, superintendence, superintendency, and supervision. Words Related to governance are generalship, leadership, rulership, agency, aegis (also egis), custody, guardianship, keeping, lap, protection, safekeeping, trust, tutelage, ward engineering, logistics, machination, manipulation, coadministration, codirection, comanagement.

From the definition alone, we can see the superficiality of politics and the dept of governance. Politics is show. Governance is work. Governance starts where politics end. When the rallies and swearing-in are over, governance starts. Having said that, let us reflect on the pedigree of the people we choose before casting our votes. Are they people who are simply interested in political power and show or are they people who have proven that they know the "act or activity of looking after and making decisions about something?" good decision making. Stewardship.

There is Governance in all spheres of life. Political Governance is the most popular followed by cooperate governance. One of the synonyms for governance is Administration and Government. The European Union Commission says the following about governance in the following excerpt:

The quality of a country's public administration and governance is a key factor in its economic performance and the well-being of its citizens. Efficient public administrations serve the needs of citizens and businesses. It is essential that public authorities are able to adjust to changing circumstances. The Commission helps EU Member States undertaking reforms in the area of public administration and governance by providing technical support. Areas of intervention include the central administration, local administration, digital government, public procurement, better regulation, the judicial system, the fight against corruption and fraud and the better absorption of European Structural and Investment Funds."

The EU Commission goes on to say that "To

help Member States address the challenges that public administrations face, the Commission has developed a wide range of instruments over the years: from strategic and operational analysis to the design and the financing of reforms and investments; from the provision of evidence to advice and guidance from relevant stakeholders, including other Member States".

The forgoing is from EU Commission. Let us ask ourselves a question. Considering the fact that "the quality of a country's public administration and governance is a key factor in its economic performance and the wellbeing of its citizens", how many of us are looking out for politicians who have profound knowledge of public administration and Governance with practical results. How many politicians have knowledge in the areas of strategic and operational analysis? How many of them know

Politics versus governance



any thing about monitoring and evaluation as a tool for good governance?

Let us look at monitoring an evaluation. In a country riddled with corruption, we keep calling out corrupt practices without putting in place, measures to curb it. On one end of good governance is strategic planning and in the middle and tail end is monitoring and evaluation. One way to curb corruption is to employ the tools of strategic planning and evaluation. Hypothetically speaking, as a politician, before awarding a contract, do I know how to do needs assessment and strategic planning? Do I know what type of contract to award based on what the people need? Do I know how to arrive at that knowledge objectively? When I award a contract, do I know how to justify taxpayers money by using the tools of monitoring and evaluation to control the process and ensure that it achieves the objective? This has nothing to do with political rallies and false promises to the electorate. This is time to work and justify the taxpayers mandate and resources. Monitoring and evaluation is the control mechanism to ensure that results align with strategic plans within budgetary boundaries. We need these now more than at any other time in our political life as a nation because we need people who know what they are doing and have the prerequisite governance skills. Do our politicians know anything about data-based decision making and performance based budgeting? The following is an excerpt on the use of monitoring and evaluation in performance-based budgeting titled "Monitoring and Evaluation as an integral part of performance-based budgeting" from the book *Monitoring and Evaluation as tools for enhancing public expenditure management in Ukraine*, written by Sergii Slukhai, PhD, of Taras Shevchenko Kyiv National University, Kyivsergiis@yahoo.com:

Being a part of a "new public management" concept, PBB has been significant part of the modern practical approach to public budgeting in the early 1990s, being a recent development in the performance-based management domain.

The concept of performance-based management itself, along with its basic components, could be considered an attempt to apply well-known business strategies in the management of big companies to the public sector in order to increase public trust in the government, which is widely believed to be inveterately inefficient. As Jack Diamond (2003) noted, its introduction jumpstarted the fundamental structural change of public budget management systems in many OECD countries



editorial icon by alew taleeb

study of early US experience showed (GAO, 1997); failure in this issue will undermine the positive results of PBB implementation.

Some practical evidence suggests (Kentucky Legislative Research Commission, 2001), while PBB generated a higher level of accountability than in the traditional approach, it was not too successful in generating greater efficiency in public programs. The reasons why this promising approach did not give the expected results, may be rooted in the political component of budgeting, as some researchers argue (Thomas, 2007).

Since the primary goal of this paper lies in analyzing the M&E component of PBB, we first have to define these two interrelated specific activities – monitoring and evaluation. In accordance with notions used in documents of international organizations (Sanzharovskiy and Polianski, 2007:13-14), monitoring can be defined as a continuing function that uses systematic data collection on specified indicators to provide the management and the key stakeholders with ongoing information on the achievement of objectives and the usage of program-related funds. Monitoring data should be used in program evaluation.

Evaluation usually is defined as a systematic and objective assessment of an ongoing or completed project, program or policy, its design, implementation and results; its aim is to determine the activity relevance, measure the fulfilment of objectives, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability. Evaluation should provide information that is credible and useful, enabling the incorporation of lessons learned into the decision-making process of all public sector stakeholders.

M&E should not only assist the public bodies and society in identifying whether goals, objectives and specific PIs have been achieved, but it should become an effective tool motivating implementers towards reaching the maximum possible level of fulfilment of the goals set within existing funding limits. M&E should allow users to operationally generate, obtain and use complete and reliable information on achieving PIs, determine the reasons for their deviation from the planned values which could (if necessary) be used for timely modifications in the scale and scope of implementers' activities – e.g. whether to review the amounts of purpose-related public spending or not. It should also enable evaluation of short-term and long-term social and economic benefits obtained by the public due to successful realization of each separate program.

The core element of M&E activities is setting PIs whose values serve as a yardstick for measuring a program's success. In order to serve the goal of monitoring and assessing the program performance, they should have the desirable features of

being relevant, bounded (not too extensive in number), clear, understandable, valid, reliable, timely, comparable, comprehensive, and reasonably within the control of those who are made accountable for their achievement (Jackson, 1995). Of course, it is an ideal which never can be reached in reality.

The best M&E practices are primarily inherent to international organizations and non-for-profit (nongovernmental) organizations (NPO) whose activities are under constant control of the donors. Their experience is generalized in some manuals and guides that are recommended especially for utilization in developing and transition countries. However, individual countries tend to be selective in implementing the elements of M&E demonstrating approaches of their own that combine both universal and specific features. Many transition countries achieved positive outcomes while introducing the modern M&E toolkit.

Concluded from last week

We are continuing with our series on **Why Jesus Came**. There are two scriptures again that I want to bring back to our attention- Matthew 1:21 and Luke 2:11. I have told you in the beginning of the series that Jesus' purpose and life mission was declared right at His birth in Matthew 1:21, when the Angel told Joseph, Jesus' foster father that: **"She shall bring forth a son and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins."** We are further told in Luke 2:11 that: **"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."**

Now in these two passages of scripture, the purpose of Jesus, his mission, his life work was declared in His name, it said **"You shall bring forth a son, your wife shall bring forth a son and his name shall be called Jesus, he shall save his people from their sins"** Jesus is a Saviour. Now we have talked in past editions that the core anointing that Jesus carried is to be a 'Saviour' or 'Salvation'. That word 'Saviour' or 'Salvation' means a 'Deliverer', one that rescues people, one that pulls people out of danger or difficulty. It also carries the thought of healing, of wholeness, of wellbeing, actually one of the words used for salvation in the New Testament is the word 'SOZO', when it said **"He will save His people from their sins,"** (Matthew 1:21).

The word "saved" there is the Greek word Sozo, which means "to keep save and sound", "to rescue from danger" or "to rescue from destruction". It also means "to make well", "to heal", "to restore to health" or "to preserve one who is in danger of destruction". So in any case, the word "save" means to rescue, to deliver from harm, danger or anything that will be an injury or peril to human life.

It also carries the essence of healing or bringing people to wholeness in their health, in their physical bodies. All of these things were things that the Lord Jesus Christ achieved, when He came into this earth, His life work was through His sufferings, death, entire life and His ultimate resurrection to deliver mankind from the authority and dominion of Satan or darkness. Now the Bible says in Colossians 1:13: **"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear son,"** in whom we have redemption through the forgiveness of sin; in whom we have salvation; in whom we have been rescued from the assault, the wickedness of the evil one. These are the benefits to those who have come into Christ Jesus and we have also mentioned that to begin to enjoy this saving ministry of Jesus, one must first and foremost receive Jesus as Lord and Saviour. That is the first step.

The Bible clearly says, in Acts 2:21 that: **"And it shall come**

to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." So when one accepts that Jesus Christ, came to this earth to deliver one from sin, and when you put your total faith and trust in Him as the one and only Saviour that you have from sin, from eternal damnation, from eternity in hell and from the wickedness of the devil in this life, that moment the Bible says 'you' are saved. The Bible makes us to understand in 2 Corinthians 5:17 that: **"Therefore if any**

you have made Jesus the Lord and Saviour of your life, it is important you understand what has happened to you. This understanding will settle both your eternal and temporal destinies. When you become born again, you have been brought into a place of redemption in Christ. And like I said, it is important for you to understand what has happened to you.

I can liken Salvation to somebody going for shopping in a supermarket- one that is

If God be for us, who can be against us?

“

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.

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Faith is the purchasing power of the Christian to walk in all of God's great benefits. Everything in the supermarket of salvation belongs to you. Jesus Christ through His death on the cross, His resurrection which we call His sacrifice for us, has made available to you everything you ever need and require to live a godly and a prosperous life. Hebrews 9:12 assures us that: **"Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us."** Glory!



man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new". All things are of God who has reconciled us to His son the Lord Jesus Christ and has given unto us the ministry of reconciliation. So that is very important, that is the very first step, now the moment you make Jesus the Lord and Saviour of your life it is important for you to understand what has happened to you- you become born again- you become a child of God- your name is established, you purchase to be like the benefits of salvation, then the lamb of God's book of life; eternity becomes your home.

Now in this world, you have certain rights, you have certain privileges, you have certain benefits. You have a right to live in the rest of your life in this world in the fullness of God's blessing and free from satanic oppression. But the Bible, in Hosea 4:6, says that: **"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children."**

So it is important for us to understand what has happened to us when we became born again. Now for you reading, if

very large with different sections for different things such as electronics, food, beverages and clothing etc. When you get into that place, you head to the section that has the different things that you need or want to buy at that particular point in time; you pick the things off the shelf and eventually, you go to the checkout counter where they total up the goods and you pay for them there. Now if we are likening salvation to that supermarket, and the goods you purchase to be like the benefits of salvation, then everything that you will ever need to live your life, to fulfill God's plan for your life, and live free from the devil, live free from satanic afflictions and walk in the blessings of God in this life has all been made available for you through what Jesus Christ did for you on the cross.

Jesus paid the price for the salvation of the whole world, making Him Lord and Saviour, and our decision to confess Him as Lord and Saviour and Christ is stepping into that massive supermarket so to speak and everything in the supermarket has already been made available to you. That is how the salvation in Christ Jesus is to us when we became born again. Now for you reading, if your life, required for you to live

a godly life, for you to live a blessed life, for you to live a life free from satanic affliction has been made available to you in Christ.

It is up to you to understand what is in that supermarket, to understand how or what has been made available to you, the benefits that have come to you as a result of what Christ did for you in salvation and then to understand how to purchase or how to take to yourself and to enjoy those benefits.

Naturally speaking, our purchasing power in the natural supermarket is money, but in the realm of the spirit, all the things we need for life and godliness have already been made available to us and purchased, so to speak, by the redemption we have in Christ. Our purchasing power in this case is faith.

Faith in God is our purchasing power. It is through faith in God that we take to ourselves all these things that have been freely given to us in Christ Jesus. Romans 8:31 says: **"What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?"** Verse 32 says: **"He that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"**

So everything in salvation

INTERNATIONAL

Will Trump face prevention order?

Donald Trump has become the first former American president ever to be criminally charged, pleading not guilty to 34 counts of falsifying business records. So what comes next for him and his defence team? SAM CABRAL Writes.

Although these charges are usually treated as lesser misdemeanours, Mr Trump is accused of committing felonies - more serious offences that carry a maximum penalty of prison time.

The charges relate to Mr Trump's involvement in hush money payments to former porn star Stormy Daniels ahead of the 2016 presidential election.

If the case gets to trial, it will be watched worldwide.

But the legal process that lies ahead could last months - and will certainly see Mr Trump's lawyers fighting to get the case dropped.

Judge could 'gag' Trump
Legal experts have speculated that the judge may impose a so-called "gag order" on Mr Trump - barring him and his legal team from publicly discussing this case.

On social media, the former president has claimed Judge Juan Merchan "HATES" him and treated his company "VICIOUSLY" in an earlier tax fraud case. He has also bashed Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg, the prosecutor, as an "animal" and "degenerate psychopath" whose investigation could bring "death and destruction".

At his Tuesday arraignment, no gag order was requested and Judge Merchan said he would not impose one "at this time even if it were requested".

But in pointed remarks, he told the former president: "Please refrain from making comments or engaging in conduct that has the potential to incite violence, create civil unrest, or jeopardise the safety or well-being of any individuals."

About five hours later, Mr Trump made comments criticising the judge and prosecutor by name. In a speech among supporters at his Florida home, he slammed Judge Merchan as a "Trump-hating judge with a Trump-hating wife and family" and Mr Bragg as a "failed district attorney" who should himself be prosecuted.

If Judge Merchan does impose a gag order in the future and the Trump team violates it, the former president will be held in contempt of court, which could come with a fine of \$1,000 (£800), up to 30 days of jail time, or both.



Trump

Prosecutors hand over evidence
The Manhattan District Attorney's office has been investigating the Trump hush money payments for five years.

Mr Bragg alleges Mr Trump falsified the true nature of the payments because they were made in support of a crime - attempting to influence the 2016 presidential election, which is a violation of election law.

With Mr Trump's arraignment complete, prosecutors must now turn over evidence they have gathered during their probe to Mr Trump's legal team, a standard process known as discovery.

This is generally completed within 35 days of arraignment, but the Bragg team has been given 65 days - or until 8 June - to produce the "vast majority" of its materials.

Evidence will include law enforcement interviews with, and witness testimony from, key figures like Ms Daniels and Mr Trump's former lawyer Michael Cohen, as well as prosecutors' internal communications. It will also include minutes from, and

exhibits shown to, the grand jury convened earlier this year.

Trump's lawyers will try to get case dismissed
Lawyers for Mr Trump have vowed to challenge the charges against him within days, arguing that the case is "ripe for motions".

Motions are requests for the court to make a decision on a matter relating to a case before a trial begins. If a party makes a motion to dismiss, it is asking the court to dismiss all or part of a case.

New York typically allows 45 days after arraignment to make motions, but Judge

Merchan has allowed the Trump team just over four months - or until 8 August - for the defence to complete all of their motions, and set prosecutors a deadline of 19 September to prepare their response.

Trump attorney Joe Tacopina vowed on Sunday on CNN to "evaluate all our legal options and pursue every one most vigorously".

"The team will look at every, every potential issue that we will be able to challenge, and we will challenge," he said. "And, of course, I very much anticipate a motion to dismiss coming because there's no law that fits this."

In addition to a motion to dismiss, the Trump team has floated the possibility of a motion to dismiss the judge, as well as a motion to transfer the trial venue - from Manhattan to nearby Staten Island.

Mr Trump wrote on social media that Manhattan "with some areas that voted 1% Republican" is a "very unfair" place for him to face a trial. But motions to transfer venue are rarely granted.

Trump's next day in court
After each side's motions have played out, we will know for certain if the People of New York v Donald Trump will go to trial.

Defendants in New York have the "right to a speedy trial" within six months or so of an indictment, and prosecutors told the court on Tuesday they would like to go to trial in January of 2024.

Mr Trump's lawyers said a trial date in the spring would be "more realistic".

The court will deliver its ruling on motions on 4 December, and this is when Mr Trump is expected to be back in court.

That means, if the case does eventually go to trial, it will probably start after Americans begin voting in primary elections to select their nominees for president in 2024.

In the meantime, Mr Trump could face criminal charges in at least two other cases, including a sprawling special counsel probe into his efforts to overturn the 2020 election, and his handling of classified information after leaving office.

But no laws exist to prevent an indicted American from running for president, and the Republican is ploughing ahead with his third consecutive campaign for the White House. **Source: BBC News, Washington**

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INTERNATIONAL

Ukraine - France implores China to 'bring Russia to senses'

FRENCH President Emmanuel Macron says he is counting on his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping to "bring Russia to its senses" over its war in Ukraine.

The French president, on a three-day state visit, made clear he is seeking to dissuade China from supporting Russia's invasion of its neighbour.

In a joint statement following those talks, the two leaders reaffirmed their call for peace talks between Kyiv and Moscow "as soon as possible".

The men also reaffirmed their opposition to the use of nuclear weapons during the conflict.

To coincide with their meeting, Chinese state broadcaster CCTV released a report in which Xi hailed China's "positive and steady" ties with France as the world undergoes "profound historical changes".

Macron said during his trip Beijing can play a "major role" in finding a path to peace in the conflict and welcomed China's "willingness to commit to a resolution".

His visit to China – the first since 2019 – comes as Western pressure mounts on Beijing to help push for peace in Ukraine.

Though Beijing is officially neutral, Xi has never condemned the Russian invasion. While he recently went to Moscow to reaffirm his alliance with Vladimir Putin – framed as an anti-Western front – Xi has not spoken on the phone with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

The talks were "frank and constructive", the Elysee Palace said, while Beijing said the discussions were "friendly" and "in-depth".

Macron, who is accompanied on his visit by European Commission



Macron

chief Ursula von der Leyen, said he wants to "be a voice that unites Europe" over Ukraine, and coming to China with her serves to "underline the consistency of this approach".

However, Nicholas Bequelin, from Yale Law School's Paul Tsai China Center, said it was unusual for Macron and von der Leyen to travel to Beijing together "and quite confusing".

Some analysts suggested Macron and von der Leyen may adopt a "good cop, bad cop" role in Beijing with the convivial Frenchman promoting a "reset" in ties, and the EU chief laying out the thornier issues and red lines in those relations.

Video Duration 02 minutes 31 seconds 02:31

Xi, Putin agree on

'responsible dialogue' to end war in Ukraine

For its part, China is eager to ensure Europe does not follow what it sees as United States-led efforts to contain its rise, and there are at least hopes of healing divisions with France.

Von der Leyen said relations between the EU and China had grown "complex in recent years".

Beyond talks on Ukraine, Macron's trip has an important economic component with the French leader keen to firm up a crucial trade partnership.

Macron is accompanied by more than 50 French business leaders on his visit, including top bosses of Airbus, EDF and Veolia.

Airbus announced on Thursday it would open a second assembly line in China that will double its production capacity in the country.

courts on the 13th of February 2023 and our extradition request was unsuccessful," Lamola told reporters.

The court had ruled that the UAE had jurisdiction to prosecute the Guptas for money laundering offences allegedly committed in the UAE and South Africa, Lamola said.

He added that South Africa would "promptly appeal" the decision.

Cathleen Powell, associate

THE United States, South Korea and Japan have expressed deep concern over what they described as North Korea's "malicious" cyber-activities in support of its banned weapons programmes.

Cryptocurrency funds stolen by North Korean hackers have been a key source of funding for the country's weapons programmes, according to the United Nations, with such theft reaching a record last year.

Kim Gunn, South Korea's envoy, held talks with his US and Japanese counterparts this week and condemned North Korea's continued weapons tests.

Japan's envoy also "strongly condemned" the "unprecedented frequency and manner" of North Korea's missile launches as a serious and imminent threat to regional security, Japan's foreign ministry said. Japan on Friday announced a two-year extension of its trade ban on North Korea, with exemptions for humanitarian reasons.

The US and South Korea have been conducting a series of annual springtime exercises since March, including air and sea drills and their first large-scale amphibious landing drills in five years.

North Korea has reacted furiously to the exercises, calling them a rehearsal for invasion.

Japan, S Korea, US concerned over N Korea's cyber-fundraising

In response, it has unveiled new, smaller nuclear warheads, and fired an intercontinental ballistic missile capable of striking anywhere in the United States. It has also tested what it called a nuclear-capable underwater attack drone.

As Pyongyang continues to develop its military arsenal, South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol has also called for raising awareness over the continued human rights

abuses in the country.

In its first publicly released report on the situation last week, Seoul's Unification Ministry said North Korea executes its citizens for drugs, religious activities and sharing South Korean media.

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

Pyongyang has long rejected international criticism of its human rights record as a US agenda to overthrow its regime.



Suk yeol

Ethiopia to integrate regional forces into central army

THE Ethiopian government has said it intends to integrate all regional special forces either into the national army or the federal or regional police, a move likely to be perceived as an attempt to diminish the autonomy of

individual regions.

Ethiopia's 10 regions currently enjoy a degree of autonomy, ranging from having their own armies to the right to use their own language.

"The government has set a direction to build one strong and centralized army ... it has started practical steps that will allow special forces of every region to be integrated into different security structures," the government said in a statement on Thursday.

Hours before the announcement, local media from the Amhara region, Ethiopia's second largest, reported clashes between national and regional forces brought about by a refusal among Amhara Special Forces' units to surrender weapons as part of the integration process.

Amhara spokesperson immediately respond to requests for comment. In its statement, the

government confirmed tensions had arisen in Amhara but blamed it on a misunderstanding of the policy and on fringe groups within the regional force.

Amhara forces backed Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's federal troops against rebellious forces in northern Tigray when conflict erupted there in 2020.

It is not the first time that unrest has broken out in the region.

In May 2022 the former commander of Amhara region's forces, a prominent critic of Abiy's, was arrested alongside local journalists.

Three years earlier, an uprising led by a different dissident general killed the regional president and chief of army staff.

Critics say Abiy, who won a Nobel Peace Prize after taking power as a reformist in 2018, is not cracking down on dissent around Ethiopia. He says he is guaranteeing stability as well as law and order in the multi-ethnic nation.

UAE court dismisses S Africa request

A United Arab Emirates court has dismissed South Africa's request to extradite Atul and Rajesh Gupta, brothers who face charges of political corruption, Justice Minister Ronald Lamola said.

The Indian brothers, arrested in the UAE in June 2022, are accused of using their connections with Jacob Zuma, president of South Africa from 2009 to 2018, to win contracts, influence cabinet appointments and siphon off state funds. Zuma and the

Guptas have denied all wrongdoing.

South Africa received diplomatic communication from the UAE on April 6 that a court there had made the decision on February 13, Lamola said.

"In the evening of the 6th of April 2023, we were provided with a note verbale from the UAE in which we learnt with shock and dismay that an extradition hearing had been concluded in the UAE

professor of public law at Cape Town University, told Al Jazeera that there is frustration in the country about how slow the extradition process and "recovering what has been lost" has been, because of the daily impact of corruption in South Africa.

"There will be a lot of anger that the UAE has refused to extradite the Guptas and a lot of that anger will be directed at South Africa [authorities] rather than the UAE," she said on Friday.

An inquiry was established in 2018 to examine allegations of corruption during Zuma's nine years in power from 2009, which was riddled with scandals, overshadowing his presidency.

In July 2021, Interpol issued a red notice, a global alert enabling law enforcement to arrest a person sought for prosecution or to serve a custodial sentence, and arrest them pending extradition, for the Guptas.

Interpol said they were being sought in connection with a 25 million rand (\$1.6m) contract paid to a Gupta-linked company, Nulane Investment, to conduct an agricultural feasibility study.



Bin Zayed



Abiy



What its like being Jamaican in Nigeria



WHAT is it like being a Jamaican in Nigeria? Hi, I'm Xavier Murphy, the founder of Jamaicans.com. And today, in Jamaicans to the world, I talk to Carmen Latty, a Jamaican living in Nigeria. Hi, Carmen. Welcome. How are you?

Carmen: Hi, Xavier, thank you very much. I'm fine. Thanks.

Xavier: Good.

Carmen: What about you?

Xavier: I'm doing good. I'm happy to finally get someone from Nigeria so this is just really great. My question is which part a Jamaica you come from? (Where in Jamaica are you from?).

Carmen: Yeah, I'm from Fairborn Clarendon. That's way up in the bush, the hills of upper Clarendon between Johns' Hall and James Hill, and Kay Valley.

Xavier: Nice.

Carmen: But my maternal parents are from; my mother is from Tweet Side.

Carman: Now as a Jamaican. Nigerian food: first of all, all the ingredients that we use in Jamaica are here in Nigeria, so I cook Jamaican food in my house and everybody who works for me through a cooking course of Jamaican food. I don't have saltfish, but for the Nigerian foods I personally like Eba. But then, I am from Clarendon, I grew up on cassava. So, I like Eba, and Eba I eat with any other meat. You know, what the typical Nigerian soup, it would be Eba with vegetable soup, or eba with egusi or something like that. I mix it up a bit.

Xavier: Okay. Is eba white yam?

Carman: No, it's cassava. It's what when I was a child, we used to call turn cassava.

Xavier: Hmm.

Carman: You remember? Right. So, I like eba, I adore pounded yam, which again, I knew as a child growing up in Jamaica. But I'm just too small for pounded yam. I would sleep for quite a few days if I had a Nigerian size pounded yam. And pounded yam is served with a Nigerian soup. Again, it goes with vegetable soup, eddykikon (uncertain spelling 11:16] from akroavon and so on, and so forth. As a Jamaican, you can manage because you can cook your own Jamaican foods.

Xavier: All right. So, let me ask you this, because when I visited Nigeria, I asked if there is any yellow yam? And it didn't seem like yellow yam was one of the favorite yams. So, have you found yellow yam?

Carman: I saw yellow yam in the east once, but never again. It's this white yam. But then Nigeria has the nicest yam in the world. It's just the white yam I know, and I know old yam and new yam.

Xavier: Right.

Carman: It's fantastic. I like yam. It's the same yam you pound anyway.

Xavier: All right. So, I'm going to go back a little bit to people for a minute here. Right? We talked just a little bit. When I visited Nigeria, the temperament of the people seems a little similar to where it's like. Either I like you or I don't like you.

Carman: My brother, it's not similar, it's one and the same is either I like you or I don't like you. You know, the Jamaicans say my spirit nuh (don't) tek take (tek) yuh (you).

Xavier: Yes.

Carman: The Nigerians say, I don't trust am. But I think one of the reasons I have been able to settle and get along so well, it's not every time the tact and the diplomacy helps. You have to say it like it is, or, I don't understand it. And if I don't understand it, be prepared for anything I do to you. Just let me understand. As I said in a paper to the Flair Newspaper some years ago, there's a Nigerian in every Jamaican, including myself.

Xavier: I saw that temperament as I drove around and whatever it's like, the facial expressions; you're like, listen, it's like, if they like you, they like you if they don't like you, you goin know. (You going to know)

Carmen: No, if they don't like you, they don't like you. And I tell you something. I don't speak any of the major languages or any even of the other ethnic languages. But the Nigerian Pidgin, everybody speaks Pidgin and Pidgin is

another form of Jamaican patois.

Xavier: I see.

Carmen: You know, we will say, me a come, (I am coming), and here we will say, a deh come (I am coming). But it's the same walking in the opposite direction, and I'm calling you and I say a deh come.

Xavier: I know some of our words are sprinkled with African words.

Carmen: Yeah, I've been able to manage because I understand Pidgin very well, you know, and the lingua. When the Nigerian says, a no go, come kill myself, or (I can't kill myself for you). And when you're talking rubbish and they say, weh ting you da talk, (what are you talking about). To manage certain categories of staff, you must know some pidgin. I found that I get along better knowing some pidgin. Of course, when I talk it, everybody laughs because with the accent and the pidgin and whatever.

Xavier: Let me ask you this question. When folks learn that you are Jamaican and I know you've been there twenty-nine years now, but when they find you're Jamaican, what is the typical reaction?

Carmen: I remember when I came to Nigeria first and I said, I'm Jamaican. The first question is how come you're not Rasta? They expected me to have locks on to be Rastafarian and so on, but we have a fair number of Jamaicans in Nigeria. You know, Jamaicans came here in three phases in the 1800s during amalgamation, part one and part two, and then post-independence in the last 50 years. So, I'm one of the third generation in Nigeria. And after they ask you, oh, how come you're not Rasta? The next question would, of course, the international question; because I found the same thing in Japan in 1984, is, sing Bob Marley for me.

Xavier: Let me ask you this. You had children in Nigeria?

Carmen: I brought him from Jamaica. He's an important product. And when we arrived at the airport too; he looked around the airport. And I remember he said to me, Mummy, are there no white people living in this country? and we all just cracked up. Then we drove into a petrol station and there was a sign free air, and he then turned to Osita who was a friend that met us. And he said, Uncle Osita, so air is not free in this country? You have to buy it? But I tell you, he had a fantastic upbringing in Nigeria. Nigeria allowed me to bring up a much better child than if I had stayed in Jamaica with him. You know, that growing up in the seventies; seventies baby, you had to be very careful with those children because they could get totally warped. And bringing him to Nigeria it gave him such a wild experience that even a week ago we were talking about it, and he said, Mommy, thank you. I had a fantastic childhood.

Xavier: Great, great.

Carmen: He went to school he came back, he said, Mummy, imagine you can buy 10 naira rice and five naira meat, you know, all those things. He had never seen anybody going to the standpipe, and he was anxious to carry a bucket and to fetch water. He had a really, really fantastic upbringing.

Xavier: Great. Great. Let me let me ask you this. Is there a custom that when you got to Nigeria, there is a local custom that you said, you know what? This custom is kind of different. Do you remember custom that you said, you know, it was kind of different?

Carmen: I'm thinking, you know, these Nigerian people can dance, I tell you. Every Nigerian can dance and sing.

Xavier: I've seen the videos. I've seen the new dances every week. There's a new dance.

Carmen: Yes, that was intriguing. The next thing was the size of weddings and parties. I mean, who goes to working with 3000 people?

Xavier: Wow.

Carmen: And if you go to this wedding with three thousand people and you haven't brought your own crowd, then nobody talks to you, and you don't have anybody to talk to. So, you would just be sitting there, and everybody will be looking at my fingernails and wondering, are they natural or are they made? and so on, and nobody

Influential black musicians of all time

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

Prince: Simply, The Prince



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

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

Nat King Cole: The King of Jazz Piano



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

Sister Rosetta Tharpe



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

EVER'S WORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Health

Spinach: Nutritional content and health benefits

By Collins Nwokolo

IN Nigeria, spinach is sold in malls, either as fresh leafy vegetables, frozen or canned. It is usually Nigerians abroad that use spinach for cooking, as it is not easily found in Nigeria.

It is a low-calorie food and is also packed with a lot of essential vitamins, minerals, and phytonutrients, which makes it one of the healthiest and most beneficial plant-based foods. This article discusses the nutritional content of spinach, health benefits of spinach and the side effects of spinach.

Helps in Managing and Preventing diabetes.

Spinach is a great source of alpha-lipoic acid, a powerful antioxidant which numerous studies posit to be very effective in managing diabetes as it helps in lowering glucose levels, reducing peripheral neuropathy and autonomic neuropathy, boosting insulin sensitivity, as well as inhibiting oxidative, stress-induced changes in diabetic patients. Due to its low glycemic index, which prevents sudden blood sugar spikes, Spinach is often regarded as a diabetic superfood and also rated among the best superfoods for people with diabetes.

Prevents Cancer

Spinach contains carotenoids, potent antioxidants which are scientifically proven to be effective in getting rid of dangerous free radicals from the body.

This phytochemical has been proven by several studies to be effective in delaying cell division in human stomach and skin cancer cells while also preventing aggressive prostate cancer from surfacing.

Prevents Asthma

Asthma is one of the common inflammatory diseases, and it is often accompanied by dyspnea, chronic coughing, bronchial constriction, etc. However, spinach contains two potent anti-inflammatory epoxyxanthophylls [Neoxanthin and violaxanthin], which keeps inflammation in check while also preventing related diseases like asthma, arthritis, osteoporosis, migraine headaches, etc.

Lowers Blood Pressure

High Blood Pressure, otherwise known as Hypertension is a serious health condition which is often linked with kidney disease, heart ailments, stroke, etc. One thing about this condition is that it is barely noticeable, and it claims thousands of lives annually. However, Spinach is an excellent source of peptides, potassium, nitrates, folate, magnesium – all of which play major roles in lowering high blood pressure and reducing the risk of heart disease.

Strengthens the Bones

Vitamin K, Calcium, Vitamin D, dietary fibre, potassium, magnesium and vitamin C, are some of the essential nutrients your bone requires to remain healthy any day anytime, and the deficiency of any of these may result in bone fracture, osteoporosis or even stroke.

However, Spinach is a rich source



of all the nutrients mentioned above, which makes it a great food for people intending to get a stronger bone.

With the aid of these nutrients, Spinach promotes healthy bone by improving your calcium absorption, strengthening your bone, boosting your bone's strength and density, building your muscle tissues, and stimulating the growth of collagen in your body. It also helps in preventing fractures while preventing you from the risk of osteoporosis and stroke.

Promotes Healthy Skin and Hair

Looking for a leafy veggie to help improve your skin and hair health? Spinach is an ideal choice for you!

The reason is because spinach is

packed with formidable antioxidants, the essential vitamins [Vitamin A, C, E and K], as well as vital minerals – all of which eliminates skin related diseases and provides the skin with the adequate nutrients its cells need to develop evenly and produce a healthy skin tone.

To start with, Spinach contains a significant amount of Vitamin A, one of the essential nutrients your skin and hair require to grow rapidly and healthily. It promotes healthy skin by moisturizing the skin and hair as it regulates the production of oil in the skin pores and hair follicles. It also helps the body to retain moisture to combat skin issues like dryness, psoriasis, as well as acne.

Another essential nutrient found in Spinach is vitamin C, which plays

a major role in promoting healthy skin and hair as it stimulates the building and maintaining of collagen in the body. However, it will interest you to know that Spinach also contains a high content of vitamin K and folate, which enhances your complexion by reducing the appearance of acne, bruising on the skin and dark circles.

Good for the digestive system

Spinach contains a lot of fiber and water, which makes it good for the digestive tract. Spinach does not cause constipation, it prevents constipation. Raw spinach can also cause gas and bloating.

Side Effects of Spinach

Although spinach is very healthy and nutritious, it can have adverse effects in some people. Below are a few of spinach's side effects:

Kidney Stones

Kidney stones is a medical condition that is caused by acid and mineral salt buildup in the body. The common mineral salt include calcium stones, which comprises of calcium oxalate.

Spinach has a high content of calcium and oxalate, thus anyone with a high risk of developing kidney stones should reduce or avoid the intake of spinach.

Interferes with blood-thinning medication

Spinach is also rich in vitamin K1, which main function in the body is in blood clotting.

Thus, spinach can interfere with blood-thinning medication. If you are taking blood thinners, such as warfarin, you should limit your intake of spinach, because it can interfere with the medication.

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Health

Ways to take care of your breast health

BREAST health includes not only taking care of your breasts but also taking care of your body overall. Breast cancer, which can be detected early on with regular screenings, has survival rates in the 90% range if caught early enough, so it's important to get your annual screenings started as soon as you become sexually active (no matter what age). Here are 5 ways to take care of your breast health and lower your risk of breast cancer.

Maintain a healthy weight

According to research, gaining just 10 pounds can raise a woman's risk for breast cancer by 16 percent. For women who are genetically predisposed to breast cancer, maintaining a healthy weight and getting regular exercise can lower their risk even further. Ideally, **aim for an active lifestyle that leads to a BMI** in the normal range—between 18.5 and 24.9 for most women—and eat a diet high in fruits and vegetables.

Exercise

Exercise helps your body burn off excess estrogen and keeps you fit, which is important for healthy breast tissue. Plus, exercise promotes endorphins (naturally produced feel-good chemicals in our brains), which can reduce depression and stress—both of which have been linked to a higher risk for breast cancer. When exercising, be sure to drink plenty of water; dehydration has been shown to increase a woman's risk for fibrocystic changes and breast pain or tenderness, so stay hydrated!

Eat a healthy, balanced diet

According to a 2009 review in Breast Cancer Research, adopting a diet rich in healthy fats and low in pro-inflammatory omega-6 fats is associated with a reduced risk of breast cancer. Some good sources include avocados, olive oil, flaxseeds, and walnuts. Also be sure you're getting enough vitamins C and E from vegetables, fruits, and nuts, as well as calcium from dairy products or green leafy vegetables.

Watch out for lumps

If you find a lump or thickening in your breast, don't wait around; get it checked out. Most lumps aren't cancerous (especially those discovered



during self-exams), but if you want to be safe, check with a doctor.

Keep it Clean

Wash thoroughly under your breasts every time you shower. If you tend to get sweaty in that area, shower more often. Exfoliate with a washcloth or loofah, but make sure it's not an abrasive one; you don't want to irritate your skin! Apply lotion daily and massage it into your breasts, especially when they feel dry.

Food for healthy breast

Choose healthy food. Eat lots of vegetables, beans, nuts, and whole grains. These foods are

high in fiber and can help prevent breast cancer by reducing your body's production of estrogen. You also may want to choose low-fat dairy products or soy products, which have been shown to protect against some types of breast cancer. Limit how much red meat you eat and avoid processed meats like bacon or sausage because they contain nitrates that can damage cells in your breasts.

Self-examination of breast and signs and symptoms of breast cancer for early detection and treatment

1. Get a baseline mammogram when you're in your 20s, and

then regularly thereafter, beginning at age 40. These are important steps in understanding what's normal for you, so you can recognize changes that could be signs of breast cancer (more on that later).

2. Each month, use a mirror to look at both breasts and note any changes: skin color, lumps or swelling, dimpling, puckering, redness, or scaliness.

3. See your doctor immediately if you feel like something isn't right. Pay attention to any breast issues, no matter how small they seem.

Tips for pregnant women

As a woman, it is crucial that you are aware of your own breast health and how changes in hormones during pregnancy can impact it. Here are five tips for taking care of your breast health

Be conscious of any lumps or bumps:

During pregnancy, lumps or bumps may appear on your breasts. This could be from hormonal changes affecting breast tissue. If you notice anything abnormal about your breasts while pregnant, report it to your OB/GYN right away so they can have a doctor look at them and rule out potential issues such as breast cancer, cysts, or infections.

Don't smoke or drink alcohol:

Just like smoking damages the lungs, breast tissues can get damaged by smoking as well. The effects aren't just physical either; studies show women who smoked during their pregnancy are more likely to see their child struggle academically later on in life. Drinking alcohol is never healthy for anyone – drinking while pregnant increases your child's risk of having fetal alcohol syndrome symptoms such as vision and hearing impairment, developmental delays, and growth problems throughout childhood.

Breastfeeding has many benefits for both mom and baby. One benefit for mom is that breast milk contains compounds called phytoestrogens which help reduce inflammation and pain caused by premenstrual syndrome symptoms like bloating, breast tenderness, headaches, and fatigue. In addition to those benefits, breastfeeding has been shown to protect against both ovarian cancer and breast cancer in women who nurse exclusively for six months or longer. It's never too late to begin

Wear a bra at night or not?

Wearing a bra at night may be more trouble than it's worth. Studies have shown that sleeping in a bra can lead to fibrocystic breasts, which are characterized by lumpy, dense tissue. Try sleeping without a bra if you're experiencing pain in your breast area; some women report better comfort and less pain after going braless.



Reality Bites

with Palang Kasmi
peekembo@yahoo.com
08036417305, 08095322786

Embracing a life of conscientious living

Continued from last week

THE General Assembly of the United Nations had agreed in 2019 to declare April 5th to be the International Day of Conscience.

It was mapped out with the aim of creating conditions of stability and well-being and relationships based on respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction based on race, sex, language or religion.

The concept of a culture of peace had emerged from the International Congress on Peace in the Minds of Men, which was organized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Côte d'Ivoire in July 1989.

And since then the promotion of a culture of peace has increasingly been seen as a worthwhile objective of the international community.

Collins dictionary defines conscience as the sense of right and wrong that governs a person's thoughts and actions, regulation of one's actions in conformity to this sense, a supposed universal faculty of moral insight and a feeling of guilt or anxiety.

It is also viewed as knowledge or sense of right and wrong, with an urge to do right; moral judgment that opposes the violation of a previously recognized ethical principle and that leads to feelings of guilt if one violates such a principle, obsolete, consciousness, inner thoughts or feelings.

It is equally regarded as conformity to what one regards to be correct, right, or morally good says the Merriam-Webster dictionary.

The evolving concept has inspired activities at so many levels and in so many regions with the full participation of civil society that the culture of peace is gradually taking on the characteristics of a global movement.

On activities to mark the day, the UN invites all Member States, organizations of the United Nations system and other international and regional organizations, as well as the private sector and civil society, including non-governmental organizations and individuals, to build the Culture of Peace with Love and Conscience in accordance with the culture and other appropriate circumstances or customs of their local, national and regional communities, including through quality education and public awareness-raising activities,



thereby fostering sustainable development.

The International Day is celebrated by many governments while Public seminars are being organised in universities, colleges and schools where the purpose of the day is discussed. Electronic media broadcasts programmes in favour of the day and analysts write columns in newspapers.

What are actions of conscience?

Actions of conscience are many. For instance if you have social conscience, you worry about people who are weak, poor, sick, old, homeless, ridiculed, bullied,

denied social rights, the helpless and oppressed, and strive to seek social justice for them.

But those who are inspired by philosophers have their view of what activities of conscience should be.

For instance people greatly influenced by the ideas of Mohandas Gandhi, believe acts of conscience should include sit-ins, boycotts, labor strikes, and conscientious objection to war.

People who share in Marxist philosophies are irritated by oppression of the poor and weak by the rich and powerful class. Thus they call for good actions and conscience that

respects the value of people without such oppressive tendencies.

There are also acts of conscience spelt out for adherents of Christianity and Islam, including other religions. Their holy books spells out how to behave, act, and do things that indicates they are followers of their God by acting with good positive conscience for the good of humanity.

On the political scene, politicians owe their followers and subjects good leadership and must as a matter of good conscience be seen to act and perform their duties to citizens in a way that will portray

transparency, accountability, love, development, and respect for humanity irrespective of race, class, tribe, religion, and geographical affiliation.

But in Nigeria, this situation is still far fetched. Intact the just concluded 2023 elections in the country has only exposed how polarised and divided the country is.

The expectation therefore on newly elected leaders in the country is to bridge the gap and give a leadership guided by their social, political, religious conscience to bring the nation out of the many divisions and challenges it is facing.

EVE'S WORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Living

The role of women in the Easter story

By **DIONNE GRAVESANDE**

IT is significant that, because these women were doing 'a woman's task' – taking care of Jesus' physical needs – they experienced one of the greatest privileges: to be the first witnesses of His resurrection."

Dionne looks at the role of women in Jesus' life and death, and explores the various reasons why women were the first people to see Jesus following His resurrection.

The story begins with the most human of activities, visiting the site where a loved one lies buried. Here, three women are talking about the depth of their friendship and time together. Together, they had travelled with Jesus, listening and learning, questioning, laughing and praying. I imagine that they so loved Him that it was unbearable to think of Him as dead, and if it had been unbearable to think of Him gone when He was with them, how much greater, more desperate the pain now?

I've often wondered why Christ chose to appear to women first after His resurrection. Was there something special about the women? And was there something symbolic about it? During the run-up to Easter, I took a moment to reflect upon the gospels which talk about the death of Christ and, as I was reading, I connected with the resurrection story through a different lens. Could it be that the reason these women were privileged to be the first witnesses on this earth of Christ's resurrection was because they were amongst the few disciples who didn't leave Christ during His great trial, and were with Him at the cross when some of His other disciples had betrayed or deserted Him? It was only later that the Pharisees



asked to set a watch outside the tomb and seal the stone, so that Christ's disciples wouldn't try to steal His body (Matthew 27:62-66).

Not only did these women never desert their Saviour, but also they never stopped serving Him – even in death. The Scriptures tell us that on the morning after the Sabbath, as early as they could possibly come without breaking the Sabbath, Mary Magdalene, and other women who followed Jesus out of Galilee, came with spices to anoint and prepare His body for burial. This task of anointing the body was just another of the 'woman's tasks' – like cooking, cleaning, washing and sewing – that these women were accustomed to doing, and which I imagine they had done for Jesus many times during His ministry.

It is significant that, because these women were doing 'a woman's task' – taking care of Jesus' physical needs – they experienced one of the greatest privileges and

blessings of all of Christ's disciples: to be the first witnesses of His resurrection. This highlights that Christ acknowledged the faithful and loving service that these women had given Him throughout His mortal life, and realised that what women do to sustain and provide physical life is important and valued in the eyes of God. He knew that their willingness to take care of His physical body, even after He was dead, was a sign of their great love and devotion, and so He blessed and rewarded them for it.

Doing women's work often gets bad press these days. Somehow it is interpreted as not being ambitious enough, and such tasks are just things that need to be done in the normal functioning of a household. Young and upwardly mobile women aspire to be successful entrepreneurs, or to have a fruitful and meaningful career. Meanwhile, it seems to be the older women who embrace

women's tasks with joy and fulfilment, particularly within a church context. That said, I agree that to balance work with family is an extremely difficult task for women nowadays and, according to sociologists, the ability to do so can differ depending upon both marital status and class. Women of the working class are far more likely to prioritise family above work, and rightly so, while professional businesswomen tend to focus most of the attention on their work. Of course, there will be women who don't fit into such generalisations, but there are still questions we can ask about our attitude to 'domestic duties'.

It seems to me that we are distracted with arguing about whose role it is, and finding answers to support why cooking, cleaning and washing don't belong to any gender group specifically. I am not arguing for women to do or not do as the case may be, but I do think there is a lesson to learn from the Scriptures. The highlight

here is about our relationship with God and each other, and the currency of both is love! The relationships between God and people are central to the Christian faith.

During the time when Christ lived amongst us, women had an undisputed traditional role; they ministered to Christ's physical needs and more, and I think this is why these women were among the most privileged of all Christ's disciples, because they never deserted the Saviour; their testimonies of Him never faltered, and they never stopped bearing witness of His divinity.

What a blessing to receive the message to "Go and tell." For me, this is the moment Christ sends 'the message' with a woman, and that is wonderful for all people to read. The message is alive in both men and women, and we both have a mandate to share the message this Easter. Christ is alive and well; He dwells within us, and calls us to share in the work of the Kingdom.

BUSINESS WORLD

Support for women entrepreneurs

Nigeria's small-and-medium enterprises (SME) sector and its entrepreneurial ecosystem are often seen as an engine of economic activity integral to driving social change. For example, take the 2022 Anzisha Prize fellow and entrepreneur Eneyi Oshi who, through her innovative enterprise, showcases the immense potential of entrepreneurship in serving the interests of society beyond the economy. DIDI ONWU writes.

WITH a love for agriculture and a desire to improve food security in Nigeria, Eneyi started Maatalous Nasah in 2019 selling chicken, fish, and eggs. Her agribusiness has since grown to help other farmers in the community to do the same, through an ecommerce platform. Furthermore, she sells farming infrastructure to those looking to grow their own produce in their backyards.

Ambitious ventures such as hers have immense potential to reduce poverty in the country in a tangible way. Our assessment of the business environment, conducted in 2021, shows that while efforts to support youth entrepreneurship have been ongoing for over a decade, and there is still inadequate evidence of success in alleviating the challenges facing entrepreneurs in the country.

In fact, there seems to be a growing crisis of inaccessibility of funding and investment opportunities for young entrepreneurs coupled with low skills and education rates among potential entrepreneurs.

What emerges strongly, from our analysis, is the pressing need for more efforts to be directed towards promoting entrepreneurship as a sustainable livelihood option among young people. Nigerian youth need more investment in education and training programmes that will equip them, particularly when they are most impressionable (between the ages of 18 and 25) to enter the world of entrepreneurship.

This is because our assessment finds a direct correlation between entrepreneurship and employment creation and reduction of poverty. In determining the extent to which Very Young Entrepreneurs (ages 15 – 22) contribute to job creation, our analysis found that this group of entrepreneurs is much more engaged in purpose-driven entrepreneurship (i.e. job creation and poverty reduction) than the older generation whose core entrepreneurial purpose is more about creating income for themselves and their



households.

Nigeria needs more of these Very Young Entrepreneurs such as Eneyi because they're hungry, energised and ready to tackle the challenges facing their national economies right now. According to a recent report by the Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics and the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria, micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in the country account for a total of 96.7% of businesses contributing to 46.31% of the nation's GDP. In terms of the labour force, MSMEs account for around 85% of total industrial employment across all sectors of the economy.

The government needs to intensify efforts to promote and support entrepreneurship as an integral part of economic rejuvenation and recovery. We make this recommendation in the assessment mainly because we have observed that despite the substantial role that entrepreneurship plays in the local economy, the sector has continued to receive very little support, leaving these entrepreneurs to navigate numerous challenges limiting their employment capacity, productivity, and ability to grow and scale.

This has also limited the potential and, most

importantly, the crucial impact the sector could be making towards the nation's GDP, and the injection of new and innovative products, solutions, and technologies that could tackle different challenges while creating new markets.

Moreover, entrepreneurship has immense potential to help many young people to become self-sufficient generators of wealth, giving them more control over their financial freedom and helping to improve their standard of living. This is echoed in our analysis conducted in the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Unpredictable business environment

Before the pandemic, the entrepreneurs in the country faced everything from unreliable power supply, poor broadband connectivity, inadequate infrastructure to limited access to capital and an inconsistent policy and regulatory environment.

The pandemic saw the country experience one of its worst recessions and a GDP decline of 6.1%. And this could only be worsened by the consequent poor policy mechanisms including ban on Twitter, cryptocurrency trading and the closure of land borders. Most small businesses suffered because of these measures.

Entrepreneurs, nevertheless,

may not be enough. Eneyi's business was itself not spared. For example, she says that when markets were shut, schools closed and travel limited, they all had to adapt: "We had birds on the farm that kept laying eggs anyway; we had animals that needed to be sold, or else our production costs would continue to rise.

As a result, we needed to find a means to distribute these items outside of our usual marketing channels. So we began advertising on WhatsApp. After a few weeks of advertising on this platform and on Instagram, we constructed an eCommerce application to allow more people to locate and place orders while working around doorstep delivery."

This is how her other business, Farmisphere came to be. "We also discovered that other farmers in our neighbourhood were experiencing the same problem and were technologically incapacitated. As a result, we began selling their items as well."

Turning a challenging landscape into opportunity

Small business owners need to continuously operate at an incredibly fast pace. Driven by the need to innovate and deliver increased value to customers, maintaining a growth momentum often requires them to scale up as

quickly and effectively as possible, entrepreneurs require access to the right tools and resources to do so.

Improving access to financial services is one of the most significant ways in which we can create an enabling environment for entrepreneurship as access to financial services promotes growth, reduces poverty, and contributes to the building of sustainable economies. And the need to especially focus on women entrepreneurs as a way of transforming the economy cannot be overstated.

According to the 2021 State of Entrepreneurship in Nigeria Report, while female-led businesses remain highly vulnerable, following the impact of the pandemic, they continue to receive limited support from the government. Through targeted and institutionalised support for women, and young entrepreneurs, we would not only be able to facilitate their growth but also enhance their impact on the economy.

Efforts need to be directed towards ensuring that small businesses and startups in Nigeria can scale effectively. This will strengthen the country's standing as a leading entrepreneurship hub in Africa.

Onwu is managing editor of the Anzisha Prize

BUSINESS WORLD

Alleged N20bn diversion: Reps probe NNPC officials

THE House of Representatives, set up an ad hoc committee to investigate the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited over the alleged diversion and conversion of N20bn by its officials in the guise of payment to consultants.

This is despite the NNPC denying the allegation earlier last week.

The Deputy Chairman, House Committee on Banking and Currency, Hafis Kawu, had moved a motion of urgent public importance, urging the chamber to probe into the alleged crime.

Moving the motion titled 'Urgent Need to Investigate the Conversion of N20 Billion by Staff of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation(sic),' Kawu partly said, "The House is informed that staff of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation are reported to have diverted the over N20bn in the guise of consultancy fees paid to its consultants."

Kawu stated that the alleged action by the NNPC officials breached Section 88(1) and (2) of the 1999 Constitution, which, among other things, makes it compulsory for the National Assembly to appropriate public funds before they are expended.

The lawmaker also stated that the funds should have been spent on public needs.

Kawu called for an urgent investigation of the matter and that the House should be briefed on the outcome as a matter of urgency.

The lawmakers unanimously adopted the motion.

Speaker of the House, Femi Gbajabiamila, consequently set up a panel chaired by a member of the Peoples Democratic Party from Rivers State, Kingsley Chinda, which was expected to turn in its report within three weeks.

NNPC had on Monday night said it did not pay N20bn to ghost consultants as alleged by an online medium (not The PUNCH).

A statement issued by the Chief Corporate Communications Officer, NNPC, Garba-Deen Muhammad, had partly read, "NNPC Ltd read with utmost dismay, a report by an online platform alleging: paying the sum of N20bn to ghost consultants, and theft of multi-billion naira tax due to the Ogun State Government.

"NNPC Ltd wishes to state that as a responsible corporate organisation, it does not have or deal with ghost consultants. At NNPC Ltd, the process of engaging consultants whenever the need arises is clear and verifiable and follows global best practices.

"It is, therefore, unfortunate that for whatever reason, the said the online platform would



Kyari

make such a grievous allegation, mindless of the consequences of such actions. The claim of a missing N20bn is absolutely false and baseless"

The oil firm demanded that the online media platform should retract the said publication, stressing that the going organisation should verify its facts before going to the press.

NNPC said the second component of the said report was related to Ogun State Government claiming a back duty tax liability of about N18bn, against an NNPC subsidiary, the Petroleum Products Marketing Company Ltd.

"For clarity, PPMC had objected and challenged the claim through its tax consultant. Consequently, the Ogun State Government took the matter to court which is not unusual in business circles.

"The matter is currently before the court and NNPC Ltd will prove its case accordingly.

"In conclusion, NNPC Ltd strongly advises the said online publication to be mindful of the consequences of its actions before taking them.

It stated that for a matter that was already in court, as admitted by the online publication, it was sad that any medium could arrive at such subjudice conclusions as shown by its actions.

Meanwhile, the House has also mandated the Niger Delta Development Commission to "put on hold" the release of N15bn counterpart funding requested by the Federal Government, pending the approval of the Commission's budget by the House, as it is part of the loot recovered by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission on behalf of the Commission.

Furthermore, the House mandated its Committee on Niger Delta Development Commission to "scrutinise such requests made by the Federal Government and

report back to the House within two weeks."

The resolutions followed the unanimous adoption of a motion of urgent public importance moved by a member of the House, Unyime Idem, who is also a member of the Peoples Democratic Party from Akwa Ibom State, one of the states in the Niger Delta.

The motion was titled 'An Urgent Call to the Niger Delta Development Commission to Put on Hold the Release of N15 Billion Requested as Counterpart Funding of Humanitarian Intervention by the Federal Government.'

Idem, while moving the motion, noted that the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs was inaugurated and commissioned by the Presidency to attend to intervention and humanitarian needs of the Niger Delta region of the country and promote the physical development of the area.

The lawmaker also noted that since its inauguration, the ministry had executed "fundamental and important" humanitarian intervention projects across the region.

According to him, part of the funds available for use by the NDCC is money recovered on its behalf by EFCC and given back to the Commission to ease the implementation of its financial obligations.

He said, "The House is cognisant that the Federal Government sent a special request mandating the Ministry of Niger Delta to jointly finance an intervention and humanitarian programme of sums running into several billions of naira, using the money recovered by the EFCC without budgetary provision.

"The House is also cognisant that the NDCC budget estimates for 2021, 2022 and 2023 are before the House for legislative approval.

"The House is worried that such request for intervention and humanitarian proposals by the Federal Government without requisite financial appropriation and approval by this honourable House is illegal and a breach of the

THE World Bank says Nigeria's currency, naira lost 10.2 per cent of its value in 2022.

This came as rising food and fuel prices were responsible for high inflation in the country in 2022. The global bank revealed this in its latest Africa's Pulse report for April 2023.

It explained that the worst-performing currency in the Sub-Saharan African region was the Ghanaian cedi in 2022, which lost 40 per cent of its value in the year. It stated that the currency has already lost 20 per cent of its value so far in 2023.

Commenting on the naira, the bank said, "Other currencies with significant losses last year include those of Sudan (23.6 per cent), Malawi (20.7 per cent), The Gambia (14.6 per cent), and Nigeria (10.2 per cent)."

It stressed, "Rising food and fuel prices, as well as the depreciation of the exchange rate, were the main drivers of inflationary pressures in the region—and, particularly, in countries like Ghana, Sudan, and Malawi."

The Washington-based bank noted that the hiking of monetary policy, with Nigeria increasing rates by 650 basis points, has not translated to a reduction in inflation rate.

It stated that the reduced effectiveness of monetary policy can be attributed, among other factors, to persistent supply shocks driving inflation (say, commodity prices and climatic shocks), lack of central bank autonomy, foreign exchange

Naira lost 10% value in 2022

— World Bank



Emefiele

distortions that widened parallel exchange rate market premia, and fiscal dominance.

The bank says it expects 25 per cent of countries in the Sub-Saharan African region to suffer from two-digit inflation rates in 2023. In February, headline inflation in Nigeria rose to 21.91 per cent according to data from the National Bureau of Statistics.

Nigeria is suffering from both high inflation and high budget deficits, according to the bank. It said, "About half of Sub-Saharan African countries face both high

inflation (low monetary policy space) and wider fiscal deficits (low fiscal policy space).

"Notable cases include Ghana, Nigeria, Malawi, Zambia, and Burundi, among others."

In an earlier report, the Nigerian Economic Summit Group revealed that inflation weakened the naira by 14.9 per cent in 2022. According to the International Monetary Fund, the naira has been losing 10.6 per cent of its value annually since 1973.

FG implements final phase of N41bn broadband connectivity

THE Federal Government through the Ministry of Communications and Digital Economy has commenced the implementation of the second and third phases of the N41.6 billion Nigerian Communications Commission's Broadband Connectivity Intervention in critical sectors across the country.

The Minister of Communications and Digital Economy, Prof Isa Pantami, stated this while presenting a letter of award to the beneficiaries in Abuja recently.

The minister noted that the

first phase had been implemented 80 per cent after the Federal Executive Council approved the intervention on 29th March 2023.

According to him, the funds for the interventions were internally generated revenue from the NCC, adding that the second and third phases of the broadband connectivity would provide services to 49 higher institutions of learning, 20 airports and six markets.

He said, "The first phase has been implemented on average 80 per cent; in some institutions, the implementation level is up to 90 per cent within that range.

Because of this, I feel it is the right time to commence Phases 2 and phase 3.

Innovation, entrepreneurship, solution to unemployment, says minister

"On Wednesday, 29th March 2023, I was at the Federal Executive Council where I presented a memorandum for this event we gathered here. The two memos covered 49 higher learning institutions, 20 airports and six markets. So by implication, each memo represents a phase. So, we are here for phase 2 and phase 3. The total amount we have committed to this is approximately N41.6 billion.

"The second and third phases are here; we have provisions for 20 airports, six additional markets, and 49 institutions of learning. We have prioritised polytechnics in this phase; we will prioritise colleges of education in the next phase.

Meanwhile, the Chairman Board of NCC, Prof Adeolu Akande, said the interventions were designed to diversify the Nigerian economy as envisioned by the President Muhammadu Buhari.

"It is a project conceived by the minister for communications and digital economy to drive the quest for the diversification of the Nigerian economy as envisioned by our leader, President Muhammadu Buhari," he said.



Pantami

ENTREPRENEUR WATCH

WITH CELESTINE D. ATTSAR

The disquiet in the poultry industry

It is no longer news that the Nigeria poultry industry is in the midst of a crisis which has forced a crippling glut- that has knocked not a few farmers sideways. To all intents and purposes, it has been gored and bloodied by the sharp spear of the botched currency redesign policy that precipitated a cash crunch. ABACHI SILAS UNGBO writes.

RECENTLY, I couldn't restrain my emotion when the scale of the situation hit me; the mélange of empathy and sympathy took hold me entirely. Frankly, the grave development in the poultry industry is as personal to me as it is to any investor or player in the industry. The losses are just too colossal and the weight of the pain thereof too heavy to keep one calm. How can anyone stand the sight of putrefying eggs valued at millions being buried!

It's already clear that it would never be the same for many given the scale of the losses. People are routinely counting their losses and of course losing valuable sleep. The crisis is coming on the back of other debilitating crisis like the bird flu, insecurity and the resultant high cost of key input in feed production and the big one – the COVID- 19 pandemic which saw to the imposition of lockdown which according to pundits resulted to about 1.5 trillion naira in losses. Sadly, another pandemic is on the prowl as new strain of bird flu is spreading apace.

However, the Poultry Association of Nigeria (PAN) has already put a figure on the current losses to about 30 billion naira. Not a few, players are swathed by a huge blanket of loans needed to stay afloat before the rattling punch of the current crisis. Before now, a lot of the poultry farmers have been braving singularly difficult operating environment.

Let me provide a brief context on the industry- it is a giant in the agricultural sector which contributes about 25% to the sector. Its value in put at 4.2 billion US dollars. According to the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO) Nigeria leads in the annual egg production in Africa while it occupies the second largest position in poultry population with 180 million of birds. About 85 million Nigerians are engaged in the subsector preponderantly in small to medium scale. In addition, it provides about 300Mt of meat and 650Mt of eggs annually. It means whatever happens to the subsector easily has a ripple effect on the agricultural sector and the economy as a whole.

Again, the industry is commercialized and vibrant. It is private sector led. It is consequential to the country as the population is projected to be about 400 million in 2050



and a substantial chunk would be city dwellers which comes of different nature on the protein out of the easy reach of with concomitant increase in strength of the short shelf life of the demand for poultry its important product and the population. products which ordinarily lethal effect on the input supply should elicit support to the chain.

It is, however, time to begin to explore the oft-mentioned value addition in the industry. Its swift intervention is imperative at this critical point to preclude the following among other things: the rolling back of the recorded gains and technical expertise that has put the country in the league of the top players in the industry in the continent, divestment from the industry as result of humongous loss of scarce flagging investors' confidence

The industry requires all the sympathy and support that can be mustered. It shouldn't just be allowed to walk the cold and lonely path of adversity given the centrality of the industry to the socioeconomic wellbeing of the country. It goes without saying, that the poultry industry is susceptible to crisis and the placing of poultry be city dwellers which comes of different nature on the protein out of the easy reach of with concomitant increase in strength of the short shelf life of the demand for poultry its important product and the population. products which ordinarily lethal effect on the input supply should elicit support to the chain.

have to be seen as means of absorbing the huge amount of eggs produced by the industry.

Government at all levels would have to retool and bolster the scheme in making it work not only effectively but sustainably. The private sector has a role to play in supporting scheme through the agency of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) which will serve as a boon to the poultry industry.

Ungbo from Abuja via abachi007@yahoo.com

“Again, the industry is commercialized and vibrant. It is private sector led. It is consequential to the country as the population is projected to be about 400 million in 2050 and a substantial chunk would be city dwellers which comes with concomitant increase in the demand for poultry products which ordinarily should elicit support to the subsector. It is a veritable vehicle for attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).”



What its like being Jamaican in Nigeria

Continued from page 18

talks to you. And when you catch their eyes, they look away from you. Going to a party, to a wedding, to a funeral, you better carry your own entourage if you want somebody to talk with. That I find to be very curious. And it still exists. So, no, I don't go to any weddings because I can't manage that crowd.

Xavier: Wow.

Carmen: But it's fabulous. I mean, the dressing and the music and the food. And I never seen a people who love food more than Nigerians.

Xavier: Carmen, that is just wonderful, Wonderful. I'm going to move on to the same wedding type of question, right? And I move into that part of it. So let me ask you this because I've seen these Nigerian weddings and I've seen it in film and the dancing and so on. And it is just so, so amazing. But the films you all push out Nollywood as they call it. It seems that there's a new Nigerian film, as you say in Jamaica as you quint (before you know it) there is a new Nigerian film,

Carmen: Man, everybody here is a movie star. But I don't watch a lot of Nigerian movies.

Xavier: Right.

Carmen: In the early days when I just came here. I used to laugh, and I say, in other films, when you shoot man, you hear gunshot and him dead, in this Nigerian one, when you shoot him, him dead and you hear the shot after him dead.

Xavier: They've gotten better. I think the films have gotten better

Carmen: In the early days. The movies had a lot more to it, you know, a lot more to it.

Xavier: Right, right. So, the music there. The Afrobeat has gotten big and dancehall reggae has gotten big there, were you surprised by how huge reggae and dancehall and the fusion?

Carmen: No, no, because, as I said, Nigerians are party people, they love life, they enjoy life, and, especially because of the relationship between Nigeria and Jamaica, especially in the last 20 years. And Nigerians travel a lot. They travel all over the world every nook and cranny and they bring back things. They are great imitators, and they mimic you and they enjoy life. And so, because of that, music and film is an endemic part of their culture. And I really love it. I enjoy it.

Xavier: Great, great. I'm getting close to winding down; very intriguing. But the question I have for you is this, What would you say is your biggest adjustment when you move to Nigeria? Because I would say this, the one thing I know I could not adjust to is the traffic

Carmen: You were going from Echoey to Balogun Market, which is in Lagos Island?

Xavier: I don't remember where, but I think you and I discussed it and you said it's probably there.

Carmen: Yes, its Balogun market. And that's under normal circumstances, a 30-minute drive find somewhere to park. And it's not just the vehicular traffic. The human traffic is equally heavy.

Xavier: Yes.

Carmen: Xavier, I'm going to say this at the risk of being taken to task; the way we foreigners can live in Nigeria, we could not afford it in our own country. Because you can have a driver, a gardener, a cook, a butler, a security man, and \$200US can cover the cost for the month. The cost of living, it depends on where you live and your lifestyle. But when you consider it and it really bleeds my heart when I know that seventy percent of Nigerians live below the poverty line, you know, that is what got me into philanthropy. But the cost of living, it depends on how you want to live, you know,

Xavier: Right.

Carmen: How you want to live. If you want to have a big belly, which is a sign of wealth and prosperity, then you eat that amount. You want to, you know, look average. It depends, but the majority of the people here really suffer, they really suffer.

Xavier: Oh, man.

Carmen: I wish Jamaicans would wake up; Jamaica is a beautiful country. They have so much going for us, but the way I have lived in Nigeria, and I came from a luxurious lifestyle in Jamaica. It would have been difficult to sustain it so continuously in Jamaica.

Xavier: Let me ask you this question in terms of; if there is an event location, something; if I visit Nigeria, you would say you must see or visit or do this. What would that be?

Carmen: It would be Badagry. The Heritage Museum. Badagry is the last point that the people who were captured to go into the Americas and the Caribbean as slaves, that was where they left from. There is a museum



that it tells the story very vividly. And the sea Judbe gate of no return. I wouldn't miss that folk museum and a tour of Badagry at all.

Xavier: Okay. I went to the point of no return in Ghana.

Carmen: In Ghana, yes.

Xavier: Very.

Carmen: Emotions.

Xavier: Yes, the emotions, and as I talk about it, I get goose bumps because it's; you remember the emotions, yeah, very emotional.

Carmen: I live 30 minutes from Badagry. And, you know, when I went to reminisce, I go to Badagry for the day and just tour the museum and just look around, you know. But the way we are in the West about slavery and all of that, it's not a similar sentiment here, it's different, but it's really a reminder of where you came from.

Xavier: You said different, could you explain a little bit in terms of how different its viewed there; I don't to go too deep, but because it probably is an intellectual discussion that you and I can have offline? but, give us a basic idea.

Carmen: That's for another time. But I remember the first time I went to Badagry, and I went to one of the smaller museums', and the fellow; he was very happy to tell me that my father was a slave trader. He caught slaves, he caught people, he sold them to the ship, and he made so much money, and so on. And he was very happy to tell me the story. And I said aren't you ashamed of yourself and he said no, it was the economy of the time. Whereas I left feeling bitter, he was feeling joyous, you see? Because his grandparents made a lot of money. And for him slavery was a matter of economics. and you know, it was difficult for me as a black person to hear that coming from another black person. that's what I mean by different.

Xavier: I see. Because, when I went to Ghana and we were touring the slave castle there, I always mess the name up; the gentleman apologized to us. and he said listen, we didn't know where we were sending you, and we had no idea what your fait would have been, we had no clue. And very apologetic before we started the tour. And so, that view was interesting for me, you know, to hear that point of view.

Carmen: The Ghanaians will apologize, but it's not the Nigerians fault, they don't teach that history in this country. So, all of this history that we know, and this American history and Caribbean history, it's not taught in Nigeria, so, you know, somebody will tell you; my people sold your people. As if you are a stone, you have every right to be sold. but it's because of the way the history is taught. Ghana is, you know?

Xavier: Well, Carmen, I appreciate the time you have spent giving us a little taste of what Nigeria is about. Any words of advice for anyone that is thinking of mooning to Nigeria? before my last question? this is my second to last question.

Carmen: I feel very secure here. Back in Jamaica I'm one of three million, here I'm one of one hundred and eighty, two hundred million. So, it's more difficult for people to find me. But if you want to move to Nigeria you have to have grit, you have to have gusts, you have to have determination, you can't be fearful, and you have to be prepared to work bloody hard.

Xavier: Okay. alright, good piece of advice there. So, here is how I typically end. You know some Pidgin; the Pidgin language, or, you know, so how do you say goodbye in the most informal way in one of the languages that you know from Nigeria? And you are going to teach me how to say it.

Carmen: I'm thinking, it's just evading me now.

Xavier: Alright!

Carmen: But, if it's in the night and you're leaving then you know, its odaro, meaning good night, or something like that. that's the Urogo language.

Xavier: I will go with a dark, because I know we are on two different time zones here, so, Carmen, thank you again and odaro.

Influential black musicians of all time

Continued from page 18

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

Ray Charles



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

Aretha Franklin



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

Jimi Hendrix



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

SUNDAY FEATURE

Repositioning midstream and downstream sector through regulations

Determined to further boost investment and foster expansion in the midstream and downstream sectors, through regulatory clarity, fairness, transparency, and industry best practices, six more newly gazette regulations have been received by the Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority (NMDPRA). Fourteen other regulations had been developed and shall be issued shortly. MUYIWA LUCAS writes.

THESE new regulations include the National Strategic Stock, Midstream Gas Flare, Midstream & Downstream Alternate Dispute Resolution, Midstream & Downstream Penalties & Enforcement Mechanism, Gas Trading & Settlement and Gas Distribution Systems Regulations.

Recall that earlier in March, the regulator unveiled six regulations comprising the Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Operations Regulations and Assignment or Transfer of Licence and Permit Regulations.

Others were the Petroleum Measurement Regulations, Gas Pricing and Domestic Demand Regulations, Petroleum (Transportation and Shipment) Regulations, and Natural Gas Pipeline Tariff Regulations. Eight other regulations are still being considered by the Authority and the Ministry of Justice.

The regulations are coming based on the provisions of the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) establishing a framework for the development of the relevant regulations that would support sustainable growth and investment across the oil and gas value chain in the country.

A look at the new regulations showed that the Gas Distribution Systems Regulations apply to activities connected with the grant of gas distribution licence for a gas distribution system within a local distribution zone, including the gas distribution systems in prior to the commencement of these regulations.

Going by the provisions of these regulations, the NMDPRA is empowered to sanction, penalise and impose administrative fines on defaulters. Besides, the regulation also stipulates licence validity term of 25 years from the date of grant of the licence, which may be renewed for further terms of 25 years each, subject to terms and conditions as may be prescribed by the Authority.

On the Midstream Gas flare regulation, part of the new rules is that operators in the midstream



shall provide data on flare gas, facility maintenance management, and operations in the format required, within 30 days from the date of the request.

The objectives of this regulation include reducing the environmental and social impact caused by excessive flaring and venting of flare gas, protect the environment, prevent waste of natural resources, set criteria for gas flaring in midstream petroleum operations for safety purposes and include emergency shutdown with depressurisation.

Furthermore, the regulation provides penalty for flaring gas, stipulating that a licensee shall be liable to pay a gas flare penalty of \$0.50 per 28.317 standard cubic metres (One thousand standard cubic feet) of gas flared beyond

the limit set by the NMDPRA by not more than one million standard cubic feet (1MMSCFD).

It also stated that a licensee shall be liable to pay a gas flare penalty of \$1 per 28.317 standard cubic metres (One thousand standard cubic feet) of gas flared beyond the limit set by the Authority greater than One Million standard cubic feet to 10 Million standard cubic feet (>1-10MMSCFD).

The third rule is that a licensee shall be liable to pay a gas flare penalty of US\$1.50 per 28.317 standard cubic metres (One thousand standard cubic feet) of gas flared beyond the limit set by the Authority by greater than 10 Million standard cubic feet.

It, therefore, requires that midstream gas flare penalties

collected shall be for the account The Chief Executive Officer, of the Midstream and NMDPRA, Farouk Ahmed, Downstream Gas Infrastructure receiving the newly gazette Fund and shall be utilised for regulations from the Chairman of midstream and downstream gas the Regulation Drafting infrastructure investment within Committee, charged the host community of a stakeholders in the sector to designated facility.

On the National Strategic the betterment of the country. He Stocks Regulations, the urged them to familiarise regulations recommended the themselves with the regulations establishment of national and implement so as not to fall strategic stocks to maintain the foul of the law.

security of the supply of Ahmed said the PIA emplaced a petroleum products through the framework for the development storage and distribution of of the regulations that would petroleum products by these support sustainable growth and Regulations and guidelines investment across the oil and gas issued by the Authority. value chain in Nigeria.

The guideline provided that the "Accordingly, the NMDPRA, in Authority must issue Guidelines consultation with relevant for Designating a National stakeholders, has developed the Strategic Stock and give Licensee regulations, which have been the right to maintain operating designed to enable businesses and dead stock. The Authority through regulatory clarity, shall, by the provision of the certainty, fairness, transparency, regulations, establish and and best industry standards.

maintain a minimum of 60 days "The Authority remains national demand reserve of committed to collaborating and approved petroleum products as engaging with our industry national strategic stocks. The stakeholders while promoting Authority is expected to transparency and accountability commence incremental stocking in the implementation of these to meet the security of supply. regulations," he said. NMDPRA

The guideline also recommended a national PIA Act 2021 provides for the strategic stock levy of not more development of the regulations to than five per cent of the retail actualise the benefits of the PIA. price chargeable on every Ogan, who commended the petroleum product sold by the NMDPRA for administering and management, regulation drafting financing the national strategic committee, and relevant stocks. This levy is expected to stakeholders, said the regulations be deducted by the Authority on a covered the Act to promote wholesale basis. growth.

"The guideline provided that the Authority must issue Guidelines for Designating a National Strategic Stock and give Licensee the right to maintain operating and dead stock. The Authority shall, by the provision of the regulations, establish and maintain a minimum of 60 days national demand reserve of approved petroleum products as national strategic stocks. The Authority is expected to commence incremental stocking to meet the security of supply."

NEWS

Easter: FRSC deploys 880 personnel, 22 patrol vehicles

From ANENE AIKE, Sokoto

THE Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) Kogi Sector Command, has deployed 880 personnel and 22 patrol vehicles for the Easter Special Patrol Operations beginning from Thursday, April 6 - April 12.

Also deployed are 3 ambulances and tow trucks to critical road corridors within the state in order to reduce road traffic crashes and other encumbrances.

The Sector Commander, Corps' Commander Stephen Dawulung, made the disclosure in a statement issued on Thursday in Lokoja.

"This Easter celebration, we are not leaving anything to chance as our Special Patrol Operations will involve the deployment of 880 men, 22 patrol vehicles, 3 ambulances and tow trucks to critical spots within Kogi purposely to reduce road traffic crashes and other encumbrances. "It's our believe that through strict enforcement of road traffic laws and regulations, prompt rescue and response to distress calls, speedy removal of obstructions on the highways and orientation of the public on road safety, lives and property could be very safe.



Biu

"We don't want a situation where lives and property will be wasted on our highways by careless and reckless motorists on our highways just like that.

"FRSC is ready desk with such reckless motorists in accordance with the law to serve as deterrent to others and for the good of Nigerian citizens," he warned.

Dawulung noted that the traffic peculiarity of Kogi, being the melting pot of vehicular traffic, calls for

even greater commitment towards ensuring that motorists enjoy free and safe travels across the state.

The Sector Commander, who wished travelers fruitful Easter celebration, advised motorists to always adhere to road traffic regulations, exhibit the highest level of discipline and avoid any unwholesome practices that may jeopardize theirs and others safety on the road.

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

THE Vice Chancellor of Prince Abubakar Audu University, Anyigba, Professor Marietu Ohunene Tenuche has debunked online reports of being dragged to court over alleged diversion of N31 million meant for the institution's alumni. The Vice Chancellor described the publication particularly on <https://observertimes.com>, <https://www.capitalpost.ng> and several other news blogs, with headlines like "Kogi State University female VC dragged to court over alleged diversion of N31 million", "KSU fraud: Thirty One Million Naira Prince Abubakar Audu University Fraud, VC and Others Dragged To Court" as unfortunate. Professor Tenuche while addressing journalists on the development at the university campus, on Thursday, said that the action was deliberately set up to mislead the public and cause grave disaffection to her person.

According to the VC, contrary to the purpose of alumni associations, world over, the Kogi State University management has been, for many years, dealing with a few individuals, who, rather than seek to pursue the ideals of an alumni association, resorted to devising ways of milking the university dry, at all cost. "To set the records straight, the general public should be informed that Suit No.: AYHC/03/2023 pending before the Kogi State High Court of Justice, sitting in Anyigba, has no link whatsoever, with an allegation of fraud against the office and person of the Vice Chancellor of the university. "It is no longer news that the alumni association of Kogi State University has been enmeshed in leadership crisis for years now, with two factions, all laying claim to legitimacy as national executives of the association.

"The crises have crystalized

VC denies facing court action over N31M fraud



Adamu

into legal action and counter legal actions in court. While the various actions are still pending, one of the factions, championed by two individuals, in particular, approached the university on several occasions, demanding funds and that they be invited to attend meetings of the Governing Council of the university, on the basis that they are the legally elected national executives of the university alumni association, since an Upper Area Court, sitting in Lokoja had granted an interlocutory injunction restraining the other faction from parading themselves as the legally elected executives of the alumni association, pending the hearing and determination of the substantive suit.

"Clearly seeing that the contents of the Interlocutory Injunction is entirely different from the claim of that faction, the university would rather not invite any of the factions until the matter pending in court over legitimacy of each faction's claim to the national leadership of the association is resolved. Angered by the decision of the university not to give recognition to their faction, the arrow-heads of that faction filed an action against the university and made the Vice Chancellor a co-defendant. " Their claim in the case is that the university be mandated to invite their acclaimed National President to council meetings and that previous council meetings held to their exclusion and the decisions taken at such meetings, be nullified. They are also asking the court to mandate the university to give account of what they term alumni finances of the association.

"Other demands of the duo before now are that: Demand for funds, they claimed, belong to the alumni association, a reason why they dragged the immediate past university management to court.

That the University should pay their lawyer the bills the association incurred by taking the previous university administration to court. On this, they have caused accounts of the university to be garnished to the tune of N25,000,000.00 (Twenty Five million naira), by an order of the Kogi State High Court, sitting in Idah.

An order mandating the university to return their original certificate of incorporation, which they claim is in the custody of the University.

To these demands, the University has taken the following steps: On the first demand, the University released the sum of N17,000,000.00 (Seventeen million Naira) to the alumni association. Thereafter, management closed the University Development Account formerly (Alumni Account) and stopped collection of University Development Levies from graduating students of the university as was previously done before the emergence of the present University Administration. To this end, the present university management has never collected any Development Levy or Alumni fees from graduating students.

On the second demand, the University vehemently objected to the demand to pay their lawyer and has filed an appeal against the subsequent garnishee order of the Kogi State High Court, Idah, at the Court of Appeal, Abuja.

On their demand for inclusion as members of the University Governing Council, the university has since filed our defence to the case and response to the motion for restraining order. The University Governing Council has directed that the University Management should commence the process for the review of several anomalies observed in the 2018 University Law, in line with the report of the last Visitation Panel and other global universities best practices.

"A simple check at the High Court, Anyigba Registry or a call to the University Management or its lawyers, would have revealed these facts.

" The publishers of the unfortunate news, went to town with the stories they probably were told by the individuals who are bent on bringing their alma mata and her leadership to disrepute, to satisfy their personal aggrandizement, under the guise of "pursing the interest of the alumni association", without an attempt at verifying the news.

What is more? It is the derogatory manner the Vice Chancellor was referred to in those publication as

"KSU female VC" directly, taking a swipe at the gender of the person of the Vice Chancellor of the university with several conjectures? "

NEDC kicks off training of doctors, others

From Abbas Gungura, Bauchi

NORTH East Development Commission (NEDC) in partnership with the Federal Ministry of Health has kicked off a five-day training programme for 10 doctors, nurses and other paramedics on basic emergency care providers courses for emergency

healthcare workers in Bauchi State to save lives in the region and the country at large.

Speaking at the opening ceremony recently held at the Abubakar Tafawa Balewa Teaching Hospital (ATBU-TH) in Bauchi, a consultant Urologist and Chairman of the Medical Advisory Council of ATBU-TH, Dr Haruna Usman

Liman, said the participants were selected for the programme to be well trained after which those trained will go to their various units and step down the training to other staff.

The Chairman explained that Bauchi is located at the confluence of many major trunk roads where accidents and emergencies are bound to occur, hence the need for appropriate care to be instituted at the right time to save many lives.

Liman said that it is a thing of joy for the hospital to be nominated to participate in the training programme because a tertiary centre that does not have a well developed and elaborate emergency culture has a very serious problem.

He said, "We hope in the course of time, many people within the hospital will imbibe this emergency culture and become proficient in the art of instituting emergency care when laying down protocols for interventions to save lives."

The representative of the

state coordinator of North East Development Commission (NEDC) in Bauchi State, Abdulkadir Ibrahim Baba, while speaking at the occasion, charged the participants to utilise the opportunity and acquire the requisite skills and step down the knowledge to achieve the desired objectives.

Baba said that the training is going on across the six states of Borno, Yobe, Taraba, Adamawa, Gombe and Bauchi.

Earlier, a facilitator and master trainer at the event, Dr Ibrahim Sahabo, said the basic emergency care was designed by the World Health Organisation (WHO) in collaboration with ICRC and International Federation of Emergency Medicine, the body that provides the certification for all the participants at the training.

Sahabo explained that the training is aimed at equipping the frontline health workers with the requisite skills to be able to rapidly assess and manage patients in life threatening conditions.



Ehanire

NEWS

3 missing in Taraba boat mishap

From Victor Gai, Jalingo

THREE persons including a septuagenarian have been confirmed missing when a boat conveying local traders had an accident in Dampar, Ibi Local Government Area of Taraba State.

According to the caretaker chairman, Bala Bako, the incident occurred on Thursday when the boat hit an underwater tree resulting in the accident.

While some were rescued, three persons have not been found even as rescue operation is still ongoing, Bako confirmed.

"They were returning from the market. A good number of the passengers have been rescued but from a reliable source, about three persons were missing, a 70 year old man and two others," Bako disclosed.

SUNDAY STANDAD also learnt that the passengers were not on life jackets which

are usually provided to passengers crossing the river.

According to the caretaker chairman, that is due to the inadequate number of jackets relative to passenger traffic.

"The life jackets are mostly used for those on distant journeys. So far we have provided 100 pieces but it is not enough.

"We have made appeals to highly placed persons in the community to assist us because government can't do it alone," he added.

From
VICTOR GAI, Jalingo

JUSTICE Joel Philibus Agya has been sworn-in as Acting Chief Judge of Taraba State.

Also, Justice Alfred Yakubu has been sworn-in as Acting President of the Customary Court of Appeal.

The ceremony which was presided by Governor Darius Ishaku, took place at the Executive Chamber, Government House Jalingo.

Speaking during the occasion, Governor Darius Ishaku said there was need to fill the vacuum created in

Taraba gets new Chief Judge

governance which necessitated their swearing-in.

He advised the judges to fear God and uphold justice in the discharge of their responsibility to the people.

The governor also charged them to brace up for the challenges ahead and respect the oath they have taken.

In his remarks, the Acting Chief Judge Joel Philibus Agya, thanked Governor Darius Ishaku for finding them worthy for the appointment. The Acting Chief Judge said

the Judiciary protects, ensures the rule of law, settles disputes as well as punishes offenders.

He promised to abide by the oath they have taken and assured people of the state that under his watch the common man would have access to justice.

Justice Nuhu Adi administered the Judicial oath of office to the Acting Chief Judge, Philibus Agya and the Acting President of the Customary Court of Appeal, Alfred Yakubu.

Gov Bala inaugurates 53 man transition committee

From Abbas Gungura,
Bauchi

GOVERNOR Bala Mohammed has inaugurated a 53 man transition committee. Members are mandated to review performance that gave birth for his re-election.

Speaking during the inauguration at the Government House Bauchi recently, Bala Mohammed expressed appreciation and thanks to Almighty God for having him re-elected for another four years.

He emphasized that his re-election by the good people of Bauchi State was informed by his administration's unprecedented performance in various aspects of developments, ranging from road constructions across the nooks and crannies of the state, construction and rehabilitation of schools, hospitals, water, human capital development, among others.

"I must appreciate and

commend the sagacity of my compatriots here for giving us the mandate to continue to serve them for another four years", Bala Mohammed said.

"Ordinarily, there would be no need for any transition, but we have however, decided to constitute the transition committee not for the purpose of handing over to any government but for a seamless transition to higher level of performance by our government", he said.

Bala said his administration is irrevocably committed to ensuring that by the end of his renewed four years tenure, Bauchi can be favorably compared to any state in Nigeria.

"As you are aware, ministries, departments and agencies are the vehicles for



Darius



Mohammed

Women group decry rate of divorce among couples

From Abbas Gungura,
Bauchi

BAUCHI State Chapter of Muslim Women Islamic Association, popularly known as Sisters of Jannah Bauchi State Chapter has expressed concern over the high rate of divorce among Muslim couples in Northern Nigeria.

Sisters of Jannah, expressed their displeasure over the issue recently at the 2nd Ramadan Lecture organised by the association at Bauchi Central Mosque Conference hall with the topic: "Issue of Divorce in Muslims homes /rights of neighbors. The lectures on the topics were delivered by Islamic scholars, Mallam Muhammad Suhailu Lawal and Malama Khadija Ahmed. In their separate submissions, the scholars lamented that most parents usually ignore the instructions of the Holy Quran when giving their children out in marriage.

"The implication is that if we don't follow the Islamic regulation by offering prayers to Allah

for guidance and following the Islamic teaching, there will be domestic problems".

"This teaching is for the women and men to know their duties and rights and for the wife to know her duty and rights. Those rules are to bring harmony in our homes."

The scholars said that though divorce was detestable, it was permitted in Islam.

"As a Muslim, you must ensure that your home is an Islamic home, a home where you recite the Quran, a home where you take turns to gather the children and teach them the word of Allah. You teach them the words of the prophets and not just allow them to fully have western education but add Islamic education to it as this will guarantee your children will be pious Muslims," Mallama Khadija said.

"Allah loves a house in which a wedding is held and hates a house in which a divorce is conducted and there is nothing more hateful than divorce," she pointed out.

She identified agents of

divorce as indifference of spouses towards one other and apathy and lack of passion in fulfillment of the sexual needs of one another, misconduct, discourteousness, carping, picking quarrels, and stubbornness in a husband, wife, or both, and behavior incompatibility of spouses.

The cleric advises couples against selfishness, egocentricity, autocracy, and recalcitrance, and advocates tolerance, forgiveness, and resolving differences with reason, fairness and affection.

On his part, Mallam Suhailu Said tolerance, forgiveness, and these qualities shown to neighbors are a demonstration of the moral values and virtues inbuilt into the worship of the one God—Allah and advised neighbors to be kind, help and offer gift to the neighbors.

"Offer your neighbor a ride if you see them walking to the grocery store. Make chicken soup or buy home-made medicines like fever,

common cold for them; If you meet a new neighbor while they are moving in, greet them with a smile and bring them refreshments.

Give them a quick run-through of the area in general, where things are located, and what can they expect from the community. If a former neighbor is moving out, then help them with packing, cleaning, and bring them dinner or lunch. When you make something, send some over to your neighbor. Buy an extra box of something useful and give it to your neighbor.

"O Muslim women! No one of you should consider insignificant (a gift) to give to her neighbor even if it is (a gift of) the trotters of a sheep"

The patron of the association, Hajiya Maryam Garba Bagel said the aim of the association was to promote Islam among Muslims across the country and advised couples not to be self centered but to be fair and just in order to build a good marital home for the good of all.

the realization of the developmental objectives of any government through the implementation of policies and programmes", the governor noted.

"Let me use this opportunity to commend the MDAs in the state for executing the various projects that have made Bauchi State one of the best states in the provision of infrastructure and other amenities", he added.

Bala while commending the heads and staff of all the MDAs for their financial and moral discipline in carrying out their responsibilities, said such attributes made his administration to execute many projects with very little resources.

"There is therefore the need for hand over notes to be prepared so as to adequately acquaint the incoming commissioners of the structures of responsibilities of the MDAs", he said.

According to him, "the hand over notes becomes imperative in view of the need for the MDAs to optimally perform towards the realization of my Bauchi project".

Bala who said that committee was been constituted for the purpose of transiting to higher performance, said that members of the committee were drawn from 20 local government areas of the state for inclusiveness and geopolitical representation.

He said merit was not compromised in the process of selecting the committee members which has former Deputy Governor of the state, Architect Audu Sule Katagum as its chairman as well the Governor's private principal Secretary, Alhaji Sama'ila Burga as the secretary of the committee.

Bala said the names of members of the committee could not be made available at the time of the inauguration, therefore, the rest of the members would be carefully selected to guarantee inclusivity.

According to the governor, the committee is expected to collect handing over notes from all Ministries, Departments and Agencies and provide comprehensive data on the programmes and projects executed by the present administration from 2019 to date.

He said that the rest of the terms of reference of the committee is to also look into problems of the Ministries, Departments, Agencies and their effects on his campaign promises, provide a roadmap for the new Bauchi State and to ascertain if there is any outstanding recurrent expenditure, in the areas of salaries, pensions in all MDAs and local government areas.

Speaking on behalf of the committee, its chairman, Architect Audu Sule Katagum promised to justify the confidence reposed in them by the governor.

Police confirm abduction of former Deputy Governor

From Abbas Gungura, Bauchi

THE Police Command in Nassarawa State has confirmed the abduction by gunmen of a former Deputy Governor of the state, Prof. Onje Gye-Wado. The confirmation is contained in a statement on Friday in Lafia by DSP Ramhan Nansel, Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO) in the state. Gye-Wado was deputy governor of Nassarawa between 1999 and 2003 in the administration of Alhaji Abdullahi Adamu. The PPRO in the statement said the Commissioner of Police (CP), Maiyaki Muhammed-Baba, has deployed tactical operatives to rescue the former deputy operation. He said that the police received reports that the former deputy was kidnapped by gunmen in the early hours of Friday at his residence in Wamba Local Government Area (LGA). "Information received by the police command indicated that on Friday, April 7 at about 12:30 a.m., gunmen invaded Gwagi Village in Wamba LGA, broke into the residence of the former deputy governor and abducted him to an unknown destination. "Upon receipt of the information, police operatives attached to Wamba Division



Alkali

swiftly moved to the scene, but the hoodlums had fled with the victim before their arrival," the police spokesperson added. Nansel stated that the police commissioner had further mobilised reinforcement comprising police tactical teams, the military, vigilance groups and local hunters to complement the ongoing search to rescue the hostage hale and hearty. He assured the public that the police would do everything possible to arrest the perpetrators of the act and make them to face the law.

'Terrorists abduct over 80 residents in Zamfara

RESIDENTS of communities in Tsafe local government area of Zamfara state North-west Nigeria say more than 80 people were abducted by terrorists early Friday morning. Residents who spoke to BBC Hausa service as monitored by PREMIUM TIMES said some of those abducted had gone to the bush around 7:45 a.m. to gather firewood for domestic purposes. Others were working on their farmlands as rainy season begins. "We were sitting between 8 o'clock in the morning when we heard that some of our

youths who went to fetch firewood in the bush and those who have gone to clear their farmlands have been abducted by bandits," a village elder whose name was not mentioned said in the Hausa language. When asked the actual number of those taken, the elder said "it's between 80 to 100". "Well, we can't say the actual number of the victims now but we expect it to be between 80 and 100 of our people. Most of them are youths between teenage years and those who are in their twenties. There is one old man who is in his fifties. And there are others too. But the

majority are young men and women," he said. The source, who spoke to BBC Hausa on behalf of the other residents said one person was seriously wounded and is being treated. He said several others escaped being abducted and have been reunited with their families. Another resident, who also didn't give his name for security reasons said his son was among those abducted. "I can't say how many of them have been abducted but my son was taken. He went with my motorcycle and they've taken him with the motorcycle. I don't know the actual number but they're many including children and young people," he said. "My daughter was also abducted today," a woman told the BBC Hausa. "My daughter is 15 years old and she was among those who went to fetch firewood for us...you know how the situation is..they went to fetch firewood but they've now been abducted. " She said the people of the community immediately notified security agents stationed in the community but the terrorists had already left. The police spokesperson in the state, Mohammed Shehu, didn't respond to calls and SMS sent to him on the abduction. Terrorists have continued to unleash mayhem on people of Zamfara State and other North-west and North-central states for over a decade.



Mattawelle

PRESIDENT Muhammadu Buhari has urged Nigerians to continue to be confident and believe strongly in Nigeria as a geopolitical entity for better seasons ahead. The president made the call in his Easter Message to Nigerians on Friday in Abuja. While recognising that Easter is about renewed hope and a glorious future, the president joined Christians in Nigeria and around the world to celebrate the occasion, which commemorated the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, signposting his victory over death. He said, "At the heart of Easter, is the triumph of light over darkness. "It is a season that reminds us that the Almighty can turn an unpleasant situation around for good. "Recognising that Easter is about renewed hope and a glorious future, I urge all Nigerians to continue to be confident and believe strongly in our country for better seasons ahead."

Believe in Nigeria for better season ahead-Buhari



Buhari

The president used the opportunity to again congratulate those who emerged winners of the February and March general elections, calling on those not satisfied with the

outcome to seek redress in the courts. "As a nation, we have gone through an election that has produced the next set of leaders at the Federal and State levels.

Suspected cultist stabs student to death



Adamu

A mob of the protesters reportedly set the family house of the suspected killer on fire. Mr Ayodeji was stabbed to death by a suspected cultist who is an indigene of the town during an argument in an off campus residential area. Some persons said the argument was over N1000, although the details were sketchy. As soon reports of the incident reached the school campus, students reacted violently raising panic and apprehension on the school premises. It was gathered that the house of the suspect's mother was burnt down by the irate students during the protest. There were further protests in the Akungba community

where students took to the streets over the killing. However, the police waded in and in collaboration with the school management, restored calm to the university community. The police spokesperson in the state, Funmilayo Odunlami-Omisanya, confirmed the incident. She said the stabbed students was confirmed dead at the hospital. "An indigene had an issue with a student and one thing led to the other, and he stabbed the student which resulted to the student's death," she said. "Students took to the street to protest, corpse taken to the morgue by police, while on it some people mobilize to the suspects mother's house to set it ablaze, policemen are there to douse the tension. "

The last time the students of the university were on the streets protesting was in February last year, when they raised the alarm over the incessant killing of students by hit and run drivers plying the expressway. Meanwhile, the Students Union Government of the institution has given further details on the incident. A statement signed by the SUG President, Ogunsanmi Kolade, and General Secretary, Adeyefa Tolulope, and made available to journalists on Thursday, said the culprits were on the run, but efforts were underway to apprehend them. To illustrate the characters and inherent qualities of Professor Tanko Ishaya at the same Nasarawa State, while on the national assignment as INEC Returning Officer for the 2023 General Elections. Prof Ishaya returned as duly elected two SDP Senators in the persons of Hon. Ahmed Wadada and Sen.Godiya Akwashiki and all others who duly won their elections. We as a Group challenge all or any of the returned winners to mention any sum of money they respectively used to influence the proclamation of their victory. Most importantly, he returned the Labour Party as winner of Presidential election despite Nasarawa State being renown as an APC state and home of the APC National Chairman. Drenkat said we urged politicians who lost to accept the outcome of the elections.

SUNDAY MAGAZINE

Nigeria's May 29th handing over: Anxiety grips citizens



Continued from page 10

people-oriented policies. It is common knowledge that he is a welfarist and a pacifist. This is even more so that millions of citizens have spoken through the ballot box in his favour.

"By being declared winners, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu and Senator Kashim Shettima are legally entitled to be inaugurated into office as provided for by law and as we have practised since 1999, whilst those who feel otherwise have the right to seek legal redress in court. Why should their situation be different from what we have practised since 1999?

"Those who are dissatisfied with the declaration must conduct themselves within the ambits of the law. Nigeria is not a lawless country and should not be portrayed as such no matter the frustrations as presently being exhibited by some bad losers.

"Those who are stoking the embers of hate, division and falsehoods as well as peddling misleading narratives through some compromised media outlets should detract from such. It amounts to campaigning after elections. Hate speeches, fake news and propaganda at a time like this are needless because Nigerians have already made their choice. Those who are bent on scuttling the process will ignite the fire of destruction and run away. But they should not even start.

"We simply wish that peace reigns in the country. It does not make sense that some persons

who should know better are encouraging violence and are so determined to achieve that.

"We know these persons and their sponsors from within and outside Nigeria and we shall be working closely with the security agencies to apprehend them and bring them to book. Our concern is that everyday Nigerians who are unaware of the evil intentions of these persons should not be used as cannon fodders. Enough is enough. Their continuous determination to dare us should cease forthwith. We are not lacking in capabilities and capacities. Our silence should not be taken for cowardice. We should come together for the peace of our beloved country. It is better", Keyamo added.

Beyond this unhealthy development, the Department of State Security also issued a statement calling on the attention of Nigerians on the plans by some individuals to also truncate the handing-over ceremony. These statements however did not go down well with many individuals who not only questioned that credibility of the presidential elections but challenged DSS to reveal the names of the persons allegedly involved.

In the statement titled "DSS CONFIRMS PLOT FOR INTERIM GOVERNMENT BY MISGUIDED POLITICAL ACTORS", it had claimed that these politicians are trying to truncate democracy, stop the swearing-in of the president-elect, Bola Tinubu and thus push for the installation of an interim government.

The statement raised questions about the motive behind the press release and the credibility of the DSS, while at the same time, creating a sense of fear among residents, as they are unsure of what could happen next.

But again, just recently, the Minister of Information, Alhaji Lai Mohammed also picked on the Labour Party Presidential Candidate claiming treasonable allegations against him. In the days that followed, one of the privately own Television stations in the country, Channels was fined N5 million for hosting the Vice Presidential Candidate of the same party, Datti Baba Ahmed over uncomplimentary remarks which he made. This single act also generated heated debates within the media industry as to why are media organizations oppressed in a callous way and manner.

Reacting over Lai Mohammed's allegations against Peter Obi, The presidential candidate of the African Action Congress, AAC, Omoyele Sowore, has accused the Minister of Information and Culture, Lai Mohammed of harassing and fighting the Labour Party, LP, presidential candidate, Peter Obi.

Sowore said Mohammed was fighting Obi because he is a wimp with zero ability to fight a revolutionary struggle.

He spoke while reacting to Mohammed's claim of Obi committing treason.

Mohammed had said it was "treason" for Obi to incite people to violence following the outcome

of the presidential elections.

However, Sowore said Mohammed's allegation was a hoax and fallacy taken too far.

In a series of tweets, Sowore wrote: "I am clear about these issues even though I stringently continue to state that @PeterObi and his @NgLabour are not different from his @OfficialAPCNg and @OfficialPDPNig uncles.

"However, shameless Lai Mohammed and @NGRPresident claims that protected speech and lawful protests against fraudulent election amounts to "Treason" is a hoax and fallacy carried too far.

"They're harassing @PeterObi and his Vice Presidential candidate, DATTI Ahmed with these tactics because they know they are wimps with zero ability to fight a revolutionary struggle and because they've all been partners in crime since 1999."

Though President Muhammadu Buhari, has, reiterated his commitment to handing over the leadership of the country to an elected president on May 29, 2023, saying his term in office would end on that day in line with the constitution of the country, there is great fear and anxiety on the polity. Many citizens of this country do not believe that Buhari will come May 29th handover the affairs of this nation to Tinubu considering the baggage he is dealing with at the moment.

Beyond this, many pundits also are of the opinion that Buhari should not take his luck too far knowing too well that the presidential elections did not go the absolute way Nigerians had

anticipated. Unconfirmed reports also have it that arresting any of the two many presidential candidates may not auger well for country itself. Already, a Nollywood veteran actor, Kanayo O Kanayo has raised concerns over the safety of the Labour Party, LP, presidential candidate, Peter Obi. Kanayo O Kanayo disclosed that Nigerians should watch out because Obi would soon be arrested.

He alleged that some people are conspiring against the LP flag bearer, adding that he feels like something fishy is about to happen. n an Instagram post, the veteran actor said: "Peter Gregory Obi will soon be arrested, Watch Out. The conspiracy is brewing, you want to bet?"

The All Progressives Congress, APC, Presidential Campaign Council, had called for Obi's arrest for allegedly inciting violence.

Tinubu's spokesman, Bayo Onanuga, accused Obi of making inflammatory statements following his loss at the presidential election.

As it is; many citizens of this country are hurt, many are still disillusioned and traumatized in the aftermath of the polls, as such, this unfolding developments must be handled with care as anything short of this may spell doom for the nation.

While preparations have gone far for the handing over ceremony to the incoming government, the indicators are clear, the handing on the wall is still uncertain.

METRO-FOCUS

The importance of firewood amidst economic hardship

By JIDAUNA DARING

WITH the economic challenges presently faced in Nigeria, many people have now resorted to the use of firewood in their houses both in the urban city and rural areas as alternative means for cooking. Gone are the days when firewood was unpopular and only common in the villages or with the very poor in the urban areas. This cannot be unconnected to the high price of kerosene and cooking gas.

Firewood as the name implies, is a wooden material that has been cut into logs or pieces to be used particularly for burning fires.

In fact, firewood is mostly fetched in the bush particularly in the rural areas. It is common practice for rural dwellers to enter the interior of bushes to pick shrubs and cut stem of trees. These would be tied with rope and conveyed back home to be used for cooking.

Nigerians are reputed as people who easily adapt to any situation. The turn of events over the years, has forced everyone to strategise, except for the extremely rich. Without realizing it, most urban dwellers are living village life in the city. It is now common practice for struggling families to enter the bush to fetch firewood. This clearly indicates that no condition is permanent as long as people live on earth.

Therefore, the importance of firewood cannot be undermeasured since it performs different functions when it comes to cooking especially for those who use it for different purposes. In the past, if at all average families were using firewood, it was only to boil bathing water or cook large quantities for occasions. This was Mrs. Rita Dakas submission.

In fact, as far as life is concerned, people are supposed to imbibe the spirit of making do with what they have in their hands, rather than aiming for what is not available or what is beyond their means. People should not be shy when coming out to scout for the firewood in the bush, particularly when it comes to carrying it on their heads, if it would make it easier to convey from one point to another.

Speaking with **METRO FOCUS** on the use of firewood in some households, a resident of JentaAdamu in Jos North Local Government Area (LGA) of Plateau State, Mrs. Sylvia Ishya said that she grew up in a community called Bankilong in Kanam LGA before coming to stay in Jos. She explained that she has done a lot when it comes to fetching of firewood in the bush to cook all kinds of things that need firewood in the family.

Ishaya also said that when searching for the firewood, they sometimes have to treka long



distance to outskirts of town before getting the best firewood that is durable. Their supplies usually come from dead trees or

trees that have been fell. And since they move in group, they then use an axe to cut their find into logs or pieces.

She told **METRO FOCUS** that as a person, she prefers firewood to other means of cooking because the taste of the food

cooked on the firewood is always different from others. A white man, Mr. Johnson corroborated this. He said Jollof rice cooked on fire wood is the best.

Ishaya maintained that, the price of the firewood is equally going high because the demand of the firewood is now getting high almost on a daily basis. It is now beyond the reach of a poor man. Adding that, N500 or N1,000.00 firewood is not much in quantity and will take one nowhere, particularly for those who may not be able to always afford it due to financial challenges.

Also speaking with **METRO FOCUS**, a firewood seller who is a resident of Kabong area, Mrs. Esther Isaac Ibrahim said that as a retiree, what motivated her to key into the business was because she did not want to stay idle as long as she is alive.

Ibrahim pointed out that the little gain or interest that she is getting it from the business is not a regrettable, since it puts food on the table of her family.

She noted that before the naira crunch, patronage used to be fair, but it became worse when Nigerian citizens in February this year due to cash scarcity which has dragged many people into temporary poverty.

Ibrahim maintained that Nigerians are gradually coming out of such unpleasant or unfriendly experience. She added that there is an improvement in the business now that things are becoming better.

She challenged retirees to key into different kinds of little businesses that would further help them and their families, pointing out that idleness does more harm than good as far as life is concerned.

Ibrahim advised people not to feel too big or shy when it comes to business or hand work, so as to keep them busy at all times.

She disclosed that her suppliers are within Plateau and Bauchi State. Ibrahim also explained that those using firewood to cook can still make charcoal after cooking which is a plus.



SUNDAY PEOPLE

WASHING OF LEGS

St. Louis Church, observed Last Supper of our Lord Jesus Christ by the Parish Priest, Rev. Fr. Joseph Dung Pwol on Thursday evening



Parish Priest of St. Louis Church, Fr. Pwol performing the washing of legs



A cross section of Reverend Sisters listening to homily



Church Choir presenting their special song



A cross section of St. Louis College Students at the event

EASTER FRIDAY SERVICE

The Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA) Gospel 4 Jenta Adamu, Jos North LGA, held Easter Friday service



Rev. Danladi Isa Diwa, delivering his sermon during the service



A cross section of worshipers listening to the Easter message



A cross section of women fellowship at the service



Christian faithful at the Easter Service

Photos: JOHN LAR



Road Runner

Michael Agada
magada122@gmail.com
 +234 803 333 5313

SAFER TOGETHER

Road traffic crash: in case of emergency (ice)

ROAD traffic crashes and the need for rescue services can be minimized through timely preventive maintenance of our vehicles. Unfortunately, emergencies still occur no matter how much preparation we make. Road traffic crashes still remain part of the landscape. While crashes will hopefully be greatly reduced, it is very important to know what to do in emergency situation. However, in case of emergency when the unforeseen occurs, it is advisable to carry battery jump leads, a towrope, a fire extinguisher and a caution sign (warning triangle among other items). If you need to call for rescue, it is advisable to first move the vehicle to a well-lit area if possible, do not stay in the vehicle on the highway.

Research findings have shown that many crashes occur on the hard shoulder of the road. It the crash occur in the middle of the bush with no help in sight it is best to get into the car on the passenger side, put on the seatbelt and lock all doors. Otherwise stay in the vehicle and lock windows and doors, request for identification from anyone attending to the scene. In present day Nigeria where insecurity has become a thing of concern, you may move out of the vehicle to where you can be concealed but keep the vehicle in view if you feel vulnerable and insecure.

The following details should be noted in crashes and emergency situation: The name and address of the other driver and also that of the vehicle owner, if different. The name and address of each witness

A description of any injury to yourself or others
 The damage to vehicles and also to property
 The name and address of the other driver's insurance company (see issue disc on windscreen)

The number of their certificate of insurance
 The registration number of the other vehicle
 The make, type and colour of the other vehicle
 The date, time and location of the crash (landmark and route)

Name and service numbers of the rescue officers

Possible cause of crash
 Width of the road, road markings, state of the road surface, weather conditions and visibility\

Debris or marks on the road relevant to the crash (skid marks)

The manner of the other drivers driving prior to the crash

A rough sketch of the vehicle position before and after the crash

Whether other drivers and passengers were wearing seatbelts or not

Take photograph of the scene with your cell phone

All of these is possible only if you are in a conscious state after the crash. Keep your vehicle at or near the crash scene for a reasonable period. Give, on demand, your name, address, and that of the other vehicle owner (if different), the vehicle registration number, and insurance particulars. Report the crash as soon as possible.

It is a chargeable offence not to do so.

First aid idea is highly desirable in emergencies. Some of the basic first aid ideas may seem obvious but in crash and emergency situations, people do not always think as they should.

Dealing with injuries at crash scene

Access the situation

Stay calm

Ensure safety

Switch off engines and remove battery terminals

Control traffic

Summon professional help from medics/paramedics/ FRSC/ police etc.

Do not give victims anything to drink, eat or smoke even if they ask

Offer constant reassurance even against hope
 Keep casualties warm while waiting for qualified medical personnel
 Loosen victims' belts, ties and other tight clothing

Do not move injured victims unless they are in immediate danger

Do not attempt to remove piercing objects/ burnt clothes.

Recovery position

If the person is breathing but unconscious, the recovery position should be used. The victim is turned onto his or her side, tilted slightly forward with the uppermost leg and arm bent to help prop the upper body.

Burns

Burns should be treated by immersing in cold water for at least 10 minutes. Never attempt to remove clothing from burned skin. Transport to the nearest hospital or health facility with the burned clothing on.

Bleeding

Severe bleeding should be treated by supplying continuous direct pressure to the bleeding point. Raise the affected limb if necessary.

Note:

Emergencies and road traffic crashes are no film shows. Do not attempt more than you can do. Allow a more trained and qualified medical personnel to take charge and be ready to offer supported when called upon. Avoid posting pictures of crash and emergency scenes on social media platforms. If you are not of any help just leave the scene and go your way. Avoid overcrowding the scene as victims need good ventilation to aid their recovery.

The motoring publics are advised to always have an ICE phone number for care givers and rescue operators to contact in case of emergency. This is the phone number of a close friend, family member or colleague to contact in case the unexpected happens. And for such to be effective commuters should avoid pass-wording or locking their phones with PIN. ICE stands for IN CASE OF EMERGENCY.

Emergency toll-free numbers:

122 FRSC

112 National.

NEWS

Christians to embrace Christ's life of making sacrifice

From
AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

KOGI State Governor, Yahaya Bello while rejoicing with the Christians world over on the occasion of the 2023 Easter celebration, challenged them to embrace Christ's life of making sacrifice when the need arises.

Bello in a special Easter message on Friday in Lokoja, congratulated the Christian faithful for the successful completion of the Lenten season which he noted was much-needed self-denial to pray for the peace of the country and wisdom for the leaders.

The governor in a statement signed by his Chief Press Secretary, Onogwu Muhammed stressed the need for Christians to imbibe the good virtues of Jesus Christ to create a better and saner society.

"I wish to rejoice with our Christian brothers and sisters all over the world on the auspicious occasion of the 2023 Easter celebrations.

As we all know, Easter is marked by Christians as a joyous holiday because it represents the gratification of the prophecies and the revelation of God's redemptive plan for the followers of Christ," the governor said in the message.

While urging Nigerians to remain hopeful about the nation's progress, Bello said Easter also signifies the celebration of the defeat of death and the hope for salvation.

"In immortalising the



Bello

Resurrection of Jesus, Easter also means the celebration of the defeat of death and the hope for salvation.

"Therefore, I urge all citizens to keep faith in our leaders with prayers for a greater Nigeria," he said.

The governor added that just as the death, and resurrection of Christ signified hope for mankind, there must be a renewal of hope for our nation in this season of great challenges.

He urged Christians to reflect on critical issues affecting the nation and to continue seeking the face of God Almighty for the country so that security, unity and peace will prevail in the overall national interest.

Governor Bello noted that the 2023 general elections, which will usher in a new breed of leaders across the country by May 29 represent a watershed

for Nigeria.

He insisted that all citizens who participated effectively in the process of electing the new leaders into the various offices "must also commit themselves to pray for the smooth transmission of government, growth and prosperity of the country."

While assuring the Christian faithful in Kogi state of the state's commitment to a joyous celebration free of all hitches, he added that security operatives and other collaborating agencies are working together round-the-clock to checkmate crime and secure the lives and properties of citizens.

Bello, however, urged Christians to use the opportunity of the season to find strength and solace in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Abubakar Audu varsity VC denies facing court action

From **AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja**

THE Vice Chancellor of Prince Abubakar Audu University, Anyigba, Professor Marietu Ohunene Tenuche has debunked online reports of being dragged to Court over alleged diversion of N31M meant for the institution's Alumni.

The Vice Chancellor described the publication particularly on <https://observerstimes.com>, <https://www.capitalpost.ng> and several other news blogs, with headlines like "Kogi State University female VC dragged to Court over alleged diversion of N31M", "KSU Fraud: Thirty One Million Naira Prince Abubakar Audu University Fraud, VC and Others Drag To Court" as unfortunate.

Professor Tenuche while addressing journalists on the development at the University Campus, on Thursday, said that the action was deliberately set up to mislead the public and cause grave disaffection to her person.

According to the VC, contrary to the purpose of Alumni Associations, world over, the Kogi State University Management has been, for many years, dealing with a few individuals, who, rather than seek to pursue the ideals of an Alumni Association, resorted to devising ways of milking the University dry, at all cost.

"To set the records straight, the general public should be informed that Suit No.: AYHC/03/2023 pending before the Kogi State High Court of

Justice, siting in Anyigba, has no link whatsoever, with an allegation of fraud against the office and person of the Vice Chancellor of the University.

"It is no longer news that the Alumni Association of Kogi State University has been enmeshed in leadership crises for years now, with two factions, all laying claim to legitimacy as National Executives of the Association.

"The crises have crystalized into legal action and counter legal actions in court. While the various actions are still pending, one of the factions, championed by two individuals, in particular, approached the University on several occasions, demanding funds and that they be invited to attend Meetings of the Governing Council of the University, on the basis that they are the legally elected national executives of the University Alumni Association, since an Upper Area Court, sitting in Lokoja had granted an interlocutory injunction restraining the other faction from parading themselves as the legally elected Executives of the Alumni Association, pending the hearing and determination of the substantive suit.

"Clearly seeing that the contents of the Interlocutory Injunction is entirely different from the claim of that faction, the University would rather not invite any of the factions until the matter pending in court over legitimacy of each

faction's claim to the national leadership of the association is resolved. Angered by the decision of the University not to give recognition to their faction, the arrow-heads of that faction filed an action against the University and made the Vice Chancellor a co-defendant.

"Their claim in the case is that the University be mandated to invited their acclaimed National President to Council Meetings and that previous Council Meetings held to their exclusion and the decisions taken at such meetings, be nullified. They are also asking the court to mandate the University to give account of what they term Alumni finances of the association.

"Other demands of the duo before now are that; 1. Demand for funds, they claimed, belong to the Alumni Association, a reason why they dragged the immediate past University Management to Court. That the University should pay their Lawyer the bills the Association incurred by taking the previous University administration to Court. On this, they have caused accounts of the University to be garnished to the tune of N25,000,000.00 (Twenty Five Million Naira), by an order of the Kogi State High Court, sitting in Idah. An order mandating the University to return their original certificate of incorporation, which they claim is in the custody of the University.



SUNDAY FEATURE

The greatest act of love unfolds

Good Friday of the Lord's Passion: Then he handed him over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus, and, carrying the cross himself, he went out to what is called the Place of the Skull, in Hebrew, Golgotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus in the middle. John 19:16–18

THE Passion of our Lord begins. Our Gospel narrative today begins with Jesus going out to a garden with His disciples after the celebration of the Passover meal. It's shocking to consider that the Second Person of the Most Holy Trinity permitted such injustice to befall Him. Though perfect in every way, He allowed Himself to be treated as a criminal, to suffer at the hands of sinners, and to die an agonizing death.

One of the first shocking events to take place in the Garden where Jesus was arrested was the sheer number of soldiers sent to arrest Him. A "band of soldiers" could mean that as many as 600 soldiers were sent to accomplish this deed. Going out with "lanterns, torches and weapons" reveals that it was dark. The symbolism of darkness is significant in John's Gospel, portraying the spiritual darkness that permeated that night. Within that darkness, one of Jesus' own Apostles betrayed Him, leading this massive number of soldiers to arrest Him.

Upon Jesus' arrest, Peter, the soon-to-be leader of the Apostles, denies, for the first time, that he even knows Jesus. This happens while Jesus is interrogated by Annas, a respected former High Priest. The fact that a High Priest was the first to question Jesus shows that even those who are "religious" can, at times, be brutal instruments of attacks upon the faith. After Annas, Jesus is brought to Caiaphas, then acting as High Priest. During that interrogation, Peter denied our Lord a second time and then a third. These religious leaders concluded that Jesus must die. Recall that Caiaphas had previously argued that "it is better for you that one man should die instead of the people" (John 11:50). In fact, those words of Caiaphas were an unintended prophecy, predicting the death of our Lord for all the people.

Since the Jewish authorities did not have the power to crucify someone, they relied on the Roman governor Pilate. Although Pilate shows little interest in meeting their request, He does so out of fear of an uprising and reprisals from Caesar. Pilate also humiliates Jesus, scourging Him and permitting his soldiers to mock Him. Little did they know that the purple cloak with which they covered Jesus and the crown of thorns they placed on His head were symbols of Jesus' true Kingship, exercised by His defeat of death itself in the battle for the salvation of souls.

When Jesus was crucified, He hung on the Cross between two thieves. As He agonized for three hours, He permitted His mother to stand by Him, entrusted her to the disciple John and John to her, drank of the wine to quench His thirst, spoke His final words, "It is finished," and then He bowed His sacred head and handed over His



spirit.

John's Gospel relates to us that after Jesus was dead, a soldier pierced His side with a lance, and blood and water flowed out. This final gift from our Lord has been understood as a symbol of the Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist. It was truly finished. The King had won the battle. Death was defeated, and the

means by which we are to share in that victory was given by the institution of the Sacraments.

Reflect, today, upon this most sacred scene. There is no end to the depth and breadth of the meaning of every action that took place that holy day. Every detail reveals the love of God. Every symbol points to the reality of what took place. Every word our Lord spoke is for us to hear, to

receive and to believe. The meaning of Good Friday is beyond our human comprehension. Nonetheless, on this holy day we are called to prayerfully penetrate the meaning of this perfect act of love, so that we will more fully share in the grace given to us by our Lord.

My crucified Lord, from the perspective of human beings, Your death was horrific. But from

the perspective of Your Father in Heaven, Your death was the glorious fulfillment of His will. Through Your Passion and death, You exercised Your Kingship by taking authority over sin and death and commanding it to cease. May I stand with Your dear mother this day, dear Lord, and gaze with gratitude and awe on what You have done for me. Jesus, I trust in You.

SUNDAY SPORTS

Where will Messi be playing next season?

"Everything is a possibility" with regards to where Lionel Messi will be playing next season, says Spanish football expert Guillem Balague. Balague says the Argentina captain has received offers from Saudi Arabia and the USA's Major League Soccer, while there is interest in bringing him back to Barcelona, albeit no official offer has been made yet.

MESSI had reached an "agreement in principle" to renew his contract at Paris St-Germain for another year, with his priority to continue in elite European football until the 2024 Copa America.

After two seasons in Paris, the club, which is owned by Qatar Sports Investments, would like to convince him to accept that extra year under the same conditions as he has now.

According to Balague, the 35-year-old still needs to be convinced the Ligue 1 side can remain competitive at the top of European football, as director of football Luis Campos has been asked to reduce the wage list to comply with Financial Fair Play regulations.

"Messi said he would stay put for that extra year as long as - because it has to be accepted by both sides - there is a sporting competitive team put together," said Balague.

"The message that Messi got was that PSG will keep the same financial conditions, which is not a problem, but that they had to reduce the wage list which makes the team less competitive.

"It is also not clear if the manager (Christophe Galtier) will be replaced and who will come in. In Qatar, the talk is that the team line-up will vary by four to five players, which makes next season a bit of an uncertainty."

A number of clubs from around the world are stepping up their own attempts to convince the 2022 World Cup winner to sign for them.

"The pressure from the club's Qatar owners is massive. They don't understand why there is a delay and would be willing to put even more money on the table. But I insist, that's not an issue," said Balague.

PSG lead Ligue 1 by six points but their 11th consecutive attempt at winning the Champions League ended in a last-16 3-0 aggregate defeat by Bayern Munich last month.

Messi, who left Barcelona for financial reasons in 2021, was met by whistles from a small section of PSG fans before they fell to a seventh defeat of 2023 at home to Lyon on Sunday.

That followed the news last week that Barcelona were in contact with Messi about returning to the club, and after stories started appearing in French media about his future that placed the Argentine in a negative light.

Jorge Messi, Lionel's father and agent, had a 25-minute meeting with Barca president Joan Laporta in a Barcelona hotel. It was the first time they had met since the day Laporta confirmed in Messi's office that the player was not going to continue at the club.

"The main theme of the hotel conversation was not the future of Leo but how can Barcelona give him an homage," said Balague.

"Leo and Laporta have not spoken but obviously Barcelona keep pushing the idea that yes, they are going to go for it. The main engine is manager Xavi who speaks very regularly to Messi and quite clearly paints him a picture of a team that



Lionel Messi, who won the World Cup with Argentina in December, has scored 29 goals in 67 games for PSG

needs his quality.

"Xavi tells Messi he will be used as one of the two midfielders in front of the holding one, very close to what he does with Argentina. Xavi has thought of different ways for that to work and every time Leo hears about this, his eyes light up."

"But then he hears stuff from the club like 'we're definitely talking to them and this is going to happen' from directors who suggest that this is almost a goer and I imagine his reaction is quite negative because there has been no offer at

all. It's just talk coming from Barcelona."

Messi agreed a new deal with Barcelona on reduced wages two years ago, but the club changed their mind unexpectedly at the last minute. Now, with a similar financial situation, the thinking is that having Messi in the team will bring money in to keep bringing big players.

That Laporta decision in 2021 ended Messi's storied spell at the club which yielded four Champions Leagues and 10 La Liga titles - plus

six Ballons d'Or.

The club have continued to struggle with their finances since.

"How is it possible that Barcelona, who are in a similar situation to what they were when Messi left, think they can afford Messi?" said Balague. "And why don't they start negotiations?"

"Nobody has approached Jorge or Leo to tell them how to put all that together with a financial package. Barcelona still need to reduce their wage list by 200m euros.

"My intuition is that if they did,

they would be at a disadvantage enticing Messi with the possibility of coming back. Every week that passes without an offer is one less million that they will probably offer.

"If the only offer that Messi has got to stay in the elite game is PSG, and he is not fully convinced because of their sporting situation, Barcelona can come in a month's time and say 'we cannot afford to pay what you deserve but we can actually offer you this, which won't be a lot'."

Messi has had an offer this week to sign for Al-Hilal in Saudi Arabia's Pro League, where rival Cristiano Ronaldo already plays, for in excess of 400m euros for one season, according to Balague.

He has also had an approach from Inter Miami in Major League Soccer, the club his former Barcelona team-mate and friend Sergio Busquets is expected to sign for next season. Busquets is not committed to that move yet because he is hoping to be reunited with Messi.

"In MLS, they can never pay what Al-Hilal and PSG can offer. The hope for Inter is that Messi feels it's time to abandon the elite and be in a quieter place to be ready for the Copa America," said Balague.

"Anyone that says Messi has decided one way or the other would be lying. He will take a decision at some point of course but the priority is to stay in the elite game until 2024 and the Copa America, which puts PSG still in the forefront.

"Barcelona have made no offer, the offer from Inter [Miami] is very clear and has been for a while, and then the other offer for 400m-plus wouldn't keep Messi in the elite but it is a crazy financial package and the possibility of playing against Ronaldo again. So that's where we stand."

Source: BBC SPORT



Messi is Barcelona's all-time top scorer with 672 goals in 778 games

SUNDAY SPORTS



Super Falcons

Nine players hit Super Falcons camp

NINE players have World Cup. arrived at the Ahead of the competition, Super Falcons the team has been involved camp in Antalya ahead of in a series of friendly their World Cup games. They are set for preparatory games against two more fixtures later this week, as they take on Haiti and New Zealand. Newsnow said that, the and New Zealand. Super Falcons are looking Coach Randy Waldrum to do better than their invited 23 players for the previous performances games, including when they travel to Barcelona Femeni striker Australia and New Zealand Asisat Oshoala and for the 2023 FIFA Women's longtime absentee Desire

Oparanozie.

The Super Falcons camp opened on Tuesday. And as of the time of this report, nine players had hit camp. Yewande Balogun, Regina Otu, Esther Okoronkwo, Onome Ebi, Etim Inyene, Abiodun Deborah, Halimatu Ayinde, Vivian Ikechukwu, and Glory Ogbonna were the available players. Coach Waldrum still expects 14 players for the games.

NUGA hoping to take 100 athletes

THE Nigerian University They met at a gathering in Games Association Abuja hosted by China's (NUGA) is hoping to take a Ambassador to Nigeria, Cui team of 100 to the Summer Jianchun, about the event due World University Games in to open on July 28 and close on Chengdu this July, they have August 8 having been revealed. postponed from 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Newsnow said that, they expect to compete in athletics CVCNU secretary general swimming, badminton, judo, Yakubu Ochefe is hoping to establish inter-university exchanges and partnerships between Nigerian universities and their counterparts in China.

"This is indeed a great opportunity for Nigerian students to showcase talents on a global stage and bring glory to the nation," NUGA acting general secretary Chidiebere Ezeani said.

NUGA has also appointed Red Sapphire and Integrated Marketing Communications to secure sponsorship and partners to provide financial support for the team travelling to China.

Red Sapphire chief executive Ono Akpe has visited the Committee of Vice Chancellors of Nigerian Universities (CVCNU), an association of 221 educational institutions to discuss preparations for the Summer World University Games.

All of Nigeria's gold medals at the University Games have been in athletics. Their best performance was at the 1983 Summer Universiade in Edmonton when they finished third on the athletics medal behind the Soviet Union and United States with five gold medals.



Nigeria to participate in World University Games

REMO Stars FC became the third football club yesterday to be sanctioned by the Interim Management Committee (IMC) in the on-going Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL) following the decision of the league body to dock the Ikenne-based club three points and three goals among other punishment imposed on the club.

Newsnow said that, two months ago, the IMC had sent a clear message of a no-nonsense era to the football community following the sanction on Bayelsa United over assault of an Assistant Referee at the Samson Siasia Stadium in Yenegoa by ordering deduction of three points and three goals from Bayelsa United FC.

The same day, IMC ordered El-Kanemi Warriors of Maiduguri to play their home matches behind closed door for violent attack on Bendel Insurance of Benin on Match-day five of the season.

And yesterday, Remo Stars were docked three points and three goals

NPFL: IMC hammers Remo Stars over assault

amongst other sanctions imposed on the club by the IMC for the assault on match Referee Ndubuisi Ukah and subsequent disruption of the Match-day 12 fixture of the NPFL against Gombe United.

The match of Sunday, April 2 was concluded the next day after the Referee was assaulted in the dressing room at halftime as a result of Remo Stars failure to provide adequate security for the match Officials.

The IMC in a Summary Jurisdiction notice signed by Davidson Owumi, the Head of Operations said the sanctions followed review of findings of the official match report.

In the charge, Remo Stars was found in breach of Rules B8.21, B13.21, C11

and B13.52.

For breach of Rule B8.21 which is failure to adequately secure match Officials before, during and after the match leading to the assault on one of them, the club was fined ₦500,000 and also directed to pay ₦250,000 to the said Official, Ukah Ndubuisi as compensation.

Mr. Ekene Adams identified as the attacker has been banned from all NPFL activities for the rest of the season. Remo Stars are also to ensure diligent prosecution in the law court, of Mr. Adams who is the Club's General Manager.

The Club was also found to have breached Rule B13.21 for disturbances and disruptions and fined ₦500,000.



Remo Stars

PSG offering Messi contract extension

LIONEL Messi, head down, making a beeline for the tunnel, whistles ringing in his ears – it's become a common sight at full-time at the Parc des Princes. But no less shocking. After all, we're talking about the greatest player of all time, a seven-time Ballon d'Or winner and World Cup champion, being booed and jeered by his own club's supporters.

Goal said that, the Argentina international has never really settled in the French capital, and it makes no sense for him to stay for another year.

"It's embarrassing," Thierry Henry told Amazon Prime after Paris Saint-Germain's 1-0 loss to Lyon on Sunday. "You can't whistle one of the best players on the team, who has 13 goals and 13 assists this season."

"Personally, I would like to

see him finish his career at Barcelona, in Europe. After that, I don't know what he will do. Because the way he left Barcelona after everything he did... I didn't really like it. For the love of football, he should go back to Barcelona."

Article continues below

And he could. Joan Laporta, Xavi and Sergi Roberto have all made it clear that he would be welcomed back at Camp Nou with open arms.

But he could also stay at the Parc des Princes, and the obvious question everyone has been asking in the wake of the latest show of antipathy towards Messi from the PSG faithful is: why would he want to? He clearly deserves so much better.

However, it also feels pertinent to ask, why on earth do PSG want to keep him?...

Cooper is still the manager

NOTTINGHAM Forest say Steve Cooper remains manager but "results and performances must improve immediately".

BBC SPORT said that, Forest, beaten 2-1 by Leeds United on Tuesday, are 17th in the Premier League, above the relegation zone only on goal difference.

In a statement, owner Evangelos Marinakis said he wished to end "false and disruptive reporting" about Cooper's future.

Forest have not won in eight games, the longest winless run in the top flight.

Cooper joined Forest in September 2021 and guided them to the Premier League for the first time since 1999 in his first season.

He has signed 29 players since last summer, spending more than £160m.

Marinakis said: "No-one denies that our club is in a difficult position in the Premier League.

"But we wish to end the speculation and the false and

disruptive reporting in the media to confirm that Steve Cooper remains our manager at Nottingham Forest.

"We have all been disappointed with recent performances and it is very clear that a lot of hard work needs to be done to address this urgently."

Cooper signed a new contract at the City Ground until 2025 in October, when the club were bottom of the table after eight games.

Marinakis said "there can be no time for distractions, rumours and speculation" and that Cooper and his players need "hard work, determination, a commitment".

Asked about his position following the defeat at Elland Road, Cooper said he had "trained" himself to "focus on the stuff I can control".

He said: "I always think of the greater good of the football club.

"Any sort of worry, disappointment or frustration I'm feeling right now is the

fact that Forest have lost a game they could have done so much better in."

In clarifying Cooper's position, Forest's owner could not make it any clearer: "Results and performances must improve immediately."

Marinakis didn't have to be so blunt. It is clear Forest need a form reversal.

If Forest lose their Midlands derby at in-form Aston Villa on Saturday, they will be in the bottom three as the two sides immediately below them - Leicester and Bournemouth - meet at the King Power.

Given Marinakis' words, the pressure will be back on Cooper again and all eyes will be on the owner to see how he reacts.

Cooper retains the backing of the vast majority of Forest fans, but is equally clear Marinakis' patience is wearing thin.

He has helped his manager by quietening the noise building up around him following the defeat at Leeds.



Messi

SUNDAY SPORTS

Nadal remains French open doubt after Carlo withdrawal

DEFENDING champion Rafael Nadal remains a doubt for the French Open after pulling out of next week's Monte Carlo Masters with an ongoing hip injury.

BBC SPORT said that, the Spanish world number 14 has won the tournament in Monaco 11 times but is not fit to return to action.

The 36-year-old has not played since his straight-set second-round defeat by American Mackenzie McDonald at the Australian Open in January.

World number two Carlos Alcaraz is also out of Monte Carlo through injury.

The Spaniard, who is chasing Novak Djokovic for the number one ranking, has hand and back problems.

"After two months abroad I am happy to return home, but sad because I finished my last match in Miami with physical discomfort," said Alcaraz, who lost to Jannik Sinner in the last four of the Miami Open, on Twitter.

"I will not be able to go to Monte Carlo to start the clay-court tour. I have post-traumatic arthritis in my left hand and muscular discomfort in the spine that needs rest to prepare for everything that is to come."

Nadal had expected to be out for six to eight weeks after an MRI scan following his Melbourne loss showed a tear in his left psoas muscle.

But missing the start of the European clay-court season leaves him short of match practice before the Roland Garros event he has won a record 14 times, which begins on 28 May.

"I'm still not ready to compete at the highest level," Nadal said on Twitter.

"I will not be able to play in one of the most important tournaments of my career, Monte Carlo."

'Tennis could have done better from the beginning'

Aban on Russian and Belarusian players by tennis authorities would have sent a strong message, says world number one Iga Swiatek.

BBC SPORT said that, players from the two countries were banned from Wimbledon in 2022 after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, but were allowed to compete elsewhere on the ATP and WTA Tours under a neutral flag.

Wimbledon has now reversed its decision for the 2023 Grand Slam tournament.

But Poland's Swiatek says tennis could have done better "from the beginning".

"I heard that after World War Two, German players were not allowed as well as Japanese and Italian, and I feel like this kind of thing would show the Russian government that maybe it's not worth it," the 21-year-old told the BBC.



Nadal

"I am not yet in a position to play with the maximum guarantees and I continue my preparation process, hoping to return soon."

Canada's world number

seven Felix Auger-Aliassime will also miss next week's event with a left knee issue, but has said he hopes to be back for the Madrid Open which starts on 26 April.

Muguruza to take break from tennis until summer



Muguruza

FORMER Wimbledon champion Garbine Muguruza says she will take an extended break from tennis until the summer.

BBC SPORT said that, the Spanish former world number one has only played four times this year, not appearing at all

since January.

The 29-year-old, who has dropped to 132nd in the world, said she will miss the clay and grass-court seasons.

"Spending time with family and friends and it's really been healthy and amazing, so I am going to lengthen this period

FIVE-time Masters champion Tiger Woods believes "it's just a matter of time" before Rory McIlroy wins at Augusta.

BBCSPORT said that, this year is the Northern Irishman's 15th attempt to win the only major to have so far eluded him - and ninth try to complete the career Grand Slam.

American Woods, who has won 15 majors, said: "Rory has the talent, he has the game and all the tools to win here."

"Whether it is this year or next, he will get it done and have a career Grand Slam."

Woods, who won his fifth Green Jacket in 2019, added: "A lot of things

Woods, McIlroy to complete career grand slam Augusta



Woods

have to happen to win at this golf course, a lot of things have to go right and Rory has shown over the years that he has learned how to play this golf course. You just have to understand how to play.

"He's been there. Last year he made a great run and put himself there but I think it is just a matter of time."

McIlroy has said he will try to stay clear of "outside noise" and putting himself in a "bubble" is key to his preparation at Augusta.

Fulfilling 'Masters dream' would be 'worth the wait' for McIlroy

Speaking to BBC Sport Northern Ireland, the world number two added that he tends not to read news articles or watch the build-up to the year's first major on television.

When asked if he finds it easy to insulate himself from speculation about his chances of finally conquering Augusta, McIlroy said: "Yeah, it's something I've just had to do here over the last few years. It's actually, a bit of a digital detox. I don't look at my phone as much."

"Whenever I go home, I'm certainly not watching anything to do with golf, it's usually a movie Poppy (his daughter) wants to watch, so it's actually a nice way to get away from it."

"I try to put myself in my own bubble for the week. It's the only way that I know how to shield myself from all the noise."

'I talk to him every day' - McIlroy on his friendship with Tiger

McIlroy has had a complicated relationship with Augusta over the years. In 2011, he held a four-shot lead going into the final round only to shoot himself out of

contention with an eight-over 80.

Last year, his final-round 64 saw him finish second to Scottie Scheffler, and while he encountered another major near-miss at The Open, he arrives at Augusta with four wins since June and a third-place finish in his last start, at the WGC-Dell Technologies Match Play Championship.

"I'm excited and I'm pretty confident too," he said.

"I feel like my game's rounding into good form. I started the year off pretty well, struggled at The Players but played well at the Match Play and figured a couple of things out."

"My game's in good shape. I don't feel like I need to do anything differently here. The way I've played over the past 18 months, if I play like that I'll have a good chance."

Only five players - Gene Sarazen, Ben Hogan, Gary Player, Jack Nicklaus and Tiger Woods - have won the career Grand Slam and McIlroy admits the prospect of joining that elite club makes him more nervous at Augusta than at any other course.

"I think with the experiences I've had at this place, I definitely feel more nervous on the first tee here than I do at any other tournament," said McIlroy, who won the last of his four majors in 2014.

"But I'd guess other players would say the same thing. There's such a build-up to this tournament, the last major championship was played eight or nine months ago."

"The build-up is huge for this one compared to the others and I think all of that culminates into a few more nerves on the first tee."

SUNDAY SPORTS

"Oshoala is the bigstar of our team"

- Waldrum

SUPER Falcons coach Randy Waldrum has heaped praise on Barcelona femeni striker Asisat Oshoala as he believes she is the game-changer in the team. Soccernet.ng reports.

Oshoala has been one of the biggest exports from Africa in recent years. The Nigerian talisman is the only woman from Africa to win the UEFA Champions League.

She has been an important part of Barcelona's dominance in the Liga, and coach Waldrum has asserted she is an essential part of his setup.

"Oshoala is an extremely talented player, a great person, a true pro," Waldrum told FIFA TV.

"She carries a big burden. She plays for arguably the best club in the world and has done really well for them."

"So she's the big star of our national team, people expect a lot from her and she puts a lot of pressure on herself because she loves Nigeria and she wants Nigeria to be successful on the world stage."

Some questions have been raised about Oshoala's commitment to the National team, especially as she has not been delivering the goods recently.

However, Waldrum has put those talks to rest, as he explained that Oshoala has a better level of understanding with her club teammates than her Super Falcons colleagues.

"I think people on the outside have difficulty understanding that it's easier to play for Barcelona than it is your national team," Waldrum added.

"She's with her Barcelona teammates every day, they understand each other's movements. The national team doesn't get together very often and you have different players from camp to camp."

"But despite the difficulty and the pressure she's under, she always shows her talent and professionalism with the



Oshoala has been one of the best female Nigerian players recently, and Waldrum believes she can be the game-changer at the World Cup

national team, has a very positive influence on her team-mates, and delivers on the field. Oshoala returned to action for Nigeria on Friday in a friendly game against Haiti.

She scored the second goal to help the Super Falcons to a hard-fought 2-1 win. She would look to continue with her great form, as the team prepares for the World Cup in July.

Super Eagles drop in FIFA ranking



After a loss and a win and just one goal scored over 180 minutes, the Super Eagles are now ranked No. 6 in Africa.

NIGERIA'S Super Eagles, coached by Jose Peseiro, have dropped down the FIFA rankings. The team, who fell 1-0 to Guinea Bissau last month, is currently ranked 40th in the world, down from 35th in the previous ranking released in December.

Nigeria was the fifth-ranked team in Africa, below FIFA World Cup semifinalists Morocco, African champions Senegal, Tunisia, and Cameroon. But in the latest ranking, Egypt has overtaken Nigeria and climbed into fifth place. Cameroon also fell

three places, from fourth to seventh.

World champions Argentina moved to the summit, supplanting South American rivals, Brazil. FIFA, in a release, said, "Six years after last topping the FIFA/Coca-Cola World Ranking, Argentina (1st, plus 1) are once again at the summit of world football."

"Recent friendly wins against Panama (2-0) and Curaçao (7-0) helped the world champions dethrone Brazil (3rd, minus 2), who paid a high price for defeat in their friendly against Morocco (2-1)."

The release also revealed that the Central African Republic have been the most improved side since the last ranking. "However, the most improved side in this edition are Central African Republic (122nd, plus 10)."

"By twice beating Madagascar, at the time ranked 30 places above them, Les Fauves du Bas-Oubangui rose 10 places in the global standings, outperforming other notable movers such as Namibia (106th, plus 7), Malaysia (138th, plus 7) and The Gambia (120th, plus 6)."

The Super Eagles will have the chance to improve their ranking in June when they travel to Freetown to face Sierra Leone in a continuation of the 2023 AFCON qualifiers.

AFN backs Nigeria to win laurels in Zambia



Officials of the AFN

Tonobok Okowa and the board said they were going to do because when the President was campaigning, he promised to bring championships to the Northern part of the country.

"The Ahmadu Bello Stadium track is still one of the fastest tracks in the country and the weather is always competition friendly; we are still going to have more championships this year in other Northern States."

He said, "AFN is excited that a National Record was set in Kaduna; we are happy that an U20 athlete, Ronke Akanbi set a seniors National Record in the 3,000m; that is

something great and the board is optimistic that the future of Athletics is the youth."

Onikeku expressed optimism that Nigeria will win multiple laurels at the forthcoming African U18/U20 Athletics Championship in Zambia this month.

He said, "Ten Personal Best (PB) were set at the All Comers Trials in Kaduna; this has justified the purpose of the championship which is to select athletes for the African U18/U20 Athletics Championship in Zambia."

"I want to assure Nigerians that the athletes will make Nigeria proud in Zambia like they did in Kenya a few years

Mixed martial arts to operate as sports federations

THE Federal Government has approved the recognition of Mixed Martial Arts (NMAAF), as one of the National Sports Federations under the control and supervision of the Federal Ministry of Sports and Youth Development.

The Minister of Sports and Youth Development, Sunday Dare, said this in a statement issued on Tuesday by Mohammed Manga, Director, Press & Public Relations of the ministry.

Manga reported the minister as saying that the approval was granted on Jan. 11 following series of interfaces between the federation's board and the ministry.

He said the approval came, having satisfied the condition precedent, pursuant to NMAAF's acceptance to abide by the Code of Governance of all National Sports.

"The recognition has also

saddled the Federation with the responsibility to develop, regulate and ensure the safety of Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) as a thriving Sports in Nigeria in line with global best practices," the statement quoted Dare as saying.

He called on the federation to work towards discovering and developing talents from the grassroots for the game.

The minister also urged them to take the game to a world class status not only through the development and maintenance of strict rules but also adhering strictly to its standards.

The Mixed Martial Arts Game is reputed to be one of the world's fastest growing sports with an estimated 449 million followers worldwide.

Nigeria's Kamaru Usman, Israel Adesanya, Sodiq Yusuf and Kennedy Nzechukwu are among the top ranking Mixed Martial Arts fighters in the



Kamaru Usman, Nigerian fighters in the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) Mixed Martial Arts

EPL: Super Eagles stars suffer setbacks

THOUGH there is still the chance of turning things around, at least six Super Eagles players are at risk of being relegated to the Championship from the English Premier League with their respective clubs.

The roll-call of those in the relegation zone has the quartet of Wilfred Ndidi and Kelechi Iheanacho with Leicester City

and the Southampton duo of Joe Aribo and Paul Onuachu.

For the trio of Alex Iwobi, Taiwo Awoniyi, and Emmanuel Dennis, even though they are not in the relegation zone for now, they are dangerously hovering over it as their teams are tied on the same points with those there but they have the better goal difference.

Unfortunately, the results from Tuesday's matches did more harm than good for the survival of these Nigerian players and their relegation-hunted teams.

At the Kings Power Stadium, Leicester City's free fall even after the exit of their erstwhile manager Brendan Rodgers continued as they were beaten 2-1 by the high-riding Aston Villa team. Bertrand Traore scored an 88th-minute winner as Aston Villa continued their impressive form under Unai Emery to compound the woes of the managerless Leicester City.

Rodgers left the Foxes on Sunday and interim managers Mike Stowell and Adam Sadler stuck with Ndidi for a starting role in the Aston Villa tie.

Ollie Watkins got the opening goal of the game; marking his 100th Premier League appearance with a goal after a cool finish.



The roll-call of those in the relegation zone has the quartet of Wilfred Ndidi and Kelechi Iheanacho with Leicester City and the Southampton duo of Joe Aribo and Paul Onuachu



April 9, 2023



MIKEL Arteta's quest to become the first Arsenal manager since Arsene Wenger to win the Premier League will be put to test today as they visit Anfield for a date with Liverpool, who are also pushing for a top four finish on the log.

With eight points ahead of defending champions, Manchester City, who are still highly favoured by book makers to clinch the title based on their antecedents and experience, a victory for the Gunners at Anfield will not only boost their resolve but put them in good stead for a first Premier League title since 2003-2004 season, while anything short of victory for the Reds would put an end to their Champions League qualification.

In a reversal of roles from seasons gone by, Liverpool host Arsenal at Anfield in Sunday afternoon's Premier League clash, with the Gunners looking to pass another test of their title credentials while Jurgen Klopp's team play catch-up in the top-four face.

Mikel Arteta's men overcame a slow start to dispatch Leeds United 4-1 last time out, while the Reds once again could not find a way past Chelsea in a goalless stalemate.

None of the last four editions of that battle has seen either side score in 90 minutes, but the Merseyside giants were undoubtedly the more satisfied come the final whistle.

Reece James and Kai Havertz were both left to rue disallowed goals in the first game of Chelsea's post-Graham Potter era, but Klopp is confident that he will not share the same fate as his English compatriot – or any other notable victims of the recent spate of managerial sackings – thanks to his brimming collection of medals from his time at Anfield.

However, three losses and a draw from their last four games in all tournaments is form of a side embroiled in a relegation dogfight rather than the hunt for Champions League qualification, and Liverpool's recent failures have dropped the Reds down to eighth spot in the table – 10 points worse off than fourth-placed Manchester United on the same number of matches.

During that displeasing winless streak, Liverpool have only managed to find the back of the net once, but all of their games in that sequence have come away from home, and Anfield comforts have largely still been kind to those in Merseyside red during their troubled campaign.

Only Arsenal, Man United and Manchester City have performed better on familiar territory this term than Klopp's side, who have taken 16 points from the last 18 on offer at home – keeping clean

Liverpool, Arsenal clash in title chase



sheets in each of their last four and Arsenal could do with taking a leaf out of Real Madrid's book rather than Man United's when it comes to Anfield preparations.

Implying the fit-again Gabriel Jesus to create "chaos" upon his return to the first XI, Arsenal boss revelled in the Brazilian's feats during the visit of Leeds last Saturday, although the Gunners were not at the races whatsoever before Jesus drew first blood from the spot.

After ending a 14-game goal drought stretching back

to October 1, Jesus completed his brace either side of strikes from Ben White and Granit Xhaka in an Emirates romping – Arsenal's second home victory in a row by a 4-1 scoreline following their demolition job of Crystal Palace.

Already guaranteed to finish with their best points total since the 2016-17 campaign, Arsenal retained their eight-point lead over Man City in first place thanks to their drubbing of Leeds, although the champions still possess a game in hand and could once again temporarily reduce that

gap when they tackle basement side Southampton this evening.

Responding in the manner of champions since being put to the sword by Man City in April, Arsenal are out to win their eighth Premier League game on the bounce this weekend, as well as their fourth in a row away from home and they are far and away the best-performing side on their travels with 34 points taken from a possible 42.

Furthermore, Arteta's men have scored at least three goals in each of their last five

Premier League victories – never before in their top-flight history have they done so six games in a row and the Gunners truly made the rest of the division stand up and take notice when they defeated Liverpool 3-2 at the Emirates back in October.

However, the Arsenal army have often lacked the artillery to break down the Anfield walls, as Liverpool are unbeaten in nine Premier League home games against the visitors – winning each of their last six by a 22-4 aggregate scoreline, but the time is nigh for the Gunners to

end their Merseyside hoodoo.

Meanwhile, seeking to remain in touch with Arsenal, reigning champions Manchester City travel to St Mary's to face basement club Southampton this evening.

While the Citizens have picked up 10 points from their last four top-flight away games, the Saints have accumulated the same number of points across their 14 home matches this season – the fewest of any team in the division.

After rescuing a point in a 3-3 draw at home to Tottenham Hotspur, Southampton came away from the London Stadium empty handed last weekend as they lost 1-0 against relegation rivals West Ham United.

Since taking the reins on a permanent basis, Ruben Selles has only won one of his six top-flight matches in charge of Southampton – a 1-0 home win over 19th-placed Leicester City last month and they have failed to score in three of their last four games under his tutelage.

Indeed, the Saints have struggled to pose a regular threat in the final third and they are currently the joint-lowest scorers in the Premier League, finding the net just 23 times in 29 games along with Wolverhampton Wanderers and Everton.

However, Southampton managed to score twice in their last meeting with Man City, with Sekou Mara and Moussa Djenepo both on target in a 2-0 EFL Cup quarter-final victory at St Mary's in January.

Southampton have only won one of their last 13 Premier League meetings with Man City, but Selles will hope his side can replicate their resilient EFL Cup showing that frustrated the Citizens earlier this year as they bid to climb to safety.

Man City extended their winning run across all competitions to seven matches when they put Liverpool to the sword with a deserved 4-1 victory at the Etihad Stadium last weekend.

Guardiola's 100th Premier League home win momentarily saw the Citizens move to within five points of leaders Arsenal, but the gap to the summit increased to eight just a few hours later after the Gunners beat Leeds United. City could reduce the gap to five once more with a win over Southampton before Arteta's men travel to Anfield to face Liverpool on Sunday.

City, who beat Southampton 4-0 at the Etihad in October, head into today's encounter having won each of their last 10 Premier League games against teams starting the day at the bottom of the table, a run dating back to March 2016, while they have not conceded in any of their last 14 fixtures against a basement club.

Waldrum excludes Falcons as World Cup winners

SUPER Falcons coach Randy Waldrum has tipped countries he feels can win the upcoming 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup as he played down Nigeria's chances.

While speaking to the FIFA media, the American gaffer mentioned his native country the United States, Olympic champions Canada, Spain, European champions England, Sweden, and the Netherlands, and the host Australia.

Despite being in charge of the 9-time African champions, Waldrum didn't tip Super Falcons as one of the favorites to emerge, as the winner, of the competition.

Now I think you have a handful of teams. I think Australia at home is going to have to be a favorite. I think the US always is going to be in that mix.

What Spain is doing is putting them in the conversation. England, you saw how well they did in EUROS.

Canada is the Olympic champion, and Sweden looked really good in that tournament. Then there's the French and the Dutch, who are fully capable of going on a

run and winning it.

Meanwhile, Waldrum believes that Nigeria can replicate Morocco's 2022 World Cup feat and reach the semifinal of the 2023 FIFA World Cup.

Morocco shocked Africa and the rest of the World after an amazing run that saw them reach the final four of the World Cup in Qatar. The Atlas Lions claimed some big scalps on the way to the semifinals.

They defeated Belgium, Spain, and Portugal before they lost 2-0 to France in the semifinal despite a spirited performance.

The Super Falcons play in the Women's World Cup later this year in Australia/New Zealand. Ahead of the Mundial, Waldrum is hoping his ladies can take a leaf from the Moroccans and replicate their feat.

The Super Falcons' best

finish at the World Cup was in 1999 when they reached the quarterfinals. Asides from that, the team has wobbled and fumbled.

Waldrum has not inspired much confidence since he took over either. The team had one of their worst finishes at the Women's Africa Cup of Nations last time out, finishing fourth.

Super Falcon's next opponent in international friendly New Zealand was held to a draw by Iceland in their game played in the early hours of Saturday, BSNSports.com.ng reports.

On Friday afternoon Super Falcons defeated Haiti 2-1 with goals from Esther Okronkwo and Asisat Oshola.

It was Iceland that netted the opening goal against New Zealand through Dagný Brynjarsdóttir in the 27th minute before Hannah Wilkinson equalised before halftime.

Super Falcons coach, Randy Waldrum said he will need to watch more videos of their matches to determine the game strategy on Tuesday.

They will confront Nigeria's Super Falcons on Tuesday at the same venue by 4 pm Nigeria time.



Waldrum