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7 Chinese
expatriates
from terrorists**



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Email: nigeriastandarddailynewspaper@yahoo.com

Protests over plans to charge Emefiele with terrorism

MASSIVE protests have hit the streets of Abuja following the discovery of a suit allegedly filed by the Department of State Service (DSS) wherein it accused the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Governor, Mr Godwin Emefiele, of financing terrorism, as well as other crimes it

described as economic crimes of national security dimension.

The protesters, comprising Buhari Legacy Defenders, Arewa Youth Consultative Movement, Ohanaeze Ndi Igbo Youth Movement, African Centre for Justice and Human Rights, Ethnic Youth Leaders, Political Parties Chairmen Forum, Lawyers in

Defence of Economic Rights and Justice marched to the Office of the Attorney-General of the Federation, where they submitted a petition against the action of the DSS and called for the sack of the Director-General, Yusuf Magaji Bichi.

They also submitted similar letter to the office of the President, Secretary to the

Government of the Federation, Inspector-General of Police, among others.

The groups, which rose from a press conference before they embarked on the march, alleged that the DSS embarked on the plot to remove the CBN Governor for political and pecuniary reasons, saying the DG of

DSS and his allies in the plot had already promised someone else the office on the agreement that the cash withdrawal limit policy will be immediately suspended.

The protesters further claimed that the plot of labelling Emefiele a terrorist was to undermine the president, usurp his powers to hire and fire and remove

Emefiele from office on the strength that they would get an order to detain him for at least 60 days to impose another person as the CBN Governor.

It was alleged that the DSS had approached the Federal High Court, Abuja in the secret suit under Section 66 of the Terrorism Prevention and Prohibition Act, 2022 to demand that the court order for Mr Emefiele's detention for 60 days in the first instance.

The protesters also vowed to continue the protest if the office of the Attorney-General

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Protest rocks Nigeria's capital over alleged plot to arrest, charge CBN Gov for terrorism

Scores killed as bandits ambush soldiers in Zamfara

It is alleged that about 10 soldiers, 68 villagers and scores of bandits were killed in Mutunji village of Dansadau emirate in Maru Local Government Area following gun duel between soldiers and bandits.

One of the victims who is now receiving treatment at the Yarima Bakura Hospital in Gusau, Shehu Mohammed,

told newsmen that soldiers were on their way to Mutunji village to assist the Nigeria Air Force personnel who were bombing bandits, not knowing that other bandits were hiding along the road.

According to Mohammed, immediately the bandits sighted the soldiers, they came out of their hiding and opened fire, killing about 10

of them on the spot.

He further explained that after the bandits had killed the soldiers, they also set three vehicles ablaze and moved to Mutunji village looking for a hiding place after they sighted a fighter jet in the air.

He said: "Immediately the bandits sighted the fighter jet, they rushed to Mutunji village and hid in the market, where

many people were at that time transacting businesses."

According to him, when the fighter jet reached Mutunji village, it started bombing, leading to the death of 68 villagers, while more than 40 were injured.

"They are currently receiving treatment at the Dansadau General Hospital, Yarima and Bakura Specialist

Hospital in Gusau, while others are still at Mutunji village."

Another indigene of Mutunji village who narrowly escaped, Mallam Musa Abubakar, also explained that several bandits were killed by the Nigeria Air Force strikes in their hideouts, a situation which he said forced them to abandon their hideouts and escape to

Mutunji village to hide within the community.

Also speaking another person who gave his name as Sa'idu Ishaka said he was in the market when the bomb was dropped by the fighter jet, adding that he narrowly escaped being killed.

Ishaka, who was admitted at the Yarima Bakura Specialist

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News

Protests over plans to charge Emeziele with terrorism



Emefiele
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of the Federation and that of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation fail to take prompt actions on the petition.

The protesters said they were all out in defence of Emeziele because of his contributions to the development of the nation's economy.

Magaji

A source said DSS is acting on a petition by a senator, backed by some governors, because of the currency redesign, adding that since they could not succeed in getting President Muhammadu Buhari to stop the currency redesign, the plan of those behind the petition is to keep Emeziele away until after the election.

Scores killed as bandits ambush soldiers in Zamfara

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Hospital, said that bandits, in their large numbers, entered their village and few minutes later, he noticed a fighter jet roaming in the air.

Reporters who were at the Yaman Bakura Specialist Hospital saw the dead bodies of the 10 soldiers killed at the hospital mortuary.

It was gathered that the dead bodies were brought in

an ambulance of Dansadau General Hospital accompanied by military personnel on Monday.

Confirming the gun battle, the state Commissioner for Security and Home Affairs, DIG Mamman Tsafe (ret'd), who visited the hospital to see the slain soldiers and those injured, described the incident as "most unfortunate."

Court sentences Okupe to two years jail term

Justice Ijeoma Ojuwku of the Federal High Court sitting in Abuja on Monday, found former President Goodluck Jonathan's Senior Special Adviser (SSA), Dr Doyin Okupe, guilty of receiving over N200 million cash from former National Security Adviser (NSA), Col. Sambo Dasuki (Rtd) and sentenced him to two years imprisonment or an option of N500,000 on each of the 26 count charge for which he was found guilty.

Justice Ojuwku in a judgment delivered held that the action of Okupe, who is the first defendant in the suit filed by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) violated the Money Laundering Act, has up to 4:30 pm on Monday to pay the fine option, totalling the sum of N13 million on all the charges he was found guilty or be sent to the Kuje Correctional Center.

Justice Ojuwku, in sentencing Okupe,



Malami

considered the pleadings for leniency from the wife of the convict, Omolola Okupe and that of his son Adesunkanmi Okupe and the alocutus by his counsel.

While stating that the Money Laundering Act provides that no individual or organization shall receive any sum above N5 million and N10 million respectively

without passing through a

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All Progressives Congress (APC) presidential standard bearer Asiwaju Bola Tinubu Monday, promised to implement labour-friendly policies and programmes, if elected in next year's election.

He said his administration will make fiscal and monetary policies to work for workers, urging them to pitch their tent with him during the poll.

The former Lagos State governor described himself as the most competent candidate with a track record of good governance.

He dissected the economy from the point of view of a financial surgeon, promising to re-enact the feat that has stood Lagos out as the fifth largest economy in Africa.

Unveiling an eclectic approach to problem solving, Tinubu promised to reposition the economy, tackle the rot in the education sector, halt unemployment and guarantee comprehensive welfare package for workers.

The eminent politician spoke during a Townhall Meeting with Organised Labour at Chida Hotel, Conference Centre, Abuja, on his plans for the country, particularly the workforce.

At the session, where the 'Tinubu-Shettima Action Plan for a Better Nigeria,' was dissected, Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) President Ayuba Wabba and Trade Union Congress (TUC) President Festus Osifo presented a charter of demands to the

flagbearer.

Former NLC Deputy President and Director of Labour Directorate of the APC Presidential Campaign Council, Comrade Isa Aremu, who set the tone for the engagement, told the Labour leaders and workers that the task before them and Nigerians was to choose a truly committed, tested and trusted candidate, who can protect their interest, fight poverty, industrialise Nigeria, provide decent jobs, and guarantee good pay.

Exuding confidence, the APC candidate, who intermittently spoke off his written address, drew attention to his antecedent as former Lagos State governor, who transformed the *Centre of Excellence*.

He said he is vying for President to resolve the challenges of unemployment, lack of credit system to allow workers own houses, poverty, problems of education, and weak industrial base.

Urging the workers to choose wisely, Tinubu said: "Today, the questions you all you must ask yourselves are these: who can be trusted to accomplish all of these? The man who has done it before, or the man whose most lasting achievement as Vice President is the corrupt sale of national assets to his friends and cronies?"

"Who has the better plan? The man whose blueprint guided the emergence of Lagos State as fifth largest economy in Africa or the man whose greatest pride is the amount of money he managed to bury in sand while his state's infrastructure decayed and its workers suffered endless hardship? The choice is yours."

"I have always been and will continue to be a progressive democrat. In my worldview, government has a cardinal responsibility to work, not only with business, but also with labour to ensure that all constituent parts of our society are afforded their fair share of rewards without taking on undue hardship."

Tinubu drew a similarity between his struggle for a better Nigeria and the battle of the Labour leaders for adequate welfare package for their members.

He pointed out that, like the labour leaders, he has been in the forefront of fighting for good governance, recalling that he was detained and eventually forced into exile because of his belief.

Workers to get better deal -Tinubu



Tinubu

Tinubu stressed: "As Organised Labour, you have been at the forefront of the workers' rights movement in Nigeria, championing economic fairness and the welfare of the average person, the weak and the forgotten."

"You have also been involved in the struggle for democracy and political rights. Your collective efforts breathe life into the democratic rights and economic ideals enshrined in our constitution."

"I can speak fondly of your impact on our nation because of my personal history on the frontlines of the social justice movement."

"I may be running for president now, but I was not always in this position. Long before I started running for the presidency, I was running away from military dictators angered by my important role in protests against them and their efforts to vanquish our democratic aspirations."

"The defining moment of my public life came during Nigeria's struggle for democracy and my membership in the National Democratic Coalition (NADECO) movement."

"I have dedicated my entire being to that cause. I was detained, then was forced into exile because of my refusal to accept anything less than a government based on the proposition that the will of the people is sovereign and should reign over armed might and imposition."

"I believe that those assembled here today share the same ideals of progressive and democratic good governance. I have spent my political life advocating for the rights and interests of ordinary Nigerians as you also do. We have long been fellow travellers on the same road. I hope that we shall continue as

sleeping when the car eventually stopped.

"When I woke up, I saw a man with AK 47 forcing every passenger to submit their phones and money. After collecting our money and phones, they selected 4 of us and took us away to the bush. The kidnappers were 9 in number, but five of them went back to where we were kidnapped and left only four with us."

"Again, as we were going, two other kidnappers said they were tired and would want to rest,

friends and brothers." The Deputy Director-General of the APC PCC, Comrade Adams Oshiomhole, hailed Tinubu's Action Plan, saying it will bring back dead industries like Kaduna Textile that once employed over 4000 workers.

He said the support of labour and the civil society for any candidate should be premised on the flagbearer's capacity to implement sound social and economic policies that will make life better for the working families in Nigeria.

The former Edo State governor said Tinubu is the best candidate for the workers to adopt because of his antecedents as a successful governor in Lagos.

NLC President Wabba, who presented the workers' charter of demands to Tinubu, said there is need for a total war on corruption.

He said corruption has almost destroyed the social and economic fabrics of the private and public sectors, adding that it is the reason Nigeria has not made progress.

Wabba stressed: "In Nigeria, our problem is people problem and we must have a government that will prioritise the fight against corruption. This is a key demand of Labour. We also need government that will make social and economic justice a priority," he said.

On corruption, Tinubu said his administration would have a zero-tolerance to corruption by strengthening anti-corruption agencies.

The candidate condemned those receiving stolen crude, saying if there is no receiver, there will be no supplier.

Tinubu said if elected, he would ensure maximum deployment of technology to monitor, protect pipelines and block theft.

Lady battles kidnappers, frees kidnapped victims

BY EZEKIEL DONTINNA

A lady named Lucy Tapnan Jeremiah, of Mangu Local Government Area who was kidnapped alongside some three men disarmed a kidnapper holding AK47 rifle and aided the freedom of her fellow kidnapped victims along Barkin-Ladi Jos road of Plateau State and were received by men of the Nigerian Police Thursday.

The Plateau State Command's Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), DSP

Alfred Alabo, disclosed this Monday while addressing journalists at the Police Headquarters Jos, the state capital.

The PPRO said, "Of recent, due to the fight being carried out by the Nigeria Police Force to curb the activities of kidnappers and criminal elements on the Plateau, the Command has made several successes and has been able to rescue several victims."

"For now, some of the victims were supposed to be here for you to interview, but they are

not here because they are receiving one or two treatments. We have a victim here. This female has been very brave having known that the police are there to rescue her, forced her way through and was able to help herself and some of the kidnapped victims before she was rescued by the police."

"Presently, we are giving the kidnappers a hot chase and by God's grace, we will have something to say as regards their arrest soonest. We have four of them that were rescued and it happened somewhere in

Barkin-Ladi on the 15/12/2023 at 0600 hours where a team of police operatives came in contact with the kidnapped victims at Kassa Barkin-Ladi and rescued them", he disclosed.

Narrating her ordeal, the brave lady, Lucy Tapnan said, they were kidnapped around Science School Kuru while on their way from Abuja by the gang of kidnappers after seizing their phones and robbing them. "I was on my way to attend a wedding in Jos. Before the incident, I was

leaving only two, that was why I decided to initiate the escape. I suggested to the remaining victims that we should attack them, but they were afraid because they had no weapon with them."

At the point of filing this report, the three other kidnapped victims were receiving treatment at the hospital, while the brave lady from Mangu Local Government has been taken to Police Clinic for treatment because she sustained a deep injury on her leg.



Business & Economy

Limiting withdrawal: Knocks, kudos for CBN

Recently, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) undertook audacious steps in repositioning the economy by redesigning the naira and limiting cash withdrawals. A cross section of Nigerians share their views on the implications of the recent policy that is expected to take effect from January 9, 2023.

THE CBN recently said that more than 85 per cent of the currency in circulation is outside the formal banking system. The implication of this is that there are "banks" outside the formal banking system which keep more than 85 per cent of currency in circulation.

No doubt, there is evidence that some people prefer to house their money in their bedrooms, personal safe, water tanks, suction systems, and other unimaginable places. Agreed that there are people who engage in this to hide their ill-gotten wealth, but it is important to determine why Nigeria still has such a large unbanked population. This is a problem which must be resolved first; financial inclusion and deepening needs to be pursued in a strategic manner.

The CBN recently approved agency banking as evidenced by the number of POS operators everywhere. Unfortunately, with the new policy on limits on cash withdrawals, most of the agencies would close shop and their staff thrown into the unemployment net once again.

Recently, I read a report that alluded to the fact that the total cash in circulation represents about six per cent of the total money. If this is true, then it demystifies the CBN fuse about money outside the official banking system.

Consequently, I still have a hard time understanding the reason behind the CBN's complaints about money outside the banks' vaults. Money is not meant to be in CBN or banks' vaults. It's meant to keep moving, and facilitating transactions.

Obviously, it is clear that one of the main objectives of revamping the currency is to migrate transactions from physical money to electronic money. The eNaira or e-cash policy is a good policy, but it's a hastily implemented policy. And if it is not well managed, it will cause chaos and damage the economy.

Digital/e-transactions will create a better audit trail for tax, accounting and security purposes. Distortions/disruptions to electronic banking services have not been addressed. What has



Emefiele

the CBN done to address the issue of debits for failed transactions and delays in executing transactions caused by system failures and poor networks?

In many urban areas, electronic transactions are greatly limited by unreliable electricity and telecommunications services. Thus, forcing everyone to embrace electronic transactions is virtually beyond CBN, except the intention is to unleash chaos.

Dr Chiwuike Uba, ACUF Board Chairman

CBN should be applauded

Since the policy was made public, many Nigerians have shared divergent opinions on the development, but it is necessary, in the national interest, to go deeper into the entire cash-less policy of the federal government since its inception due to misconceptions and misunderstanding of the recent

development.

As specified by the CBN as far back as 2012, the cash-less policy is aimed at placing Nigeria among the best 20 economies in the world before the year 2020. This is a target that was never met. We're in 2022.

Is Nigeria now among the 20 best global economies? But the CBN informed the world that Nigeria would commence the process of changing to a cash-less economy by January 2020 and complete the process in 2020 to be among the best economies. So, why are people complaining about the timing of the implementation of the new cash withdrawal limits when the CBN is running behind its own scheduled implementation target?

Only a mischievous person will be complaining about the timing of the review of the cash withdrawal limits because we should be applauding

Mr. Godwin Emefiele as the CBN Governor for daring to move Nigeria's economy into top 20 best in the world after over seven years of stagnancy.

A good observer can easily identify three categories of people who are critical of the cash withdrawal limits introduced by the CBN. They are those who are totally ignorant of what the policy is about; those who misunderstood the policy and thought that cash withdrawal limit is the same as digital transaction limits; and those who, for political advantage, distort information about the policy in order to score cheap political points to further their corrupt and anti-people agenda. Among the third category of people are mostly politicians who have concealed huge sums of money in their bedrooms and farms for election rigging and for vote buying.

They are the same category of critics who complain about the timing, forgetting that the full implementation of cash-less policy in Nigeria should have taken place in 2014.

Nigerian lawmakers should have been commending the CBN governor and his management team rather than vilifying them. We see them as enemies of the people in the forthcoming 2023 general elections.

Any individual who plots to induce voters in any way, especially through vote buying, should be considered as prime enemy of democracy in Nigeria.

Chief Willy Ezugwu, CNPP Executive Secretary

'It's recipe for disaster, must be resisted'

The Coalition of Northern Groups (CNG) is extremely worried about the imminent crises arising from the CBN's pronouncement of a regime of harsh policies on cash withdrawal limit, noting especially that the livelihood of many individuals and enterprise sustainability would be impacted.

As the representatives of various interest groups from northern Nigeria, the CNG, after watching and analysing the situation carefully, has come to believe that the CBN policy is another not-well-thought-out, unreasonable and unacceptable action perpetrated by certain dubious interests led by Godwin Emefiele against Nigerians collectively, and northerners in particular.

We find it ridiculous for Emefiele and the CBN, after plunging the country into economic crisis, that involves high inflation, poor exchange rate, and dwindling foreign reserve as symptoms of mismanagement and bad economic policies, to so arrogantly insist on the enforcement of this policy despite an order of the National Assembly to the contrary.

The CNG notes that the timing without adequate preparation and sensitization of the critical mass that drives the economy, the SMEs and MSMEs, could prove counter-productive and further drive many below the poverty line.

We note also that the banking infrastructure and mobile/digital facility to drive the cashless policy in Nigeria and in the North in particular, are not sufficiently developed.

As usual, not one to remain silent in the face of this constancy of disastrous Monetary Policies by the CBN that potentially affect the livelihood of Nigerians and the people of northern Nigeria, in the light of the above observations and highlighted complications and attendant risks, the CNG hereby resolves to embark on the mobilisation of northerners for a massive protest to resist the attempt by Emefiele or any other authority to place more misery on Nigerians at a time when businesses are groaning under the burden created by not-well-thought-out Government policies.

For the avoidance of doubt, the CNG is resolved to taking further necessary actions to stop Emefiele and the CBN from going ahead with the implementation of this and other manifestations of inconsistencies and misalignments between the fiscal and monetary policies of the government. This is because it is embarrassing that the CBN has been making announcements without any regard to the constitution and other relevant laws on the national economy and complete defiance of the Money Laundering Act.

Abdul-Azeez Suleiman, CNG Spokesperson

Policy Buhari's best legacy

I keep saying that President Muhammadu Buhari will bequeath the best legacy of his administration to Nigeria before he leaves office. Though the APC has been greatly vilified by Nigerians, every now and then President Buhari comes up with good policy to better the lives of Nigerians.

The Electoral Act amendment was signed by President Buhari, which put paid to the ambition of many politicians, especially greedy lawmakers. Now, we are talking about an economic policy to limit corruption by restricting the amount of money in circulation.

The CBN's latest policy on limited withdrawal is the best legacy President Buhari can leave for Nigerians. It will curb vote buying, ransom payment and digitise the economy.

I support it with my full chest. The CBN should ignore threats by politicians and implement it in full. We have never had it this good.

Hopefully, by the time the policy comes into effect in January next year, Nigerians will realise that the government means well.

Jacinta Tolu, civil servant

Digital/e-transactions will create a better audit trail for tax, accounting and security purposes. Distortions/disruptions to electronic banking services have not been addressed. What has the CBN done to address the issue of debits for failed transactions and delays in executing transactions caused by system failures and poor networks?



Business & Economy

Nigeria's oil output under Buhari lowest since 1999

NIGERIA saw its crude oil production fall the most in two decades on President Muhammadu Buhari's watch, data collated show.

Buhari has doubled as the minister of petroleum resources since 2015, when he first came to power.

The country's oil output has declined by 42 percent, according to data obtained from the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC), and online resource Indexmundi.

During the tenures of President Olusegun Obasanjo, Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, and Goodluck Jonathan, crude oil production averaged 2.24 million barrels per day (bpd), 1.96 million bpd, and 2.02 million bpd respectively. Under Buhari, output has hovered around 1.59 million bpd and the country cannot even meet its OPEC+ quota.

Oil theft and pipeline vandalism have taken a turn for the worse in recent years, with oil thieves running rings around government officials. International vessels enter Nigerian waters and in connivance with state oil firms and security officials reportedly steal large volumes of crude.

Analysts have attributed the decline in production to insecurity, hostile regulatory environment and poor fiscal policies. Local producers have been hamstrung while multinationals are fleeing the onshore fields in the Niger Delta,

Bala Zakka, an oil and gas specialist, told BusinessDay that the Buhari government hasn't been forthcoming with smarter policies and easing the business climate to attract investments.

"Companies in that sector are faced with different levels of insecurity and threats," he said. "This is why most of these companies are no longer looking to invest."

This year, Nigeria lost \$2 billion in eight months on the back of vandalism and crude theft.

"The greatest challenge that led to the drop in production in this administration has been oil theft," said Ndubuisi Okereke, a senior lecturer in the Department of Chemical and Petroleum Engineering at Afe Babalola University.

Bala Wunti, group general manager of National Petroleum Investment Management Services, said recently that the Nigerian National Petroleum Company was losing 470,000 bpd of crude oil monthly, amounting to \$700 million, due to oil theft.

According to Wunti, criminal activity has rendered the pipelines inoperable, particularly those near the



Sylva

Bonny terminal. He said daily barrel thefts were extremely high and that about 270 barrels that were scheduled to be loaded in Bonny each day would no longer be loaded as a result of theft.

"This current administration, no doubt, took some steps to avert the challenges of reduced crude oil production. It, however, appears that enough was not done as the situation did not improve significantly," said Ayodele Oni, energy lawyer and partner at Bloomfield Law Practice.

He said that divestment, heightened security issues in the country, the presence of illegal modular refineries for the refining of illegally obtained crude oil products, and a lack of regulatory certainty, amongst others, have shackled the government's effort to significantly turn things around.

He said the current administration could have dedicated more resources

Raw materials import declines by 22.36% to N1.88trn

MANUFACTURERS spent N1.88trn on raw materials import in nine months, foreign trade reports of the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) have shown.

The Q1-Q3 foreign trade reports indicated that manufacturers imported raw materials worth N1.88 bn between January and September 2022, a 22.36 per cent decline from the N2.43bn they spent in the corresponding period in the previous year.

The dipped was on the back of forex scarcity in the country which has made many firms source their raw materials locally and those who could not get their inputs in the country had to stop production.

Some manufacturers who spoke with Economic Confidential lamented the difficulty in accessing foreign exchange at the parallel market due to Central Bank's refusal to allocate forex to bureau de change operators.

They claimed may be forced out of business by the current difficulty they grappling with sourcing raw materials.

and demonstrated more dedication to the reduction of crude oil theft and refining within the Niger Delta region.

"The development of adequate infrastructure and tightening of security in the country are also options that could have been considered by the current administration to reduce the issues associated with the reduction of crude oil production," Oni added.

Wheat price rises by 50% as import drops

THE price of durum wheat has risen by 50 per cent since the start of 2022 and its importation has fallen by 16.09 per cent.

This is because of the global scarcity of wheat caused by the Russian-Ukraine and the lack of foreign exchange in the nation.

The National Public Relations Officer, National Wheat Farmers, Processors and Marketers Association of

The Chief Executive Officer of Coleman Technical Industries, George Onafowokan, said the weakness of the naira, particularly in the parallel market, where a majority of manufacturers source foreign exchange, has greatly disrupted production activities.

Onafowokan expressed optimism that the price hikes which followed the naira's devaluation would fizzle out if the currency maintained its current momentum.

He said, "The volatility which caused a 36 per cent increase in one week or so was not to anybody's benefit. It distorted the markets. Manufacturers kept repositioning, and eventually, the whole manufacturing sector almost went into comatose. Some companies had to stop selling and production, because there was no way they could replace their stock."

He said manufacturers were dealing with the dictates of the black market, which was not healthy for the economy.

"Whether you are buying raw materials or machinery, you are still dependent on the black

THE move by the Department of State Services (DSS) to arrest Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Governor, Godwin Emefiele may cause a further slip of the naira against the dollar.

In the suit, FHC/ABJ/CS/2255/2022, the security agency asked the Federal High Court in Abuja permission to take Emefiele into custody.

Justice John Tsoho did not grant the application. The Chief Judge said the DSS did not provide concrete evidence to substantiate its claims against the CBN chief.

Emefiele is accused of terrorism financing and economic crimes, though a coalition claims the plot is to keep him in solitary confinement ahead of the sack.

Since the news broke, Nigerians have been raising their concern about the fate of the naira, which is recovering from a recent free fall.

Though the current dollar-to-naira rate is about N745 on the black market, it nearly hit N900 sometime between October and November.

Individuals and business owners are now contacting Bureau De Change operators to get information on what to expect in the coming days.

Sanni, an operator in Abuja, told DAILY POST that customers called him on Monday to purchase dollars

Concerns over dollar-naira rate as DSS probe Emefiele



Emefiele

due to uncertainty over Emefiele's case.

Some social media users have also voiced fear about the naira weakening more due to a loss of confidence.

"Without recourse to the fact before the court, the presiding judge did a good job by denying the application of DSS to arrest Emefiele.

"The consequences of his arrest will be extremely grave

on our economy, particularly the value of our currency, naira", @skelly16th wrote.

It is unknown if the DSS will return to the court with another application and evidence that will convince the judge to approve Emefiele's arrest, a major topic of debate.

The Public Relations Officer, Peter Afunanya, is yet to reply to a text enquiry on the agency's next line of action.

into Nigeria was N753.59bn in the first three quarters of 2022, a N144.59bn fall from the N898.19bn it was in the corresponding period of 2021.

Based on the NBS, durum wheat is the major agricultural import into Nigeria. It said, "The major agriculture goods imported in Q1, 2022 included Durum wheat (not in seeds) were from the United States with N71.56bn and Argentina

with N59.04bn.

Wheat, which serves as flour, is essential in the production of pasta, bread, noodles, and other food items. The fall in wheat importation which the nation is heavily dependent upon has translated to higher prices for most of these food items.

Ogunnubi said, "Wheat importation is decreasing but it doesn't mean that we have achieved wheat sufficiency as such. We have wheat still retaining the third position in

terms of commodities that engulf the highest FX. It is after refined petrol products and gas.

"Wheat is fast becoming a staple food. If people are not eating maize, they are eating bread, flour, spaghetti, which are some of the side products from wheat. So why are not sufficient."

"The crisis in Russia and Ukraine is affecting importation but that does not mean there are no other markets for importation. The durum wheat that we tend to process in Nigeria can be sourced from Mexico. It is not as if people are not looking in that direction, but the CBN is not giving foreign FX for wheat importation."

According to him, at the beginning of the year, a loaf of bread in Abuja that was between N350 and N400 is now N800.

However, Kuti-George noted that the new development was being taken with a pinch of salt.

He also claimed that the dollar was not available to manufacturers because of scarcity, adding that the situation would get worse in the New Year due to the new directive by CBN for banks to source forex on their own.

– NBS



Business & Economy

Inflation, food security and implications for agric revolution

"MY pension is only N90, 000 monthly; my children, two undergraduates, and one graduate all rely on this money and my wife's little income from her petty trading. With the rising prices of food, we can barely afford to eat twice a day, not to mention meeting other needs. Writes AFONNE EMMANUEL.

THIS is the story of Mr David Omotayo, a pensioner whose children still rely on to meet their needs amidst other family demands in the face of increasing food prices and inflation.

The situation not different with Ms Blessing Ike, who said inflation has negatively affected her business and eroded her purchasing power.

"There is no profit from this business anymore, we are barely managing. The high prices of foodstuffs coupled with the increasing price of cooking gas which I use for my business, leave me with no profit," she told the News Agency of Nigeria.

For Mrs Amina Audu, a civil servant, the high cost of living caused by inflation has reduced her living standard.

She says that 90 per cent of the family income is used on expenses ranging from food to other consumables such as cooking gas and electricity bills.

"It is impossible to save money in recent times", Audu told NAN.

This is the reality in many Nigerian homes as inflation rate hits a 17- year high, the highest since September 2005 amid soaring food prices, according to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS).

NBS statistics shows that Nigeria's headline inflation rate increased to 21.09 per cent on a year-on-year basis in October 2022, indicating a 5.09 per cent increase compared to 15.99 per cent recorded in October 2021.

According to the Statistician-General of the Federation, Prince Semiu Adeniran, factors responsible for the increase in annual inflation rate include disruption in the supply of food products, increased import cost due to currency depreciation, among others.

Consequently, the average Nigerian cannot afford to purchase some of these staple food items, which the Multidimensional Poverty Index Survey (MPI) report launched on Nov. 17 confirms.

The MPI report revealed that 63 per cent of Nigerians are multi-



dimensionally poor, accounting for 133 million Nigerians.

According to The World Bank's Food Security report, domestic food price inflation remains high around the world. Information between June and September 2022 shows high inflation in almost all low-income and middle-income countries.

The bank, therefore, recommended Social Protection Responses to the Global Food Crisis, advising policymakers in developing countries to focus on the poor through social investment.

"Strengthening national social protection systems can help populations manage shocks and stressors and build long-term resilience to food insecurity.

"Social protection, food, and health systems can work together across sectors to improve food security and

nutrition outcomes of vulnerable groups," the report said.

Similarly, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) says high food insecurity is compounding the Covid-19 pandemic's scarring effects on the vulnerable in Nigeria.

After its routine official visit to Nigeria in November 2022, the IMF said it anticipates that food prices would continue to increase in Nigeria in 2023 due to high fertiliser prices and recent flooding in many parts of the nation.

"Similarly, further volatility in the parallel market exchange rate and continued dependence on central bank financing of the budget deficit could exacerbate price pressures," IMF said.

The Fund's position is contained in its Staff Concluding Statement of the

2022 Article IV Mission in Nigeria.

The IMF recommended strengthening the performance of the agricultural sector as key to job creation, food security, and social cohesion.

However, the Federal Government has debunked insinuations that Nigeria will experience food shortage due to recent floods.

At the 5th Edition of President Muhammadu Buhari Administration Scorecard 2015-2017 series in Abuja, the Minister of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Dr Mohammad Abubakar, assured Nigerians that there would be no food shortage in the country.

Abubakar said in spite of the rising inflation in the country, which he said was a global crisis and the flood disaster notwithstanding, the country would not experience food shortage.

"Absolutely, we have enough to eat in this country. There is no shortage of food.

"Yes there is inflation and an increase in prices, but we have enough food to feed everyone. It is better to have inflation than to have no food. We have enough to eat and we will continue to have enough to eat", Abubakar said.

Mohammed said one of the measures the government had put in place to ensure food security was dry season farming which would be done by also harnessing some of the flood waters.

However, Sam Amadi, an analyst and Director, Abuja School of Social and Political Thoughts, said: "if we are food secured then we want to see it in its affordability.

"Experts are predicting a difficult time with respect to food in Nigeria. Human security includes food affordability.

Economists have suggested concrete steps to address the rising inflation and food prices in Nigeria.

They also opine that the increasing inflation rate in Nigeria has impacted negatively on the living standard of Nigerians.

Prof. Aminu Usman, a lecturer at the Department of Economics, Kaduna State University, said the rising inflation rate meant devaluation of individual income, which amounted to drop purchasing power.

Dr Ayo Anthony, an economist, said Nigeria's exchange rate management needed to be revisited; and the cost of production must be looked into before inflation can come down.

"The cost of production must be looked into because inflation in Nigeria is more of cost-push inflation. We have energy costs with diesel and petrol, which are on the high side now", he said.

Mr Tope Fasua, an economist, advised the federal government to put more efforts into the agriculture sector for increased food production.

"Nigeria is a largely agricultural country, yet 62 years after independence we can't do better than grow rice. We are also not growing the crops properly and we are not even growing enough crops, diversify across the board, not even the ones we need."

"So, one place to start is to do more in agriculture and bring some science into agriculture and recognise our luck, capability, and capacity to turn things around", she said.

Source: (NANFeatures)

The MPI report revealed that 63 per cent of Nigerians are multi-dimensionally poor, accounting for 133 million Nigerians. According to The World Bank's Food Security report, domestic food price inflation remains high around the world. Information between June and September 2022 shows high inflation in almost all low-income and middle-income countries. The bank, therefore, recommended Social Protection Responses to the Global Food Crisis, advising policymakers in developing countries to focus on the poor through social investment.

News

Ishaku assents to N173 billion budget

From
VICTOR GAI, Jalingo

TARABA State Governor, Darius Ishaku had on Monday given assent to the 2023 Taraba State Appropriation Law which was recently passed by the State Assembly.

In a ceremony at the Government House, Executive Chamber, Ishaku passed the sum of N173,234,537,459.49k. That represents an increase of N502,000,000.40k from the initial sum of N172,732,537,459.40k presented to the House.

He thanked the House for passing the bill in record time and promise to ensure the monitoring of projects and program implementation and also work hard to generate revenue to finance the plans on ground.

Being his last engagement with the House, Ishaku thanked the House for the harmonious relationship with the executive and also the civil servants and all the citizens of the state for the opportunity given to him to serve the state.

"We have done the best possibly to be done. Without being immodest, we have



Ishaku

come, we have seen and we have conquered. As a very stringent teacher whose pass mark starts from 75, I have scored a pass mark".

Earlier on, Speaker, Taraba House of Assembly, Joseph Albasu Kunini, said the House found it expedient to increase the allocation to the State Independent Electoral Commission (SIEC) by N500

million bearing into consideration the local government polls to be conducted within the calendar year.

He acknowledged the support of the Ishaku government but however appealed to the governor to listen to cries of legislative staff by paying them arrears of outfit allowance.

THE Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) says it won't relent in its determination to prevent vote buying in the 2023 general elections.

The INEC Chairperson, Mahmood Yakubu, said this at a day stakeholders' summit on addressing the influence of money in the 2023 general elections, on Monday, in Abuja.

Mr Yakubu said as a commission, INEC harboured no illusion that it was going to be easy to root out the negative influence of money on the election, saying however that it was determined to tackle it.

"We fully realised that today's initiative will not go down well with people who may not be committed to the growth of our electoral system and the consolidation of our democracy.

"We expect them to fight back. There will be both covert and overt pressure, countervailing actions and even threats by these vested interests.

"I wish to reiterate that our loyalty is to Nigeria and our allegiance is to Nigerians. We are committed to working with the collaborating agencies to see that this initiative succeeds in the 2023 general election and beyond. IRESD

"The commission is aware that legal provisions and the actions of the agencies are critical but will not be enough to completely root out the deep-seated cancer of corrupt

We're determined to confront vote buying -INEC

money in our election," he said.

Mr Yakubu added: "The concerted actions of citizens are crucial. Citizens must reject inducements to sway their votes through vote-buying.

"They must also engage effectively in stopping the negative use of money in our electoral process generally by reporting cases to INEC and other agencies.

"In addition, civil society organisations should make this a major plank of both their pre-election and election observation activities.

"Financial institutions, religious organisations, traditional institutions, the media, civic bodies and, above all, citizens must also join in this fight"



Mahmood

Fulani stakeholders laud Karu LGA Chairman

STAKEHOLDERS, leadership of Fulani Socio Cultural organization and youth in Panda

From
DORCAS PANKYES, Abuja

Uphold ethics of profession, Minister charges COMEG

From
DORCAS PANKYES, Abuja

THE Honourable Minister of Mines and Steel Development Arc. Olamilekan Adegbite has charged inductees of the Council of Nigerian Mining Engineers and Geoscientists (COMEG) to join hands with the Council to uphold the ethics of the profession, as stipulated in the Council's Code of Conduct.

The Press and Public Relations Officer, Ijomah E. Opia in a statement said that the Minister gave the charge in Abuja recently, during the occasion of the COMEG'S 12th Induction Ceremony.

Adegbite said the occasion marks another momentous juncture in the journey of the Council towards becoming the foremost regulator in the Nigerian extractive industry. "Going back in time, I still recount with nostalgia all the laudable achievements of this Council in the life of this present administration, most of which are in tandem with Mr. President's aspirations toward building a prosperous nation".

According to him, these achievements are highly recommendable under the leadership of COMEG Council, led by the Chairman, Dr. Godspower Okpoi, and COMEG management, led by the Registrar, Prof. Zacheus Opafunso.

Also, he revealed that over the years, the Council has consistently

been a role model among other agencies under his watch, especially in its quest to ensure Professionalism is entrenched by practitioners as well as making relevant Professional practices lawful by re-introducing and re-energizing its Mandatory Professional Examination (MPE) in the year 2020 in line with Part IV section 11 - (1) of the COMEG Act No. 40 of 1990 (now CAP C33 LFN 2004).

The statement added that as a result of the Council's subsisting reviews on examination best practices, its first CBT-based (sit-in and online) examination was conducted in October and November, 2022 respectively which has culminated in the Council's Induction of Class of 12th Inductees.

He congratulated the Inductees and enjoined them to always stand tall in the practice of mining and geoscience profession in Nigeria in all its aspects and ramifications. More so, he enjoined them to strive hard in upholding the ethics of their profession as enshrined in the code of conduct of the Council.

The minister was represented by his Senior Assistant, Mr. Olu Adadayo.

Speaking earlier, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry, Dr. Oluwatoyin Akinlade, who was also represented at the occasion by the Director of Human Resources Management, Mr. Muhammad Suleiman, said that the

over 200 individuals and corporate inductees professionals will assist President Muhammadu Buhari's administration to reposition the nation's minerals and metals sector for global competitiveness and economic diversification.

She said the nation certainly looks up to COMEG and other professional bodies within the mining sector to live up to high expectations of ensuring steady supply of professionals to drive the transformation of the minerals and metals sector into leading employer of labour, foreign exchange earner and stabilizer of the nation's macro economy. She urged all the inductees to endeavor to uphold the ethics of the professional practices as it will help reduce the effects of illegal practitioners in the industry.

The Chairman of COMEG, Dr. Godspower Ebimotimi Okpoi, in his remarks, informed the gathering that the Council of Nigerian Mining Engineers and Geoscientist

(COMEG) was established by Decree 40 of 1990 now enshrined as CAP C33 LFN 2004. It was promulgated with the responsibilities of: prescribing and enforcing the minimum standard of education and experience to be obtained by persons qualified to practice as registered Mining Engineers, Geoscientists, and other professionals; Maintaining discipline in the profession in accordance with the Act; regulating and controlling the practice of Mining Engineering Geosciences and related professions; proscribing and enforcing the code of conduct of Registered Mining Engineers, Geoscientists and other professionals, among others.

He said since the establishment of COMEG in 1990 and its inauguration in 2021, the Council has continued to discharge its responsibilities in

accordance with its laws and as permitted by prevailing circumstances.

The Registrar, Prof. Zacheus Opafunso, in his address, told the inductees and guests at the occasion that the Council in the last three years has made concerted efforts to promote and enshrine the sustenance of professionalism in the Nigerian extractive industry and that the efforts are geared towards enthroning a strong and virile COMEG in accordance with relevant sections of the COMEG Act and that this has resulted in a re-invigorated Mandatory Professional Examination (MPE) exercise as a standard requirement for membership registration prior to every induction ceremony.

He thanked the Honourable ministers, the Permanent Secretaries and members of the COMEG for their unwavering support towards the growth and continued sustenance of the Council.

Development Area have applauded the Executive Chairman of Karu Local Government Council, Hon James Thomas for his laudable achievements in one year and for appointing three of their sons into his cabinet in Karu LGA.

Speaking during the stakeholders meeting held in Gitata, Ardo Panda Alhaji Ardo Mato said "This is the first time in history, where three Fulanis from Karu LGA were recognized through appointment from a local government chairman in Nasarawa State.

I want to assure the Executive Chairman that Fulani community in Panda Development Area and Karu LGA will replicate this gesture by coming out in their numbers to vote for His Excellency, Governor Abdullahi Sule and all APC candidates in Nasarawa State come 2023."

The Chairman who was represented by the Supervisory Councillor of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Hon. Isah Muhammed Aso, appreciated the Fulani community for their cooperation and support for his government, adding that Hon James is a grassroots leader who has his people at heart, and Fulani will not be left alone in his council's decision making.

Earlier, Director General, A. A Sule Campaign Council Nasarawa State, Barr. Tanimu Adams urged the Fulani community to be good ambassadors of peace in Panda Development Area, as Fulanis were known from time immemorial as peace ambassadors.

He however, pleaded with them to vote for APC from top to bottom in the forthcoming general election in 2023.

ACF BoT chairman passes on

From
JOHN FWAH, Kaduna

CHAIRMAN of the Arewa Consultative Forum, ACF, Board of Trustees, BoT, Ambassador Shehu Malami has died at the age of 85.

According to the Secretary General of ACF, Murtala Aliyu, Ambassador Malami who was the Sarkin Sudan Wurno, died on Monday in Cairo, Egypt.

Murtala Aliyu, said Malami would be missed especially for his extraordinary leadership skills.

According to the statement, 'the Arewa Consultative Forum, ACF, regrets to announce the demise of our Chairman, Board of Trustees, Ambassador Shehu Malami, OFR, CON, Sarkin Sudan Wurno. He died Monday, the 19th of December, 2022 in Cairo, Egypt."

"Ambassador Shehu Malami was born in Sokoto in 1937 as a Prince of the Sultanate dynasty. He had his early education in Sokoto, Bida and Katsina. He also attended various Colleges in the United Kingdom. He had a degree in law from the Middle Temple. Amb Shehu Malami worked as private secretary and then as Special Assistant to Sultan Sadiq Abubakar III."

service career that spanned several decades."

"He had earlier worked for the BBC as a broadcaster. At various times, he was Nigeria's Ambassador to the Republic of South Africa; Chairman, Assessment Committee of the Nigeria National Merit Award, Director, the Nigerian Industrial Development Bank, Chairman, Union Bank of Nigeria, Chairman, PZ Industries, among many other top leadership positions during his long public

Chairman assures of support for APC

From
DORCAS PANKYES, Abuja

EXECUTIVE Chairman of Karu Local Government Council, Hon. James Thomas, has received in audience Sarkin Ankoma, Alhaji Baba Bala in his office, Monday.

According to the monarch, "We are here to show our appreciation to the Honourable Chairman for the necessary support given to our community during this recent appointment.

And to also assure the Chairman of our resolve to reciprocate this gestures in the next coming election to vote for our great party APC from top to bottom.

"The nation will undoubtedly miss Ambassador Shehu Malami's extraordinary leadership skills, his generosity, his sense of justice and fair play.

We send our deepest condolences to his family and the nation. It is our prayer that Allah, SWA, forgives his mistakes and grant mercy on his soul," the ACF said.

He however, sought for the indulgence of the Chairman to convey their appreciation to Governor A. A. Sule for the brand new car given to Governor Sule campaign Coordinator Panda Development Area, Hon Inusa Giwa.

The Chairman who's represented by Council Secretary Hon Utoh Vakpa Danladi, appreciated him for suspending his activities in order to identify with this administration, a gesture he said is an indication of the support the community has for this administration, urged them not to relent in their efforts.

CHANGE OF NAME

ESTHER

I formerly known as **ESTHER KWANG'A PAUL**, now wish to be known and address as **ESTHER PWAJOK PAUL**. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and general public to please take note.



Politics

State of women's candidacy ahead of 2023 elections

Across the globe, Nigeria ranks extremely low in gender equality index ratings and this has been attributed by many, to the inherent culture, lack of internal party democracy, and the patriarchal practice across the country, EBUNOLUWA AFOLABI writes.

Since Nigeria's return to democracy in 1999, one key trend has been women's underrepresentation in politics.

Historically, Nigeria's political system has been dominated by men, even though women constitute a larger part of the voting population, with 6.2 million out of 12.2 million newly registered voters ahead of the 2023 elections, and almost 50% of the nation's overall population.

Across the globe, Nigeria ranks extremely low in gender equality index ratings and this has been attributed by many, to the inherent culture, lack of internal party democracy, and the patriarchal practice across the country.

The country also has one of the lowest rates of female parliamentary representation in Africa, ranking 181 of 193 countries, according to the Inter-Parliamentary Union/UN Women map, which presents global rankings for women in executive and government positions as of 1 January 2021.

The low representation of women in Nigeria's political space is despite the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted in 1995 and the 35% affirmative action for women enshrined in Nigeria's National Gender Policy. While the aim was to increase women's participation at other levels of government, the reverse has been the case. Nigeria has not elected a woman into the offices of president, vice-president or any governor.

Women's representation in elected and appointed offices in the country is not only low but keeps declining, despite concerns and efforts by a wide range of stakeholders to improve women's political participation and achieve gender equality.

Gender equity in Nigerian politics has not increased to the extent that Nigerian politics requires. Despite increased avenues for political participation, it has remained relatively restrictive.

Women have only been able to aspire to deputy governor positions, with the only female governor assuming the position in an acting capacity. Even national legislative numbers don't leave much room for optimism.

In 2003, 22 of 359 (6.7%) elected members of the House of Representatives, and three of the 109 (2.7%) elected senators were women.

In the April 2007 elections, only 628 of a total of 7,160 candidates were women and represented 8.8% of the total number of candidates. There was a total of 3,141 candidates running for seats in the National Assembly, and only 209 (6.7%) of those were women. In 2019, 235 women ran for Senate seats out of a total of 1,904



candidates, while 533 women ran for House of Representatives seats out of a total of 4,680 candidates. In all, 768 women ran for national legislative office, about twice as many as in 2015. The results, though, were meagre. The number of elected female senators rose to nine in 2007 and remained the same in 2011, but while there were 25 elected representatives in 2007, there were only 19 elected in

2011. Numbers have since dropped to a stage where there are 13 representatives in the current House and 9 in the Senate. But elected positions are only half the story – there is still a challenge for female politicians to even aspire to contest.

Ahead of the coming elections, there are only 92 women out of 1,101 senatorial aspirants, representing 8.4% of

candidates, while there are 286 women out of 3,107 representative aspirants, tallying 9.2% of candidates. In the 2019 elections to the senate, 232 of 1,904 candidates were women (12.18%), but only 7 were elected (3.02%), with one more winning a by-election seat.

Meanwhile, in the House of Representatives, 528 of 5,208 candidates were women (10.14%), but only 13 were

elected (2.46%). If the percentage of elected officials from 2019 follows, it means there will be only 7 representatives (down 6) and 3 senators (down 4). Such representation will be a sad decline in Nigeria's political history, especially as consequential issues will require more effective and deliberative decision-making processes.

POORlitics and 2023 elections: Nigeria belongs to Nigerians

Nigeria's political class are good at polarizing Nigerians along religious and ethnic lines during elections. In looting public funds, there is unity in diversity and cohesion of stealing interest. A few months to the general elections in 2023, manifestos that won't be manifested, unrealistic promises and deceit becloud the Nigerian political space, writes ALIKOR VICTOR.

ABUJA and city-based politicians are back to the grassroots to display subterfuge. The streets are filled with deceptive and pretentious love for the electorates by political actors. It is time to release some of what has been stolen, embezzled and purloined in the last few years to woo the electorates to get their support. POORlitics, implying leaders who use political positions to impoverish the citizens while enriching themselves, comes to mind.

Poverty is a weapon to decide the outcome of elections in Nigeria. Vote buying strives in an atmosphere of hunger and squalor. The insistence of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to use the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) implies that vote buying is the last hope of the majority of the Nigerian political class in 2023.

In 2023, Nigerians have a chance to right the wrongs of economic and social damages witnessed by Nigerians in the

last six decades. Poverty, corruption, rising unemployment and inflation, excessive borrowing, food insecurity, the collapse of the health and education sector and other challenges remain uncurbed. Those who have contributed passively and actively to the sorry state of Nigeria are creeping out with solutions. Except for a few essential workers, Nigeria's retirement age is 60; due to a decrease in one's ability to be productive.

Elders with several years beyond Nigeria's retirement age of 60 are jostling to be Nigeria's president. Surprisingly, those within 65 years and above constitute just 3 percent of Nigeria's population according to the United Nations Population Fund. The average age of the presidential and vice-presidential candidates of the three (3) leading political parties, All Progressive Congress (APC), Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and Labour Party (LP), are 63, 69

and 57 years, respectively. Nigeria needs a young, healthy, intelligent president that combines the wisdom of elders and the energy of the youth, not retirees and grandfathers.

The increase in the number of registered voters is a sign to show that Nigerians are tired of the current political order. Nigerians, particularly the youths, are willing to take back Nigeria from the clutches of failed politicians with empty promises. In 2023, vote-buying will fail. It will mark a change from the old to the new ways of doing things. Nigeria will be for Nigerians, the masses who have suffered for over six decades of underdevelopment.

Those who kept Nigerian university students at home while their children enjoyed world-class education abroad will be remembered. Leaders who went on foreign medical trips while our hospitals remained in the abysmal state will taste the fury of Nigerians at the poll. Politicians who made no effort to secure their citizens, as

Nigerians lost their loved ones to Kidnappers, Bandits, Boko Haram and Unknown gunmen, will understand that power truly belongs to the people. Like the famous adage, it will be one day for the owner after 49 days for the thief.

The 2023 elections present a new hope for Nigerians. This time, votes will count as has never been witnessed in Nigeria since democracy. The youths, who constitute the vast majority of Nigerians, will vote for a new Nigeria, regardless of ethnicity and religion. Competence will be selected over mediocrity. Track records will inform the decision to validate trust. The old order will give way to a new Nigeria with the capacity to make Nigeria great again. Fairness, justice and equity will guide the decision of a vast majority of Nigeria. Nigeria will show the world it truly belongs to Nigerians.

IMAGES

APC PCC HOSTS TOWNHALL MEETING WITH ORGANISED LABOUR

The All Progressives Congress (APC) Presidential Campaign Council (PCC) and the Presidential Candidate, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu on Monday held Town Hall meeting with organised Labour in Abuja



Director General of the PCC and Governor Simon Bako Lalong (CON) welcoming the APC Presidential candidate, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu



Governor Lalong (left) in a handshake with the APC Vice Presidential candidate, Sen. Kashim Shettima



APC Presidential candidate, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu delivering his remark



DG PCC, Rt. Hon. Simon B. Lalong and Organised Labour applauding to the speech by the APC Presidential candidate



Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu in handshake with Governor Bagudu Atiku of Kebbi State and others



Comrade Adams Oshiomhole exchanging greetings with Organised Labour and DG PCC, Rt. Hon. Simon Bako Lalong (CON)



Director General of the Presidential Campaign Council and Governor of Plateau State, Rt. Hon. Simon Bako Lalong (CON) delivering the welcoming



APC Presidential and Vice with the Speaker, House of Reps, Rt. Hon. Femi Gbajabiamila listening with rapt attention to remarks by the DG, PCC

Politics

Kaduna: History beckons on Senator Sani Uba

The days are fast approaching for the 2023 general elections. In Kaduna State, the man to beat for the race to the Government House is Senator Sani Uba. KATDAPBA Y GOBUM examines that possibility and why he is only waiting to be sworn in come May 29, 2023.

IT was Abraham Lincoln, who once said: 'Elections belong to the people. It's their decision. If they decide to turn their back on the fire and burn their behinds, then they will just have to sit on their blisters'.

The Kaduna State governorship election, is supposed to be a straightforward contest, between Senator Uba Sani, of the All Progressives Congress (APC), and Isa Ashiru Kudan of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), but clearly it's turning out to be a non contest, as Uba Sani, has pulled far ahead.

For all intent and purposes, Kaduna State election, was expected to be a 'battle', which unfortunately isn't turning out that way.

Despite being a sitting Senator, Uba has mounted a vigorous campaign that Isa Ashiru Kudan, hasn't been able to match. In the last few weeks, virtually every key voting bloc has endorsed the governorship aspiration of Uba Sani. And from every indication, Uba Sani, will succeed the highly cerebral Governor Nasir el-Rufai.

Since 2015, when Isa Ashiru Kudan, first contested the governorship of Kaduna State against Nasir el-Rufai, several things have happened in between 2014 and 2022. One, he has moved from the APC to the Peoples Democratic Party in order to actualize his dream of ruling Kaduna State in 2019, but was once again defeated. Though 2023, is his last chance, but he hasn't been able to put up any stiff challenge, due to funding. The 2014, 2019 and 2022 primaries and elections have financially drained him.

His last job, was in 2015, as a member of the House of Representatives, where he represented Kudan/Makarfi federal constituency. Election is a money guzzler. And Atiku Abubakar, who is equally on his last attempt, at becoming the president of Nigeria, is facing his ambition squarely.

Isa Ashiru Kudan's burning ambition to govern Kaduna State has unfortunately fizzled out. It can't match the political power of Senator Uba Sani, the All Progressives Party governorship flag bearer. Those who know the politics of Kaduna State know that the party intends to hold on to the state, to ensure continuity from where Governor Nasir el-Rufai



Senator Uba



Kaduna State Governor, el-Rufai with the APC gubernatorial candidate, Senator Sani Uba will stop in 2023.

And the defeat of Isa Ashiru Kudan, may 'lead to his retirement from politics, like Uba retired Senator Shehu Sani in 2019'.

It is on record that the All Progressives Congress has an impenetrable base in the state. After the Sabon Gari House of Assembly defeat in the hands of the Peoples Democratic Party, it returned to the drawing board to put its house in order. In fact, before now, the foot of the APC in the Southern part of Kaduna was in clay, but the APC has made foray into the zone and was able to capture 5 local government councils in the 2021 local

but not to dethrone the ruling APC in the state.

As of today, the PDP has no path to victory, especially with the PDP in the state deeply fragmented.

The APC is certainly the party to beat, considering the achievements of Governor Nasir el-Rufai in the last eight years. These achievements are a stumbling block, standing in the way of the other parties.

It is hard to discountenance the fact that el-Rufai has raised the bar of governance in Kaduna State. The challenge before Kaduna State citizens is for the next administration to continue on the foundation laid by the el-Rufai government, with some adjustments, where necessary, and to consolidate on them. Senator Uba Sani,

between Senator Uba Sani and Isa Ashiru Kudan, the two main contending gladiators? The answer, even amongst politicians is that Senator Uba Sani, is the real deal.

The 2023 governorship election, has been rightly framed as a stark choice, between continued physical and human capital development, which the All Progressives Congress (APC) represents or a return to the ugly era of stomach infrastructure, a term popularized by former Governor of Ekiti State Ayo Fayose'.

That can never be the dream of the people; and even if there may be reason to change, 'a credible alternative' has not been provided. Between 2018 and 2021, the PDP twice suffered defeats in the local government elections; but by far, Isa Ashiru Kudan's defeat in 2019 is an effective pronouncement of the capacity of the APC to repeat the feat in 2023. After all, there are still some allegations still subsisting against Kudan regarding his secondary school certificate and his last place of work.

The people are well informed about the negative campaigns by the opposition PDP during the last general election against the APC. The people of Kaduna State are a lot wiser and will not buy into the same negative campaign that the PDP has consistently mounted on the various reforms (education, public service, traditional institution, local government, etc), or the urban renewal projects, which though led to the demolition of some structures, but which the owners were adequately compensated'.

There is no society that does not go through the pains of development for its tomorrow to be better. If the people think otherwise, then they will have to live with the consequences of 'the choice they make'.

Because Senator Uba Sani, has delivered on his mandate in the last four years in the Senate, the consensus is that he will deliver if elected Kaduna State Governor in 2023.

government elections. The PDP, on the other hand hasn't been able to penetrate the APC strongholds.

To defeat the APC is going to be difficult, the PDP today, lacks a base. The Labour Party has worsened the situation for Isa Ashiru Kudan. The Labour Party (LP) has without doubt compounded whatever chance it thought it had, by settling for Jonathan Asake, the former president of the Southern Kaduna Peoples Union (SOKAPU), as its governorship candidate. The LP gubernatorial candidate in Kaduna State, Hon Jonathan Asake will certainly attempt to use the new found euphoria of the party to gain relevance,

who has will certainly maintain the same tempo'.

The political trajectory of the state is a study in itself. It is on record that despite being the senator representing Kaduna Central Senatorial District, Senator Sani Uba attracted the College of Education Kafanchan, an ICT Center, while supporting the need for a federal university to be cited at Manchok, all in Southern Kaduna. Given this fact, it will be foolhardy for the people of this zone to want to be politically irrelevant in 2023.

The question which many Southern Kaduna people have started to ask; is who will best serve their interest

NEWS

NBA member accuses EFCC of impunity

From
AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

FORMER President of the Nigerian Bar Association, Dr Olisa Agbakoba, SAN, has lambasted the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission over what he described as unwarranted media trial of the Kogi State Government as regards the fresh case against a nephew of the Governor and the previous N20 billion bail-out controversy.

Agbakoba who spoke at a press conference on "The Rule of Law in Nigeria," held on Sunday, specifically noted that the EFCC was turning itself into a one-man Robin Hood riot gang, which must not be allowed.

According to him, how a state spends its money should not be the business of the anti-graft agency.

According to the former NBA president, the Supreme Court recently said in one of its judgments that the EFCC could not be a jack of all trades and that they should concentrate on what the law empowers them to do under Section 46 of their Act.

He said, "Like the current trending case where the EFCC arrested some people in Kogi State on allegations of money laundering, I believe that case should not be the business of the EFCC at all. Is it their business how Kogi spends their money? Even if it is their business, is it their lawful business to make that enquiry?"

"If we have lost money, we are the ones to complain and if we are not complaining or we are complicit in any fraud, then the appropriate agency to handle it is the ICPC or the state House of Assembly.

"So the candidates (2023 election candidates) must tell us what they are going to do with all these agencies because we need to know if they are going to allow the EFCC to continue to engage in media trials and carry on as the attack dog of the Federal Government against other arms and levels of governments."

On the 2023 election, Agbakoba noted that although some of the candidates had released their manifestos, their positions on how they would tackle corruption and also relate with the various anti-corruption agencies were not well spelt out.

He said, "It is a big problem because it appears as if it is nobody's job and the EFCC has somehow taken over the responsibility of all other agencies, thereby overreaching itself.

"I believe that the EFCC is overburdened with too much responsibility. I recently saw the EFCC Chairman, Bawa on television saying that the Commission is auctioning forfeited properties seized from convicted criminals, which should not be his job.

"I challenge anybody to tell



Agbakoba

me anywhere in the world that an agency with the same functions as that of the EFCC does three distinct jobs of investigation, prosecution and disposal of seized or recovered assets.

"I believe what the EFCC should do is to face investigation, as is done by similar agencies around the world. The commission is not an agency that is capable of effectively prosecuting cases. This is the reason they do not win most of their cases in court.

"I will strongly recommend that the prosecutorial power of the EFCC should be transferred to a new National Prosecution Agency. The Department of Public Prosecution in the Federal Ministry of Justice could be carved out and made independent to perform this role." "We also need a new body that will deal with recovered assets and other proceeds of crime so that the EFCC can face its primary function of investigating financial and economic crimes," Agbakoba added.

CSO empowers women, harps on peaceful elections

From
AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

n international election monitor, Ambassador Hamzat Lawal has empowered over 400 women with cash to boost their petty trading and called on Nigerians to complement

government's efforts by ensuring peaceful elections during the 2023 polls.

The empowerment programme which was part of the sensitization advocacy to the grassroots on the need to sustain the existing peace and collection of Permanent Voter's Cards (PVC), was organized by

a Civil Society Organization, Connected Development held at Ahogede community in Okene Local Government Area of Kogi State over the weekend.

Addressing the beneficiaries during the sensitization, Ambassador Lawal said the empowerment is a token to

appreciate women for their support in ensuring that the community remains peaceful at all times.

According to him, he was in Okene town to commence sensitization advocacy for the collection of Permanent Voter's Card (PVC) and also to educate the electorate ahead of 2023 general election on the need for them to shun vices that can cause crisis.

He pointed out that whenever there is any crisis, the people most often affected are women and children and therefore urged women leaders and mobilizers in election affairs to contribute their quota toward ensuring peace in the community. "As a mobilizer working with grassroots, my simple message is that where there is peace, the bridges of peace and prosperity are women. As we are going into elections, mothers should talk to their children that we must maintain peace in Kogi State.

"And now that the PVCs are ready, we should mobilize women door to door, to sensitize them on the need for them to collect their cards from INEC office in their respective local government areas.

"It is obvious that the highest percentage of people that participate actively during elections are women and youth, and as such they should take ownership of the political dispensation for the purpose of creating better future for themselves." Ambassador Lawal who emphasized that there is no alternative to peace, charged Nigerians to work with INEC to overcome the existing

barriers in the conduct of free, fair and credible elections.

"I am urging INEC to be proactive in attending to the feedback from the people so that the 2023 general elections can be conducted under a conducive atmosphere. I am assuring the electoral umpire that CSOs and Nigerians are ready to assist the commission to deliver on their mandate as provided in the country's constitution. "I am also assuring Nigerians that in the forthcoming elections, votes will count. With the current introduction of BVAS, the issue of ballot box snatching and thumb printing will be a thing of the past," he assured.

In his remarks, a chieftain of the All Progressive Congress (APC) in Kogi Central, Alhaji Yahaya Abubakar Karaku appealed to electorate both young and old to allow peace to reign during elections. He cautioned the youth not to allow themselves to be used as agents of crisis during elections.

"I am also lending my voice to the continuous calls by Ambassador Lawal that people should go out and collect their PVC because nobody of voting age will be allowed by INEC to vote on election day without PVC. And if you don't have the card, how can you vote for the candidates of your choice during elections? "Am using this medium to appeal to INEC to organize themselves and take the PVCs to wards for easy distribution so that people will not have reason for not collecting their PVC," he said.

IN a bid to ensure total compliance by participants on the nationwide graduate attachment programme, the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), at the weekend, flagged off the scheme in Kogi State. The programme is put in place by the NDE for graduates who have completed their NYSC and were attached to corporate, public and private organisations on internship for 3 to 6 months during which they would have been exposed to various skills acquisition that can develop their talents for job opportunities.

The Director General of NDE, Mallam Abubakar Nuhu Fikpo while speaking during the orientation programme, said that the major target of the scheme is to address youth unemployment.

"The Scheme is out to improve upon the employability of the participants as well as ensuring close skills gap that could build a competent workforce"

The Director General who was represented by the Kogi State Coordinator of NDE, Mallam Abubakar Zakari disclosed that one of the strategies adopted

NDE charges beneficiaries on productivity

From
AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

by the Directorate in its job creation drive is the introduction of transient jobs designed to absorb the teeming unemployed graduates roaming the streets.

The Director General appealed to the participants to take advantage of the programme and avail themselves for the rare

privileges. He noted that the lucky ones among them could be retained by their employers.

The Director of Special Public Works, Mrs Roseline Olaomi who was represented by Mallam Idris Haruna came from NDE headquarters, Abuja to conduct the compliance check in order to ensure that graduates on attachment strictly adhere to the implementation of the programme in Kogi.



Fikpo

KGIRS goes digital, unveils e-tax services

From
AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

THE Kogi State Internal Revenue Service (KGIRS), has launched its e-payment platform to the public to ensure easier and effective tax collection for the state.

The Acting Chairman of KGIRS, Alhaji Sule Salihu Enehe while performing the ceremony in his office, said that the era of using technology to drive tax payment has become imperative to enable his organisation live up to expectations in revenue generation for the state.

"The new management has resolved to key into technology for effective service delivery as well as enhancing compliance in tax payment. Our tax payment processes from now on will receive serious boost as you can simply stay in your house or office to pay your tax

"The KGIRS Service Charter will help in identifying who is real or fake tax officials. Will also take care of tax clearance certificate, tax reception and registration"

Enehe said that with the



Enehe

newly launched e-tax service, the tax system of the state will no longer be the same as his organisation can now boast of meeting with the N23 billion expected revenue in the 2023 budget estimate.

Enehe disclosed that with the support of his management team, he has been able to reposition KGIRS for optimum performance.

He said he was able to usher

in greater improvement in the day to day running of the organisation to soar up the revenue base of the Service, with tax friendly policies.

"Within one year in office, staff welfare, tax education, enlightenment and collection as well as prompt payment of monthly salary and claims amongst others were given topmost priority."

THE MIANGO CONCERNED CONSUMERS OF ENERGY

DISSOLUTION OF MIANGO COMMUNITY TRANSITION COMMITTEE A. K. A. MIANGO ENERGY COMMITTEE ALIAS MIANGO ENERGY CONSUMERS' COMMITTEE AND A DISCLAIMER BY THE MIANGO CONCERNED CONSUMERS OF ENERGY

The Miango Community Electricity Transition Committee was inaugurated by the District Head of Miango on the 19th of September, 2015 at the Miango Electricity Consumers' Meeting held at Miango Rest Home Conference Centre. The Committee comprised:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Chief W. A. Chattalas | Chairman |
| 2. Mr. John Willy Iche | Secretary |
| 3. Mr. Haruna Jibo | Financial Secretary |
| 4. Mr. Emmanuel Benedict Zamfara | Treasurer |

The Committee was put in place to tackle the serious power supply challenges in Miango Community, by (1) working out a modality for the clearance of the debt owed to JEDC, and to clear the debt for the restoration of light to Miango Community and (2) by negotiating a JEDC to NESCO (Nig.) Ltd transition as agreed by the Miango Community.

While the Committee was constituted as a mere Committee and while its mandates were restricted to the above terms, the Committee moved itself from the Electricity Consumer Protection Committee that it was, to an Energy Project Enterprise, without due consultation from the Community.

In order to hoodwink the Community into believing that the JEDC - NESCO transition canvassed for had been attained, the Committee first demanded from JEDC every customer's consumption details allegedly with a view to knowing their consumption statuses for the purpose of defraying their cumulative debts to enable the Community start on a clean slate.

However, before the individual consumers' consumption details could be finally processed, the Committee approached JEDC and informed it that it was no longer interested in having individual consumers' accounts but that all accounts should be collapsed into a single account. This was done. All individual customers' electricity accounts with JEDC were collapsed into a single account (**Account No. 627943**) without a prior consultation with, or knowledge and consent of, the electricity consumers or the Miango Community.

The Committee then proceeded to proclaim, with the aid of a megaphone, round Miango Community, a switch-over from JEDC to NESCO (Nig.) Ltd. It then asked JEDC and its staff to stay off Miango Community as far as electricity issue was concern; that the Committee would collect the bills and remit them to JEDC itself.

By keeping JEDC and its Staff off Miango Community, the Community was made to believe that the JEDC - Nescos (Nig.) Ltd transition had come. Consequently, the Committee resorted to the use of hired staff, mostly its cronies, for bills collection, claiming it would keep the money until it was enough to offset the debts and then transit to NESCO.

In order to underscore this falsehood, the Committee resorted to erratic issuance of electricity consumption receipts in the name "Miango Community Energy Consumers' Committee" (Miango Community Energy Project Enterprise") with a deceptive hand-written inscription of "NESCO Bill" on them.

Besides, it embarked on the registration of the foregoing enterprise, the Miango Energy Project Enterprise, wherein it employed its cronies and paid salaries from revenue generated from the consumers and engaged in other wasteful spending.

Barely five (5) years following its inauguration, the power supply challenges worsened with a concomitant rise in the Community Debt Profile, to JEDC, from the then about Thirty Eight Million Naira (N38,000,000.00) only, at its inauguration to over Two Hundred Million Naira (N200,000,000.00).

Thus, acting under the pretext of flushing out the middle man and perceived problem of the Community, JEDC, the Committee arrogated to itself powers that were beyond its mandates including collection of light bills from consumers without issuance or prompt issuance of receipt, single-handed determination of customers' energy consumption and bill and what to do and what not to do with the bills collected, non-or partial remittance of money collected from the consumers to the distribution company, failure to render a proper account of the revenue collected over the years, failure to settle network for a smooth transition to NESCO, failure to service accrued debts, resulting in mass disconnection of consumers' light.

Still, in order to cover the Committee's malfeasance, its appointor, wrote a letter Hon. Commissioner, Plateau State Ministry of Water Resources and Energy, alleging NESCO's (Nig.) Ltd disconnection of the Community light, knowing full well that it was JEDC that disconnected the light for non-remittance, by the Committee, of the monies collected from the Consumers. The reference to NESCO as the entity responsible for the disconnection was to explain away the Committee's claim that the Community was done with JEDC as far as electricity supply was concern.

In all these, a series of meetings have been held over the protracted Miango Community energy crisis. In one of such meetings, the meeting of Stakeholders on Miango Community Lingered Power Situation, held on the 8th of July, 2021, at the old Government House (Executive Chambers), Jos, which had in attendance Government officials and some prominent personalities, the Committee was asked, as part of the resolutions, to produce a financial report for the five (5) years of its stewardship which should be submitted to the District Head for onward submission to the Paramount Ruler of the Irigwe Chieftdom, the Brra Ngwe. The Committee has not, up to date, submitted any such report to the Paramount Ruler through the District Head of Miango as resolved.

Based on the above stated reasons, and all other reasons ancillary to these, the **Miango District Council of Chiefs and Stakeholders' on Electricity** have, with effect from the 1st of February, 2021 dissolved the Miango Energy Committee and the Committee has, since then, ceased to be the representatives of energy consumers in Miango.

In the light of the official dissolution of the Committee by the said Council of Chiefs and Stakeholders on Electricity as contained in the letter dated 13th October, 2022, addressed to the Regional Manager of the Jos Electricity Distribution, Jos Office, and signed by His Highness, Mr. Daniel Chega, the District Head of Miango, and His Royal Highness, Rev. Ronku Aka (Rtd.), the Brra Nggwe Rigwe, We, the Miango Concerned Consumers of Energy, hereby publicly disclaim:

1. The above dissolved Committee and its constituent members;
2. Any further transaction by the Committee or any of its members on behalf of the Miango Community under whatever guise;
3. Anything already done by the Committee or yet to be done by the Committee under the cloak of NESCO (Nig.) Ltd.;
4. The Committee's claim of Miango Community's transition from JEDC to NESCO (Nig.) Ltd.

N. B: Whoever ignores this does so at his or her own risk.

In conclusion, we equally wish to and hereby proclaim that Miango Community is not yet under NESCO (Nig.) Ltd but still under Jos Electricity Distribution Company.

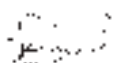
We therefore appeal to the Management of Jos Electricity Distribution Company to immediately restore power to Miango Community and thereafter commence the enumeration of the consumers and consequently restore our individual accounts that were collapsed into a single account without our consent.

Thank you,

For: Miango Concerned Consumers of Electricity,



Mr. Emmanuel John Kadiya
Secretary



Chief Daniel Geh
Chairman



Purging the fuzz

A lot of our institutions have come under the microscope for thorough examination for the roles they play in shaping the society. Some of these institutions have, to say the least, not lived up to expectations of the people. Because these institutions interact on a daily basis with the citizenry, they have received flakes for their failure to carry out their constitutional mandates to the best of their abilities. And, since these institutions are key to the development of the society, we cannot fail to continue to put them on the spotlight to critically examine their activities so that they can change as they continue to serve the populace well.

One such institution that has acquired a very bad and sordid reputation is the Nigeria Police Force. To be sure, there are very good police officers in the police force at the moment. These officers are the shining lights and the light bearers if the institution. They are few and all their efforts are being overwhelmed by the activities of the bad eggs who should not have been in the force in the first place but for the bad recruitment process.

But why have the police turned out to what it is today? The society cannot absolve itself totally from sharing in the blame for what has befallen our beloved police force. It is, to say the truth, a reflection of the whole of our society and the contradictions therein. Even though it was set on a faulty foundation, we have had several opportunities to correct the anomaly but we have not risen to the occasion. The force like it is being portrayed is not people friendly neither is it open and people centred. The regimented nature of the force has not allowed it to be people centred and purpose driven.

Sadly, the leadership of the institution at the

various levels have not helped matters as they too have been steeped in corruption and sleaze. Some of the DPOs, (Divisional Police Officers) have been anything but criminals themselves. They are not in the police to serve but to be serviced. They push the officers to do untoward things that smear the image of the generality of an institution saddled with the protection and defense of the civil population. I have had some personal encounters with police officers who see themselves as mini-gods. I have had encounters too with very good, hard working and thoroughly professional officers whose conducts have served to lift the force.

Sadly, Police officers sent out on duty and not given the wherewithal to carry out their responsibility. These officers of the law resort to begging to enable them do their duty and along the way, they are compromised. Fuel to run

“ One such institution that has acquired a very bad and sordid reputation is the Nigeria Police Force. To be sure, there are very good police officers in the police force at the moment. These officers are the shining lights and the light bearers if the institution. They are few and all their efforts are being overwhelmed by the activities of the bad eggs who should not have been in the force in the first place but for the bad recruitment process. ”

their vehicles for patrol are forcefully collected from black-marketers selling their wares in gallons. These does not in anyway speak well for the reputation of an organization that should protect and serve people. Unfortunately, too officers of the force seem to pay scant regards to the equipment entrusted in their care. Give them brand new vehicles, come back after six months, you would not recognize that vehicle. Their maintenance culture is not only horrible but out of this world. Rickety vehicles, dirty and unkept barracks have become the identity of a once revered institution.

What prompted this piece on the whole is the management of the force in the states. Some Commissioners of Police in the States are not supposed to be in those position. Some of them have performed excellently while some need to have a look at their activities and re-examine their actions. A situation where a commissioner's bills are being picked in turn by his DPOs does not speak well of a leader. This not only exerts a lot of pressure on these officers who in turn are forced to make their men in the field indulge in activities that are anti-people and counter-productive. How can such an individual justify making others sweat while he relaxes and carry on as if all is normal?

Again, it speaks to the kind of institutions we run these days. How do we expect to run on auto pilot when we do not service and ensure all that needs to carry out a smooth sail is provided? Are releases being done for these institutions to do their responsibilities? How many times are such releases made in a year? Unless we address these and many others we would keep lamenting about our failed system.

News

Lalong, Tinubu hold town hall meeting, woo workers

By PALANG KASMI

THE APC Presidential Campaign Council led by its Director General and Governor of Plateau State, Simon Bako Lalong have met organised labour promising a better deal if elected in 2023.

The DG gave the assurance during a town hall meeting with the organised Labour in Abuja, Tuesday, December 19.

During the meeting, presidential candidate of the APC, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu gave an insight into what his relationship with the Labour will be when elected into office.

Asiwaju who said his manifesto, "Renewed Hope" captures his plans for reviving the economy and boosting production, said the Nigerian worker will have a greater deal under his presidency.

He said his relationship with the Labour movement goes deep as he worked side by side with some of its frontline leaders in the fight for the enthronement of democracy many years ago.

Tinubu explained that his vision for Nigeria is anchored on creating economic opportunities through industrialisation, fighting corruption and enhancing security as well as harnessing the potentials of every part of the country. Jobs, he said must be created for the youths which will make the economy grow while crime goes down.

He said Nigerian workers apart from deserving living wages, must be given the opportunity to own houses, access quality healthcare, get credit to afford basic necessities of life as well as have their children get quality education through student loans among others.

Tinubu assured that Labour will be carried along in the governance process as he believes in collective



Tinubu

responsibility which is evident from his antecedents as Governor of Lagos State where he was able to marshal resources and guarantee the survival of the state despite drought orchestrated by the then federal government.

Director General, APC Presidential Campaign Council and Governor of Plateau State, Simon Bako Lalong appreciated the organised Labour for giving the APC presidential candidate the opportunity to share his vision with them and to also explain how he intends to impact their lives and that of Nigerians in general when elected.

NLC President, Comrade Ayuba Wabba while presenting a charter of demands by the workers said the Nigerian worker is the one that really creates value but yet has been under-paid, under-employed and even exploited both in and out of service.

He said workers want a living wage, social security, controlled inflation and a regime of energy security that is based on local refining of Nigerian crude rather than

import of refined products which has been used to siphon money belonging to all Nigerians under the guise of subsidy.

Also speaking, TUC President, Comrade Peter Osifo said the Nigerian worker is tired of being shortchanged and left with no option than to embark on strike to press for his rights.

He said in the next dispensation, the workers want to be part of a government that will be transparent, responsible and prudent in order to manage the resources of the nation rather than plunging generations yet unborn into debt.

Deputy DG PCC and former NLC President, Adams Oshiomole said Asiwaju presents the best deal for Nigerian workers because of his antecedents which clearly show that he is compassionate, strategic and open to carrying all sectors along.

He said a vote for Tinubu will make the Nigerian worker comfortable enough to give his best for the growth of the nation.

By PALANG KASMI

Contractor to meet deadline on flyover construction

THE contractor handling the Jos British American Junction flyover and dualisation of Lamingo road has been commended for striving to meet the deadline for the job.

A statement Monday, by the Director of Press to the Plateau State Governor, Dr. Makut Simon Macham indicates that work has progressed steadily after the last visit to the site, by Governor Simon Bako Lalong.

The statement said during the last assessment visit, the Governor had commended the progress of work and charged the contractor to work hard at meeting the completion dateline.

"However, a recent visit

to the site shows that the contractor has commenced application of stone-base on some sections between the second and third bridge; setting up of parapets; back-filling of the abutment; further earthworks; welding on the third bridge before casting among others", said the statement.

The statement pointed that the flyover is one of the projects that is billed for commissioning in early 2023 as the Lalong Rescue Administration delivers on its projects which were either inherited or initiated.

"Some of the projects awaiting commissioning

are the High Court Headquarters Complex Jos; General Hospital Mabudi, Langtang South; General Hospital Kwall, Kanke Local Government; Shendam Internal/Byepass Roads and bridges; Kalong-Angwan Dadi Bridge; Potato Value Chain Processing Centres; NUJ Remodelled Centre among others," stressed the statement.

According to the statement, work has resumed on the Lalong Legacy Projects across the 17 Local Government Areas, and they are also expected to be delivered and commissioned before the end of the administration.

NYSC urges corps members to be security conscious

THE Acting Director-General, National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), Mrs Christy Ubah has urged corps members to be vigilant and avoid night outings during their service year.

She made the call on yesterday during the closing ceremony of the 2022 Batch "C" Stream II Orientation Course, at the NSYC Permanent Orientation Camp, Wailo in Ganjuwa Local Government Area of Bauchi State.

Represented by the NYSC Coordinator in the state, Alhaji Namadi Abubakar, she also advised them to avoid night parties, visit to dangerous places, free car rides and gifts from strangers.

"The NYSC management is committed towards making adequate provisions for your welfare and security.

"Accordingly, we are in

constant liaison with security agencies and other critical stakeholders with a view to ensuring your safety as well as addressing other essential needs for a fulfilling service year," she said.

The NYSC boss urged corps employers to regard corps members as their children, accept them, make necessary provisions for their welfare and proper mentoring to enable them to develop their potentials.

"I also call on other stakeholders, including state and local government authorities as well as traditional rulers to give the necessary encouragement to the corps members.

"Let me use this medium to thank the federal government for its unwavering support to the scheme," she said.

Gov. Bala Mohammed, represented by his deputy, Sen. Baba Tela described the scheme as relevant to

national unity and development.

He charged the corps members to add value through execution of meaningful Community Development Service projects in their host communities.

"You are, therefore, expected to respect the culture, norms and traditions of these communities so that you can be truly integrated into them," he said.

The governor said his administration has accorded premium on security and welfare of the corps members, stressing that they are expected to be law abiding and good ambassadors of the scheme.

Also speaking, the Commissioner for Youths and Sports, Alhaji Manu Soro admonished the corps members to put in their best towards the development of their host communities.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that 1,250 corps members deployed to the state completed the orientation exercise.

operation. The PPRO said that the Command is intensifying efforts to apprehend the fleeing members of the syndicate by the grace of God.

Lalong approves refund of pilgrims' money

By JIDAUNA DARING

PLATEAU State Governor and Chairman Northern Governor's Forum (NGF), Rt. Hon. Simon Bako Lalong has approved the refund of money for intended Pilgrims who were not able to make it to this year's Hajj.

This was issued in a statement signed by the Public Relation Officer (PRO) Plateau State Muslim Pilgrim Welfare Board (PSMPWB), Namu Sulaiman Sanusi and made available to THE NIGERIA STANDARD in Jos.

This statement further called on all affected intended 2022 Pilgrim who could not perform the Hajj operation for this year to come to the board office for their refunds. It also revealed that refund will not be given by proxy to any affected persons, adding that all documents are to be presented for confirmation by all the affected



Lalong

Hajj members before collecting the refund. It equally added that those

who may wish to roll-over their money are expected to come to the board for preliminary preparation

Police neutralize 12 bandits, kidnappers

From ABBAS GUNGURA, Bauchi

BAUCHI State Police Command has in its efforts to stem the menace of banditry in the state, succeeded in neutralizing 12 bandits/kidnappers

including their kingpin, Madaki Mansur who has been terrorizing Alkaleri Local Government Area of the state and its neighbouring states of Gombe, Taraba and Plateau States.

The Police Public Relations Officer, SP Mohammed Wakil through a press statement in Bauchi said "on the 19th December 2022 at about 0230hrs, a joint operation of security operatives engaged suspected bandits/kidnappers in 4 different hideouts; Mansur, Digare, Gwana and Dajin Madam in Alkaleri forest".

According to SP Wakil, "as a result of hot exchange of superior fire-power by the Bauchi Police Command operatives, it left twelve (12) of the kidnappers neutralized while others were subdued, dislodged, and scampered in disarray into the nearby bushes with possible gunshot wounds and abandoned their camp".

He explained that consequent upon the encounter, weapons and operational motorcycles were recovered during the



Foreign News

Russia drone attack targets 'critical infrastructure' in Kyiv

UKRAINE'S capital has been targeted by a wave of drone attacks by Russia's military that again struck "critical infrastructure".

About 20 drones were deployed to Kyiv and the surrounding area early Monday, according to officials, with air defence systems destroying about 15 of the unmanned aerial vehicles.

Air raid sirens blasted in the early morning before the sky was declared clear at 5:50am (07:50 GMT).

Russia's drone attack caused "fairly serious" damage in Kyiv and three areas were left without power supply, Governor Oleksiy Kuleba said.

Russia unleashed 35 "kamikaze" drones as many people slept, hitting critical infrastructure in and around Kyiv in Moscow's third air attack on the Ukrainian capital in six days.

The Kyiv city administration said on its Telegram account that a critical infrastructure point was hit, but did not provide further details.

"The enemy is attacking the capital," the administration said.

Russian forces were using barrage ammunition from Shaheds, Iran-made drones that have pummeled Kyiv and other cities in recent weeks, it said.

Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko confirmed on Monday that explosions had occurred.

"As a result of the attack on the capital, critical infrastructure facilities were damaged," Klitschko said on the Telegram messaging app.

"Energy and heating engineers are working to quickly stabilise the situation with energy and heat supply."

Kuleba also reported private houses were also hit and at least two people were injured. No deaths were reported.

Although the capital seemed the main target of the latest Russian attacks, Ukraine's military said other places in the country were also hit.

The air force said on Telegram it was able to destroy 30 of at least 35 self-explosives drones Russia launched across the country from the eastern side of the Azov Sea.

The attack follows a Russian bombardment of several cities, including Kyiv, on Friday that triggered widespread power outages and plunged swaths of Ukraine into darkness in the cold winter temperatures.

Russia has increasingly relied on large-scale aerial attacks in its invasion of Ukraine, which began on February 24, after a series of battlefield setbacks.

Ukraine's government, the United Nations human rights office, and the head of the European Commission have said the attacks constitute war crimes by threatening civilians and stifling basic services in a country where an



Zelensky

estimated 18 million people are already in need of humanitarian aid.

For its part, Moscow has maintained that such attacks are militarily legitimate.

The EU and the US have also ratcheted up sanctions on Iran in an attempt to target people and companies allegedly involved in the country's drone industry.

In November, Tehran admitted to selling Russia a

"limited number of drones" prior to the invasion but has maintained it does not support either side in the conflict.

Meanwhile, Ukrainian officials have increasingly warned that Moscow may be planning a renewed offensive in the new year, which could include a new ground assault on Kyiv, although analysts have questioned if Russia has the resources for such an operation.

Five people died after gunman open fire

POLICE responded to reports of the shooting at the building in Vaughan, about 30km (19 miles) north of Toronto, at 19:20 (12:20 GMT) on Sunday, shooting the suspect dead there.

Another injured person has been taken to hospital in a serious condition.

Authorities are investigating the motive, including a possible connection between the gunman and the victims.

York police Chief Jim MacSween said attending officers were met with a "horrendous scene", with numerous deceased victims found in different flats of the building.

Mr Mac Sween said there

was no ongoing threat to the public, and York police said those evacuated could return to their homes.

While it has fewer mass shootings than neighbour the US, Canada has recently seen an increase in gun violence prompting recent legislation to ban handguns.

Fiji's main political rivals deadlocked after parliamentary election

Fiji's two main rival political parties headed by former coup leaders are deadlocked after Wednesday's general election, final results show.

The Fiji First of Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama and opposition leader Sitiveni Rabuka's People's Alliance will each get 26

UNIONS must ensure there will be "sufficient" staffing during this week's ambulance strike to protect patients, the health secretary says.

Workers in England and Wales will walk out on Wednesday in a dispute over pay, but life-threatening emergencies will be responded to.

Unions say discussions were still taking place with ambulance trusts to draw up detailed plans for cover.

Steve Barclay said there is a lack of clarity about what is being offered.

He said it was for the unions to ensure they "meet their obligations" for emergency cover so that people in crisis get the care they need.

But Unite leader Sharon Graham, whose union is co-ordinating the ambulance strikes with Unison and GMB, said Mr Barclay will "have to carry the can if patients suffer".

"It's Steve Barclay who is holding the country to ransom," she said.

Unions say the government has the power to stop the ambulance strike - and action by nurses on Tuesday - if it signalled a willingness to discuss pay.

The ambulance walkouts will involve paramedics as well as control room staff and support workers.

The action by the three main

Ambulance strike cover must be sufficient- Health secretary



Barclay

ambulance unions - Unison, GMB and Unite - will affect non-life threatening calls, meaning those who suffer trips, falls or other injuries may not receive treatment.

Welsh Ambulance Service CEO Jason Killings said about 15% of callouts were for issues which were immediately life threatening, although this varied across

the regions.

He said a provision was in place for a "full return to duty, should there be a declared major incident", such as a terrorist attack.

Members of GMB are set to follow up the action with another walkout on 28 December.

The government's emergency Cobra committee will meet this morning to discuss how to lessen the impact of the ambulance strike. Ministers have already announced members of the military will be on standby to help out.

The unions representing NHS workers have asked for above-inflation pay rises for staff.

The governments in England and Wales have given staff an average rise of 4.75%, with a guaranteed minimum of £1,400.

Mr Barclay has said the government's pay award met the requirements of the recommendations of the independent NHS Pay Review Body and what was being asked for was "unaffordable".

While visiting an emergency call centre in Chelmsford on Sunday, Mr Barclay declined to be drawn on reports the government had ruled out a one-off payment for NHS workers to break the strikes deadlock, saying discussions between his department and the prime minister on the issue were private.

He added: "But I'm keen to continue a dialogue with the trade unions because there's a range of issues that matter to staff," he said, referring to issues such as technology and safety.

Both Unison and the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) union have threatened further strikes in the new year if an agreement is not reached.

Unison's Sara Gorton urged Mr Barclay to "do the right" thing both for NHS workers and patients and "host genuine talks and put a better pay offer on the table".

"Ministers should take their heads out of the sand, stop pretending they can't boost wages and stop ignoring a worsening staffing crisis," she said.

Liberians protest hardship

Demonstrators hold a banner as they protest over the economic hardship and President Weah's prolonged absence from the country, in Paynesville, a suburb of Monrovia, Liberia, December 17, 2022. Hundreds of protesters gathered on Saturday at the outer section of the Samuel Kanyon Doe Sports Complex in Monrovia to protest against

soaring costs of living, a day before President George Weah's return from a 48-day trip abroad.

The protest was organised by the Coalition of Collaborating Parties - an opposition alliance in the West African country - but reports of internal scuffles kept only the Alternative National Congress (ANC) in the fold.

From as early as 9am,

protesters gathered at various locations around the city, including the party headquarters of the two opposition parties, chanting protest songs as they walked to the stadium, Liberia's largest. "We tiyah [are tired of] suffering", some of their banners read.

ANC supporters also wore shirts with the face of their candidate Alexander Cummings, one of Weah's two challengers for the presidency in the 2023 election.

Since early December, the price of rice - Liberia's staple food - increased from \$15 to \$17.50 for each 25kg bag. This increase came off the heels of a commodity shortage that has led to long queues and inflated prices of rice and other items, partly due to disruption of global supply as Russia's war continues in Ukraine.

According to the World Food Programme, an estimated 64

percent of people in Liberia - one of the world's poorest countries - live below the poverty line and 1.3 million of those live in extreme poverty.

A 2019 government payroll harmonisation process made things worse, as it effectively reduced the salary of government workers since then.

The protests were held a day before Weah's return on Sunday from his trip, which included a visit to Qatar to watch his son play for the USA football team in the FIFA World Cup.

The president, whose 1995 win of the Ballon d'Or - the annual award for the world's best player - remains the only time an African has done so, also made stops in Morocco, Egypt and France.

While the presidency has said the trip was an official one and government officials have claimed that the trip has produced dividends for the country, opposition figures say it was a waste of scarce resources.



Weah

Foreign Commentary

N Korea completes 'important' test of spy satellite

N Korea has released satellite imagery of South Korea's Seoul and Incheon cities presumed to have been shot during test.

NORTH Korea has conducted an "important, final phase" test in the development of a military reconnaissance satellite, which the country plans to complete by April 2023, North Korean state media has reported.

The Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) reported on Monday that North Korea's National Aerospace Development Administration conducted the test on Sunday at the country's Sohae satellite launching station in Cholsan, in North Pyongan Province.

A rocket carrying what was described as a "test-piece satellite" — including multiple cameras, image transmitters and receivers, a control device and a storage battery — was launched at a "lofted angle" to an altitude of 500km (311 miles), according to KCNA.

According to KCNA, the test was designed to review satellite imaging capabilities, data transmission, and a ground control system.

"We confirmed important technical indicators such as camera operating technology in the space environment, data processing and transmission ability of the communication devices, tracking and control accuracy of the ground control system," an unnamed North Korean aerospace spokesperson said in the KCNA dispatch.

North Korea plans to complete "preparations for the first military reconnaissance satellite by April, 2023," the official said in the KCNA report.

South Korea's Yonhap news agency reported on Monday that KCNA also released satellite imagery of the South Korean capital "Seoul and its adjacent city of Incheon presumed to be shot from the test-piece satellite".

On Sunday, North Korea also fired two medium-range ballistic missiles, which flew for an estimated 500km (311 miles) before splashing down in the sea off the country's eastern coast. On Friday, Pyongyang announced that it had tested a high-thrust solid-fuel engine which experts said would facilitate quicker and more mobile launch of its ballistic missile arsenal.

In an emergency meeting on Sunday, top South Korean security officials deplored what they described as North Korea's continued provocations that they said came despite "the plight of its citizens moaning in hunger and cold due to a serious food shortage".

South Korea will respond by boosting trilateral security cooperation with the United States and Japan, according to



Jong Un

South Korea's presidential office.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has promised to develop high-tech weaponry — including spy satellites and tactical nuclear

weapons — as a means to both deter and provide real-time information on military actions by the US and regional allies South Korea and Japan, which

he claims are threatening his country.

Pyongyang has test-fired an unprecedented number of ballistic

missiles this year, including a Hwasong-17 intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) — called the 'monster missile' — in defiance of international sanctions.

On Friday, the Japanese government adopted a national security strategy that would allow it to carry out preemptive strikes and double its military spending to give itself more offensive footing against threats from China and North Korea.

The strategy marks a significant break from Japan's strictly self-defence-only post-World War II military posture. The Japanese strategy names China as "the biggest strategic challenge", ahead of North Korea and Russia, to Japan's efforts to ensure peace, safety and stability.

Japan's Defence Ministry also said on Sunday that it had detected a fleet of five Chinese warships, including an aircraft carrier off the southern Japanese island of Okidaitojima the previous day. Ministry officials said Chinese fighter jets and helicopters were engaging in takeoff and landing exercises on the carrier and that Japan responded by scrambling fighter jets and dispatching a destroyer to the area.

SOURCE: NEWS AGENCIES



A drill by North Korea's Korean People's Army artillery units

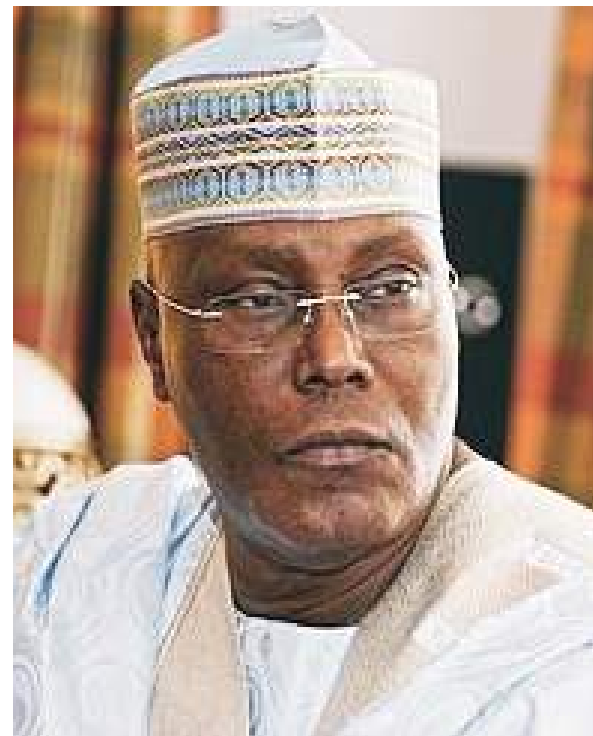
Feature



Tinubu



Obi



Atiku

BY CHINDAPBA NGOP

2023: Politics and religion in Nigeria

WHENEVER the subject of religion pops-up on social media as it relates to politics in this country, one could see how apoplectic and combative voices seem to dominate the discourse because of the sensitive nature of religion and always make me to recall the popular diction of Karl Marx who referred to religion as the "opinion of the people," describing religion as a sacred or spiritual booze that controls the whole human existence. Marx added that religion could "reduce the pain of everyday life" and it may also be a "source of harm in its own right".

The choice of the All Progressive Congress (APC) and its presidential candidate, former Governor of Lagos State, Senator Asiwaju Ahmed Bola Tinubu to nominate his running mate, Senator Kashim Shettima who is also a Muslim has continued to generate mixed feelings among some northern Christians and many Nigerians who also feel dissatisfied with the party's same faith option. The ruling party's decision has incredibly redounded to the disadvantage of not only the party, but it has equally plunged religions and their leaders as well into the murky waters of Nigeria polity.

In the Nigerian context, the relationship between religion and politics has never been cordial overtime. There is this mutual suspicion between the two subjects of thought and the misapplication of religion in Nigerian politics can be highly inflammable and dangerous at this critical moment, more so, in a country where its people are extraordinarily religious but their conducts have remained scary, extremely ungodly and shallow.

Religion has been a big factor in our polity and it is becoming difficult to draw a borderline between politics and religion, even though, most Nigerian politicians often times use religion as a manipulative skill to play on the sensibilities of Nigerians. However, after the 1993 Presidential elections that were held under the two party system of General Ibrahim Babangida's (rtd) regime that indicated Moshood Kashimawo Abiola, a Muslim and his ruling

mate Babagana Kingibe also a Muslim of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) defeated Bashir Tofa a Muslim and Sylvester Ugho a Christian Igbo of the National Republican Convention (NRC), political parties have always observed an unwritten agreement of considering religious and regional sensitivities in the national elections.

Despite the wild criticisms that greeted the muslim-muslim choice by the ruling party, All Progressive Congress (APC), a lot of Nigerians have also argued that there is nothing strange and wrong about the same faith ticket of the party, after all, politics is a game of number, therefore they view the decision of the party and its presidential aspirant as a mere political calculation to win the election. Some political analysts have equally argued that the solutions to the multi-dimensional challenges that have bedeviled the country is not solely located in the religion of individuals which is strictly private but it is based on personal conviction, competency and merit.

Rotimi Akeredolu is quoted in *Premium Times* of August 10, 2022, saying that, "Any so-called religious leader who ignores knowledge and competence as a necessary criteria to measure leadership capacity is an apostate. The earlier we stop using religion to destroy the unity of the country the better for the nation as the country is not government by religious postulations or principles as being perceived by some sections of the country".

The wild criticisms and the over emphasis on the ruling party, All Progressive Congress (APC), choice of the same faith ticket noticeably, CAN, the former secretary of the Federation, SGF, Babachir Lawal, the former Speaker of House of Representatives, Rt. Hon. Yakubu Dogara and even some eminent Muslims themselves and Islamic scholars have expressed strong disapproval with the party's decision of fielding Muslim as a running mate of the presidential candidate. On the other hand, however, the sharp reactions by

Nigerians is an indication, that the Nigerian people still believe, that same faith can be a reservoir of hope in the ruling party.

Sadly, there are some groups of APC stalwarts who felt slighted are shouting bombastically not because of the general and genuine concern for the need to bridge the religious imbalances but because they are worthy for consideration in the party simply because and perhaps they do not possess any electoral value in their respective states and localities. These group of party faithful, out of mischief and hierarchy are hiding under the guise of religion to create an unhealthy political environment by amplifying religious bigotry to set Nigerians particularly the poor and the vulnerable on themselves in other pave way for them to gain political power.

A former secretary to the Government of the Federation and former Chieftain of the ruling party, APC, Babachir Lawal who have recently moved to Labour party, LP, and his group have vowed that the All Progressive Congress (APC) will not win in the forth coming presidential elections because the presidential candidate and the party ignored the choice for a Christians from the North and went for a Muslim-Muslim ticket. Infact, it is being alleged that Babachir could not win in his polling Unit in 2019 election even as a respected Christian, a professor and a Pastor. It would be recalled that in one of his (Lawal) interviews with BBC, in November, the former SGF in his words said, "I am not for Bola

Tinubu now, I am not for Muslim-Muslim ticket. It is Bola who did not want to go with us, he chose where he wanted to go, and we told him that we will not vote for him if he did a Muslim-Muslim ticket. PDP discussed with us, and they agreed to do what we want if we support them and we agreed to support them. You see the problem of the northerners, if you say you are a Christians, it is difficult for us to get a job".

Quite regrettable isn't it? That this remark is coming from someone who has occupied one of the highest positions in the country, who also was in position to influence jobs for the Northern Christian or Speaks about the lopsidedness in the service when he was still in the service of government? The argument by the former SGF is highest display of hypocrisy.

In defense of his decision for Muslim-Muslim ticket the presidential candidate of All Progressive Congress (APC) said, "All my life, my decisions regarding the teams are is, guided by the principles of competence, innovation, compassion, integrity, those principles are non-Negotiable. Without them, there cannot be victory, there can be no joy". While his running mate senator Kashim Shettima responded to the unending criticisms; "we all witnessed the decisive blows dealt the bigotry dispensed by a hopeless minority, ahead of the APC Presidential primaries, last June. The futility of the propaganda, showed that Nigerians aren't the unthinking

robots some are quick to call them. Nigerians are national beings with the capability to tell an invidious agenda apart from sincere concern for them. "They are not the uncritical consumers of chick bait and false hoods, as some of us think they are". They see through the bigots, masquerading as patriots and very importantly, they know those who represent their interests, even in the quietest and darkest of meeting rooms" Shettima said.

While some religious leaders such as the Archbishop emeritus of Abuja, His Eminence, John Cardinal Onaiyekan described the APC's Muslim-Muslim ticket as a party's political decision or a calculation of solicitation for votes, which is not binding on Nigerians. Archbishop of Sokoto Diocese, Mathew Kuka on his part has warned Nigerians to be weary of the manipulative tendencies of politicians and not to kill themselves for them. The politicians are all fighting over the national cake.

In any case, if anyone feels aggrieved by Muslim-Muslim or Christian-Christian ticket, there are 18 registered political parties in Nigeria and there is no constitutional provision or rule that stop Nigerians from making their choices from the multiple choices.

After all, the parties can have their ways but the people should have their say. More importantly, 2023 general elections, with special emphasis on the top job (the presidency) is a decisive moment for the nation and its people.

"Any so-called religious leader who ignores knowledge and competence as a necessary criteria to measure leadership capacity is an apostate. earlier we stop using religion to destroy the unity of the country the better for the nation as the country is not government by religious postulations or principles as being perceived by some sections of the country".

EVERYONE'S WORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Living

Learn to keep secrets to your self

HAVE you ever told someone more they need to know?

No, but after having a phone conversation, you think you should have said less.

All things being equal, you are not alone. This is only for you, so don't read it anyone else.

The truth is that a lot of us have a bad habit of wearing our hearts on our sleeves. Even people who don't know us will be able to see us. We don't need that at all. Secrets are what make life taste good, all things being equal, so we don't really need them. Keeping a clear separation between your personal life and your professional life is a difficult (but important) skill to master. You must be very careful about who you share your secrets with, because not everyone wants to be nice.

Importantly, you should be careful so that the small things in your own life can't be used to hurt you. It's good to have a basic list of personal information you should never give to other people. In case you don't know how to make your own rundown, we're here to help you out! Indeed, we've added a few insider facts that you should always try to keep to yourself, no matter how strong the desire is to share them with everyone.

As Joan Collins says, "The secret to having an individual life is not answering too many questions about it."

The following is a list of things. is there 6 things you shouldn't tell your friends?

1. In the past, I was angry.
We all have bad stories about our own lives that we can tell about people we don't like. It may be hard for you to think of those classmates or former partners who made you angry years ago, but maybe you still do. There's no doubt about it. In every case, it's best to let go of these feelings and look into them as little as possible. This is true for you as well as for other people, because pessimism is bad for you. To feel and to pay attention. People like to talk to people who are positive and have interesting stories to share, not people who worry about people they don't know. Relinquish anything that's making you stressed. Try to focus on the present, and you'll see that more and more people will be eager to



talk to you.

2. Material things

Obviously, some things in life are worth more than they cost. It's true that sometimes we can't help but brag about the new car we just bought or the new phone we just bought for a low price. Parks and Recreation may not tell you this, but your partners don't want to know about how you've been taking care of yourself. It can make you look like you're too focused on how much money things are worth instead of how important they are. The best frill is being unobtrusive. You should try to spread it all over your talks.

3. Goals for the Future

You might think it's crazy, but there is science behind the fact that you're more likely to reach your long-term goals if you don't tell anyone else about them. At the point when you tell others what you want to do in the future, you almost feel like the satisfaction of



achieving the goal has been taken away from you. Accordingly, you don't work as hard to get it. As long as you don't talk about your goals, though, you have a much better chance of getting them done. What's more, when you've done that, you can tell the whole world about it.

In this case, your income

Only people who work at your bank should be able to find out more about how much you make. It's not a good idea to talk about able to stop them. That way, you won't be in a situation where you don't know how much you're getting paid.

money in public because no one can tell what anyone else's financial situation is. It might look like you're bragging about something that doesn't have any real value. Cash, as well as

information about accounts, can break up relationships in a bad way. When your financial situation is made public, people start to look at you in different ways without you being able to stop them. That way, you won't be in a situation where you don't know how much you're getting paid.

5. Great things have been done.

Some people say that good deeds always bring good luck. That's true, but if you start bragging about it, it changes into a completely different story. You should never be afraid to do well. In this way, you're taking away the good you've already done. Many of the world's best humanitarians aren't well-known for a good reason. There should be more attention paid to those you're helping and less to yourself when you do something kind. In this

way, you're taking away the good you've already done. Many of the world's best humanitarians aren't well-known for a good reason. There should be more attention paid to those you're helping and less to yourself when you do something kind.

6. Problems in the family

If it's your distant family or your close family, keep the issues under wraps, no matter who they are. Try not to get people's trust mixed up. As someone who is close to these people, you've been told about these secrets. They haven't let you tell them to everyone in your group of friends, though. They had faith in you, and breaking that faith is the most terrible thing you could do. Be aware of what others know that you don't. Because of this, you can expect them to treat you the same way.



THE NIGERIA STANDARD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Health

Causes of low back pain in women

PMS is a condition many women get before their periods. It has many potential symptoms, and you likely won't have all of them. Broadly, symptoms include:

- physical symptoms, such as: lower back pain, headache, fatigue, bloating, emotional and behavioral symptoms, such as: Mood swings, food cravings, anxiety, trouble concentrating.

PMS usually starts a few days before your period, and it ends within a day or two after your period starts.

Premenstrual dysmorphic disorder (**PMDD**) **Endometriosis**

Endometriosis is a condition where the tissue that lines the uterus, known as endometrial tissue, grows outside the uterus.

With endometriosis, this tissue often grows on the ovaries, fallopian tubes, and other tissues lining the pelvis. It may even grow around the urinary tract and bowel.

Pain is the most common symptom of endometriosis. Other symptoms include:

- very painful menstrual cramps
- pain during or after sex
- low back and pelvic pain
- pain with bowel movements or urination when you have your period

Endometriosis can also cause bleeding or spotting between your periods. Digestive issues like bloating and diarrhea can be common too, especially during your period. Endometriosis may make it harder for you to get pregnant.

Dysmenorrhea

Very painful menstruation is known as dysmenorrhea. Although it's usually manageable, it can be very severe in some people. You may be at a higher risk for dysmenorrhea if you:

- are under the age of 20
- are a smoker



- bleed heavily during your periods
- disease

Back pain is common during pregnancy. It happens as your center of gravity shifts, you gain weight, and your hormones relax your ligaments in preparation for birth.

For most women, back pain

happens between the fifth and seventh months of pregnancy, but it can start much earlier. You're more likely to have back pain during pregnancy if you already have lower back issues.

Other low back pain causes

There are also causes of lower back pain that can affect anyone of any sex. Some of the most common causes include

Muscle strain

A muscle or ligament strain is one of the most common causes of lower back pain.

If you continue doing the type of movement that strained the muscle, it can eventually cause back spasms.

Sciatica

Sciatica is a symptom caused by compression or injury of the sciatic nerve, the longest nerve in your body. This is the nerve that travels from your lower spine through your buttocks and down the back of your legs.

Sciatica causes a burning pain or a pain that feels like a shock in your low back. It usually extends down one leg. In severe cases, you may also have leg numbness and weakness.

A herniated disc is when one of the discs that cushions your vertebrae gets compressed and bulges outward. This can eventually cause the disc to rupture. Pain is caused by the bulging disc pressing on a nerve.

Disc degeneration

As you age, the discs in your spine can start wearing down. Degeneration can also be caused by injuries or repetitive motion. Most people have some disc degeneration after age 40. It doesn't always cause pain, but it can cause severe pain in some people.

Degeneration is most common in your neck and lower back. The pain may extend to your buttocks and thighs, and it may come and go.

Home remedies for low back pain

If your back pain is caused by conditions related to your menstrual period or a muscle strain, you may want to try the following home remedies to ease

your lower back pain:

- **A heating pad.** A heating pad applied to your back can boost circulation, which, in turn, allows nutrients and oxygen to get to the muscles in your back.

- A warm bath. A warm bath can improve circulation and reduce muscle pain and stiffness.

- OTC painkillers. Over-the-counter (OTC) nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), such as ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), naproxen (Aleve), and aspirin, can help ease back pain and other types of pain associated with your period.

- **Gentle stretching.** Regular stretching may help reduce lower back pain or prevent it from coming back.

- **An ice pack.** If your back pain is due to a muscle strain or an injury, an ice pack may help reduce inflammation, pain, and bruising. Ice packs work best within the first 48 hours of a muscle strain or injury.

- **A pillow.** Placing a pillow between your knees if you sleep on your side, or under your knees if you sleep on your back, may help ease back pain and discomfort.

- **Good lumbar support.** Using a chair with good lumbar support may help ease your back pain when sitting.

When to see a doctor

In some cases, it's important to follow up with a doctor to determine the cause of your back pain. See your doctor as soon as possible if you experience any of the following:

- you're unable to stand or walk
- your back pain is accompanied with a fever, or you're unable to control your bowel or bladder
- you have pain, numbness, or tingling in your legs
- the pain extends down your legs
- you have severe abdominal pain
- your back pain is severe and interferes with your daily life
- you have symptoms of endometriosis

- you have pain during pregnancy with vaginal bleeding, a fever, or pain while urinating

- you have back pain after a fall or accident

- there's no improvement in your pain after a week of home care

Depending on the cause of your lower back pain, your doctor may be able to provide treatment beyond home remedies or self-care measures.

Treatment options prescribed by your doctor may include:

- muscle relaxants
- cortisone injections
- hormonal birth control for endometriosis, dysmenorrhea, PMS, and PMDD
- antidepressants, which may relieve PMS and also help with certain types of back pain

- surgery for severe endometriosis, which involves removing endometrial tissue from areas where it has grown outside of the uterus



Editorial

As the year comes to a close

IN a couple of days, the year 2022 will come to a close. Though Nigerians are still optimistic that the remaining days of this year may end up a blessing, most of the citizens of this country are already traumatized over the unpleasant experiences of the past eleven months.

JUST like other preceding years; 2022 started on a promising note for all the citizenry. After the 2022 national budget was presented and endorsed by relevant government authorities, it became obvious that should it have been implemented to the letter, many people would find succor from the difficult economic calamities of the past. Knowing too well that the nation's pending national assignment was the forthcoming 2023 general elections, both stakeholders and the electorate had concluded that though some of these challenges are gargantuan, with resilience and pragmatic patriotism, Nigerians would at the end celebrate greater prospects ahead.

THROUGHOUT this past eleven months, the country has been struggling to overcome many insurmountable challenges ranging from the precarious menace of kidnapping, armed insurrection in the North East region, serious threat to national integration in the South East, disruptions in power supply, high level corruption and improper administrative accountability by public office holders and most recently scarce petroleum product supply which is further exacerbating avoidable hardship on Nigerians.

AFTER months of strike by the members of the Academic Staff Unions of Nigerian Universities, (ASSU), the Federal Government eventually managed to persuade striking lecturers to resume classes but their terms of agreement is still an issue of contestation. The inability of the government to find lasting solutions to this perennial down tooling by lecturers has led to the unnerving brain drain situation engulfing us in the past couple of years. This aside, government's administrative ingenuity in handling the health sector has also promoted medical tourism abroad not forgetting the recent recorded cases of over 3,000 medical doctors leaving the shores of this country seeking for greener pastures abroad. Another issue which has generated much concern this year is that of inflation affecting the living standard of vulnerable citizens, unemployment and youth restiveness across the nation. Many of these frustrated youths who have become serious drugs addicts have also been routinely used by the political class to disrupt peace and political processes in the country.

AS this year comes to a close however, we have every reason to appreciate our creator who through his infinite mercies has seen this country through thus far. Indeed, we cannot afford to forget our amiable musician, Burna Boy who represented this country very well and won a Grammy, our sportswoman, Amuson who set a new world record at the world athletics championship amongst other respected intellectuals who successfully distinguished themselves in several fields of human endeavors.

WITH the general elections of 2023 around the corner however, it is anticipated that Nigerians will get it right by electing leaders who would diligently uphold justice, righteousness and fair play in the art of good governance for the purpose of facilitating holistic integration of the people of this nation. After coming this far; we are strongly of the notion that the citizens of this country deserve better leadership and quality infrastructural provision to ensure that they are fundamentally motivated to unleash their potentials for the benefit of all. We equally believe that though the journey throughout the year has been quite rough and unpalatable, the year 2023 from all indications look promising if the right steps are taken to propel our citizens to greatness.

NIGERIA is now in a countdown to the next general elections come 2023. It is a period where another set of new leaders will be elected to run the affairs of the country for another four years.

However, there is a lot of anticipation by political enthusiasts on the upcoming event. Therefore, people are now using the social media as an important tool to promote their activities through platforms such as face book, you tube, twitter, Instagram, along with other models of communication and technology.

Interestingly the use of social media is diverse because groups are able to engage in intellectual discourse, commerce, brainstorm on issues. It is also an avenue for social interaction a source of sharing personal information which can be of use to many.

It is a clear fact that the social media is a vibrant tool for

campaigns by candidates and their supporters because it stimulates citizens' engagement to political activities.

Apart from being a medium that provides unlimited access of communication, promoting business, social, educational and other forms of relationships the social media and ICT generally cuts across national and international boundaries.

Instead of using the social

Social media and political campaigns

media to promote negative issues, the social media can be a veritable platform for important engagement with the general public especially

The negative effects of girl-child marriage

GIRL-CHILD early marriage or child marriage refers to any formal marriage, or informal union between a child under the age of eighteen and an adult or another child.

Sustain the zoning equilibrium

The second seat that is common to both constituencies in Plateau Central is senate.

Mangu Bokkos Federal Constituency represents Plateau Central in Uppe, Chamber from 1999 to 2007 (late Senator Ibrahim Mantu) and 2011 to 2018 (Senator Joshua Dariye) making it fifteen years representation.

Late senator Sati Gogwim from PKK was at red chamber from 2011 to 2015 (four years). The serving senator, Senator Hezekiah Dimka completed one-year residue tenure of Senator Joshua Dariye in 2018 (one year) and re-elected in 2019 to date making it five years.

Going by this practical statistical analysis, PKK only had nine years representation against 15 years of Mangu Bokkos Federal Constituency.

Pankshin and Kanam have never ever represented Plateau Central in upper chamber.

In the spirit of rotation/zoning and power shift, both Giants'



in selling their manifestoes policies and programmes in order to convince the electorate on the democracy dividends to expect when

Abdul Azeez Abubakar is an IT student from Federal Polytechnic, Bauchi.

However, child marriage is driven by poverty, ignorance and so on.

Indeed child marriage has caused a lot of havoc to victims

and the nation at large, in the sense that girls leave school and victims loose opportunities skills and it also takes them away from friends.

In addition, most of such victims precisely girls become dropouts due to pregnancy and have to stay a whole lot of time at home nurturing the child. Also a high number of young mothers are idle not involved in any skill or trade, and are really facing financial difficulties considering their poor family background.

Meanwhile, increased risk of premature birth, sexually transmitted diseases including cervical cancer etc, are usually driven as a result of child marriage.

Data have been collected, from 50 married girls within ages from 15 to 30 years, the results showed that 94% of the respondents regretted over their early marriages, 92% of the school girls were married due to poverty, and also 24% of the school girls were married because they were pregnant.

I therefore appeal to the government to launch an awareness campaign on media against early marriage and the value of education. Child marriage advocates and activists should therefore endeavour to speak against child marriage, stand against such menace to the society and the nation at large.

Furthermore child marriage robs girls of their childhood and threatens their lives and health.

Girls who marry before the age of eighteen are more likely to experience domestic violence and less likely to remain in school.

However, World Bank programmes should endeavors to help victims of such circumstances by offering them admission into various levels of education, including the secondary and tertiary institutions.

Grace Dalu, Kuru

APC and PDP considered Pankshin for representation in the upper chamber for 2023 dispensation.

By this zoning, APC in PKK is fair in power balancing by zoning house of representatives seat to Kanam and senate to Pankshin. PDP ought to have done same in the spirit of justice, equity and fair play not allocating both senate and house of representatives to Pankshin which negates the principle of zoning, though not constitutional but ethncial.

I make it as a clarion call to Northern and Southern senatorial zone to see reasons for justice, equity and fair play and rescue PKK from marginalization by Mangu Bokkos Federal Constituency and give support to PKK to produce Governor come 2023 for power balancing as zoning is a bases in which Plateau State believes for fairness which has come to stay.

Kopkangha Zakka writes from Kanke LGA, Plateau State.

Standard Cartoon



Opinion

Let's make it more than merely Christmas

By **IKEDDY ISIGUZO**

CHRISTMAS and its charm are parting ways. Years back, depending on where you were, and how you were, maybe who you were, Christmas was the best part of the year. We looked forward to its unbridled extravagance. There was too much to eat and drink and we enjoyed liberties that we could only imagine at other times.

The saying that "every day is not Christmas" attests to the uniqueness of the day, plus the abuses that have joined it. We ate and drank as if we were piling up reserves until the next Christmas.

At Christmas everyone speaks of a better tomorrow. Hopes are high. The commercialisation of Christmas is a global act. In parts where statistics count, Christmas sales post strong indicators of the economy. Without scientific studies of the economic contributions of Christmas, we have explored the religious angles remarkably well.

We peddle miracles at Christmas and charge special rates for them. Few are complaining. People want to be counted worthy to have paid. Those whose miracles did arrive are faithless, but they should not be despondent. We use Christmas to ferry people post haste to the island of the New Year, which is a week away. The New Year will be better, we always pray.

Hope is important. Haste, hurry is even more so. We run through life looking forward to Christmas, sometimes we are surprised that the year or everything is not resolved at Christmas.

Things seem impossible without Christmas. How do we show off our acquisitions in the past year? How would the world know how we have fared, if we are not hosting one of those A-list parties?

Christmas is show time. People who have not eaten for weeks somehow get something to eat. Drinks are surplus. Everyone, almost everyone, manages to carry on with the air of abundance. The truth is usually revealed in the coming weeks, when the wastes of Christmas put some unplanned expenditures in perspective.

There is a side of Christmas that is gone with the ever-changing school calendar. Younger folks would parade the streets with their new clothes and Christmas-day assumed liberties. Those of that era would tell you that terms and conditions applied. They really did.

Then the school year ended with December. The implication was that those who did not earn promotion to the next class had no Christmas celebration. Christmas held more appeal then as we celebrated academic excellence and the attendant rewards that reflected appreciative parents.

Christmas is dissolving into nothingness. The celebrations are muted. The joys of a distinct part of the year are shared with a shearing fear of the unknown. Would a bomb go off? Would there be food (at Christmas!)?

Would travellers arrive safely? Would salaries be paid? What happens next year?

How would the 2023 elections fare? Would they benefit from the love Christmas preaches, though drowned in selfish pursuits?

A further intrusion on Christmas 2022 is the FIFA World Cup final that for the first time in its 92 years is being held just a week from Christmas.

These mundane issues are matters of the moment. Christmas is subsumed in them. People are afraid to be seen to be happy, otherwise they can court the wrong attention from those who count happiness as a sign that one is in government, the most flourishing enterprise in today's Nigeria.

Christmas is declining; its emptiness is resounding from the depth of the abandonment of its simple message of love of God for mankind and the expected lesson of man loving his fellow man.

Yet the birth of Jesus Christ which Christmas marks still brings a unique, universal joy to this season. We should not waste it.

The greed of Christmas, the lingering poverty around us, an economy that is getting deeper into the woods, and insecurity can make this season mainly, merely Christmas.

It is for us to make it a different Christmas by sharing whatever we can with those around us who are not sure of a meal, no matter the season, though their uncertainties are certainly beyond a meal. If we do, we would have ensured it is no longer merely Christmas.

Finally... will the Department of State Services give an update on its orders that forbade fuel queues nationwide? The latest intervention in solving a nagging, national menace deserves an appraisal as there are other pressing national issues that demand acute attention – security, for instance.

Abuses were the major responses I got for last week's article, Tinubu's presidential ambition, hopefully a final word. None of the responses addressed the main premise of the material which is that there would be no point attaching any serious thought to Tinubu's candidacy until his identity was ascertained. Why is it so difficult for Alhaji Bola Ahmed Tinubu, Jagaban Borgu, to tell Nigerians who he is?

MINISTER of Finance, Budget and National Planning Hajia Zainab Ahmed, has explained the N424bn that was reportedly padded by the Minister into the 2023 Appropriation Bill. The explanation satisfied the Senate Committee on Appropriation. What is left is for the same Committee to tell Nigerians with how much principal officers of the National Assembly padded the 2023 budget.

ISIGUZO is a major commentator on minor issues.

"Christmas is dissolving into nothingness. The celebrations are muted. The joys of a distinct part of the year are shared with a shearing fear of the unknown. Would a bomb go off? Would there be food (at Christmas!)? Would travellers arrive safely? Would salaries be paid? What happens next year? How would the 2023 elections fare? Would they benefit from the love Christmas preaches, though drowned in selfish pursuits? A further intrusion on Christmas 2022 is the FIFA World Cup final that for the first time in its 92 years is being held just a week from Christmas."

Why Nigeria needs a healthy media

By **LANRE IDOWU**

WE hold, and very firmly too, that it is only a healthy media that can birth a healthy country... It is because of this desire for a healthy country that we urge our colleagues to take a more balanced view of the tremendous opportunities offered the country in the coming elections. A lot is at stake, but, sadly, the required leadership and direction that the media should offer is grossly missing.

Let us begin on a note of appreciation to all of you, good people, gathered in this hall today to keep faith with our annual celebration of some of the best brains in the Nigerian media.

Some of us are here as nominees for the honour of being inducted into the DAME Hall of Fame. Without you, there will be no award ceremony.

Some are sponsors of the various categories on offer. Without your financial support, it will be near-impossible to be here today.

Some are judges who helped in determining those qualified for today's honours. Yours is an important task and we truly appreciate your roles.

Some are representatives of various media houses. The programme is yours and if you have not embraced it over the years, we couldn't have kept it this long.

Some are friends of the house — members of the civil society on whose behalf the media keeps a watch over society. Without you as representatives, the media can only engage in a monologue.

Some of us are family who are

here to support their own. May we never have cause to disown our own. Anyone who has home support has a good thing. May we never do anything shameful that will cost us the support of our own.

Our journey here today started in 1991 when we came up with the idea of an annual awards ceremony to encourage the media to tread the path of responsibility. From the very first edition on 20 March, 1992 till date, we have inducted 576 names from the worlds of print journalism, broadcasting, and marketing communications into the DAME Hall of Fame.

We have honoured men, women, and organisations. We have awarded 29 lifetime achievement awards, and three honorary fellowships. Today, we will add fifteen more prizes, one more lifetime achievement award and two honorary fellowships. We have brought respectability to the industry and we will continue to do so.

We have asked for nothing in return other than fidelity to ethics, commitment to standards, and the pursuit of a greater tomorrow for our profession and our country. We hold, and very firmly too, that it is only a healthy media that can birth a healthy country.

It is because of this desire for a healthy country that we urge our colleagues to take a more balanced view of the tremendous opportunities offered the country in the coming elections. A lot is at

stake, but, sadly, the required leadership and direction that the media should offer is grossly missing.

Many of us are still engrossed in emotive reactions to situations. Many are ensconced in ethnic cocoons and lack the ability to tower beyond ethnic prejudices. Many have neglected the professional responsibility to set the agenda in a proactive manner; instead they seem to relish the pathetic situation of merely reacting to situations, regurgitating unproven allegations, and generating heat instead of light.

The media must moderate the process by defining the issues, and getting the candidates to respond to them. Why is it so difficult to moderate media debates or interviews if we approach the task with the political detachment necessary for a professional job?

I recall that in the past, the NPO, comprising the Newspaper Proprietors Association of Nigeria, the Guild of Editors and the NUJ had shown direction in this area. I know that a few attempts have been made by the Guild but a more integrated or collaborative effort may be more rewarding.

It is not in the interest of the democratic process if the media cannot be trusted to assess the preparedness of candidates for political office. Nor is it in the interest of candidates if they are perceived to be avoiding media scrutiny.

Trusting that there is sufficient time for our media to make necessary amends before the elections, let us turn to the

commendable strides that have taken place in our industry.

The first is the unbundling of mass communication training from a single, monolithic course into seven courses, which takes cognisance of global developments and best practices. These courses are Journalism and Media Studies, Public Relations, Advertising, Broadcasting, Film and Multi-media studies, Development and Communication Studies, Information and Media Studies.

We congratulate the National Universities Commission for the step taken. We encourage the universities to implement them in a coordinated and coherent manner, according to their capabilities to ensure successful implementation.

The second is the recent agreement among media stakeholders to amend the code of ethics for Nigerian journalists and introduce an industry-driven mechanism called co-regulation.

We congratulate the NPAN, NGE, NUJ, the GOCOP, and various media NGOs for the breakthrough. We look forward to the formal establishment of the media complaints commission in the new year, which will implement the new scheme.

Distinguished guests, without further ado, let me welcome you to the 31st DAME presentation. I wish you a pleasant evening and look forward to greater engagement with you as we expand the frontiers of development in our country.

LANRE IDOWU is the CEO and Editor-in-Chief at Diamond Publications Limited.

Feature

Taraba APC in disarray over Presidential Campaign Council

Old wounds have once again been opened as the battle for the soul of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Taraba continues. This time around the conflict is about who controls the Tinubu/Shettima Campaign team in the State. Correspondent VICTOR GAI writes from Jalingo.

The controversies that have trailed the opposition APC in Taraba under the present dispensation have degenerated with the latest inauguration of the Tinubu/Shettima Presidential Campaign Council in Jalingo, the Taraba state capital on Sunday, the 18th December, 2022.

The APC has been engrossed with the in-house crisis which emanated from the governorship primaries of April 2022. Also, there is the contentious issue about the legitimacy of the Barrister El-Sudi-led exco of the party. Not less than two governorship aspirants have sued to court the eventual winner of the primary election, Emmanuel Bwacha. This is apart from the various litigations challenging the National Assembly primaries in the State. All these have put the party at a disadvantage ahead of the 2023 elections.

While party supporters await the Supreme Court to thrash all the pending court cases which would give the party a direction, another fresh crisis erupted to complicate the already existing problem in the party.

On Sunday December 18, 2022, the Tinubu/ Shettima Presidential Campaign Council was inaugurated by the Minister of Transportation, Alhaji Muazu Sambo, who also doubles as the State Coordinator of the Campaign Council.

Sambo, while inaugurating the committee appealed to the party members to unite to deliver the party at all levels in the state.

"I am delighted to welcome everyone to today's Taraba State Tinubu /Shettima Presidential Campaign Council Structure Inauguration. At the Instance of our great party, the All Progressives Congress (APC) we have been saddled with the responsibility of conducting an effective, message-driven campaign, leading to Tinubu/Shettima's ticket victory in the 2023 presidential election.

"Albeit, despite the title "Presidential Campaign Council" in its official name, our responsibility is to deliver Taraba State for the All Progressive Congress in the coming election, from the councilor at the ward level to the Presidential Flag bearer.

"In the real sense, a victory for the presidential candidate alone won't suffice and bring the coveted development to our dear state, but it will make more sense if we have an APC President, an APC

Governor, APC Senators from our Senatorial Districts, APC House of Representative Members, APC State House of Assembly Members, APC Local Government Chairmen and APC Councilors.

"Therefore, in the spirit of our party symbol "the Broom" which symbolizes unity and togetherness, I call on you all irrespective of our creed, faith, beliefs, and ideology to make this happen," he said.

Sambo also said that the campaign structure was subdivided into three major categories namely; the Campaign



Adamu

Management Council, the Campaign Advisory Council, and the State Campaign Council.

He explained that the Campaign Management Council which was purely administrative was consisted of the State Coordinator, the Deputy State Coordinator, the three Zonal Coordinators, the Council's Secretary/Legal Advisers, the treasurer, the Youth leader, the Organising Secretary, the Public Relation Officer, the Women Leader and the Leader of the Disabled.

He also said that the Campaign Advisory Council consisted of all former Governors, former deputy Governors, all serving and former Senators who were members of the party, all serving and former members of the House of Representatives, all Ministers and former Ministers, all serving Ambassadors and former Ambassadors who were members of the party and all members of the National Executive Council and the State Chairman of the party as members of the advisory committee.

According to him, the State Campaign Council comprised all Aspirants - Gubernatorial, Senatorial and the House of Representatives, as well as State Executive Council members of the party.

Jaji however appealed to party members not to feel left out but unite and make sacrifices for the success of the party in the 2023 elections.

"Naturally, not all members of our party can be in the Presidential Campaign Council. But every single member of the Taraba State APC is an important member of the party and each one of you is still entrusted with the responsibility of leading our party to victory in next year's elections. Those of you who have not found yourselves in the State Presidential Campaign Council are just as important as those who have, and we do not take

your contributions for granted.

"I therefore, call us all to unite, party members and Tarabans at large, sons and daughters of my fatherland, we are Nature's gift to the nations. The coming days are pivotal in the history of our dear country, this is a call to purpose, let's come together as one. Let's sheath our sword, let's put aside our differences, we cannot be separated in interest or divided in purpose; we are only as strong as we are united. Let's put aside tribal sentiments, religious beliefs, personal interests, and embrace the ideals of genuine brotherhood and nation-building," he appealed.

However, this appeal did not go down well with the upper echelon of the party in the State who felt sidelined.

Some of those who raised concern were the State Chairman of the party, Barrister Ibrahim El-Sudi and Ali Sani Kona, the APC senatorial candidate for northern Taraba who recently recovered his mandate against Sani Abubakar Danladi through a Court judgement.

Speaking on a Channels TV programme 'Sunrise daily' on Monday, El-Sudi disclosed that he as party chairman was not consulted before the council was inaugurated in spite of being instrumental to the selection of Jaji as the coordinator of the council.

"He never called us for any meeting. Then suddenly, on the 16th, one of his PA's, Umar Umar, called me to tell me that the Campaign Council would be inaugurated on the 18th, on Sunday. There was no letter to that effect. I asked him and he told me he had the letter in the morning. I said, this is 8 o'clock, why are you telling me this (a letter was addressed to the chairman APC Taraba state but I did not receive it). My own culture, I sign to receive any letter written to me. So nobody ever gave me a letter. I was shocked and surprised, we had to

go on social media as they did to tell them of our displeasure that there was no consultation. Since they have by- passed us, we equally had to act the way they acted. I was inundated with calls from my Christian brothers (I am a Muslim). They said why did you fix the inauguration of a campaign on a Sunday? I didn't have any answer. So we had to write another letter showing our disdain that we are not a party to what was going on," he stated.

According to him, the gubernatorial candidate of the party, Emmanuel Bwacha was exempted from the Campaign Council because he was involved in a court case but queried why certain persons who had similar pending court cases would be included in the council.

"Sani Abubakar Danladi was appointed coordinator for the northern zone. He contested election and was declared winner for Taraba northern senatorial zone but Ali Sani Kona took him to court and recovered his mandate. You now make him a coordinator to superintend over an election which he has been booted out by the court. The same thing with the southern zone where David Sabo Kente (DSK) who incidentally was the person that took Emma Bwacha to court was given the coordinator, he would work against our candidate. Our candidates are supposed to participate because they have a stake in the campaign and election that will take place in 2023," El-Sudi added.

The former lawmaker also disclosed that the Minister had been avoiding him after making efforts to meet him to resolve certain issues. He also questioned the composition of the campaign team which he said was skewed in favour of a certain zone.

"I made frantic efforts to meet him (Jaji). We even fixed a date to discuss this matter; he didn't give me the audience. Several times I attempted to see him he locked me up. For goodness sake I am the state chairman. I have seen the reason why he would not invite me. He should have invited me for a discussion on how to go about it and all those automatic members were never called. Maybe some of them were called but the majority of them were not called. Not a single candidate was invited for any meeting. If we are to advise you, you have to call us so that we sit down at a round table and discuss the blueprint on how to go about the campaigns... What really

disturbed us was the composition of the Presidential Campaign Council in Taraba state. The coordinator being the Minister is from Jalingo, northern Taraba, the deputy is from Karim Lamido, northern Taraba, the Secretary of the committee is his cousin (Barr. MD. Mustapha, from Jalingo. If there were consultations, this wouldn't have arisen. The youth leader is from the northern Taraba, the organizing secretary too," he further disclosed.

He stated that Bwacha remains the candidate for APC and has the highest stake in the party. He

however blamed the Minister over his attitude which may divide the party further.

El-Sudi however pledged to work for the victory of Asiwaju Bola Tinubu in Taraba.

"The disposition and attitude of Minister Jaji towards certain people leaves much to be desired. As far as we are concerned, the Court of Appeal has made a pronouncement that he (Bwacha) is the candidate. Other cases can never be different from the case that has been decided. The Minister has failed in his responsibility as a coordinator, as a unifier of the party.

On his part, the APC Senatorial candidate for Taraba north, Ali Sani Kona, expressed his worry over the situation and said the happening could spell doom for the party in the forthcoming elections. Kona, who ought to have been by statute the northern zone coordinator for the PCC, expressed fears that those appointed into the PCC could work against the party candidates.

"I want to add that we are taking a very wrong direction that will affect the campaign of our presidential candidate because candidates for the senate and House of Representatives have more stake than any other person including the Minister and for the Presidential Coordinator not to have sat for once with those candidates and the party, the coordinator has deliberately factionalised the presidential campaign in the sense that (I don't know whether it was accidental or deliberate) but for whatsoever reason, he has chosen to deal with people that are not supporting our presidential candidate," he stated.

Kona added that it has been a tradition in the APC that the gubernatorial candidate should be the coordinator of the Presidential Campaign Council. He expressed his disappointment over the current situation in the party and doubted if it could ever be resolved.

"It is a difficult thing for the Presidential Campaign Council to sit down and reverse a decision they have taken but it is the right thing to do because the gubernatorial candidate has more at stake than any other person," he concluded.

In view of the weighty allegations levelled against the Minister and Coordinator of the Tinubu/Shettima Presidential Campaign Council, Alhaji Muazu Sambo Jaji, The Nigeria Standard made efforts to get his response, but it was not successful. Several calls put through were unsuccessful as the phone was either switched off or not available.

An SMS was also sent to him demanding his response to the allegations but up till this moment, no reply came.

News

NSE awards Gov. Mohammed

From **ABBAS GUNGURA, Bauchi**

BAUCHI State Deputy Governor, Senator Baba Tela, recently applauded members of the Nigeria Society of Engineers (NSE) for giving their professional support to Governor Bala Abdulkadir Mohammed for effective and efficient execution of his infrastructural projects.

He passed the comment at Government House Bauchi when he hosted executives of the national body of the society led by the President, Engineer Tasi'u Sa'ad Gidari on a courtesy visit.

The Deputy Governor said he is proud to mention that the state government under Governor Bala Mohammed, has succeeded in the execution of infrastructural projects across the state without any hitches, and attributed the successes to the outstanding support, cooperation of engineers to the state government.

Senator Baba Tela, assured that the state government will consolidate on its partnership and collaboration with the Society of Engineers for the execution of engineering projects, and urged NSE to assist in tackling building and other infrastructure collapse through checking construction methods.

"I am highly delighted to receive you on behalf of His Excellency, Governor Bala Mohammed on this courtesy visit. I must thank you for your kind words on the infrastructural projects executed by the Governor. We look forward for continued synergy and working collaboration with you.

"His Excellency, Governor Bala Mohammed has even before coming into power, developed a blueprint on execution of infrastructural projects designed by experts in his desire to ensure the advancement of the state. On his behalf, I welcome you to Bauchi and I want to appreciate NSE for recognizing the contributions of late Engineer Abdulkadir Saleh by organising a public lecture in his honour."

The Deputy Governor reiterated the readiness of the administration of Governor Bala Mohammed to assist professional bodies in the state including Nigeria Society of Engineers to discharge their responsibilities effectively for the benefit of the state and its people.



Bauchi Deputy Gov. Sen. Baba Tela, Left receives Award of Excellence for Gov. Bala Mohammed as presented by Engr. Tasi'u Sa'ad, NSE President.

Earlier in his speech, the national president of the society who led the delegation, Engineer Tasi'u Sa'ad Gidari, while presenting an award of excellence to Governor Bala Mohammed through his deputy, said the honour was in recognition of his administration's performance in the execution of infrastructural projects.

Engineer Tasi'u Gidari appreciated the state government for the engagement of NSE members in the construction of the roads, and assured of their support in their maintenance for

sustainable development.

"We are not surprised with the achievements of Bauchi State Government in its infrastructural projects, because His Excellency, the Governor has engaged our members in the process. This is so special to us in view of the fact that the roads have been executed with engineering standard.

"Your Excellency, engagement of quacks is key to building collapse and we in the NSE, we are always against that, because there is no engineering challenges that our members cannot handle. So, we must appreciate Bauchi State for always partnering with us."

GOVERNOR Simon Bako Lalong of Plateau State has urged those in leadership positions to always put their history and experience in writing to serve as a reference point to the younger generation.

Governor Lalong stated this at the presentation and launching of a book entitled: "Authoritative Guru," an authorised biography of His Royal Highness, Halilu Bala Usman III, Osu Ajiri of Edege Chieftom in Nasarawa Local Government which took place in Lafia, the state capital at the weekend.

Represented by his deputy, Professor Sonni Tyoden, Governor Lalong described the event as a family gathering of old Plateau and Nasarawa as one state.

Lalong, who congratulated the monarch for his emergence as the third Ajiri said his courage to put his history and experience in public, that is his private life in writing will continue to serve as a legacy to the future generation.

Governor of Nasarawa State, Abdullahi Sule represented by his deputy, Emmanuel Akabe and the Chairman of the occasion, Ambassador Suleiman Azores described the Osu Ajiri, Halilu Bala Usman as an experienced, missionary administrator who always

Lalong charges leaders on writing biography

From **DUMAH RANDONG, Lafia**

worked for peace and progress of his land.

Former Governor of Plateau State, Fidelis Taggun in whose administration the monarch served as his deputy during the old Plateau/Nasarawa State, said the people have chosen the unique leader who will serve them. He described him as a problem solver.

Book reviewer and Director of Research, National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies, NIPPS, Kuru, Professor Pam Dung Sha said the

book with 300 pages and 11 chapters, showcased the Osu Ajiri, Halilu Bala Usman as a strong leader who takes delight in empowering his people, sharing his vision and leadership change in the society.

There were goodwill messages from the Emir of Lafia, Justice Sidi Bege, representative of Senator Tanko Almakura, Former governor of the state as well as Jonah Madugu.

High Points of the event was the unveiling of the book by Governor Simon Bako Lalong of Plateau State and other dignitaries.



Lalong

NAF rescues 7 Chinese expatriates from terrorists

From **DORCAS PANKYES, Abuja**

IN what could be described as a daring and clinical military operation, Special Forces (SF) under the 271 Nigerian Air Force (NAF) Detachment, Birnin Gwari, Kaduna State, carried out a rescue operation in the early hours of 17 December 2022 leading to the rescue of 7 Chinese expatriates earlier kidnapped and held hostage by terrorists.

In a statement signed by Air Commodore Edward Gabkwet, Director of Public Relations and Information, Nigerian Air Force, it stated

that the rescued Chinese victims are believed to have been kidnapped in June 2022 by terrorists while working on a mining site in Ajata-Aboki, Gurmana Ward of Shiroro Local Government, Niger State.

The Combat Search and Rescue operation, which consisted of 35 Special Forces was conducted in the cover of night at Kanfani Doka and Gwaska general areas leading to the terrorists abandoning their enclaves, weapons and kidnapped

Chinese victims while fleeing for their lives due to the superior fire power of the special forces. After the successful operations, the 7 Chinese victims were flown to the 271 NAF Detachment Medical Centre for evaluation were 2 of the victims were stabilized. Subsequently, the 7 victims were flown to the NAF Base Medical Hospital, Kaduna for further medical investigations.

The Chief of Air Staff, Air Marshal Oladayo Amao has

since congratulated the Commander of the 271 NAF Detachment, Birnin Gwari and his men for their continued determination and commitment, even in the face of danger, as they make inroad into the final fringes of terrorists' enclaves in Kaduna State and the Northwest in general.

According to the CAS, 'I am very proud of what our Special Forces in Birnin Gwari and elsewhere have

continued to achieve and I remain confident that we will soon free all areas of terrorists and their activities.' Air Marshal Amao also enjoined Nigerians to continue to support the Armed Forces of Nigeria and other security agencies by providing useful information that will lead to the arrest of criminal elements and those supporting them.



Amao

Ishaku assents to N173 billion budget

From **VICTOR GAI, Jalingo**

TARABA State Governor, Darius Ishaku had on Monday given assent to the 2023 Taraba State Appropriation Law which was recently passed by the State Assembly.

In a ceremony at the Government House, Executive Chamber, Ishaku passed the sum of N173,234,537,459.49k. That represents an increase of N502,000,000.40k from the initial sum of N172,732,537,459.40k presented to the House.

He thanked the House for passing the bill in record time and promise to ensure the monitoring of projects and program implementation and also

work hard to generate revenue to finance the plans on ground.

Being his last engagement with the House, Ishaku thanked the House for the harmonious relationship with the executive and also the civil servants and all the citizens of the state for the opportunity given to him to serve the state.

"We have done the best possibly to be done. Without being immodest, we have come, we have seen and we have conquered. As a very stringent teacher whose pass mark starts from 75, I

have scored a pass mark".

Earlier on, Speaker, Taraba House of Assembly, Joseph Albasu Kunini, said the House found it expedient to increase the allocation to the State Independent Electoral Commission (SIEC) by N500 million bearing into consideration the local government polls to be conducted within the calendar year.

He acknowledged the support of the Ishaku government but however appealed to the governor to listen to cries of legislative staff by paying them arrears of outfit allowance.

Feature

Features that will shape 2023 polls

The 2023 General Election seems to be stirring a lot of interest among Nigerians, unlike in the past. Though the 2015 elections that ushered in the All Progressive Congress, APC witnessed a semblance of such interest and enthusiasm. Perhaps because of the high hopes and expectations for which the Constitutional responsibilities placed on its shoulders (Good Leadership) which the ruling PDP led government of President GoodluckEbele Jonathan could not meet. Citing among other issues such as cluelessness of the government, corruption and insecurity as some of the reasons which it failed to address, hence the need for the change. DUMAH RANDONG takes a look at why the 2023 election will be very interesting.

THE usual lack of interest by some Nigerians of voting age, especially the youths during elections appears to be a cliché this time in our history going by the enthusiasm shown by people especially with regards to 2023 general election. The disinterest that usually characterised most elections, perhaps due to certain factors such as stuffing of ballot boxes with already thumb printed ballots in favor of a preferred candidate, rigging, thuggery, snatching of ballots and a host of other negative stuff might not be the case with the introduction of new technology which has also given some ray of hope as could be visibly seen in many Nigerians especially the youths who believe that their votes will count by the zeal demonstrated by Nigerians to take back the country.

The introduction of the new technology into the process to ensure that the system give everyone some form of hope is not something to be taken with a pinch of salt. The new Electoral Act which was assented to by President Muhammadu Buhari in Friday 25th February 2022, provides a legal framework that empowers the Independent Electoral Commission (INEC) to determine the mode of voting and transmission of results as to review declaration of election of results made under duress. It legalised the use of technology in elections, redefined overvoting and mandates INEC to take reasonable steps to provide support to persons with disabilities during voting. The new Act also alters the timelines for the conduct of election and creates new timeframes for political parties to fulfil various requirements and activities concerning nomination of candidates for elections. Democracy as widely known is suppose to be government of the people by the people and for the people but in this case, is a different bold game considering what this country has gone through since the military juntas returned to the barracks paving way for a democratic government. The institutions saddled with the responsibility of ensuring credible election which should be free, fair and acceptable to all is done but has always failed short of the expectations of many. Though, elections all over the world have never been without one issue or the other but past elections in the history of democracy in Nigeria has never received disapproval like in recent times. This has left many doubts in the minds of most electorates about the credibility of the process thereby causing distrust in the system.

What is needed is for the electoral umpire be given independence devoid of manipulation from any quarters to conduct its affairs without control. Going forward, Nigeria's electioneering process has suffered as a result of such failures. It is against this backdrop, that some far reaching decisions were taken to address the challenges bedeviling the country's electoral system by deploying the Bimodal Voter Registration System, BVAS by the Independent National Electoral Commission. This technology has to a greater extent reduced most of the misgivings or controversies usually associated with elections in the country since the new technology has the capacity to capture both facial and fingerprint at the point of accreditation. This could also be the driving force behind the citizens interest and desire to have a total departure from the norm, where the vote of every electorates will count. We can't keep doing the same thing and



Mahmood

expecting to have a change. Their resolve to take their destiny in their own hands by participating in the process that would eventually culminate in the emergence of credible leadership for Nigeria, is what makes the 2023 general election most interesting. Equally, what appears to make the 2023 election very interesting, is the fact that most people have realised the fact that their lack of participation in the process has always resulted in giving room for the wrong people to be chosen as leaders. Even though it is equally important to point out that over time, they have participated in the process but to their greatest disappointment the votes never reflected the wishes of the electorates.

With just few months to the 2023 general elections, political parties and their candidates have since joined the furor for the leadership by unfolding different ideology and manifesto to try to convince the electorates in order to win their hearts. But the narrative seemed to have changed because the citizens have since realised that their silence and docility can no longer be taken for a right by the ruling class, as those seeking political offices come to deceived them with crumbs only to enslave them for the rest of the time. It is on this premise that the voting population has become more and more aware of the antics of the political class who have manipulated them overtime by giving the masses stipends in order to buy their conscience while they put them in perpetual control. Further more, the elite theory has fitted or captured the exact situation in Nigeria as far as democratic rule is concerned. This is so as one of the hypotheses in political theory puts it, "in every society, there is I must always be a minority which rules over the majority."

According to them, there is no liquidity of this leadership. By implication, these group of people are few in number but very powerful because of the coercive resources at their disposal. Therefore, they tend to use power and influence to manipulate the process and subjugate the masses unchallenged. Interestingly, the 2023 election which is just some months away, citizens have demonstrated a lot of interest giving the fact that the 2022

Electoral Act as amended has given some bit of hope, that it will no longer be business as usual. The new Electoral Act has given confidence and removed the seemingly fear and lack of trust in the system by Nigerians that with new innovations, some respite that would change the nation's electoral process have been achieved unlike before where the votes of the people never counted. The amendment has further gone to correct some serious defects in the system such as multiple voting, ballot box snatching and a whole lot of others. One of the major boost to the electoral process is the fact that the accreditation will be done electronically. The accreditation is bimodal, meaning, facial recognition and finger print will be taken so that those with the intend to do multiple voting will no longer be business as usual.

The Bimodal Voter Registration System is a new technology introduced by the Independent National Electoral Commission which allows for accreditation of voters through biometric capturing, uploading of polling results and other functions. Stakeholders have described BVAS as an upgrade of the Smartcard reader which was used in 2019 elections, and a game changer in the country's electoral process. Recently some reports emerged in the social media claiming that a law suit has been instituted before the Federal High Court in Owerri, Imo state, seeking to stop INEC from using BVAS for the 2023 elections. Reacting to the development, INEC Head of Information and Voter Education, Festus Okoye had recently debunked the report saying that the use of BVAS for election in the country is stipulated in the Electoral Act of 2022. The Commission according to the INEC spokesman, is not sacred of any legal action which may seek to challenge the legality of the use of BVAS. Okoye added that Nigerians have accepted its use and that the Commission will not relent on its commitment to improve the electoral process via technology.

"The BVAS is domiciled within the confines of the Electoral Act of 2022 and we do not have any fear whatsoever in relations to the validity of and legality of the BVAS and other technological and electronic devices we are using for elections, the Commissioner for

Information and Voter Education, Festus Okoye reiterated."

The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria has given INEC the exclusive right, Power and mandate to organize, undertake and supervise elections that are captured within the confines of the Constitution. "We are accountable to the people of this country and the people have accepted the BVAS as a game changer in our electoral process. "We can not under any circumstances, go back on the use of BVAS for the purpose of voter accreditation and we can't also go on the issue of transmitting polling unit level results into our INEC viewing portal," the Electoral body spokesman was quoted as saying. "These two machines and protocols are sacrosanct and the commission is committed to using them in the forthcoming 2023 General Elections" he noted.

The Coalition of United Political Parties (CUPP) had recently told the nation that some politicians were doing everything within their powers to rig the 2023 general election Ikenga Imo Ugochinyere, spokesman for the group, while speaking to Journalists in Abuja, said Their vigilance team following credible intelligence discovered the suit at the Owerri Federal High Court where it was filed since August 24th, 2022. The CUPP also displayed extract of the National voters register which claimed were part of the over 10 million fake registration done by some chieftains of a political party aimed at rigging the election. The group alleged that the new on those displayed registers were sourced from both within and outside Nigeria including some African countries such as Ghana, Cameroun, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Togo, Guinea and countries outside the continent. Ugochinyere also announced that some of the dates of birth of those whose names uploaded on the INEC data had been 1900 and other impossible dates and that in some of the of the newly created polling units in a state, all the people who'se names appeared on the data had some birth date. There were also mismatches of names and pictures used against female names and vice-versa. He also said that the INEC chairman was under pressure to announce a change to the commission's stance on the compulsory use of BVAS Machine for accreditation, adding that the plot was to Yakubu through the court. The intelligence CUPP intercepted which led to the discovery of the suit filed seeking to nullify the BVAS and exposure of the massive compromise in the voter registration cannot now be wrong that the third leg of the plot is to sack the National Chairman through a suspension as the plotters know they cannot get the required number from the National Assembly for an outright sack," he said.

The new technology which many still believe to be a game changer has not only given some reassuring hope to individuals and corporate bodies as well. This can be attested to in some elections conducted using the new technology. For instance, in the Isolo South State Assembly Constituency bye-election in Delta state and the Anambra Governorship election on November 6th, 2021, an election observer, Yiaga Africa, hailed the Independent Electoral Commission for the development of the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System as a way to reduce human interference in the electoral process. The election observer body made the commendation recently in a statement signed by Cynthia

Mbamalu, its Director of Programme, where it indicated that INEC in its quarterly consultative meeting with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) shared its plan to deploy the BVAS for accreditation of voters and to enable near-time viewing of results. The all-in-one technology is a multifunctional integrated device that serves multiple purposes for different activities in the value chain of elections in Nigeria. This includes serving as the INEC Voter Enrollment Device (IED) during voter registration, serving as the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) for copter accreditation on Election Day which replaces the Smart Card Readers, and serving as the INEC Results Viewing Device (IREV Device) to be used for election results upload on Election Day.

The statement read in part, this recent innovation is worthy of commendation on Election Day. This is particularly important because as revealed in previous Yiaga Africa watching the vote election observation reports, the Smart Card Reader while achieving an impressive level of functionality, had a major challenge with full biometric authentication of voters. The BVAS as presented will address this issue because it is designed as a bimodal biometric authentication device integrating both fingerprint and facial technology. Accordingly, on Election Day, the device will be used to authenticate voters either through fingerprint or facial recognition during the accreditation. Where fingerprint authentication fails, facial authentication will be done. In a situation "where both fail, the voter will be allowed to vote," according to Yiaga Africa.

The election monitoring body also made known in a statement after its meeting in Abuja with CSOs, that INEC assured all present that the new machine is robust and sufficient to further guarantee the credibility of the voter accreditation and result management process and by extension promote transparent election. This will significantly reduce or possibly eliminate incidents of multiple voting, PVC buying and selling as well as PVC theft. The election monitoring body appreciated INEC's efforts and that it was its considered opinion that the introduction of the new technology will go a long way in guaranteeing the sanctity of the ballot. It also expressed optimism that the new BVAS will boost citizens' confidence in the process and encourage their participation.

The deployment of the technology is seen as a huge relief that will checkmate the irregularities that have always marred the elections in Nigeria, what INEC needs to do now, is to document critical lessons from the deployment by Making the effort to bridge any gap identified. The commission should train its Adhoc staff to build their capacity on how to use the new technology to avert any form of capacity gap in the deployment of the system. Develop a strategic plan to periodically upgrade its system to enhance its security and a comprehensive voter engagement strategy to educate voters on the technology. This will further support the work of INEC, provide ample time for the familiarization of the improved legislation and build citizens' confidence in the electoral process.

2023 elections: Avoiding Judicial ambush by politicians



BY KENNETH DARENG

WITH the countdown to the 2023 General elections, and as a common tradition with the outcome of every election circle in Nigeria after all is set and done, attention will definitely shift to the courts.

This is a time the Judiciary as usual becomes the last resort and hope for losers who would approach it for justice to be served in order to retrieve their mandate through the use of all available legal fire frameworks.

Perhaps sensing that the 2023 elections might be the toughest battle for the Nigerian political class as well as for the Judiciary in view of the mirage of litigations that are likely going to accompany it, the Chief

Justice of Nigeria [CJN], Justice Olukayode Ariwoola, had recently on three separate occasions issued serious warnings to politicians to refrain from interfering with the operations of the Judiciary.

The CJN who also spoke at the 2022 Conference of the Nigerian Bar Association on Public Interest and Development Law [NBA SPIDEL], said; "The electoral process has been set in motion and the 2023 elections are just stone throw away.

"We are fully aware that it is in a period like this that the executives or those seeking and aspiring for political positions will not threaten on the path of rule of law, the Electoral Act and the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, but will rather act on their whims and fancies to clinch to power.

"Interestingly, the Judiciary shall be at the centre stage of this to equipoise between the electoral players and further catalyse and administer justice, fairness and equity in the courts where their petitions shall flow."

According to the CJN, "past and present political regimes in Nigeria have not ceased to intervene and interfere in the premises of the Judiciary and have almost diluted its supposed sanctity." He also accused the politicians of

whittling down its powers and authority and tampering with its Independence and autonomy through various means.

The second time Justice Ariwoola warned was shortly after he was sworn in as the substantive CJN where he directed his plea to both politicians and other Nigerians urging them to allow the Judiciary to function because law is not static, and that is why you have seen that the National Assembly continues to amend laws. "And it is the laws that the courts apply to the facts available."

And for the third time during a reception organized in his honour by the Oyo state Government the CJN again warned the politicians, "Let them do their things and allow us do our things. The laws are not static. What we apply is the law as it is made. But our dockets are full. We have asked for amendment to our Constitution over and over again.

"There are many matters that should not find their way to the Supreme Court in 2022. Many are indeed domestic matters of political parties. Why bring that to the court for us to adjudicate when your constitution has shown the way?"

Clearly, the signals coming from the CJN, is an indication that given the past experiences in the country and the embarrassing revelation made



by some judicial officers after the 2015 general elections where Judges gave details of how politicians pestered them to tilt or scale down justice in favour of some political interests and failure to abide could be met with dire consequences as was the case with the invasion of the residences of some Judges by the Department of State Services [DSS].

A recent report by the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission [ICPC], Titled; "Nigeria Corruption Index: Report of a Pilot survey covering 2018-2019, placed the Judiciary on top of the Nigeria Corruption Index."

The report estimated that N1.4 billion was exchanged in a bribe-for-judgement scheme in the Judicial sector between 2018 and 2019. It also stated that lawyers were mostly responsible for offering bribes for favourable judgements mostly in electoral and political matters.

Therefore, the CJN's persistent caution to the politicians might have been

informed by the dangerous trend because as an insider operating at the pinnacle of the nation's Judicial arm, apart from knowing what is going on, he also understands what is actually happening.

And to borrow from the words of Hon, Justice S.O. Uwaifo a former Supreme Court Judge, in his valedictory speech on January 24, 2005, opined that; "A corrupt Judge is more harmful to the society than a man who runs amok with a dagger in a crowded street. The later can be restrained physically. But a corrupt Judge deliberately destroys the moral foundation of the society and causes incalculable distress to individuals through abusing his office while still being referred to as honourable."

This also means that the Nigerian Judiciary has a crucial role to play in 2023 and beyond by resisting any attempt to play into the hands of some unpatriotic and selfish politicians. A just, fair and equitable Judiciary will at the very end be to the benefit of the politicians and indeed other Nigerians at large.



By PETER H. TITLE

INTERESTING but fearful events are unfolding daily in our society. Apart from the normal banditry, robbery and ritual killings which has become a daily reoccurrence, the people including security personnel have device other means of looking for livelihood through all avenues. But the omnipotent in His infinite wisdom is catching up with them and will continue extend same to those who thought they are untouchable based on the wielded shield accorded them by the corridors of power. The saying that "Every day for the thief and one day for the owner" has come to bare recently, when a big fish was caught in the web in Nigeria.

The 'Super Cop' as he was referred to was before now seen as an upright and saint personnel in all ramifications based on how he was being portrayed to Nigerians by his immediate

Passing integrity test with equity

constituency. (The Police Force). He was described as, a no nonsense officer, was seen as a crack detective of high repute, viewed as an officer per excellent. And that, at the mentioned of his name, everything around shivers with fear.

Unfortunately, those qualities garnered over the years by the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), in charged of IGP-Intelligence Response Team (IRT), Abba Kyari, did not only fizzle out but was just a mirage. The encomiums poured on the officer was indeed the opposite. His case is akin that of the hunter becoming the hunted. He was shamelessly caught in the act which before now, no human being would have believed that the officer would be involved in such a shameful act.

Though, the officer had been in the news for some times before now. Reasons? Allegations of his involvement in shady deals and prominent amongst them was that of Ramon Abbas (Hushpippi), the cyber crime kingpin based in the United States of America (USA) with the former accused of collecting large sum of money in order to let the accused off hook.

Based on Hushpippi's allegations, the accused police czar was suspended by police service commission in order to pave way for investigations. Nigerians, therefore went to sleep believing that Kyari was on suspension not knowing that he was still in controlled of the special unit of the police under the office of the Inspector-General of Police (IGP).

It was indeed unfortunate that, what the public were fed of regarding DCP Abba Kyari was the direct opposite. He was shielded by the police force while doing his job but making dubious fortune out of it.

Another allegation, was that of Evans. Remember him? The popular Lagos based kidnapper caught by Abba Kyari. He accused Kyari recently that some of the statements he made were under duress adding that he was forced to do so at gun point by the police detective.

According to him, he was mercilessly dealt with as well as seeing other detainees being killed by icers personal belongings. Evans explained further that as a result of torture in the hands of Kyari, he almost lost his eyes sight.

The police officer. Their valuables he explained including posh cars were confiscated and became the officers personal belongings. Evans explained further that as a result of torture in the hands of Kyari, he almost lost his eyes sight.

One is therefore left to ponder as to how a deputy commissioner of Police would have the kind of wealth that he has. Of course, he cannot acquire that through his salary and other emoluments. We learnt that when you see a state of an art edifice in Maiduguri, Borno State capital, it either belonged to DCP Abba Kyari or no body.

It was as a result of all these that the United States, intelligent unit, FBI, yours sincerely learnt send

and communicated with Nigeria Security Agencies to investigate and turned their search light on Abba Kyari based on Hushpippi allegations, but it was thrown to the dogs. Nothing done and nothing heard.

Then came a bang and surprise to Nigerians, precisely on the 14th February, the most trusted and saint police officer as was seen then was caught with 25kg of cocaine. It was even made public that their transit operation was Brazil, Ethiopia and to its final destination Nigeria. It was revealed too that they have been in the business for a long time. Thanks to National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), for a job well done.

With a recent seizure of Tramadol syrub worth over N3 billion by the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) which was also linked to the police officer, it is therefore clear that if they dig more into the activities of suspect, more revelations will come out.

Apart from Kyari, others undergoing grilling according to reports include, Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP), Sunday Ubuah, ASP Bawa James, Inspector known as too much money) is still at large but was said to have been sighted in the United Arab Emirates (Dubai) recently.

Simon Agrigba, John Nuhu while ASP John Umoru (also known as too much money) is still at large but was said to have been sighted in the United Arab Emirates (Dubai) recently.

Since DCP, Abba Kyari is a fraud in uniform, and for Nigerians to have faith in the system regarding his investigation and trial, it will therefore be a good omen that all national honours given to the prince of criminals be withdrawn immediately. Every organisation that had given him an award should withdraw it as well as distance themselves from him in order to save their reputations.

Though seizures made and culprits apprehended, a lot needs to be done by all security agencies in the country to stem the tide in its entirety and ensure that they crux of the matter is brought to bare and every person found wanting be penalized accordingly. Definitely, heads must roll, we know and the unexpected will be heard too because names of top brass within and without will be mentioned. Nothing should be swept under the carpet if at all they want Nigerians to have faith in their leadership style and the system as well.

The issue at hand is weighty which must be dealt with, with all seriousness it deserved. Religion, ethnicity and other colorations that may attached be set aside to ensure justice is brought to bare so that the citizens will have faith in the system.

Also, those saddled with the responsibility of investing Kyari and others must be people of proven integrity because it is fact that whoever is coming to equity must therefore come with a very clean hands.

By **BULUS GAMBO**

SECURITY Reporters' Association of Nigeria recently presented an award of the Best DPO in Crime Control to the Divisional Police Officer in charge of Rantya, SP Ayuba Iliya following his results oriented efforts aimed at ensuring that criminals have no hiding place within the area of his jurisdiction.

This award has distinguished SP Ayuba as one of the highly respected and professional Police Officers Plateau State is lucky to have. This most recent award of excellent performance is coming on the heels of another remarkable award earlier presented to him by the Arewa Youth Association, classifying him as the *Jakadan Matasan Arewa*.

This award was given to him in recognition of his immense contributions towards youth empowerment, philanthropy, human transformation, educational development and prudent management of human and material resources for the benefit of humanity and the country.

Much earlier, the Chairman of Jos South Local Government Area, Hon. Dandereng had given him an award which was presented to him by the Commissioner of Police, Plateau State Command, CP Bartholomew Onyeka, which was bestowed on him following his doggedness in crime fighting in the area. The award was deliberately intended to motivate the Rantya DPO towards implementing far reaching decisions and contemporary effective and efficient policing strategies in ensuring the protection of lives and properties as enshrined in his operational responsibilities.

Presenting the award on that fateful day, the Police Commissioner charged all his men to ensure that they continue to give in their best towards protecting citizens in the state. He also commended SP Ayuba Iliya for living up to his responsibilities as expected of him within the confines of the law.

Before the coming of SP Iliya, Rantya area was openly known for its notorious activities by sophisticated criminals and men of the underworld. Aside some parts of the wildlife area which was a criminal hideout, the Solomon Lar Amusement Park area was also a no go place in the night. It was then no longer an open secret that the residents of the whole areas were sleeping with their hearts in their mouths.

After he assumed office, SP Iliya held several stakeholders meeting where elders and youths of the area were educated on the relevance of residing in a peaceful environment in our society. On several occasions, the DPO of Rantya Division has by himself spearheaded successful raiding to criminal hideouts and flushed them out without much hiccups.

Some of these crime fighting mechanisms were successfully implemented following the intensive training SP Ayuba has

gone through in his policing career. Some of these achievements can also be attributed to the experiences he garnered while working under the Divisional Police Officer at Nassarawa Gwong, Jos, CSP Musa Hassan. SP Iliya served as Divisional Crime Officer of Nassarawa Gwong Police station.

Today, though manning Rantya Division which is cosmopolitan by nature could be a herculean task, SP Ayuba has masterminded required techniques to dealing with such issues. What has yielded positive results for him

SP Ayuba: Another award for a dogged Police officer



promptly kept him on toes in his anticipated obligations is his ability to sniff any crime before it happens.

However, no police officer on the Plateau can claim to achieve the obvious without the great assistance by the state Commissioner of Police, CP Bartholomew Onyeka. Over the years, the tremendous support offered by the CP has led to the several breakthroughs recorded

to the admiration of all. The tremendous impact SP Ayuba has recorded in most recent times has prompted many citizens to asking where he hails from and how he was able to strategically employ mechanisms to achieving these goals in his community.

Born into the family of Mr. and Mrs. Agyo Akawu on 16th January 1985, in Obi town of Nassarawa State, SP Ayuba

graduated from Okpeka LGEA Trooper at Police MTC Bukuru, Jos Primary School in 1995 and proceeded to Government Dog Training School Bukuru in Secondary School Obi in 1996 and graduated in 2002.

Thereafter, SP Ayuba obtained National Diploma in Animal Health and Production in 2005 and subsequently obtained his HND in Animal Production Technology in 2007 all at the College of Health, Agriculture and Technology Lafia in Nasarawa State. The dogged police officer had his NYSC experience in Ekiti State between 2009-2010. He was subsequently enlisted into the Nigeria Police Force on the 19th April 2010.

The Rantya Divisional Police Officer was trained at the Police College, Ikeja, Lagos in Nigeria and on passing out was posted to Gombe State Command then to the Mounted Training College, (MTC) in Bukuru, Plateau State. Thereafter, he was posted to the P&G then to Nassarawa Gwong here in the state.

After four years of meritorious service, the CP transferred him to A Division and from there he was posted to Rantya as the Divisional Police Officer. Within this short period, DPO SP Ayuba attended several courses to include Equitation Course as Gallant

in 2011, Dog Handler at Police Dog Training School Bukuru in 2012, Citizenship and Leadership Course at Sea School Apapa Lagos in 2017 and PMF Unit Commander and Combat Course at Mobile Police College Illa Orangun, Osun State in 2017. Other courses include Operational Leadership and Command Course at Police Staff College Jos in 2021 and Executive Leadership Course at Mountain School Shere Hills Lamingo, Jos in 2021.

Some of the duties he has continued to perform also include administration and supervision of police officers at Rantya Division, arrest and prosecution of suspects, operations e.g. patrol, stop and search, raiding of black spots, jungles and criminal hideouts.

This aside, SP Ayuba has continued to assist the less privileged, pay school fees of vulnerable children, registration of WAEC including assisting many others gain employment. The DPO has won the hearts of many people in his area of operational responsibilities earning him respect both within and outside the division

IMAGES

PDP HOLDS PRESIDENTIAL RALLY IN JOS

The People Democratic Party (PDP) Presidential Candidate, his Vice and other candidates held their campaign rally at the Rwang Pam Township Stadium, Jos



PDP Presidential Candidate, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar (left) signing the visitors register at the Palace of the Gbong Gwom Jos, Da Jacob Gyang Buba (CFR), President of the State Traditional Council



Plateau State Governorship Candidate, Barr. Caleb Mutfwang and his Deputy, Hon. Josephine Piyo delivering his speech



His Grace, Archbishop Benjamin Argak Kwashi of the Anglican of Jos (middle) in a group photograph with PDP candidates during a visit on him



Cross section of PDP supporters at the Party's Presidential Rally in Jos



National Chairman, JNI and the Emir of Wase, HRH (Dr.) Muhammad Sambo Haruna Abdullahi with the PDP Presidential Candidate and Turakin Adamawa, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar at the JNI Office in Jos



National PDP Chairman presenting the Party's flags to candidates at the Rwang Pam Township Stadium, Jos



A mammoth crowd listening to the speech by PDP Presidential Candidate



Turakin Adamawa, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, PDP Presidential Candidate delivering his speech

Odd World

'My date ditched me at a bus stop'

A woman was left outraged when her date left her at a bus stop in the 'freezing cold' instead of giving her a lift - and called her clingy for wanting to get home safely

The world of dating can be tricky to navigate, but one woman has been left furious after her date seemingly had no idea how to treat someone he was supposed to care about - as he left her stranded at a bus stop in the snow instead of offering her a lift home in his car.

In an anonymous post, the woman shared text messages between herself and her date, in which she called him out for "dumping" her at a bus stop in the "freezing cold", and also said she had felt unsafe while waiting for the bus as she was on her own and in the dark.

And although she expected her date to understand his mistake, he instead called her "needy" and "clingy" for expecting a safe ride home.

The text messages, which were shared on Reddit, began when the man asked the woman why she had "unmatched" with him on Tinder, to which she said: "Well, dumping me at a bus stop in the freezing cold

without an explanation is a d**k move."

Her date initially tried to excuse his actions by claiming his roommate had a "medical emergency" and that he needed to rush home to take him to the hospital, but then added at the end of his message: "Didn't realise you're needy as f**k..."

The woman then replied: "I'm sorry to hear that, I hope your roommate is okay. But I don't think making sure I have a safe ride home after a date is being needy, especially when it was dark and freezing/snowing outside."

Then, the bloke took another turn as he accused her of creating "drama" and said that giving her a lift home shouldn't have been expected because he didn't see their date as serious.

He said: "Drama much? It was a hook-up, let's face it. Thought we understood each other. Don't be so clingy."

After the woman told him he was "missing the point", he ended the conversation with another message which read: "I'll let you calm down a little and dial down the drama before we talk again. I'm sorry you had these lofty

expectations.

"Let's meet up later this week and we can talk about it."

When posting the screenshots on Reddit, the woman wrote: "My Tinder match dumped me off at a bus stop in the freezing cold in the middle of the night. Apparently, I'm needy for wanting a safe ride home."

Commenters on the post urged the woman to block the man and not talk to him again, as many of them said he had no "respect" for her.

One person said: "Please block him and never communicate with him again, he clearly doesn't have an ounce of respect for you. Run and never look back!"

While another added: "He's absolutely devoid of respect. Even worse, he's blaming you for his a**hole behaviour and proceeds to not take any responsibility."

And a third wrote: "This was infuriating to read. As much as an asshole move this was, I'm kinda glad he didn't drive you home so he doesn't know where you live (assuming he didn't pick you up there). Bullet dodged."

Source: The Mirror



The ISSUE
BULUS GAMBO

SMS Only: 08111186564. E-mail: wolfcatcher2004@yahoo.co.uk

Christmas amidst democratic misadventure

IN a few days' time, Christians all over the world will be massively celebrating the birth of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. This annual occasion is quite significant as it reminds us of the coming into the world of the father through the son to reconcile mankind back to God. To commemorate this epoch making event, Christians usually refocus their thoughts on the love and outrageous mercy God poured on mankind through the sacrificial act of sending his only beloved son to die for us all. Though Christ had no sin, He took our entire blotch and was subjected to all kind of sufferings and subsequently experienced death to liberate us from the shackles of sin.

But for the coming of Christ, one would not have comprehended the magnitude and degree of calamity which would befall the world. Therefore, the coming of Christ afforded us this ample chance and opportunity to conveniently overcome the struggles of this complex and contemporary world which we presently live in.

Unfortunately today, not many individuals comprehended this great move by God to reconcile this world back to our creator. Indeed, not many individuals today know the true meaning of Christmas and what it means for humanity. For many, this eon is but a chance for Christians to wine and dine spending their monies extravagantly in bar parlors and other mundane social engagements. Some of these people who are usually in the habit of pulling resources together right from the first month of the year only end up throwing away such resources by hosting many parties and visiting exotic places that derives pleasure only for the flesh. I equally have seen others spending thousands buying cloths and high class clothing which ends up only God knows where. Sad enough, many homes have dissolved, marriages broken and children left like orphans due to lack of containment with the little God has blessed us with.

This year alone, many promising women and children tired of the problematic disposition of this country decided to take their lives by themselves. These people became frustrated about these unfolding developments in the country and concluded that they had no other choice than to end it as they could no longer face the pressures of the harsh economic realities.

A few days back as this unpalatable fuel scarcity began to hit us real hard, I had to park my car and eventually joined our trekking crowd. One fateful Monday morning, I boarded a tricycle heading to Plateau Radio Television Corporation in Rayfield to anchor my usual programme when I bumped into an ongoing discussion about the fate of this country in the next coming years. The discussants were full of lamentations and pessimism particularly as regards the democratic misadventure we are passing through this very moment in the country. I had to take more time to explain to them that though this situation looks unredeemable, we cannot afford to lose hope particularly at this crucial moment of our nation's history. I had to convince them further that God was still at work in this country and would not abandon us in the lion's den. But come to think of this properly however, how serious have Nigerians become while

trying to get their nation back on track? How well are our leaders navigating this country to the Promised Land? Some months back, former Nigeria's President Olusegun Obasanjo shocked many citizens of this nation after advising people to stop praying to God for availability of economic resources but rather pray that we should have good and sincere leaders who can use what we presently have to change the fortunes of this country. Obasanjo believes that economic resource was not the problem of this country but rather successive lack of visionary and credible leaders who can sincerely turnaround the fortunes of this promising nation for the better.

Like it or not, former President Olusegun Obasanjo has rightly spoken the minds of many individuals in this country. This is hinged on the fact that we as a country can never forge ahead if we do not change our usual ways of doing things. To be more realistic, how would this nation move ahead when these same thieves stealing our monies are consistently recognized by our clergy in our mosques and churches?

How on earth can we have a better Nigeria when many of us are neck-deep into sustaining the statuesque which has continued to loot our resource leaving the entire citizens in abject poverty and want? How on earth can we move forward when in the words of our illustrious musician, Femi Kuti "truth don die in this country"?

The most recent revelation by a private investigator, Mohammad T. Ismail that a few Nigerians were discovered to have looted about N 70 trillion from our treasury is one of the tragic news I have heard in most recent times. According to this report, put together, this N70 trillion can finance our entire country's budget for three years with appreciable amount as leftover. Yet, in the midst of the plenty at our disposal in this country, some of us are celebrating this Christmas in absolute want any poverty.

Many still cannot afford three square meals a day not to talk of paying their children's school fees come January next year. Indeed, the situation we have found ourselves in today is so pathetic and dehumanizing to say the least. Many of us have become beggars at the mercy of our society for no fault of ours. While many things have gone wrong, we are refrained from saying the truth as doing this would hurt our political class the more. Thank God that Nigeria's general election is around the corner, a time for us to reason together in the best interest of our future generations.

This platform will also interestingly provide an ample opportunity for many of us to correct our wrongs of the past. Though embarking on such a cleanup operation may not be an easy excise, it remains the only profitable and viable option which would strategically change our ugly narratives of the past. When these forthcoming elections come by God's grace, we must all shine our eyes and ensure that we do the needful by putting the devil and his cohorts to shame.

Above all, may the spirit of this Christmas open our eyes to comprehend the unpleasant realities of our time, compel us to decode the intrigues of the wicked to enable us salvage this nation from the claws of the wicked. Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year in advance.

View Point

PUUSDUNG Bauchi 2022: A celebration at its best

By **BULUS GAMBO**

PUUSDUNG is one of the major events which has continued to showcase the rich culture and traditions of the Ngas nation to the outside world. Each time the event is held, it brings to bear the exciting moments which usually accompanies such an occasion.

Some weeks back, all Ngas people residing in Bauchi State came together to stage its own edition of the cultural festival which was celebrated in style. What made this 27th edition of the programme one of its kind was the way and manner the event was celebrated by Ngas people residing in the state. For quite a long time now, Ngas people in Bauchi State have continued to distinguish themselves.

Historically, this ethnic nationally has had long standing ties with many other tribal groups they have mingled with in the course of their existence and migration. More exiting is the pattern of the movement of Ngas people from Kukawa in the defunct Kamen Borno Empire to their present place of abode.

Amongst the suburbs of Bauchi axis, the Ngas people still occupy large settlements along Bigi and Inkil including Yelwan Bauchi whose central area is popularly called Unguwan Ngas. it is also important to stress that apart from historical linkages, the Ngas people even by modern political arrangement are not aliens to Bauchi. For instance, Tapshin which is a direct extension of Ngas land into Bauchi State is the largest District with eleven village areas in Tafawa Balewa Local Government Area of Bauchi State. There are also two village areas; Dukum and Dasham Yelwa in Boi District of Bogoro Local Government Area which are also Ngas.

Though the celebration of PUUSDUNG Bauchi which showcased the rich tradition and culture of the Ngas nation has come and gone, this year's event will for years continue to linger on the minds of many citizens of the state. Apart from the display of its cultural diversity, the ethnic group was also able to consolidate on its long existing ties with the people of the state.

Speaking during the event, the chairman of Ngas Development Association, (NDA) Bauchi branch, Nde Tongshinen Dimfwina explained that "the Ngas people have coexisted peacefully with other ethnic nationalities. Respect to other people around us has always been part of our culture, and it is through which we are known. It is important to note that anywhere you find yourself, your culture is of great value since it is one characteristics that made you to be who you are today."

According to him, "Under no circumstance, a hero should abandon his culture because if



values, skills, social understanding and the various customs of the society. This will further improve the quality of lives of the youths that will be employed and contribute to the economic development of the state by extension."

In his remarks, Guest Speaker at the occasion, Prof. Sylvester S. Shikyil disclosed that "National cultural policy is generally regarded as an instrument of promotion of national identity and Nigerian unity as well as of communication and cooperation among different Nigerian cultures. Culture is viewed as the shared characteristics and knowledge of a particular group of people in both material and nonmaterial forms. As a people, culture encompasses our worldwide views, socio-economic habits, traditions, religions, food, music, arts, what wear, how we wear it, our language, marriage customs, what we belief as right or wrong, how we welcome visitors, how we relate with love ones, our agricultural practices among many others.

He said, "Culture needs to be integrated into the upbringing and education given to children at home and at school. In this way, parents, teachers and the society as a whole can transmit culture and its positive values from one generation to the other for national unity. Culture and cultural values can be effectively transmitted by leveraging on activities such as the one we are witnessing today."

Also commenting, Hon. Joseph Gokum, APC candidate representing Kanke Constituency at the Plateau State House of Assembly commended the NDA for organizing such a wonderful occasion and was delighted to grace the event.

Represented by Lengdimma Kassam, the APC candidate solicited for support of the Ngas people in Bauchi State towards the forthcoming 2023 general elections.

Others who spoke at the occasion including member representing Kanke, Kanam and Pankshin at the House of Representatives, Hon. Yusuf Gagdi Candidate for the Senate Plateau Central, Diket Plang, and PDP Senatorial Candidate, Plateau Central, Amb. Gotom Golkuna amongst others, also commended the organizers of the event for a job well done. The PUUSDUNG Bauchi has proved a point that the significance of promoting our culture and tradition cannot be overemphasized.

Aside ensuring that the event creates unity of purpose for the people, such it has also presented the rich dynamic cultural heredity of the Ngas nation and its desire to project such values to the outside world.

he forsakes his culture; I dare to say, he would abandon himself. The Ngas people are known to cherish their culture and this could be seen in our appearance at this PUUSDUNG festival tagged Bauchi 2022 and that's why my friends and relations across the length and breadth of this country are always

mobilized to grace this celebration."

The NDA Chairman noted that "The Ngas speaking people of Bauchi State have agreed within themselves to start the process of community development to foster both social and economic development for the entire people. With their active

involvement and full initiative an idea of constructing classroom blocks to start a school where the pass executives acquire twelve plots of land for the association was muted. The idea if realized will transform the younger ones into responsible people in the society through the transmission of attitudes,



A season of political rallies, meetings

WITH barely three months to Nigeria's 2023 general elections, the tempo is heating up with politicians campaigning from one part of the country to another to woo voters.

Plateau Governor who has a major task as All Progressives Congress (APC) Director General (DG) of the Tinubu/Shetiima Presidential Campaign Council is also spearheading such outings for the success of his party.

Lalong, last week led the APC Presidential Candidate and stalwarts to Kaduna for the North Western campaign mega-rally.

The rally took place Tuesday December 13, 2022 at at the Ahmadu Bello Stadium Kaduna.

Lalong used the forum to canvass for support from the numerous party supporters and Nigerians to vote for the Party's Presidential Candidate Asiwaju Bola Tinubu and his running mate Kashim Shettima.

In line with the APC manifesto "Renewed Hope", speakers at the rally including Party Chairman Senator Abdullahi Adamu, Kaduna Governor Nasir El-Rufai, Asiwaju Tinubu and his running mate Shettima all assured supporters of development in various sectors.

A day before the rally, Lalong had led the APC flag bearer Tinubu, alongside Governors of Kano, Abdulkahi Ganduje, Kebbi, Atiku Bagudu Jigawa, Abubakar Badaru, and other Party leaders and candidates to meetings with key Stakeholders in Kaduna, and visited communities in Birnin Gwari Local Government Area of Kaduna state to commiserate with victims of series of bandits attacks that occurred in the area. During the visit, the APC candidate Tinubu attracted the royal blessings of his Royal Highness Zubair Megwari II who conferred him with the traditional title "Dakari Birnin Gwari" which means fearless warrior for being the first Presidential Candidate to visit the Area.

Lalong the APC PCC Director General also led the Presidential Campaign Team to a town hall meeting with workers, promising better working conditions.

The meeting which was also to woo Nigerian workers had in attendance the Nigeria Labour Congress President, Comrade Ayuba Wabba, Trade Union Congress President Comrade Peter Osifo, Deputy DG, APC PCC and former NLC President Adams Osiohmole, and key stakeholders from the labour and APC.

Governor Lalong alongside dignitaries like Vice President Yemi Osinbanjo, former President Goodluck Jonathan, Governors, personalities from the public and private sector over the

weekend attended the wedding of the daughter of Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Boss Mustapha.

The colourful and classic wedding also attracted family members and well wishers from all works of life.

At the wedding, which took place at the National Christian Center Abuja, Lalong tasked the couples to live a loving and harmonious life in line with biblical tenets.



News

Work together in unison, Lalong tasks couples

PLATEAU State Governor and Chairman of the Northern Governors Forum, Simon Bako Lalong has tasked couples to work together with love as one body.

The Governor gave the charge weekend as he was among dignitaries that attended the wedding of the daughter of Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Boss Mustapha, Anna and her heartthrob Rimambotop.

The wedding solemnisation took place at the National Christian Centre, Abuja on Saturday, 17th December 2022.

Among top dignitaries that

By PALANG KASMI

attended the wedding were Vice President Yemi Osinbajo, Former President Goodluck Jonathan, governors, national assembly members, top government officials and other private sector members.

Governor Lalong while wishing the newly wedded couple a successful married life, said he was happy that the parents of the couple gave them full support, raised them well and exposed them to wise counsel to go ahead with the union.

He said the couple is to do their part by working together with one another in line with the

word of God to accomplish his will for them.

In a sermon, Resident Pastor of Family Worship Centre, Wuye, Pastor Wilson Akuboh said marriage is founded on commitment to love and service where giving is the ideal.

He charged the couple to be patient, forgiving, kind and generous to one another as well as be ready to accommodate one another's weaknesses.

CAN President, Rev. Daniel Okoh, Pastor Sarah Omakwu of Family Worship Centre Abuja, and other men of God also prayed for the couple and assured them of their prayers and support.

The father of the bride, Mr. Boss Mustapha also prayed for the couple and wished them a great marriage.

President, Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria, had appreciated the governor for signing into law the establishment of the Commodity Management Agency, noting that this will strengthen the organization in the state.

He appealed to the state government to implement the Pharmacy Consultancy Cadre in the state, support the citing of the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences at the University of Jos Campus 4, JUTH Lamingo as well as provision of vehicle for the association to fight fake and counterfeit drugs pharmacy and medicine stores across the state.

From ANENE AIKE, Sokoto

Three persons die, N860m worth properties gutted by fire

NO fewer than three persons died while properties worth over N860 million were destroyed in different fire incidents in Sokoto State, the state Fire Service Department has stated.

The Chief Fire Officer, Alhaji Nuhu Lawal said the incidents occurred between January and December 2022 within Sokoto State as a whole when three persons died and properties worth over N860 million destroyed.

The Fire Prevention Officer of the Sokoto State Fire Service, Alhaji Nuhu Lawal stated in Sokoto that the agency responded to about 433 incidents and about N7 billion worth of properties were saved during the period January to December 2022.

According to him, the Fire Service Departments are equipped with fire fighting vehicles in each of the 23 local government areas of the state, besides zonal offices in the three senatorial zones and other selected places.

The Prevention Officer also decried the state of fake emergency calls from some unscrupulous elements to which the agency responded to the distress calls.

He said that several times when their men arrived at the scenes, they found nothing as the information were found to be false at the mentioned



Tambuwal areas.

While calling on households in the state to cooperate with the Fire Service by taking fire outbreak preventive measures serious, he said they should also ensure prompt maintenance and monitoring of their energy sources and appliances such as electric and cooking gas to avoid fire outbreak incidences.

The Preventive Officer, therefore appealed to the state government to as a matter of urgency, assist by repairing some of the agency's grounded firefighting machines as the harmattan season has begun.

He also reminded all petroleum filling stations owners across the state to

ensure they install fire extinguishers at various strategic locations of their filling stations.

Lawal also called on households in the state to cooperate with the Fire Service by taking fire outbreak preventive measures serious. He therefore advised that they should also ensure prompt maintenance and monitoring of their energy sources and appliances such as electric and cooking gas to avoid fire outbreaks incidences.

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Lalong

Sports

Winners and losers of the 2022 World Cup

GOAL looks back on a tournament staged in the tiny but wealthy Gulf state of Qatar that provided quality and controversy in equal measure.

And breathe... The 2022 World Cup has just come to a close after four frenetic weeks of 64 games in eight stadiums located in and around Doha.

The drama was relentless. The group stage alone was remarkable, producing one upset after another, while the Moroccan miracle continued all the way to the semi-finals.

In the end, Lionel Messi finally got his hands on the trophy that appeared destined to elude him, with Kylian Mbappe having to content himself with the Golden Boot after becoming only the second man after Geoff Hurst to hit a hat-trick in the World Cup final.

Below, though, GOAL has tried to pick out the most memorable moments from a tournament that was truly unforgettable, and not always for the right reasons...

Gianni Infantino talked a lot of rubbish in Qatar. He was arguably right about one thing, though: the 2022 World Cup boasted the greatest group stage in the tournament's history.

Matchday three generated an unprecedented level of drama, with nearly every single set of fixtures producing late twists and turns. That is not always the case, of course, but the 32-team group stage just works. It reduces the risk of dead rubbers and increases the likelihood of exciting finales. It also makes for a convenient way to reduce the field to 16 teams.

The only trouble is that FIFA have only realised this now. In their infinite wisdom, they've already decided to increase the World Cup to 48 qualifiers in 2026, so they've now got a problem to solve. The plan was to have 16 groups of three but even Infantino has realised that they need to revise that plan because four-team groups is what makes the first round great.

However, the most obvious solution as it stands is the re-introduction of the dreadful format which allows some of the 'best' third-place finishers to progress to the knockout stage. And even that won't address the issue of more meaningless matches on matchday three. It's a mess. And one all of FIFA's making.

The kid is a freak of nature, a natural-born phenomenon, a heaven-sent talent destined to rewrite the record books. When Didier Deschamps says the World Cup is Mbappe's competition, he means it.

This is the game's grandest stage and yet he's completely at ease in the spotlight. He just doesn't fluff his lines. Ever.

Think about it, at any point did you think he was going to miss any of the three penalties he took against Argentina? What's more, when that ball dropped for him 95 seconds after his first spot-kick, you just knew that he was going to volley it home.

Mbappe is inevitable. If he stays fit, he will go down as one of the greatest players in history.

Well, at least Fernando Santos has been sacked. That's the one positive to come out of the 2022 World Cup for Cristiano Ronaldo.

However, there's no guarantee that the next coach won't come to the same conclusion as the man who benched him in Qatar (and Erik ten Hag before him at Old Trafford) – that a team trying to play a modern brand of football is better off without a player who can't/won't press.

This tournament was meant to be about redemption for Ronaldo. It was



Messi

supposed to remind everyone of what he still has to offer at the very highest level. Instead, it provided evidence of his dramatic decline. But it didn't have to be this way.

Ronaldo didn't arrive in Qatar match fit because he had long since burned his bridges at Manchester United. He then promptly set fire to his relationship with Santos and his whole reputation as a great sportsman went up in smoke.

For a man who talks a lot about respect, it was interesting that he didn't afford anybody any in Qatar – not his coach, not his team-mates, not his opponents and not even his own supporters. Some GOAT...

The best fans at the World Cup? The tidiest were definitely Japan's, who even helped volunteers clean up after games. We should probably give a special mention to England's supporters. Not one arrest is a historic achievement for the Three Lions' followers.

Meanwhile, anyone who attended a Morocco match will tell you that there was a ringing in their ears for hours afterwards. They whistled in unison for every single second their team didn't have the ball, which added up to a fair bit of time given Walid Regragui's players revelled in their counter-attacking approach.

In terms of support, though, this tournament belonged to Argentina. They not only didn't just take over stadiums for 90 minutes; they occupied them until long after full-time. Argentina's tournament triumph really was as much theirs' as it was the players'. They visibly inspired one another.

Arsene Wenger used to be one of the most respected figures in football. Not anymore. A man who used to complain about fixture congestion is now pushing for the expansion of existing tournaments and the creation of others.

Just this week, the legendary Arsenal manager-turned-FIFA employee even lashed out at the "negativity" of the debate surrounding player welfare, despite the fact that those that are actually being told to carry the extra workload are dead against the introduction of more and more games.

Worse again, Wenger made a fool of himself by claiming that the sides who made political statements in Qatar performed worse on the pitch, referring to early exits for Denmark and Germany, while completely ignoring the historic progress being made by Morocco, who took every opportunity to highlight the plight of the Palestinian people. It was an argument as nonsensical as his

previous proposal for a World Cup every two years but even more pathetic.

Croatia, a nation of four million people, followed up a runners-up finish at Russia 2018 by claiming bronze at Qatar 2022. Luka Modric is the man behind the miracle. The midfielder is 37 and yet he was, as coach Zlatko Dalic pointed out, playing with the energy of a 20-year-old. Indeed, Modric isn't just incredible from a technical perspective, he also remains a human dynamo, winning ball after ball in midfield. "Some people think this is the end," Dalic said, "but I think Luka Modric stays with us a long time." Let's hope so, because he remains a privilege to watch.

"We concede goals too easily," Ilkay Gundogan admitted, "we lose balls too easily and up front we miss goalscoring chances too easily. Of course, as Germany, we have to have different aspirations, so we have to take a good look at ourselves. We just didn't manage to do our best as a group, or maybe even individually. We have to question what the reasons were and everyone has to look in the mirror and tell themselves that it wasn't enough."

That period of self-reflection is already well under way, with Germany having returned home some two weeks ago after a second consecutive World Cup first-round exit. Hansi Flick has held on to his job as coach for Euro 2024 but Oliver Bierhoff has already resigned as managing director of the country's national teams and academy, underlining that Germany's problems are more structural than anything else. The country's football system is clearly in need of an overhaul similar to the one that paved the way for the 2014 World Cup triumph in Brazil, 14 years after their embarrassing showing at Euro 2000.

Roy Keane most definitely wasn't a fan of Brazil dancing their way past South Korea and into the quarter-finals, feeling they would have been better off focusing on football. He'll argue he was right, too, given the Selecao were upset by Croatia in the last eight.

However, Tite doing the 'Pigeon Dance' with Richarlison remains one of the abiding images of the tournament. It was nothing, though, compared to the sight of Sofiane Boufal and his mother dancing on the pitch after Morocco's sensational win over Portugal.

It was a heart-warming expression of pure joy and a timely reminder of what this whole game is meant to be all about: fun. As Roger Milla, the man who brought the Makossa to the World Cup, memorably put it,

"playing football and celebrating are the same thing – that is dancing." And nobody – not even the paid killjoys like Keane – is going to drive it out of the game.

Was Kevin De Bruyne right about Belgium being too old to win the World Cup? A first-round elimination would certainly suggest so. Should he have said it, though? Absolutely not.

That De Bruyne signed off on the publication of that interview after Belgium had played – and won – their opening game was astounding. His comments immediately became a distraction for Roberto Martinez, and a bone of contention among his team-mates.

It evoked memories of Roy Keane's dramatic withdrawal from the Republic of Ireland squad before the 2022 World Cup for comments made in a newspaper article. And yet Keane had merely – and rightly – slammed the standard of the facilities in Saipan. De Bruyne threw his team-mates under the bus. A bitter backlash was inevitable, particularly as De Bruyne proved a bigger disappointment in Qatar than any other Belgium player.

Morocco's campaign ended with two frustrating defeats but disappointed soon gave way to pride. As Kylian Mbappe told Achraf Hakimi: "Don't be sad, bro, everybody is proud of you. You made history."

And he was spot on. No African side had ever previously made it past the quarter-finals. Well, they have absolutely smashed through that glass ceiling, redefining what is possible for the international game's undervalued and underappreciated nations when talent is combined with organisation, fighting spirit and vociferous support. Walid Regragui claimed before this game that his team were the ultimate underdog story, the footballing equivalent of Rocky, and that the entire world had fallen in love with his side. And he's right. Dima Maghreb!



Mbappe

For 90 mesmerizing minutes, it appeared as if Tiki-taka was back. Spain announced their arrival in Qatar with a 7-0 schooling of Costa Rica that was as emphatic as it was easy on the eye.

However, that was to be as good as it got at this tournament for both La Roja and possession football. Spain bowed out in the last 16 after having the ball for 78 percent of their meeting with Morocco. The likes of Rodri complained afterwards that their opponents had done nothing remotely positive during the game. In reality, though, it was Spain who had contributed nothing to the contest other than a thousand passes.

This was possession with zero penetration and they paid a heavy price for the total lack of variation in their game. By that point, it was already abundantly clear that this tournament was all about quick transitions and rapid wing play.

It's no coincidence at all that both France and Argentina reached the final after having just 39% possession in their respective semi-final wins over Morocco and Croatia, respectively.

It didn't really matter who won Sunday's final. Qatar had already won this World Cup. And that's in spite of the fact that they became the first nation to bow out in the group stage without winning a single game, after their supposed supporters had given up on them at half-time in their tournament-opener against Ecuador.

For the Gulf state, the only objective was to stage a well-run competition that would allow fans and journalists to focus on the football. And they achieved that goal with the help of Lionel Messi and Kylian Mbappe, two footballers employed by Paris Saint-Germain, who are owned by Qatari Sports Investments (QSI), which is a subsidiary of Qatar Investment Authority (QIA), the state's sovereign wealth fund.

Seriously, in the circumstances, amid all of the criticism and allegations of corruption, this couldn't have gone any better for the tournament organisers. France against Argentina, Mbappe versus Messi, it was the final of their dreams. And they even managed to get a bisht for the trophy presentation...

David Beckham's face has been everywhere in Qatar yet his voice was never heard, which was rather fitting. Amid constant calls for him to voice his support for the LGBTQ+ community which considered him an ally for such a long time, the former England captain stayed strangely silent.

Perhaps his lucrative ambassadorial role for Qatar 2022 had something to do with it. He may have made millions as a result of his promotional work but it's cost him a lot of fans.

Sports

Sunshine stars sign Yusuf from Remo Stars

SUNSHINE stars of Akure have signed Remo stars young sensational, Ibrahim Yusuf ahead of the 2022/23 Nigeria Professional Football League (NPFL) Season.

Newsnow said that, Ibrahim was part of Remo stars squad that picked continental ticket last season.

He joined Remo stars youth team from Ikorodu based academy, Remo stars in 2018 where he was promoted to the senior team.

Ibrahim was part of the team that helped the Ogun state-based side gained promotion to NPFL from Nigeria National League (NNL).

Ibrahim Yusuf sign for Sunshine stars AFP

He made his NPFL debut against Kano Pillars for Remo stars under coach Gbenga Ogunbote last season.

The Ogun state-based team qualified for the NPFL after winning the Super Six in Enugu.



Yusuf

Remo stars finished third last season, with 62 points, the highest in the club's history.

Remo stars lost to ASFAR Fc of Morocco in the preliminary stage of the CAF Confederations cup.

Recall that, the team captain, Nduka Junior, was rewarded with a car for his brilliant performances at the club last season.

Sunshine Stars Upgrade

stadium Sunshine stars has upgraded the stadium ahead of the kickoff of the NPFL Season.

The stadium didn't meet the requirements standard set by the Interim Management Committee (IMC).

The pitch has been revitalized and the dressing room has been completely upgraded with the floodlighting system in good condition.

THE Interim Management Committee (IMC) of the Nigerian Professional Football League (NPFL) will meet with the 20 clubs listed for the 2022/23 season to ratify the kickoff date for the season and other matters related to the competition.

Newsnow said that, a source close to the IMC have disclosed that the season may begin on December 28 with the opening fixture, while the rest of the season will continue from January.

Yesterday, IMC's Head of Operations, Davidson Owumi, in a circular notified the clubs of tomorrow's meeting billed to hold at Sandralia Hotel, Abuja.

The circular noted that the

NPFL's 2022/23 season kickoff as IMC, clubs meeting

meeting is being convened to perfect earlier interactions with the clubs on the new season's roadmap.

The memo read, "sequel to our previous meeting and the need to finalise our conclusions, the IMC of the NPFL wishes to invite the 20 NPFL clubs to an interactive meeting that will finalise the way forward for a smooth running of the 2022/23 season."

The two bodies met in November and agreed to have a final session to perfect modalities for the start of the

season.

The IMC in conjunction with Dozy Mmobuosi Foundation earlier this month organised a pre-season competition featuring four teams as test run for the 2022/23 season.

Winner of the competition, 3SC of Ibadan, got N100 million as reward for their efforts.

At tomorrow's meeting, the IMC and clubs are expected to, apart from the league programme, determine rewards for the clubs in the competition and modalities for the league.



Bala Akintunde of 3SC of Ibadan challenges Reuben Bala of Enugu Rangers during the NPFL pre-season

Benzema claims in tweet that international career 'is ending'

FRANCE striker Karim Benzema has tweeted that his journey with the national team "is ending".

BBC SPORT said that, Benzema, who turned 35 on Monday, missed the World Cup through injury as Les Bleus lost 4-2 on penalties to Argentina in the final.

He has 97 caps, scoring 37 goals and now it appears he has retired from international duty.

"I have written my story and made the mistakes to be where I am today and I am proud of it," he added.

The Real Madrid forward did not play for France for nearly six years after being embroiled in a blackmail scandal involving former team-mate Mathieu Valbuena, but returned to the squad for Euro 2020.

His fine form at club level, including helping Madrid to a 14th Champions League title

last season, was rewarded by winning his first Ballon d'Or earlier this year.

The club tweeted in response to Benzema with a clapping emoji and a French flag, while the Fifa World Cup's official account replied by saying "Merci, Benzema".

Meanwhile, France players Kingsley Coman and Aurelien Tchouameni have been subjected to online racist abuse after missing their penalties in the World Cup final.

France were beaten 4-2 in a penalty shootout by Argentina on Sunday as they failed to defend their world title.

Coman's club Bayern Munich have since posted a message of support for the 26-year-old winger.

His penalty was saved by Argentina goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez, while Tchouameni's effort went wide.

"FC Bayern strongly condemn

the racist comments made towards Kingsley Coman," said the German club in an online statement.

"The FC Bayern family is behind you, King. Racism has no place in sport or our society."

Brighton hope to keep Allister for long

BRIGHTON hope "it won't be a problem for a couple of years" when it comes to keeping hold of Alexis Mac Allister, says chief executive Paul Barber.

The midfielder, 23, impressed as he helped Argentina win the World Cup in Qatar.

Mac Allister has a deal at Brighton until June 2025, with the club having the option to extend it by a year.

"He will be sought after, we're very aware of that, but we hope to keep him here as long as we can," said Barber.

Brighton's recent departures have included defender Marc

Cucurella (£60m), midfielder Yves Bissouma (£25m) and forward Neal Maupay (£15m) - all sold last summer - after Ben White (£50m) left in June 2021 and fellow defender Dan Burn (£13m) moved on in January 2022.

Speaking to BBC Sport about the attention on Mac Allister, Barber added that it was "a nice problem to have".

He added: "Of course, when staff and players do well, as we've seen in the last few months, they do attract the interest of other big clubs.

"These are clubs that are

wealthier and have the chance to give players a new level, we understand that and we're not naive to that.

"All we can do is protect ourselves the best we can through the contracts and hope we can hold on to the player for as long as possible, but this is a young man who has just won the World Cup at 23 and set up arguably one of the most iconic goals in World Cup history."

Mac Allister made six appearances for Argentina at the 2022 World Cup and scored the opener in a 2-0 group-stage win against Poland.

He passed to Angel di Maria for his side's second goal as Argentina beat France on penalties after a 3-3 draw in the final.

Mac Allister was rated as man of the match by BBC Sport readers for his performance in the victory.

"On the BBC website he was voted player of the match, which is incredible for a 23-year-old in his first World Cup, having only recently broken into Argentina's team," said Barber.

"To perform at that level and get an assist as well, a superb assist, was an incredible moment for him and his family and for our club as well.

"I didn't speak to him [after the game] but I sent a message and didn't expect for one minute to get a reply because I'm sure he was inundated.

"But, typical of Alexis the player and the man, he replied

overnight and thanked me and everyone at the club for the good wishes and all the support he received from the club in the tournament.

"That's Alexis, he's humble, he's down to earth and comes from a great family. I couldn't be more delighted for them; they're really nice people and deserve the success."

Mac Allister joined Brighton in a reported £7m deal during January 2019 from Argentinos Juniors, where he initially returned on loan.

He also had a loan stint Boca Juniors and, after making his Argentina debut in September 2019, made his first appearance for the Seagulls in March 2020 against Wolves.

"He comes from a footballing family, his father played for Argentina with [Diego] Maradona actually," Barber said.

"We felt that he could adjust well to playing in the Premier League. We knew it might take a bit of time because he was young and the league is very physically demanding.

"There's not a lot of room for error either in the intensity of the game but we felt he had all of those qualities and over his time here he's become more and more of a regular in our first team.

"He can score goals, he can assist, he can tackle and he has a very competitive edge about him, without being nasty in any way.

"Then off the field he's a very nice, humble man. We're very pleased for him but also that nice bit of reflective glory is good for our club.



Karim Benzema made his France debut against Austria in 2007

Sports



Venus Williams will compete in her 22nd Australian Open in January

Williams given Australian Open wildcard

Venus Williams has been awarded a wildcard to compete in January's Australian Open at the age of 42. The American will be back in Melbourne 25 years after her debut in the tournament, which begins on 16 January. Williams won just three matches in 13 tournaments last season but is yet to show any inclination to follow her sister Serena into retirement. A seven-time Grand Slam champion in singles, she was beaten in the Australian Open final in 2003 and 2017. "I am very excited to be returning to Melbourne. It will be an honour to play for the

fans again," said Williams, who has won five doubles titles in Melbourne. "I've been competing in the country for over 20 years now and the Australian community has always supported me wholeheartedly. "I'm looking forward to making more memories at the tournament this year." Williams is ranked 1,007th in the world and her last competitive singles match was a first-round defeat at the US Open in August, having played just four tournaments in 2022. The Grand Slam in New York was the last for Williams' sister Serena, who announced she was "evolving away" from

tennis before the tournament. Nine-time champion Novak Djokovic is also set to compete in Melbourne - a year after being deported from Australia because of his Covid-19 vaccination status. Meanwhile, 17-year-old British player Ben Bartram has been given an Australian Open men's wheelchair wildcard after being named the International Tennis Federation's (ITF) Junior Wheelchair Tennis Player of the Year. Bartram has won six senior titles since June and will join Britain's Alfie Hewett and Gordon Reid in the tournament.

Emma Raducanu appoints Sebastian Sachs as new coach

EMMA Raducanu has appointed Sebastian Sachs as her new coach. The 30-year-old German, who guided Belinda Bencic to Olympic gold last year, has started working with the Briton, last year's US Open champion. Sachs is in Abu Dhabi with Raducanu, who lost on Friday to Wimbledon runner-up Ons Jabeur 5-7 6-3 (10-8) in an exhibition match on her injury return. The German had a brief career as a player on the Futures tour, but has enjoyed plenty of success as a coach. Before helping Bencic into

the world's top 10, he worked with Julia Gorges and before that as part of Victoria Azarenka's team. Sachs will be Raducanu's fifth coach in 18 months. This year, the 20-year-old Briton has worked with first Torben Beltz and then Dmitry Tursunov. Tursunov decided not to continue the partnership after this year's US Open, despite Raducanu's improved performances since Wimbledon. The Russian spoke in late October of "red flags" and

potential problems further down the line if she continued to listen to too many voices. "She's probably a two-and-a-half-year project. Her game is very raw," the 39-year-old Tursunov told tennismajors.com. "It's going to take some time, but as I said to her and to pretty much everyone on her

World Cup 2022: Argentina return home, holiday declared

WORLD Cup winners Argentina were greeted by jubilant crowds at Buenos

TIGER Woods says 2022 was "one of the more rewarding years I've had in a while" and is aiming to play all four majors next year. The American, a 15-time major winner, is still recovering from severe leg injuries suffered in a car crash in February 2021. He has also developed plantar fasciitis - pain in the base of his foot. It means the 46-year-old has been limited to only nine rounds of competitive golf this year.

Before taking part in the Match - an exhibition tournament in Florida - last week, Woods had not played since the Open Championship at St Andrews in July, when he missed the cut. This weekend he played in the PNC Championship family golf tournament in Orlando, Florida, alongside son Charlie, 13. And when asked how he felt compared to when he played in the event last year, Woods said he had made "a lot" of progress. "Last year I played with a

Woods: 2022 'tough but rewarding'



Woods, who played alongside son Charlie, used a cart to help him get around the course at the PNC Championship

broken leg. This year nothing was broken, but it was good that all the pieces are there again all lined up," he said. "Plantar fasciitis is no fun and now I get to truly recover and heal and progress forward on this. "There are so many good things that I've been able to do physically - be able to hit the golf ball and practice and do everything in a standstill. "But I haven't been able to get from point A to point B and we're obviously going

to work on this," added Woods, who used a cart to get round the course in Orlando. "It was a tough year but also one of the more rewarding years I've had in a while. "It was an incredible week just to be able to play with Charlie," added Woods, who also said he did not yet know what his 2023 schedule would look like but that he was aiming to play in all four majors. The Woods pairing tied for eighth at the event, which was won by Fiji's Vijay Singh and his son Qass Singh.

Three athletes banned for breaking anti-doping rules

THREE Kenyan athletes have been banned for a collective period of eight years after breaking anti-

doping rules. The Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) has banned marathon runners Alice Jepkemboi Kimutai and Mark Otieno for two. Otieno, 29, tested positive for the banned anabolic steroid Methasterone before the 100m heats at the Tokyo Olympic Games. It meant he was not allowed to compete. Otieno, a three-time national 100m champion, will have his ban backdated from the Games and end in July 2023. The suspension for November's Porto marathon winner Kimutai - who tested positive for the male hormone testosterone - began on 16 November. Maiyo's ban started on 20 July for returning a positive test for erythropoietin (EPO). Last month the east African country avoided a sanction by governing body World Athletics - despite having 55 athletes serving suspensions - after committing to spend \$25m over the next five years to combat doping. Kenya's sports minister Ababu Namwamba then announced they intended to criminalise doping in athletics in an attempt to bring an end to a string of cases in the sport.



Sebastian Sachs (left, with Belinda Bencic) is Emma Raducanu's fifth coach in 18



Sprinter Mark Otieno is one of the three Kenyan athletes to receive a ban from the Athletics Integrity Unit



Quest



writer

Ayodele Brown

FRAGMENT

"No broadcast shall encourage or incite to crime, lead to public disorder or hate, be repugnant to public feeling or contain offensive reference to any person or organization, Alive or dead or generally be disrespectful to human dignity. Broadcasting shall promote human dignity, therefore, hate speech is prohibited. The broadcaster shall not transmit any programme, programme promotion, community services announcement or station identity, which is likely, in any circumstance, to provoke or perpetrate in a reasonable person, intense dislike, serious contempt or severe ridicule against a person or groups of people because of age, colour, gender, national or ethnic origin, disability, race, religion or political leanings."

Ayodele Brown

Guidelines on political broadcasts

THE National Broadcasting Commission was established on the 24th August 1992 under the National Broadcasting Commission Act Cap NII Laws of the federation of Nigeria 2004. Some of the key responsibilities of the Commission are:-

Advising the Federal Government generally on the implementation of the National Mass Communication policy with particular reference to broadcasting.

Receiving, processing and considering applications for the establishment, ownership or operation of radio and television station including cable television services, direct satellite broadcast and any medium of broadcasting and Radio and television stations owned established or operated by the Federal, State and Local government.

Recommending applications through the minister to the President for the grant of Radio and Television licences.

Regulating and controlling the broadcasting industry.

Receiving, Considering and investigating complaints from individuals and bodies corporate or incorporate regarding the contents of a broadcast and the conduct of a broadcast station.

Updating the principle of equity and fairness in broadcasting.

Establishing and disseminating a national broadcasting code and setting standards with regards to the contents and quality of materials for broadcast.

Regulating ethical standards and technical excellence in public private and commercial broadcast stations in Nigeria.

Monitoring broadcasting for harmful emission, interference and illegal broadcasting.

The Nigerian Broadcasting Code.

This is the regulatory document of the Commission guiding the practice of Broadcasting in Nigeria as may be reviewed from time to time under the provisions of the NBC Act Cap NII laws of the federation of Nigeria 2004 and any amendment thereto.

The Code represents the minimum standard for broadcasting in the Federal Republic of Nigeria. It shall be applied in the spirit as well as in the letter in accordance with the professional ideals of broadcasting.

Guidelines on political broadcasts

Political broadcast shall be in decent language devoid of hate speech, fake news, inciting comments, derogatory and divisive remarks.

Hate speech-chapter 3 of the Nigeria Broadcasting Code under professional rules states.

No broadcast shall encourage or incite to crime, lead to public disorder or hate, be repugnant to public feeling or contain offensive reference to any person or organization, Alive or dead or generally be disrespectful to human dignity.

Broadcasting shall promote human dignity, therefore, hate speech is prohibited. The broadcaster shall not transmit any programme, programme



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promotion, community services announcement or station identity, which is likely, in any circumstance, to provoke or perpetrate in a reasonable person, intense dislike, serious contempt or severe ridicule against a person or groups of people because of age, colour, gender, national or ethnic origin, disability, race, religion or political leanings.

Fake News

The Nigeria Broadcasting Code under news and current affairs states:

News is a sacred, free access right of the people. News shall be presented as a truthful and accurate account of an event or phenomenon.

More than any other genre of communication, News requires the highest level of responsibility by practitioners in adhering to the most pristine of their professional ethics. Those include truthfulness, accuracy, fairness, objectivity, impartiality, inclusiveness and accountability.

Broadcast news is the most potent of all forms of news. In news, facts are sacred and shall be treated as such. Political enlighten includes News, Current Affairs programmes, political campaigns, political jingles or spot announcements.

The broadcaster shall present news as factual and in a correct and fair manner without distortions, exaggerations or misrepresentation. Material omissions

Interpretations

Fake News is prohibited.

The broadcaster shall adhere strictly to the rules provided in the Electoral Act 2022, all extant rules and guidelines or political coverage. Therefore, political campaign shall commence 150 days to the Election Day and end 24 hours before polling day.

Electoral Act 2022: Section 95

A candidate and his or her party shall campaign for the elections in accordance with such rules and regulations as may be determined by the Commission.

State apparatus including the media shall not be employed to the advantage or disadvantage of any political party or candidate at any election. Media time shall be allocated equally among the political parties or candidates at similar hours of the day.

At any public electronic media, equal airtime shall be allotted to all political parties or candidates during prime times at similar hours each day, subject to the payment of appropriate fees.

At any public print media, equal coverage and visibility shall be allotted to all political parties. (6) A person who contravenes subsections (3) and (4) commits an offence and is liable on conviction, in the case of:-

A public media, to a fine of N2,000,000 in the first instance and N5,000,000 for subsequent conviction; and principal officers and other officers of the media house, to a fine of N1,000,000 or imprisonment for a term of six months.

Section 96

A person, print or electronic medium that broadcasts, publishes, advertises or circulates any material for the purpose of promoting or opposing a particular political party or the election of a particular candidate over the radio, television, newspaper, magazine, handbills, or any print or electronic media whatsoever called within twenty-four hours immediately preceding or on polling day commits an offence under this Act.

Where an offence under subsection (1) is committed by a body corporate, the principal officers of that body shall be deemed to have

equally committed the same offence.

A person convicted of an offence under this section is liable—

In the case of a body corporate to a maximum fine of N1,000,000; and

In the case of an individual to a maximum fine of N1,000,000 or to imprisonment for a term of six months or both.

The broadcaster shall provide equal opportunity and airtime to all political parties or views with particular regards to amount of time and belt during the electioneering campaign period.

The broadcaster shall not deny any person, party or group a right of broadcast of a political advertisement.

The broadcaster shall avoid monetization of political news as any form of commercialization of political news in the interest of fairness and balance.

The broadcaster shall highlight the activities of government functionaries, resort to praise singing or denial of access to those with contrary views or political leaning.

All broadcasters shall carry out their civic responsibility of transmitting all aspects of political enlightenment.

A station shall ensure that a log is kept by her news department showing the allocation of time to each political party with dates, titles of programme and other information as may be requested by the Commission, to ensure fairness.

A station shall set up a committee to examine all complaints and appeals from political parties and the general public on political broadcast during electioneering, and make appropriate decisions, including the granting of a Right of Reply. The committee's proceeding shall be forwarded (on demand) to the Director General of the Commission within 24 hours.

Nigerian Broadcasting Code states

Pursuant to section 2 (i) (f) (n) (q) of the Act, the Commission shall receive, consider and investigate complaints and where necessary arbitrate or repose sanctions for non-compliance with any of the following:

- Content of the broadcast
- Conduct of the broadcaster
- Terms, conditions and obligations of the broadcast licence.
- The Act, the Code and any other regulation of the Commission.

Complaints format

A complaint to the Commission shall be in oral or written form and contain amongst others the following:

- Name of the Broadcaster
- Title of the programme
- Date of the broadcast
- Essence of the complaint or observation, such as the absence of fairness, obscenity or technical shortcoming etc and
- Name, address, telephone number and/or email and signature of the complainant.
- Any person, group of persons or

institution aggrieved may lodge a complaint with the Commission within 14 days of the occurrence of the act or omission.

Note that a complaint received after the 14 days shall not be entertained by the commission.

The Commission shall on receipt of complaint:

Inform and require the broadcaster to provide within a special period determined by the Commission, a response in writing and a recording of the relevant materials.

Request for copies of the relevant correspondence from the complainant.

Promptly investigate and or arbitrate on the matter within a reasonable period and notify the parties of the progress of the investigation, findings and action taken.

The broadcaster's failure to supply the requested materials or make statement in response to the inquiries within the stipulated time limit shall be deemed as acceptance of the complaint(s) and the appropriate sanction be applied.

Where the complaint is upheld direct the Commission shall direct the broadcaster to within 14 days comply with its directives.

The Commission may make the outcome of the investigation public.

The broadcaster shall regularly announce that every political party is entitled to airtime during political campaign therefore the station shall ensure equitable coverage of all registered political parties.

The broadcaster shall authenticate a purported withdrawal of a candidate in an election and ensure that the affected candidate personally endorses such claim.

The broadcaster shall ensure that the broadcast of a partisan political campaign, jingles, announcements and any other partisan party identification or symbol ends not later than 24 hours before polling day.

A station is free to sell airtime for the purpose of political campaigns provided that:

All messages shall be in form of spot announcements or jingles not exceeding 60 seconds.

All jingles shall conform to the standards of truth, decency, good taste and morality.

All sponsors of partisan political advertisements shall be identifiable

No station shall be involved in the production of such announcements or jingles.

This information is Culled from the Nigeria Broadcasting Code (6th Edition)

Please read the full details of the guidelines in sections 5.3 and 7.7 of the Nigeria Broadcasting Code (6th Edition).

Conclusion

As regulators our job is to remind broadcasters of the initial role they play in the democratic process and as dignified journalists you all have a huge responsibility to help guide the electoral process to a free and credible election come 2023.