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## Nigeria to receive Monkeypox vaccine from US Government



Adeyeye

**T**he Director General of the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC), Prof. Mojisola Adeyeye, has met with United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to strengthen international partnerships for technical support, staff training and monkeypox vaccine donation.

Adeyeye, who is currently in Washington DC for a series of meetings, announced on Tuesday that Nigeria will soon receive donation of monkeypox vaccine from US government.

Initial plans for the donation were discussed in a meeting between NAFDAC, the United States Department of State, Center for Diseases Control and Prevention (CDC) and USAID.

Follow-up of the discussions lean towards Bavarian Nordic, Dutch vaccine manufacturer, sending the dossier directly to NAFDAC.

She stated that the option to receive the vaccine directly from the manufacturer was based on the reliance pathway that the agency uses for review of vaccines that have been previously approved for Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) by well established NRAs such as US FDA, Health Canada, European Medicine Agency (EMA), etc.

The NAFDAC DG highlighted the strategic and beneficial relationship between USAID and NAFDAC which more recently has included support of traceability through donation of 2D android-enabled scanners, personnel training, and personnel support for in-country serialisation.

## Nigerian Resident Doctors kick against 'slavery'

**T**he Nigerian Association of Resident Doctors has said any attempt by the Federal Government to enslave Medical Doctors in the country under any guise will be resisted.

The association in a communiqué issued at the end of its emergency extended National Officers' Committee meeting signed

by the NARD President, Dr Emeka Orji; its Secretary-General, Dr Kelechi Chikezie; and Publicity and Social Secretary, Dr Umar Musa, said a bill being proposed by the National Assembly as modern day slavery which should be thrown away.

The meeting was held virtually on Friday, Punch reports.

A bill to prevent Nigeria-trained medical and dental practitioners from being granted full licences until they have worked for a minimum of five years in the country passed second

reading at the House of Representatives last Thursday.

The bill, sponsored by Ganiyu Johnson, is aimed at addressing the health workers' brain drain in the country.

NARD, in its communiqué, said, "The

extended NOC admonishes the Federal House of Representatives that the obnoxious bill as sponsored by Ganiyu Johnson is a clear definition of modern-day slavery and not in keeping with anything civil, and so should be thrown away at

this point.

"The house however agreed with him on the palpable dangers of the current menace of brain drain in the health sector and promised to work with the government to reverse the trend when the

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## NSCDC impounds three trucks carrying precious stones



Ehanire

The Zamfara State Command of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps has intercepted three trucks laden with precious stones.

Speaking at a news briefing in Gusau on Monday, the state Commandant, Muhammed Muazu, disclosed that the trucks were impounded in Gusau on their way to Sokoto, as the drivers could not present legal documents for security

clearance.

According to Muazu, the truck owners were to provide the necessary evidence that would permit them to engage in the business.

"We have no problem with the drivers or vehicles," he said, "rather the owners were to provide the necessary evidence that will permit them to engage in the business."

Muazu highlighted the requirements that every

person or corporate body must meet to take part in the transaction of any mineral deposits.

These requirements include a license to possess and purchase minerals, evidence of royalty payment, mineral title if the solid mineral is coming from a legal source, agent movement permit, and mineral buying centre certificate.

He warned that if these documents are not

presented, the drivers and anyone involved should be prosecuted, while the truck and its contents impounded by the Federal Government, as the law stipulates.

The state commandant issued an ultimatum of seven days to the trucks impounded and their drivers to provide legal documents for engaging in the act, or else they would face prosecution.

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Abubakar



## News

### Nigerian Resident Doctors kick against 'slavery'



*Continued from page 1*

government was ready to come up with genuine solutions to the problem.

"The extended NOC

reiterates that any attempt by the government or any of her agencies to enslave Nigerian medical doctors under any guise would be strongly and vehemently

resisted by the association."

NARD also urged the FG to keep to agreements reached by the stakeholders constituted by the Federal Ministry of Health on the implementation of the 2023 Medical Residency Training Fund and to expedite action on its payment.

It added that any attempts to do otherwise would only throw the health sector into another series of undesired crises.

It also called on the Federal Ministry of Health and the Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria to review the current status of the membership certificates of the postgraduate colleges and upgrade them.

The Pension Funds Administrators reduced the funds under the Contributory Pension Scheme that were invested in fixed deposits and bank acceptance to N1.6tn in February.

According to the National Pension Commission, this was as the total funds under the scheme hit N15.49tn in the period under review.

PenCom disclosed this in its unaudited report on the pension funds industry portfolio for the period ended February 28, 2023.

The data provided information on the approved existing schemes, Closed Pension Fund Administrators and Retirement Savings Funds (including unremitted contributions at the Central Bank of Nigeria

### Pension Funds: PFAs reduce banks investment to N1.6tn



**Dahir-Umar**

and legacy funds).

At the end of December 2022, the PFAs had invested N1.94tn in fixed deposits and bank acceptance.

The commission had, in its amended investment regulation, highlighted the requirements for investing the funds in line with the provisions of Pension Reform Act, 2014.

It said the purpose of the regulation was to provide uniform rules and standards for the investment of pension fund assets.

According to the regulation, pension fund custodians must only take written instructions from licensed PFAs with respect to the PFAs' investment and management of pension fund assets held in the custody of the PFCs on behalf of the contributors.

It said the PFCs, in discharging their contractual functions to PFAs, must not contract out the custody of pension fund assets to third parties, except for allowable investments made outside Nigeria.

It said, "In addition to the requirements of other guidelines issued by the commission on corporate governance, ethics and business practices, each PFA shall establish an

investment strategy committee as well as a risk management committee, in compliance with section 78 of the Pension Reform Act, 2014.

"The investment strategy committee, in addition to other functions specified in the Act, shall formulate internal investment strategies to enable compliance with this regulation, taking into cognisance the macro-economic environment as well as the investment objectives and risk profile of the respective PFA Funds."

**NSCDC impounds three trucks carrying precious stones**

*Continued from page 1*

Muazu also urged truck drivers to avoid conveying any mineral resources, except if the owner provided legal documents to them.

He called on the National Union of Road Transport Workers to sensitize its members on the dangers and legal implications of moving mineral resources without the necessary documents required by the Federal Ministry of Mining and Solid Minerals.

### Kaduna Govt. seeks media support for census exercise

The Kaduna State Government, on Tuesday solicited the support of media establishments to sensitise and educate residents of the state on the 2023 Population and Housing Census.

Hajiya Umma Aboki, Commissioner, Planning and Budget Commission, made the appeal in Kaduna, at the opening of a one-day sensitisation workshop for the 2023 Census Media and Publicity Sub-committee in the state.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), reports that the State Government in collaboration with the National Population Commission (NPC), had in March inaugurated Media and Publicity, and Security sub-committees for a smooth exercise.

Aboki said that to ensure successful conduct of the exercise scheduled for May 3 to May 5, residents must be sensitised, educated, and enlightened on the processes to keep them prepared.

The commissioner particularly said that residents needed to know the key information that

would be required from them to ensure data quality and credibility.

"As such, we need the support of media establishments in the state to ensure the success of the exercise.

"The residents need information about how the census will be conducted and the kind of information they will be required to provide.

"Therefore, the media are critical partners that will help us spread the needed information and mobilise the people to actively participate to ensure a hitch-free exercise," she said.

The State Director, NPC, Hajiya Adama Uthman, said that media sensitisation and mobilisation was critical to the success of the exercise, and appealed for the cooperation of the media.

"We cannot work without the media. We need them to communicate critical

messages and information to the members of the public.

That is, we are here for the media team to review what they know so far, and what other information they need to effectively carry out their task," Uthman said.

She appealed to the residents of the state to cooperate with the enumerators for a successful exercise.

Earlier, Dr Isiaka Yahaya, Director, Public Affairs, NPC, said that the main objective of the workshop was to improve the capacity of journalists to effectively report the process and outcome of the exercise.

Yahaya, who was represented by Malam Alkasim Bala, Public Affairs Officer, added that the workshop was also to increase media coverage of the census to keep people informed in real time.

According to him,

sensitisation will keep people informed and educated on the processes, as well as refute negative perceptions and enhance acceptability of the exercise and its outcome.

Malam Bashir Ladan, Deputy Director, State Planning, PBC, and Secretary of the Media and Publicity Sub-committee, explained that the committee was saddled with the responsibility of coordinating media sensitisation and enlightenment activities.

According to Ladan, the committee is expected to facilitate and coordinate the production and airing of radio and television jingles, articles, and features stories in print and online media, among other media products.

"The measure is to keep residents informed and prepared for the success of the exercise in the state." (NAN)

### Navy arrests 27 vessels, deactivates illegal refinery sites



**Aboki**

The Eastern Naval Command of the Nigerian Navy on Tuesday announced that it had arrested 27 vessels involved in illegal bunkering and crude oil theft, while 294 illegal refinery sites were deactivated.

Rear Adm. Ibrahim Dewu, the immediate past Flag Officer Commanding (FOC) Eastern Naval Command, disclosed this in Calabar while handing over the leadership of the command to his successor, Rear Adm. Olusola Oluwagbire.

Dewu explained that the arrests were made between the period he assumed office as Flag Officer of the Command, from Feb. 4, 2022 to the period he exited from the

command on April 11.

According to him, the command also sustained effective patrol of its maritime area of responsibility as well as undertook several 'clearance and swamp buggy operations' in the backwaters.

He noted that the operations resulted in a considerable reduction of piracy in Nigeria's maritime domain.

He said that the command also took part in some independent, joint and combined exercises like; Operation Calm Waters, Operation Tripartite Border Patrol, Operation Tsare Teku, Operation Gba Pada, Operation Dakatar Da Barawo and Operation Obangame 2023.

"Within the period under

review, from Feb. 4 2022 till date, our sustained operations led to the arrests of 27 vessels engaged in illegal bunkering, crude oil theft and other maritime illegalities.

Other achievements include deactivation of about 294 illegal refining sites and still counting, destruction and evacuation of illegally refined diesel, kerosine and crude oil and destruction of several pirates as well as kidnappers' camps.

"It is noteworthy to state that the command also recorded significant achievements in infrastructure development across all the bases and establishments under the command," he said.

He mentioned the projects executed to include; the remodeling of Eastern Naval Command swimming pool with a lounge, mini mart and restaurant.

Others are; remodeling of the multipurpose sports hall and conference room as well as construction of corner shops, and a gym at 1006 officers' quarters.

"Furthermore, across the bases and units, the commanders and commanding officers have embarked on series of projects towards improving the welfare and security of the personnel.

"We remain grateful to God Almighty, who made it all possible and the Chief of the Naval Staff, Vice Adm. Awwal Gambo, for

graciously providing the resources.

"I, therefore, implore you all to fully support the incoming FOC, to enable him surpass these achievements during his time here," he added.

Responding, the new FOC commended his predecessor for all the achievements he recorded, and solicited the support and cooperation of officers and men in the command to enable him succeed.

"I look forward to contributing my quota towards achieving the Chief of the Naval Staff' mission of optimising the deployment of Nigerian Navy in the performance of our constitutional roles and undertaking of assigned tasks," he said. (NAN)





## Cashless policy: To be or not to be?

**MR Godwin Ifeanyi Emefiele, the Governor Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), is no doubt the most misunderstood living Nigerian today, if his current travails as the helmsman of the nation's apex bank are put under a klieg light. ADEMOLA BAKARE writes.**

FOR an impressive first term performance, President Muhammadu Buhari rewarded him with a second term. The past eight years have been strewn with socio-economic challenges, which no doubt the Governor had himself admitted. Evolving global and domestic challenges proved the mettle in Godwin Emefiele with the way he rose to the challenges spewing out programmes and policies that rescued the economy from recession in 2016. This was few months after President Muhammadu Buhari assumed office.

He launched the Anchor Borrowers' Programme (ABP), suspending initially forty-one items, which he later increased to forty-three from the official forex window to give bite to the backward integration economic policy of the government. He launched this to encourage local production of the products rather than outsourcing and frittering away the nation's scarce foreign exchange. With the policy Nigeria came out economically stronger.

But the global COVID-19 pandemic halted the trajectory. Instead of sulking, as confronted by the unfolding global socio-economic tragedy, and knowing also that the Nigerian economy was just crawling out of a recession, he speedily rallied the private sector to the rescue – the CACOVID. The move was indeed a succor. His initiative proved potent and immunized the economy from collapse.

Aside this initiative was the deployment of Targeted Credit Facility to assist households and businesses to mitigate the effect of the lockdown.

Now, and if we must recall, Emefiele assumed office with high expectation from Nigerians and critical stakeholders. At the time, international price of crude oil declined significantly to an abysmal \$16/20 per barrel and the resultant capital flow reversals and acute shortage of foreign exchange.

Stoutly built for the challenges, he rolled up his sleeves, solicited and got the support of the Bankers' Committee, a novel collaboration in the Nigeria's financial system. He secured a yearly five percent commitment of their annual profit as pool fund to provide credit facility for the resuscitation, development, and growth of the real sector – the MSMEs, the health sector, Power, and Aviation, among others. Health sector got N100 billion, while the Real Sector got N1 trillion. In fact, the COVID-19 pandemic exposed how weak and vulnerable the Nigerian economy was. The fiscal authority was caught napping, but for the swiftness and initiative-taking Central Bank of



Nigeria, one can best imagine what would have become of the economy if Godwin Emefiele had not risen to the occasion.

Afterwards, he started erecting legs for the economy to breathe well. He launched the Loan to Deposit Ratio (LDR) policy and regulatory forbearance, 100-for-100 Policy on Production and Productivity, RT 200 Programme to stimulate non-oil exports, the Creative Industry Financing Initiative (CIFI), Nigerian Electricity Market Stabilization Facility (NEMSF-2) for capital and operational expenditure of distribution companies (Discos) aimed at improving their liquidity status and aid recovery of legacy debt. He established Infrastructure Development Company (INFRACO) in conjunction the Federal Government to stimulate infrastructure development nationwide, to mention but few.

Recently, the Bank stepped up its cash-less policy initiative launched in 2012 by redesigning and reprinting three high-denominated banknotes – N200, N500 and N1,000. Governor Emefiele announced to the nation in October 2022 of his intention. Nigerians welcomed the news. More so that similar exercise was conducted about

two decades ago

The benefits of a cash-less economy are numerous, thus remain the best option for Nigeria, rated as one of the best financial systems in the world. Mr Emefiele had said that the policy will help to check insecurity, corruption and economic sabotage, banditry and kidnapping as well as rein-in inflation.

However, developments that followed the implementation seemed to have thrown spanners in the implementation agenda, temporarily putting it on hold till December 31, 2023. Politicians conjecturally felt that the policy, launched on the eve of the general elections was targeted at them to squeeze them of needed electioneering funds. Three State governors, later joined by twelve other colleagues, took the Federal Government to court alleging that the policy was inflicting unimaginable pains on Nigerians. The Naira redesign/swap programme by extension would have (as was witnessed during the elections) reduced vote buying. The Bank was accused of playing politics with the policy, thus likely to hamper smooth electioneering process. Nevertheless, the CBN

loudly restated its unassailable apolitical stance.

The strange meddlesomeness of the apex court in matters of monetary issues leaves one gaping, and still asking: where is the independence of the Central Bank of Nigeria? Its action foretells a repeat or forage in matters of CBN's management of inflation or deployment monetary tools in future.

As enshrined in CBN Act. 2007 (as amended), Section 18 says the Bank shall – (a) arrange for the printing of currency notes and the minting of coins; (b) issue, re-issue and exchange currency notes and coins at the Bank's offices and at such agencies as it may, from time to time ... and Section 19: (1) The currency notes and coins issued by the Bank shall be – (a) in such denominations of the Naira or fractions thereof as shall be approved by the President on the recommendation of the Board; and (b) of such forms and designs and bear such devices as shall be approved by the President on the recommendation of the Board, it did not say the Supreme Court.

The adversaries may have temporarily halted the full implementation of the cash-less

policy, but they cannot abort the programme. Nations are fast developing their financial systems technologically, and Nigeria cannot afford to be left behind. What becomes of the fate of the policy or its implementation after December 31, 2023, will either advance the strides recorded in our financial system landscape, or obliterate whatever we may have laboured for in the past 12 years and months of full implementation.

The legislators are also threatening to amend the CBN Act just because of observed little glitches experienced during the implementation, which is normal with every new thing. They should however tread with caution so as not to throw the baby away with the bathwater.

Would the Supreme Court by the time it realises it has erred, and usurped powers outside its authority, causing disruption in the planned implementation of the Naira swap, apologise to Nigerians? And would the politicians who politised the policy for campaign purposes, and not love for the Nigerian masses, leave the CBN alone to do its job? Only time would tell.

**Source: Tribune**





## Global growth to slow in 2023

– World Bank

THE World Bank Group President, David Malpass says global growth is expected to be weak in 2023, slowing to two per cent from 3.1 per cent in 2022.

Malpass said this in his Opening address at the ongoing Spring Meetings 2023 Media Call, a copy of which was obtained by the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN).

He said several factors were weighing on the second-half outlook.

"Oil prices have jumped back above 80 dollars/barrel. The recent banking sector stress dampens activities and inflation pressures persist.

Malpass said the U.S. month-over-month core inflation had been rising over the last five months, saying there would be new data on Wednesday.

"If we look at developing countries excluding China, we expect a slowdown to about 3.1 per cent in 2023 from 4.1 per cent in 2022.

"The concern in our recent reports is that slow growth will persist for years for many developing countries, increasing the fiscal stress and debt problems.

"It is a combination of weak investment, higher interest rates, and relatively weak growth in the advanced economies."

He said the danger was acute due to inflation, currency depreciation, rising debt service costs, and the collapse of international reserves.

Malpass said the diversion of natural gas to Europe presented grave obstacles to developing country production of electricity, fertilizer, and food.

"These problems are severely constraining future growth and deepening inequality and fragility for developing countries.

"I travelled to West Africa in March, where we are working to provide support in the face of these problems.

"Looking at the big picture, I will mention two problems, first, the normalisation of interest rates after an artificial decade near zero.

He said this created problems in terms of the duration mismatch seen in the bank failures, liquidity shortages, and how to allocate the losses.

"The duration mismatch will take time to digest. With inflation persistent and the dollar weakening, the risk is that the losses will be allocated to those with lower incomes, including through inflation."

Malpass said the second major problem was that the available global capital was being absorbed by a narrow group of advanced economies that have extremely high government debt levels.

"I will call them sinkholes. To make matters worse, their populations are ageing rapidly and the peace dividend of the



Malpass

1990s was used up."

He said he had advocated a range of new policies that would spur production to combat inflation and currency weakness.

"However, the likelihood is a long period of slow growth, asset reprising, and capital moving in the wrong direction.

"Moving toward a narrow group of governments and big corporations rather than to the small businesses and working capital that could add to global growth."

Malpass said two exceptions to the slowdown included China and India.

According to him, China's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth is rebounding to more than five per cent in 2023, with strong private investment.

"I note the stability of China's currency and the

countercyclical nature of its monetary policy. I was in China in December as they ended the lockdown.

"The government is encouraging growth in services, especially healthcare and tourism."

Malpass said India continued to be one of the fastest-growing major economies in the world.

"We are looking for growth of 6.3 per cent in their FY23/24. They will feel some effects from the global slowdown.

"I was there in February and think it will take capital market liberalisation for India to achieve their eight per cent growth goal."

NAN reports that the World Bank Group/International Monetary Fund 2023 Spring Meetings opened on Monday in Washington DC and would end

THE Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN)'s non-oil exports repatriation rebate scheme appears to be yielding fruits as investigations reveal that inflows into the Investors and Exporters (I&E) window improved in the month of March.

According to data obtained from the FMDQ's website, total inflows into the I&E window rose by 59.2 percent month-on-month (m/m) to \$1.49 billion in March as against \$937.60 million recorded in February.

The data further revealed that local inflows increased by 46.9 per cent m/m to \$1.20 billion and this was primarily due to higher inflows from the CBN (+240.3 per cent m/m), exporters (+7.2 per cent m/m) and non-bank corporates (+50.9 per cent m/m) in the review period.

On the other hand, while foreign inflows rose to \$291.90 million, they remain significantly below pre-pandemic levels (2019FY monthly average: \$1.56 billion). According to economic analysts, this is due to the current FX liquidity constraints, an overvalued currency and absence of significant macro reforms.

Commenting on the report, analysts at Cordros Research said, they expect FX liquidity conditions to remain frail in the absence of reforms to attract US dollar inflows into the economy over the short to

## Total inflows to I&E window hit \$1.49bn



Emefiele

medium term.

"The low FX liquidity conditions will also be driven by lingering global uncertainties and higher global interest rates, or limiting foreign inflows to the economy. Thus, foreign investors will need some convincing actions as regards flexibility and clarity in the FX framework going forward," they said.

In its effort to increase the country's foreign reserves, the Central Bank had launched a rebate scheme that targets to increase the nation's reserves by \$200 billion in FX earnings from non-oil proceeds over the next five years.

Under the new rebate scheme, the CBN also said it has committed to providing

some financial incentives to Nigerian exporters of semi-finished and finished goods (manufactured in Nigeria), who sell their export proceeds at the I&E; or exporters of goods and services (information technology & creative businesses) that are permissible under the export prohibition list.

The apex bank had at a recent bankers retreat revealed that progress has been made in generating non-oil export revenues in 2022 via the RT200 programme with its Governor, Godwin Emefiele, saying export proceeds repatriation earned as rebates stood at \$62 million in Q1, \$622 million in Q2, \$850 million in Q3 all in 2022.

"We ran into almost \$1 billion during Q3 2022. We are seeing the repatriations that have resulted in almost \$2 billion coming in this year (2022)," Emefiele said.

sexport financing and also encourage export of goods out of the country, Emefiele stated that every Deposit Money Banks (DMBs) must grant at least a minimum of N500 billion in loans to export oriented companies.

"We are saying that we draw the line and that every year, the banks, the banks President Buhari's watch to will grant export facilities to the tune of at least N500 billion which the CBN will graduate amongst most banks. The large banks will take a larger share of it while the smaller banks will take the smaller share.

So what we are saying is that this is intended to further stimulate export financing and also encourage export of goods out of the country so we can generate export proceeds in an exponential way that would eventually be high", he explained.

## Buhari's N320bn TETFund grant highest in 30 years

THE latest disbursement of N320.3 billion as intervention fund for public tertiary institutions is yet another evidence of President Muhammadu Buhari's desire to improve higher education in the country.

The Buhari Media Organisation (BMO) said in a statement signed by its Chairman Niyi Akinsiju and Secretary Cassidy Madueke that the 2023 Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) disbursement to tertiary institutions is the highest in 30 years.

"If there is any administration that many Nigerians are not fair to, it is the President Muhammadu Buhari administration which has been accused of ignoring the education sector.

"But the latest information from TETFund has once more shown how insincere many of the critics of the administration have been in their assessment.

"We have been constantly assailed with tales of poor funding of public tertiary



Buhari

institutions but the facts on ground have continued to put a lie to that claim as seen in the latest TETFund approvals to the schools.

"According to the TETFund Executive Secretary, the 2023 allocation to tertiary institutions is N320 billion which represents the highest disbursement to the institutions since the Fund

was created 30 years ago.

"For the avoidance of doubt, each federal university is to get N1.154 billion, the polytechnics get N699.3 million each while colleges of education are to receive N800.8 million each for 2023 alone.

"This is unprecedented and it goes without saying that there has never been a time in

Nigeria's history that public institutions of learning got this much even at the height of the various oil booms of previous administrations, " the group added. BMO said that public institutions of learning got more funding in the Buhari years than at any time in the nation's history.

"We make bold to say with the benefit of publicly available information that yearly allocations on year, the banks, the banks President Buhari's watch to these schools have consistently been higher than previous years.

"The Buhari-era disbursement to public universities, polytechnics and colleges of education totalled N1.702trillion compared to N1.249trillion disbursed from the inception of the fund in 1993 to 2014.

"But that of 2023 clearly stood out, and like officials of the ministry of education we hope that beneficiary institutions would use the intervention funds judiciously". (NAN)





## PEBEC's : Taking ease of doing business reforms

**Nigeria is home to over 39.6 million MSMEs, comprising 96.7% of all businesses in Nigeria. 67% of these businesses are youth-owned. In 2022, MSMEs contributed over 45% to the country's gross domestic product (GDP). With 96.9% of these businesses in the micro cadre, they account for nearly 90% of the jobs made available nationwide. Therefore, as MSMEs grow, they create opportunities that lead to prosperity for more, and less insecurity across the country. JUMOKE ODUWOLE writes.**

YET, Nigeria, along with the rest of the world, is facing challenging economic conditions. The effects of the Covid-19 pandemic are still being felt, the War in Ukraine has increased international tensions, and global supply chains are under pressure. The global economy has been slow to adapt to these challenging conditions, and while Nigeria has shown resilience in the face of these headwinds, the country's economic growth, although positive, has not been strong enough to markedly improve the living standards of the average Nigerian.

Indeed, there is a strong correlation between a country's business environment and the amount of foreign direct investment (FDI) received. A poor business environment leads to reduced investor confidence, affecting the flow of investment capital into the country, further hampering economic growth. Since its inception in July 2016, the PEBEC has partnered with stakeholders from all arms and levels of government and the private sector to reduce the cost and time of doing business by removing bureaucratic and legislative bottlenecks, facilitating access to justice and enhancing transparency, particularly through the use of technology.

It is abundantly clear to all that there can be no meaningful progress in Nigeria's business environment without the commitment of state governments to the implementation of ease of doing business reforms. This led to an intervention with the National Economic Council (NEC) in July 2017 to cascade the reforms to the subnational level for the benefit of all Nigerians by jointly unlocking the constraints faced by businesses across the country and support them by making Nigeria a progressively easier place for them to start and grow their businesses to scale and thrive. With the nomination of State Reform Champions, the inauguration of Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) Councils and targeted reform agendas across states, the PEBEC-NEC collaboration has brought ease of doing business to the forefront of policy discussions and continues to provide an impetus for the implementation of coordinated business climate reforms at the subnational level.

In September 2017, the PEBEC-NEC Subnational Technical Working Group (TWG) comprising representation from six states embodying the six geopolitical zones, the PEBEC Secretariat, the NEC Secretariat, Nigerian Governors' Forum (NGF) Secretariat, the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics, the Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission, the Nigerian Export Promotion Council, the Nigerian Economic Summit Group, and other private sector



**Oduwole**

representatives, was formed. The TWG conceptualized and developed a framework for Nigeria's homegrown subnational ease of doing business survey, which was subsequently concretized as the initial methodology for the baseline survey. The survey is designed to provide empirical information on the attractiveness of states' business climates primarily from the perspective of the private sector respondents, and to serve as a credible reference resource for businesses and investors.

The first of its kind, Nigeria's inaugural homegrown subnational report – the 2021 Nigeria Subnational Ease of Doing Business Baseline Survey Report – was released on March 18, 2021, and the rankings subsequently made public. The report captured a snapshot of each business environment at the subnational level, as well as existing economic realities of MSMEs doing business in Nigeria at the time, creating an empirical baseline for subnationals and MDAs to refine their reform agendas.

The second iteration of the report, the 2023 Nigeria Subnational Ease of Doing Business Report was released on March 27, 2023, in actualisation of our commitment to make this report a biennial resource. The 2023 report builds on the previous edition and improves it in several areas. It provides more nuanced information on the business climate across the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). It highlights improvements made since the release of the first report, and identifies the challenges that remain to be met, as well as the reforms that need to be implemented to make the

business environment more conducive.

We have enhanced the report's methodology, deepening and expanding the indicators from the initial four to six – Infrastructure; Secure and Stable Environment; Transparency and Accessibility of Information; Regulatory Environment; Skills and Labour and Economic Opportunity. Each state has been rated on a 10-point scale across the indicators, providing the basis for calculating the 2023 weighted EoDB score for each state.

Further to the feedback received from MSMEs and going by global best practice, we carved out secure and stable environment from the infrastructure indicator, making it a standalone indicator. We introduced a new indicator – Access to Economic Opportunity.

The survey sample size of the latest edition increased from 998 companies to 2,852 companies, enhancing the statistical power and relevance of the survey. This represents an improvement over the statistically relevant but relatively smaller sample size of the baseline survey.

At the country-wide level, the 2023 report shows a marginal increase in Nigeria's overall EoDB satisfaction score to 5.69 on a 10-point scale from 5.45 recorded in the inaugural report. While acknowledging this improvement, we recognise that there is a lot more to be done to improve the business environment in spite of the sustained push by PEBEC and sub-nationals in this regard. We see an increase in ranking for 16 subnational governments, while 18 states recorded a reduction, with three states maintaining their rank from the baseline survey report.

The result of the survey lends credence to what we had learnt from anecdotal sources that on average there is no significant variation in

MSMEs' perceptions of the Nigerian business environment regarding the satisfaction with the ease of doing business. The case is, however, different when we examine the satisfaction score across the sectors. From the report, we see that businesses in agriculture, transportation, and construction are more satisfied being above the national average while businesses in health, entertainment, and tourism are the least satisfied with their satisfaction score, all below the national average.

Unsurprisingly, two of the six indicators – Infrastructure and Secure and Stable Environment account for the biggest pain points for MSMEs at a combined 41.1% of MSME dissatisfaction, indicating areas where policy makers can achieve some of the greatest impact in the business environment. In particular, report analysis shows that where businesses are satisfied with electricity, there is a high likelihood that their overall satisfaction with the ease of doing business would be high and vice versa. Increasing the daily power supply by 5 hours could translate to a 1.5 – 2-point increase in EoDB satisfaction score. The recent assent by President Muhammadu Busari, GCFR, to the Fifth Alteration Bill No. 33, Devolution of Powers (National Grid System), is a constitutional amendment allowing states to generate, transmit and distribute electricity in areas covered by the national grid. This is a long awaited development that has been welcomed by stakeholders.

The score movements further reinforce the need for continuous improvement in states and active engagement with MSMEs. Implementing reforms is only part of the work. Importantly, sub-nationals must ensure that they are implementing the right reforms and communicating these reforms to the MSMEs. It is, therefore, imperative that

state ease of doing business councils continue to ensure that there is a systematic approach to designing and implementing reforms, engaging stakeholders routinely to understand their pain points, and designing reforms to address these pain points. This vital loop must be strengthened in order to effect real change in the business environment.

The latest report once again places Gombe at the top position with a weighted score of 7.15, and Jigawa State ranks second with a score of 6.79, followed by Sokoto State at 6.88. A breakdown of the report by geopolitical zones shows that the North West emerged as the most-friendly regional business environment with an average EoDB satisfaction score of 6.36, followed by the North East at 6.15 while the South East ranks third at 5.51. The South West at 5.45 is at fourth position, followed by the North Central at 5.35 and the SouthSouth region at 5.23.

As part of next steps, the PEBEC Secretariat shall continue to engage MSMEs widely on the findings of the report with a view to encouraging them to actively partner with all arms and levels of government towards improving the business environment.

It is our expectation that the 2023 report findings will shape reform priorities for participating subnationals as they implement their various State Action Plans in line with the State Actions for Business Enabling Reforms (SABER) programme. The SABER Programme is a USD750 million performance-based intervention for three years (2023-2025) jointly designed by the World Bank Technical team and the PEBEC Secretariat, with support from the Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning Home Finance Department, and the Nigeria Governors' Forum Secretariat, which is open to all states that meet the eligibility criteria, to incentivise and strengthen the implementation of business enabling reforms across Nigeria.

In all these, our focus remains the same – to provide an "enabling environment" in which it is progressively easier to do business, where policies are predictable and consistent, with macro-economic stability, and where the government acts as a partner to business and investment, not a competitor or adverse regulator. It is our sacred and collective responsibility to implement reforms that will contribute to the lifting of 100 million Nigerians out of poverty over the next decade. The next administration is already committed to continuing and deepening the PEBEC's mandate. The sustainability of existing reforms at all arms and levels of government, particularly this critical sub-national intervention, will act as a springboard for catalytic interventions in this area as we cascade ease of doing business reforms to all Nigerians.

**Dr. Jumoke Oduwole is Special Adviser to the President on Ease of Doing Business and Executive Secretary to the Presidential Enabling Business Environment Council (PEBEC).**



## Politics

### APC expels Senator-elect for supporting PDP

From VICTOR GAI  
Jalingo

THE Takum Local Government Area Executive of the All Progressives Congress (APC), has expelled Senator-elect for Taraba South District, David Jimkuta over what they claimed his "anti-party activities".

In a letter signed by Chairman, All Progressives Congress, Takum LGA, Hon. Sirajo Sallau and 27 members of the party, the party had decided to expel the Senator-elect after it concluded investigations on allegations levelled against Jimkuta of anti-party activities.

"The Takum Local Government Executive Committee of our great party, after due deliberation of the report of the Disciplinary Committee set up to investigate allegations of gross anti-party activities against Hon. Jimkuta S.U David as provided under article (21) (B) (i) - (iv) of the All Progressives Congress constitution (2022 as amended), has ratified and approved his expulsion from the party as approved by the Disciplinary Committee," the letter read.

The letter also listed three bases for the action taken which include: Sponsoring and



Mahmood

openly campaigning for a rival political party, the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and its governorship candidate, open, express and tacit denunciation of the All

Progressives Congress (APC) and its governorship candidate and open canvassing of votes for the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and its governorship candidate.

### Women group agitates for power shift to Kogi West

From AMEDU JOSEPH,  
Lokoja

A feminist advocacy group, under the auspices of Kogi Women in Politics, has added its voice to the agitation for power shift to the Western Senatorial Zone of the state as it calls on the national leadership of the All Progressives Congress (APC) to zone Kogi State Governorship to the west.

The group premised its argument on principle of equity and fairness, which the group says binds the state as a united political entity in Nigerian federation.

Convener of the advocacy group, Mrs Titi Omotola, said at a news conference in Lokoja over the weekend, that women in Kogi West support emergence of an APC

Governorship candidate of Okun extraction, adding that the women movement for change is not negotiable.

"Since the creation of Kogi State, Kogi East has ruled for 16 years and at the expiration of the second term of Governor Yahaya Bello, Kogi Central would have ruled for eight years while Kogi West has not produced the governorship position of the state.

"Kogi West Women in Politics pleads with the national leadership of APC to give a favourable consideration for the zone to produce its governorship candidate.

The group expressed its

aversion to "ethnic and political marginalization of any part of the state and urged all parts to eschew ethnic antagonism"

The advocacy group praised Governor Yahaya Bello for giving fair representation to the women folk in the state as more women have been appointed into key political positions at state and local government levels.

### Supporters of suspended LP Chairman invade secretariat

From JIDAUNA YANUNG  
Abuja

SUPPORTERS of the Labour Party (LP) National Chairman, Julius Abure on Friday, forced their way into the party's headquarters which was sealed by the police on Thursday.

Armed policemen took over the Secretariat after seven members of the National Working Committee of the party, announced the National Vice-Chairman (south), Lamidi Bashir Apapa, as the acting Chairman of the party, replacing the suspended chairman, Julius Abure.

However, a faction supporting Abure, which consisted of about 28 state chairmen of the party, arrived Abuja and forced their way into the secretariat.

They insisted that Abure remains the party

From WILLIE ATTAH,  
Gombe

THE State Executive Council of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Gombe State has ratified the suspension of Senator Bulus K Amos, currently representing Gombe South at the National Assembly over antiparty activities.

Also ratified for the suspension is the member representing Yamaltu-Deba Federal Constituency, Yunusa Abubakar, who was also found guilty of anti-party activities.

The party in a press release signed and made available to newsmen by Moses Kyari Bolda, the party's Publicity Secretary, said Senator BK Amos' suspension came after his Bambam Ward Executives in Balanga LGA instituted a five man investigative committee which found him guilty of anti-party activities at the just concluded general election.

### APC Gombe suspends Senator, Rep member from party



Yahaya

Kyari in the release said a petition which emanated from his ward had caused the five man committee to investigate and get to the root of the matter, about two weeks ago.

According to the release, the committee invited the Senator who could not defend himself from the allegations hence, the committee recommended his suspension and eventual expulsion from the party.

"The order of suspension takes affect from today Saturday 08 April, 2023", Moses stated in the release.

"In the same vein, the member representing Yamaltu Deba Federal

Constituency has been suspended from the All Progressives Congress (APC).

"This came about as a result of the outcome of a disciplinary committee which found him guilty of anti-party activities at the just concluded general elections.

"His suspension takes effect from today Saturday 08 April, 2023. Both suspensions have been ratified by the State Executive Council of the party," according to the release.



Obi

chairman, stating the he could only be removed by the National Executive Council (NEC) and a court of competent jurisdiction.

But speaking at the party

premises, Chief Kehinde Rotimi, spokesperson for the forum of LP chairmen across the country, said Apapa and his team were aggrieved members who

had been suspended by the party, adding that they took the law into their hands by invading the party secretariat instead of waiting for the court to determine a motion of notice.

He said: "some hours ago, we were amazed at the report that hoodlums and thugs invaded our party secretariat at Utako that is why we came. They destroyed properties, carted away our documents, committing all sorts of atrocities that are not in tandem with the rule of law.

"We were told that they went to court and took particular order but they did not wait for the court to determine whatever motion of notice is, they took laws into their hands to come and destroy our secretariat."



Yahaya



## Politics

# Will Obi, LP drop court battle?

**WHEN the presidential candidate of Labour Party (LP), Peter Obi, took to his twitter handle recently to say that he was being pressured to leave the country amid the Federal Government's accusation of treasonable and inciting statements, it was left to the imagination to wonder who were those mounting the pressure. AMOS ESELE, writes.**

FOR the Chief Spokesperson of the party, Tanko Yinusa, the pressure is real. Family members and friends, associates and a very important person who feared for the safety of the Anambra former governor were behind the pressure.

"And it is borne out of a background: The FGs accusation of treason against him and his deputy, Datti Baba Ahmed, the doctored audio conversation with Bishop David Oyedepo designed to smear him are being used to make the party abandon the court cases to reclaim our mandate," Yinusa told THEWILL on Friday.

"We know the hand of Esau when we see one. He is not leaving the country. Now, they want to remove the National Chairman of the party through frivolous court cases. It is only the National Working Committee of the party that can remove the Chairman. We will see the end of the post-election court case to reclaim our mandate legally."

All through the weekend, the internal crisis within the party persisted, reaching a head with the emergence of a faction, which formed an executive committee on the strength of an Abuja High Court through an ex parte motion removing the National Chairman of the party, Julius Abure, for alleged forgery, embezzlement, perjury and anti-party activities.

The four appointed officers in acting capacities are National Vice Chairman, (South) Alhaji Lamidi Apapa as Acting National Chairman; Alhaji Salek Lawan, as Acting National Secretary; Comrade Reuben Favour, Acting Organising Secretary and Acting National Treasurer, Rowland Daramola.

The new NCW members immediately went about reversing the suspension of two members of the NCW, namely Comrade Arabambi Abayomi, National Publicity Secretary and Comrade Eragbe Anslem, National Youth Leader. State Executive Council members who were suspended were reinstated in Ogun, Rivers and Gombe.

Speaking for the new order in LP, Arabambi Abayomi stated that the party's crisis is self-inflicted and lays the problem on the shoulders of Abure, whom he accused of forgery and perjury and fraud.

"The fraud and forgeries were perpetrated during the conduct of primary for National Assembly members and governorship candidates for the party. Money was collected from those whose names were substituted with names of candidates submitted to the Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC. We have been pursuing the cases in court and when the one in FCT High Court sailed through, we asked for the copy of the judgement which the police used to issue a warrant of arrest on the National Chairman."

With the Abure-led NCW denouncing the FCT Abuja court judgement, arguing that a court of competent jurisdiction has also upheld his powers as national chairman of the LP, the leadership crisis has further polarised the party.



But Abure's NCW had needed help thrown its way when the owners of the party, the Nigeria Labour Congress, NLC, threw their weight behind him.

Rising from a meeting on Friday, the national leaders, who expressed alarm at the decision of Justice Hamza Muazu of the High Court in FCT to suspend the Abure-led executive committee, the NLC leadership said, "We view the decapitation of the leadership of the party with great suspicion, which cannot be far from the intent to weaken the party from within or distract it from its fight to reclaim its victories at the polls."

It declared the recognition of the Julius Abure-led team and urged the court to "review its decision forthwith."

The issue of treason, following Datti Ahmed's interview with Channels TV in which he stated that President Muhammadu Buhari and Chief Justice of Nigeria, Justice Olukayode Ariwoola, must not swear in the President-elect on May 29 until the post-election cases in court had been adjudicated upon and the alleged religious baiting contained in the leaked audio between Obi and Bishop David Oyedepo of the Living Faith Church Worldwide, aka Winners Church, is said to be baseless in intent, examined by the expert in legal matters.

On Tuesday, March 4, 2023, the Minister of Information and Culture, Lai Mohammed, in far-away United States during an official duty, accused LP's presidential candidate, Peter Obi and his running mate Datti Baba-Ahmed, of treason, saying they risked being prosecuted for making inciting statements over

the outcome of the 2023 general elections.

Reacting swiftly, Obi took to his twitter handle to debunk the claim and through the Presidential Campaign Council, PCC, he stated that the "APC was involved in a covert plot in collaboration with some security agents to frame him for treason, including the circulation of a fake doctored audio and a pressure on me to leave the country."

Taking a dispassionate look at the charges of treason and the sacking of the party's exco, Femi Falana, a Senior Advocate of Nigeria, SAN, at the weekend, said that Obi and Datti's comments failed the treason test charges being bandied by the government.

According to him, Obi/Datti have not violated the clear and unambiguous Section 37 of the Criminal Code, on treason.

"Section 37(1) of the Criminal Code Act, provides that, "Any person who levies war against the state in order to intimidate or overawe the President or the Governor of a State, is guilty of treason and liable to the punishment of death."

It is all about politics, because, according to him, "Obi and Datti have approached the court to challenge the results of the presidential election of the constitution in line with the provisions of the constitution and the Electoral Act."

Falana also frowned at the ex parte orders given by the High Court in Abuja, describing it as illegal and a violation of the rights of affected NEC members of the party.

He said, "I have always opposed the removal of public officials and political party leaders via ex parte orders because it is illegal. It

constitutes a gross abuse of the fundamental right to fair hearing, which is constitutionally guaranteed. It is a trite law that elected persons and appointees cannot be removed from office without being afforded the opportunity to react to allegations made against them. To that extent, removal of political leaders through ex parte orders cannot be justified in law.

"In *Eperokun v. University of Lagos* (1986) 4 NWLR (PT.34. 162, it was held that "constitutionally entrenched positions, particularly those safeguarding individual rights, should not, save in a fascist system, be lightly trampled upon. An appointee should not have the spectre of misconduct hanging over his head without being given an opportunity of clearing his name."

The supremacy battle within LP predates Obi's membership and his emergence as presidential candidate. The two factions were led by Victor Osagie and Abure Julius, which a Federal High Court ruling ordered NLC to unite by organising a unity convention. Then a former president of the NLC, Aliyu Wabba, who intervened with little success through an out of court settlement among the warring factions, left Abure to ride the storm in the hope that normalcy would return to the house after the presidential poll. With time, Abure had consolidated his position. His failure to reach out to aggrieved members during the polls reawakened the old hostilities, which the opposition, most probably, exploited during the polls to reduce the party's growing voter power.

Former National Publicity, Abayomi, who was suspended during electioneering in 2023 and

was on Thursday reinstated by the new exco, acting on the disputed Abuja High Court ex parte order, was accused of working for the governing APC during the just concluded polls. He was accused of scheming to delay till the last minutes the submission of names of National Assembly candidates in some states in the Southwest to INEC, leaving the party to field few candidates there.

He denied the accusation. He told this newspaper that apart from Lagos where the party was hamstrung at the National Assembly level, even though it went on to win a House of representatives seat, (Thaddeus Attah, who won the Eti-Osa Federal Constituency seat), what took place in areas like Ogun State and other states in this geo-political zone was the result of the tactless handling by Abure.

Despite the festering crisis within, both factions are agreed on one mission: The post-election court case must be prosecuted to its logical conclusion.

Abayomi says: "The leadership of the NWC under Lamidi Apampa is one hundred percent with Peter Obi. We believe we have been robbed of victory in the general election and we will retrieve it through the court of law."

Yinusa said, "We will continue to fight until we reclaim our mandate legally."

On Friday night, pro-Abure supporters with the assistance of some loyal state chairmen of the party forcefully gained entry into the premises and building earlier sealed by the police, vowing to resist any attempt to muzzle the party and stop its leaders from continuing their litigation on the poll.



## IMAGES

### BUHARI PRESIDES OVER FEC MEETING

*Nigeria's President Muhammadu Buhari presided over the Federal Executive Council Meeting held on the 5th April 2023 at the State House Abuja*



*President Muhammadu Buhari presiding over the FEC meeting*



*President Buhari addressing the FEC*



*Vice President, Prof. Yemi Osinbajo (right) Minister for Women Affairs and Social Development, Dame Pauline Tallen with the Secretary to the Government of Federation, Mr. Boss Mustapha*



*Members of the Federal Executive Council in a photograph*



*From left are, Minister of Defence, Maj. Gen. Bashir Salihi Magashi, National Security Adviser, Maj. Gen. Babagana Mohammed Monguno and the Minister of Education, Mallam Adamu Adamu during the meeting*



*Vice President, Prof. Yemi Osinbajo (right) with other members of FEC listening to remarks*



*Some ministers at the FEC meeting*



*Governor Simon Bako Lalong (CON) in a warm handshake with the CP Plateau State, Mr. Bartholomew Onyeka during the official swearing in ceremony of Judges at Government House Rayfield, Jos last week*

PHOTOS: STATE HOUSE PRESS ABUJA / DOPPA'S OFFICE RAYFIELD, JOS



## Politics

# INEC, Media and Nigeria's growing democracy

***The General Election has come and gone, with mixed feelings as expected. Those who won are happy while those who lost are expectedly unhappy. I followed the event closely from the party primaries to the final declaration of winners by the Independent Electoral Commission, INEC. AUSTYN OGANNAH writes.***

SADLY, INEC, the umpire that was copious in making promises but under-delivered results, appears to be the reason for the uncertainties and the avoidable tension that has enveloped our country simply because it failed to strictly follow its own rules and guidance to the letter in the conduct of the presidential election, as well as the Governorship and State Houses of Assembly polls.

Had INEC followed through with the strict use of the BVAS and real time upload of results to the IReV election portal, I am certain the losers and their supporters would have easily embraced their defeat and there would be no need for these quarrels that continue to threaten the peaceful transfer of power.

Since it formally declared Asiwaju Bola Tinubu, the candidate of the ruling All Progressives Congress, APC, winner and President-elect, the pre-election tension that we all expected to fizzle out, has unfortunately stuck to the country. Instead, Nigeria appears to be at a standstill on every front because of unending and unwarranted rumours surrounding the successful transition of power, even though we have concluded the presidential poll. This has left everyone frustrated with businesses (big and small) taking the biggest hit.

Businesses are recording very poor sales as a result of tension and bickering, mostly between operatives of the APC and the Labour Party, LP, which claims it won the presidential vote but was cheated.

The main opposition Peoples Democratic Party, PDP, which was declared runner up and the LP, which came third, have filed cases at the Presidential Electoral Tribunal seeking to strike down the victory of the APC. But this has not eased the tension because not a lot of people believe that the justices would swiftly and impartially adjudicate the lawsuits.

However, I think it is now time to calm fraying nerves and deflate the tension so that the country can return to normal for the benefit of all. This is where the media, which fortunately is my constituency, must drop the perceived toga of bias and partisanship and help.

Sadly, the role of the media in Nigeria has been complicated by various factors, with several



**Yakubu**

organisations and platforms being used to promote hate speech, attacks on people, politicians and political parties, as well as counter attacks on journalists and media organisations.

Recently the Peoples Gazette, an online news website, suspended one of its reporters, Ayoola Babalola, for violating the newspaper's social media policy. Babalola, who worked on the Political Desk of the website, was suspended after the company reviewed his responses to online trolls and concluded that he did not act with the decorum and professionalism expected of the organisation's employees. This incident highlights the importance of professionalism and decorum in journalism, particularly in a political climate that is often polarised like ours.

In the period leading to the 2023 general poll, some media organisations took sides and did not hide their partisanship in their coverage of events. Technically, a section of the press became the unofficial media arm of the opposition and ruling parties, doing their propaganda briefs. This has often overflowed into social media, leading to very acrimonious and divisive back-and-forth flavoured with ethnic profiling, aspersions-casting and avoidable xenophobic attacks from supporters and representatives of the main political parties. It should not be allowed to fester.

In attempting to rein in the practice before it spirals out of control, the National Broadcasting Code (NBC) fined Channels Television N5 million for allegedly violating the NBC code in a recent programme featuring the Labour Party's vice presidential

candidate, Datti Baba-Ahmed.

However, the fine has raised concerns about censorship and freedom of expression in the media, particularly in the post-election climate of accusations and counter-accusations that we have found ourselves.

There are some who accuse the NBC of playing to the tune of the ruling party. These critics claim that there have been some other provocative statements made by leaders and supporters of the APC on television programmes without the weight of sanctions levied against the network.

Coincidentally, some hours after it was reported that the President-elect's campaign had filed a petition against Channels Tv for the programme, the fine from the NBC closely followed to raise questions about the sequence of events. While the fine is within the purview of the regulatory framework of the NBC, there is a considerable threat in what could be deemed the Commission's high-handedness and it is worth exploring within the discussion of the media's responsibility.

Ahead of the elections in February and March, the Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP) had reason to call on President Muhammadu Buhari to intervene and demand the immediate withdrawal of a recent threat by the NBC to revoke the licence of broadcast stations over their coverage of the upcoming elections. SERAP urged the President to call Lai Mohammed, the Minister of Information, and the NBC to order and ensure that the NBC's actions do not limit freedom of expression and the ability of broadcast stations to cover

important issues around the 2023 general elections.

Apart from the responsibility of the media to be part of the peace-building process in a struggling democracy, there is also the need to protect the press and journalists doing their work. In the 2019 general elections alone, the Press Attack Tracker, a project of the Centre for Journalism Innovation and Development (CJID), documented at least 72 violations, including arrests, physical attacks, denial of access, threats, equipment damage, equipment seizure, harassment, and abductions.

The Nigerian media is barely surviving under severe financial stress and there are many pressures that make it difficult for the media to deliver on its mandate of enhancing the people's rights to know and holding individuals, organisations and corporations accountable. These include ownership burdens, excessive pressure from advertisers and other patrons who try to dictate content, a sustainability challenge caused by dwindling advertising revenue, and attacks on journalists and media organisations.

The media need to face the many challenges that are internal to their existence, including media partisanship and media code violations, which we have seen plenty of in and around these elections. As responsible practitioners of the sacred journalism, it behoves us, who are responsible for "comforting the afflicted and afflicting the comfortable", to come to the table with clean hands. We must rid ourselves of whatever can lead to questioning the sanctity of our practice whilst adhering to best practices and the highest standards.

Furthermore, attacks on journalists and media organisations must be addressed as well. There is a need for the government to uphold the principles of transparency and accountability during the electoral process and ensure that the media is allowed to carry out its watchdog role without fear of reprisal or censorship. These pressures make it difficult for the media to deliver on its mandate of enhancing the people's rights to know and holding individuals, organisations, and corporations accountable.

The government should also protect journalists and the press doing their work and citizens should support and respect the media's role in enhancing our nascent democratic practice. The media plays a crucial role in shaping the public's perception of the electoral process and ensuring that it is conducted in a free, fair, and transparent manner. We must uphold that role, come what may.

I am positive that the fortunes of the Nigerian media will improve when the economy returns to its lost glory and the media can help achieve this as soon as possible by taking a leading role in easing the tension in the land and remain professional and unbiased in its reportage of events concerning the general elections.

***"The main opposition Peoples Democratic Party, PDP, which was declared runner up and the LP, which came third, have filed cases at the Presidential Electoral Tribunal seeking to strike down the victory of the APC. But this has not eased the tension because not a lot of people believe that the justices would swiftly and impartially adjudicate the lawsuits. However, I think it is now time to calm fraying nerves and deflate the tension so that the country can return to normal for the benefit of all. This is where the media, which fortunately is my constituency, must drop the perceived toga of bias and partisanship and help. Sadly, the role of the media in Nigeria has been complicated by various factors, with several organisations and platforms being used to promote hate speech, attacks on people, politicians and political parties, as well as counter attacks on journalists and media organisations."***



## News

## Easter: Yahaya admonishes Christians to pray for leaders

**WILLIE ATTAH, Gombe**

GOMBE State Governor, Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya, has felicitated with Christians in the state and the world over on the occasion of this year's Easter celebration.

The Governor similarly urged them to use the occasion to pray for the newly elected leaders from the just concluded elections, and for the peace, progress and healing of the nation going forward.

In a goodwill message, Governor Inuwa said the Easter period provides an opportunity for strengthening of unity of purpose, reinforcement of bond of brotherhood and dedication in service to God and humanity as exemplified by Jesus Christ.

He said, "Easter symbolises love, sacrifice, service to God and country as well as triumph of good over evil. We should always reflect on the lessons and significance of the season and demonstrate the same in our lives.

"On this occasion of Easter feast, I want to enjoin our Christian brothers and sisters in Gombe State and the world over to continue to demonstrate love, promote peace and show good neighbourliness.

"I also want to urge you to remain steadfast in prayers and continue to sacrifice for



**Yahaya**

the good and advancement of our dear state", the governor said.

Governor Inuwa, equally, urged all Christians to pray for the newly elected leaders at all levels for God to bless them with wisdom, understanding, discernment, and knowledge as they prepare to take the mantle of leadership next month.

"We are indeed in need of prayers as leaders and as a

country, especially at this crucial moment. I am optimistic that with collective commitment, sacrifice and by turning to God through prayers, we shall overcome all our challenges and emerge stronger," the governor said.

While wishing the Christian faithful a peaceful and joyous Easter celebrations, the South, South states the fare governor urged Christian clerics to use the occasion to preach peace, tolerance and unity amongst the diverse people.

**From ANENE AIKE, Sokoto**

THE regulatory body for Hajj programmes known as The National Hajj Commission of Nigeria, NAHCON, has disclosed that the year 2023 Hajj fare is going to be influenced by distance ranging between 2,800 and 2,968.

In a press briefing, at its headquarters, Abuja, the body big boss, Alhaji Zikrullah Kunle Hassan said there will be 8 different fares because of the differences in point of embarking on the pilgrimage to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for Hajj activities.

Zikrullah also announced that on the 16th day of Ramadan, 1444 AH, equivalent to 7th April 2023, as the last day for payment of the Hajj fares for the intending pilgrims travelling from Nigeria to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the Hajj activities,

He enumerated the 8 fare's as follows: Two million, eight hundred and ninety thousand naira (N2,890,000:00) for pilgrims flying from Maiduguri and Yola for the pilgrimage; that for the rest of the states in the Northern states of Nigeria, each pilgrim has to pay Two million, nine hundred and eighty thousand Naira (N2,980,000:00).

He explained further that for intending pilgrims from the South, South states the fare stands at two million, nine hundred and sixty-eight thousand Naira (N2,968,000:00). For

## 95,000 approved for 2023 Nigeria Muslim Pilgrims



**Hassan**

pilgrims from Cross Rivers: Two million, nine hundred and forty three thousand Naira (N2, 943,000:00). Ondo and Ekiti states pilgrims will pay the sum of two million, eight hundred and eighty thousand Naira (N2, 880,000:00). While Cross State Pilgrims will pay two million, nine hundred and ninety-three thousand (N2,993,000:00).

Others, such as Lagos, Ogun and Oyo States pilgrims are to pay, two million, nine

hundred and ninety-nine thousand naira (N2, 999,000:00) while each pilgrim from South eastern states of Nigeria is to pay two million, nine hundred and sixty-eight thousand naira (2,968,000:00).

The big boss also stated that In addition to the fare announcement, NAHCON announced that the payment remittance for this year ends on 21st April 2023, and each pilgrim shall have 800 dollars as Basic Travelling Allowance from the money paid.

In addition, he explained that the body also indicates that payment for Hajj through the Hajj Savings Scheme portal have been closed while informing the stakeholders that the following air carriers, as approved by the President, Muhammad Buhari shall be in operation for this year's Hajj operations. They include Air Peace, Azman, Flynas, Aero Contractors, and Max Air, as carriers for the states pilgrims,

Zikrullah also stated that for the time being, Arik-Airlines and Value-jets would operate as chartered flights for private Hajj tour operators.

He also disclosed that the Commission has fixed 21st May 2023 as the inaugural flight for the 2023 Hajj operation even as he promises Nigerian pilgrims a seamless pilgrimage as all of them will be flown to Saudi Arabia in good time for the Hajj.

Zikrullah also urged the approved airlines to be above board because the Commission will have zero tolerance for flight delays, cancellations and positioning of lost capacity aircraft for the operation.

He also revealed that Saudi Arabia Hajj authorities allotted 95,000 slots to Nigeria for this year, 2023 Hajj and the Kingdom expects from all over the world three million pilgrims this year 2023.

## EX-NUJ Vice President blasts Senator

**From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja**

SENATOR Smart Adeyemi has been called upon to first redeem his image with his mother before aspiring to lead Kogi people as Governor in 2023

Mr Tims Ejigah, former NUJ Vice President, Zone D, made the declaration on Saturday in a chat with journalists at the NUJ secretariat in Lokoja,

Ejigah has described Adeyemi, the lawmaker representing Kogi West

Senatorial District in the National Assembly, as a politician with a "character baggage", who might not easily win election for any political party. The Former VP, who was one of Adeyemi's closest allies during his days as NUJ President and all through the time he began his journey into national politics, disclosed that the Senator had the habit of using and dumping those who assist him to rise to fame.

"If you check round you

will discover that the struggling to get their senator has no positive ticket, he would be wasting records with the NUJ that he that ticket if he emerges served as president for two candidate. I am not God, terms. but I say this based on his

"Some of us are very antecedents of use and surprised that Adeyemi had dump tactics.

joined the Kogi "Coming to our Governorship race because profession, if Smart if elections were to be Adeyemi wants journalists, conducted today, and only serving, retired or veterans journalists were to vote, as we call ourselves, to over 80 per cent would vote vote for him for anything, against the senator. he cannot have majority of

"This is more reason why votes.

I'm admonishing him to "Every journalist in the retrace his steps and ensure country knows my loyalty that he starts by redeeming and support for him. I want his image within his NUJ to say without any fear of family before thinking of contradiction that our governing Kogi. former president

"The most unfortunate (Adeyemi) is not the type thing about Smart Adeyemi that keeps relationships. is that he uses, dumps "You would remember the helpers and he can't win various campaigns of election for any party," he calumny by Smart Adeyemi said. against Audu in the very

The veteran journalist, eyes of the man before he who asked Adeyemi to died, calling him emperor mend his ways before and all. How would you do a aspiring for governorship, thing like that for someone regretted that he (Adeyemi) that you benefitted from was in the habit of drinking very well?

palm wine and breaking the "You would also recall how keg without any remose. the current administration

According to him, the of (Governor) Yahaya Bello senator would only be of APC recruited him from wasting the ticket of any the PDP and gave him a political party that makes third term in the Senate. the mistake of making him Are they still singing Hosanna?

"Whichever party he is "Narrowing down to the media profession, the



**Adeyemi**



## News

### Don't build barriers among members, Mutfwang tells clerics

BY PETER TITLE

GOVERNOR -elect of Plateau State, Barrister Caleb Mutfwang has called on leadership of the Church of God not to build barriers among members but to reach out to all irrespective of their denomination differences.

This position was made known when the leadership of the Anglican Diocese of Bukuru led by the Ach Bishop, Bishop Jwan Zuhumbes paid him a visit at the Jonah Jang Lodge on Monday..

According to him, the church has a very big responsibility ahead of it, most especially at this period that the situation in the country has gone bad. He said only prayers and determination of all citizens would salvage the nation. He promised to lead by example and called for prayers and support from all and sundry.

Earlier, the leader of the delegation, Bishop Zuhumbes said they had come to congratulate him and to pray for him to succeed in carrying the



Mutfwang

affairs of the state when he is sworn-in next month.

According to the Anglican Bishop, the expectation of the people for the governor-elect was unprecedented and therefore enjoined him to seek the wisdom of God and rule within the confines of the law.

The church intimated Barr.Mutfwang on the forth coming Synod of the church holding on the 27th-30th of April,2023 and invited the governor -elect to be part of

it, stressing that it would be enriching and issues affecting the country will be articulated and solutions proffered.

Our correspondent also reports that a group known as the Plateau Grassroots for Equity and Justice led by its leader, Comrade Butswat Gidado as well as the PDP Dependable Women Initiative led by its leader, Mrs Grace Mutfwang also paid a similar visit on the Governor-elect.

### University of Ibadan scholar emerges COSFAN President

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

DR Ekundayo Samuel, a lecturer at the Department of Veterinary Physiology and Biochemistry, University of Ibadan, has been elected as President of the Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows Alumni Association, Nigeria (COSFAN).

Dr. Samuel was previously the association's Secretary-General.

Our correspondent reports that Dr Samuel and other new Executive committee of the association were inaugurated on Thursday, April 6, 2023, at the British Council, Lagos, during the 2023 Commonwealth Day event.

Barrister Funmilayo Oniwide administered the oath of office for the new officers

Other Executive Committee members were: Dr. Azizat Amoloye-Adebayo, Vice President; Dr. Maryam Omolara Quadri, General Secretary; Mrs. Helen Akinwande-Fidelis, Publicity Secretary; and Dr. Nazmat Surajudeen-Bakinde, Treasurer/Financial Secretary.

The rest included: Dr. Oluwatosin Igbayiloye, North-Central Regional Coordinator; Dr. Adetoun Mustapha, South-West Regional Coordinator; and Prof. Olayinka Nwachukwu, South-East Regional

Coordinator.

The new executives are expected to serve for two years, renewable for another two years.

In his inaugural speech, Dr Samuel, who is also the Executive Director, Dove-Haven Foundation (DHF), commended the out-going President, Dr. Abiola Adimula for her unflinching support and contribution to the growth of the association.

He also hailed COSFAN's patrons; His Excellency, Prof. (Amb) Ibrahim Agboola Gambari, CFR, and His Imperial Majesty, Oba Babatunde Enitan Ojaja II, the Ooni of Ife, for being pillars of support and courage to the Association.

Dr Samuel equally thanked COSFAN's Matron, Her Excellency, Dr. Aminat Abdusalami-Bello, wife of the Executive Governor of Niger State for her immense support.

The new COSFAN's president appreciated the Chairman, Board of Trustees, Emeritus Prof. Olugbemi Jegede, all other board members and advisors especially, Emeritus Prof Michael Omolewa, former and present executives and members for their support and contributions to the growth of the association.

Dr Ekundayo Samuel also extended the appreciation message to COSFAN's

statutory Technical Advisor, The Honourable Minister of Education, Mallam Adamu Adamu for his technical support.

The event was well attended by its members, advisors, the British Council Country Director, Lucy Pearson including members of the public.

COSFAN is a body consisting of eminent Nigerians who have enjoyed the sponsorship of the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission (CSC), United Kingdom (through the British Council in Nigeria), in their respective postgraduate academic pursuits or career enhancement from 1960 to date.

Over 2,000 Nigerians have benefitted from the scholarships and fellowships awarded by the Commonwealth Scholarships Commission, UK. Formally registered in 2012

As a non-profit organisation, COSFAN's core objective is "to use the knowledge of indigenous and commonwealth pieces of training which members received, both locally and overseas to impact Nigerian society, especially in the thematic areas of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), education being the foremost". It is supported by the British Council.



### Reflecting on our many failings

THERE comes a time in the life of every nation when it needs to sit back and reflect on the journey it has embarked on as a nation state and as a people. Look back and see how it can make progress as well as try to change the way and manner things are done. If we continue to tow this path, we are likely not to succeed. We must therefore, chart new courses and pursue ways that would lead us to the path of progress and growth

Ethnicity has been one very sore point that is threatening to tear the society apart. Everyone resorts to their very small enclave each time there is a small social dislocation giving the impression that we are yet to grow as a people. In most cases, these divides are emphasized by the political class who prefer that the people stand divided so that they can be easily manipulated. It is sad how these events are panning out and giving the impression that the State lacks statesmen. Those who have paid their dues and have reached the peak of their careers need to speak up and show the way for our people. We must have leaders who would call everyone to order when the state is veering off towards the precipice. Someone who could speak sincerely and caution whoever is trying to bring the state to disrepute.

Lately too, the social media has added to the many challenges that have piled up on the Nigeria and has tasked well-meaning citizens of the country. Political propaganda and deliberate falsehood have become a stock in trade for some idle youths who engage in disparaging and assassinating the characters of those they perceive as enemies of their pay masters. What for instance would it profit anyone to destroy someone's hard earned reputation when at the end of the day Nigerians are pursuing the same goal using different vehicles or means to get to the destination?

What is saddening is the use of thugs in the political space and campaigns for offices meant to serve the people? Why for instance would someone feel no qualms when these *e rats* feasts on their perceived opponents and they keep quiet? This should not be our Nigeria. I

am not sure our founding fathers would be happy with the state of affairs of our dear country wherever they are.

The army of the unemployed that litter the streets is a testament to the growing threat that the ever-present Boko haram constitute to the youth population. We would never forget in a hurry the devastation caused by insurgency in the North East, Middle Belt Area, Eastern and a lot other parts that suffered from the activities of miscreants who masquerade as freedom fighters. So many people have been displaced from their ancestral homes for no fault of theirs and nothing substantive has been done to return them to their lands. Indeed, foreign invaders have had a field day in our country so much so that we have become refugees in our own land.

Another disease that has caught up with Nigerians is ethnicity. If you are from the same tribe with that of the person in power, then you gain the opportunity of securing favours. It is often viewed as your turn to make it. Merit is thrown to the dustbin and the person in power does no wrong. If someone from another tribe points out what is not being done right, he becomes an enemy who is trying to cut short the tenure of the other tribe. So, wrongs

“

Our hospitals are in very sorry states and have become “mere consulting clinics” that can hardly meet the yearnings of the people. This state of affairs has in the past led to the government being toppled. Yet when in power, the same government shows no political will to completely depart from the old ways of doing things. So many hospitals have been built over time, yet healthcare delivery has become harder to access for the common person. It, therefore, means that structures do not add up if the manpower need is not matched. Neither are structures useful when empty medicine chests are the lot of the hospitals.

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notwithstanding, they should not be pointed out. The critic should rather wait the turn of his own people to speak up and right such wrongs.

Our hospitals are in very sorry states and have become “mere consulting clinics” that can hardly meet the yearnings of the people. This state of affairs has in the past led to the government being toppled. Yet when in power, the same government shows no political will to completely depart from the old ways of doing things. So many hospitals have been built over time, yet healthcare delivery has become harder to access for the common person. It, therefore, means that structures do not add up if the manpower need is not matched. Neither are structures useful when empty medicine chests are the lot of the hospitals.

Even when these are provided, constant training and retraining to help update those to man these hospitals must be made part of the total package. For best practices to evolve, our hospitals must seek international collaborations to keep abreast with best practices from all over the world. Not reaching out in today's world would only spell doom as nobody knows it all.

If Nigerians could distinguish themselves elsewhere, it means provided with the same conditions at home, they are sure to do even more. But where they are left to work with next to nothing, no magic can bring out the best in them. This in turn means that technology should and must be deployed if we are to make any headway.

Local manufacture and fabrication must be encouraged so that resources can be saved on the importation of equipment. Indeed, research in local herbal usage should be encouraged and boosted by our local universities so that we can depend on what we have instead of importing from outside our shores.

We must take our destinies in our own hands and refuse to keep doing the wrong thing when we can change our own stories. It is, however up to us to agree to make a difference rather than keep being mediocre and not making any progress.



## News

# Peter Obi not qualified to contest presidential poll – APC tells court

By PALANG KASMI

THE All Progressives Congress (APC) has prayed the Presidential Election Petition Court (PEPC), in Abuja, to dismiss the petition filed by the Labour Party (LP) and its Presidential Candidate, Peter Obi, against the emergence of Bola Ahmed Tinubu, as president-elect in the February 25 election.

The APC, the 4th respondent, urged the PEPC to reject the petition in its notice of preliminary objection marked: CA/PEPC/03/2023 and filed at PEPC's Secretariat on Monday night, by Thomas Ojo, a member of the party's legal team, led by Lateef Fagbemi SAN, in Abuja.

The party asked the tribunal to dismiss the petition with substantial cost on the grounds that it lacked merit and was frivolous.

THEWILL recalls that Obi, the 1st petitioner, and LP, the 2nd petitioner, had sued the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Tinubu, Sen. Kashim Shettima and APC as 1st to 4th respondents respectively.

In the petition marked: CA/PEPC/03/2023, filed by Obi and LP's lead counsel, Livy Ozoukwu, they contended that Tinubu "was not duly elected by a majority of the lawful votes cast at the time of the election."

The petitioners claimed there was rigging in 11 states, adding that they would demonstrate this in the declaration of results based on the uploaded results.

Obi and LP said INEC violated its own regulations when it announced the result despite the fact that at the time of the announcement, the totality of the polling unit results had yet to be fully scanned, uploaded and transmitted electronically as required by the Electoral Act.

Among other prayers, the petitioners urged the tribunal to "determine that, at the time of the presidential election held on February 25, 2023, the 2nd and 3rd respondents (Tinubu and Shettima) were not qualified to contest the election."

"That it is determined that on the basis of the remaining votes (after discounting the votes credited to the 2nd respondent), the 1st petitioner (Obi) scored a majority of the lawful votes cast at the election and had not less than 25 per cent of the votes cast in each of at least two-thirds of the states of the federation and the FCT and satisfied the constitutional requirements to be declared the winner of the February 25 presidential election."

"That it be determined that the



Obi

2nd respondent (Tinubu), having failed to score one-quarter of the votes cast at the presidential election in the FCT, was not entitled to be declared and returned as the winner of the presidential election held on February 25."

Responding, the APC prayed the court to dismiss the suit, on the ground that Obi, the 1st petitioner, lacked requisite locus standi to institute the petition because he was not a member of LP at least 30 days before the party's presidential primary to be validly sponsored by the party.

It said: "The 1st petitioner (Obi) was a member of PDP until May 24, 2022."

"1st petitioner was screened as a presidential aspirant of the PDP in April 2022."

"1st petitioner participated and was cleared to contest the presidential election while being a member of the PDP."

"1st petitioner purportedly resigned his membership of PDP on May 24, 2022, to join the 2nd petitioner (Labour Party) on May 27, 2022."

"2nd petitioner conducted its presidential primary on May 30, 2022, which purportedly produced 1st petitioner as its candidate, which purportedly produced 1st petitioner as its candidate, which time contravened Section 77(3) of the Electoral Act for him to contest the primary election as a member of the 2nd petitioner."

The party argued that Obi was not a member of LP at the time of his alleged sponsorship.

The APC argued that "by the mandatory provisions of Section 77(1)(2) and (3) of the Electoral Act 2022, a political party shall maintain a register and shall make such register

available to INEC not later than 30 days before the date fixed for the party primaries, congresses and convention."

It stated further that all the PDP's presidential candidates were screened on April 29, 2022, an exercise in which Obi participated and was cleared to contest while being a member of the party.

It argued that the petition was incompetent since Obi's name could not have been in LP's register made available to INEC at the time he joined the party.

The APC equally argued that the petition was improperly constituted, having failed to join Atiku Abubakar and PDP, which were necessary parties to be affected by the reliefs sought.

"By Paragraph 17 of the petition, the petitioners, on their own, stated that Alhaji Atiku Abubakar came second in the presidential election with 6,984,520 votes as against the petitioners who came third with 6,101,533 votes;

"At Paragraph 102 (ii) of the petition, the petitioners urged the tribunal to determine that the 1st petitioner scored the majority of lawful votes without joining Alhaji Atiku Abubakar in the petition."

"For the tribunal to grant prayer (iii) of the petitioners, the tribunal must have set aside the scores and election of Alhaji Atiku Abubakar."

"Alhaji Atiku Abubakar must be heard before his votes can be discounted by the tribunal", it said.

The party, therefore, argued that the tribunal lacked the requisite jurisdiction to entertain pre-election complaints embedded in the petition as presently constituted, among other arguments.

of service of all teachers in Borno from 35 to 40 and from 60 to 65 by age whichever comes first.

"All interested teachers willing to enjoy this are expected to write to the board through their principals expressing their interest and attach medical certificate of fitness from any government hospital," the circular reads.

Such letters, it added are to be submitted to the board in person.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that President Muhammadu Buhari assented to four Bills recently passed by the National Assembly including Harmonised Retirement Age for Teachers in Nigeria Act, 2022.

The act provides for the [retirement age](#) of teachers in the country.

Section 1 of the act, states that teachers in Nigeria shall compulsorily retire on attainment of 65 years of age or 40 years of pensionable service, whichever is earlier.

While the provisions of Section 3 of the act provides that the Public Service Rule or any

THE leaders of three main tribes of Benue state under the aegis of the Mzough U Tiv, MUT, Ochetoha K'Idoma, OKI, and Omi Ny' Igede, ONI, have bemoaned the recent killings in the state and urged President Muhammadu Buhari to cleared a state of emergency on security in the country without further delay.

The leaders, speaking Monday in Makurdi through their Chairman and President General of Mzough U Tiv, World Wide, Chief Iorbee Ihagh, insisted that the President must act fast because the people of the state have had enough of the killings of their loved ones by armed herdsmen.

The leaders who were reacting to the recent killings in parts of the state warned that "the killings in Benue state is getting out of hand. Though we have a President in the country but it does not look like we have one. Just withing two days 86 persons were killed by Fulani herdsmen in Benue and within one week they killed about 120 people in the state."

"The President is not doing anything to save our people. Is Benue State not part of Nigeria? Why are we being treated like this?"

Whenever our people have killed a statement will be made by the Presidency and after that nothing will be heard. The killings are too much, enough is enough.

"The Fulanis are allowed to carry AK47s to defend themselves, what about the farmers? We are the producers of food in this country and if you go to the market food items are very expensive because we are no more farming; if our people go to farms they are killed."

"Our people have been sacked from their homes, and even there in the Internally Displaced Persons, IDP, camps the herdsmen go there to kill them. They kill our women and children and even unborn babies, which is our sin?"

"The situation is getting out of hand and it is time for the President to declare a state of emergency on

## WAMCO apologises, withdraws offensive Good Friday advert

THE management of FrieslandCampina WAMCO Nigeria Plc, producers of Peak Milk, has apologised to the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), for using the crucifixion of Jesus Christ as a metaphor to promote their product on Good Friday, saying the social media advertisement has been withdrawn.

While acknowledging the sensitivity of the social media post "considering the sobriety of the season", the organisation said it was neither intended to make light of the significance of

Legislation that requires a person to retire from the Public Service at 60 years of age or after 35 years of Service shall not apply to Teachers in Nigeria.

## Cyber security expert hails military leadership over ongoing operations

Prof. Ojo Ademola, Nigeria's First Professor of Cyber Security and Information Technology Management, has hailed the current leadership of the Armed Forces of Nigeria for their professionalism in the ongoing operations.

Adomola said this in a statement on Monday in Abuja.

He said the Chief of Defence Staff, Gen. Lucky Irabor, had brought in a professional touch and unique administration that had proven to be a masterstroke in the ongoing war against insurgency.

Ademola said the ability of the defence chief to get the service chiefs and personnel of the armed forces behind him without any distractions was, not only commendable but an exceptional subject of analysis.

According to him, the level of synergy among the service chiefs is what you see in the very

## Benue killings: Declare state of emergency on security now

–Tribal leaders to FG

security with immediate effect. Some group of people think that Nigeria belongs to them, but that is wrong because the country belongs to us all. But we should know that Nigeria is pregnant.

"President Buhari should declare a state of emergency on security before he leaves office because we cannot allow our people to be killed like chickens every day."

"This government declared the Indigenous People of Biafra, IPOB, a terrorist group while armed herdsmen that are tormenting the entire country are pampered, why. They should be declared terrorist organisations. We cannot continue like this. These herdsmen are not the ones we used to know that lived among us, they were obviously bought to this country by politicians and Nigerians are obviously happy with what is going on."We believe that their mission is to take over

Benue land but we cannot allow that even if it means killing every one of us.

"We also demand that the Federal Government adopt ranching as the mode of animal husbandry in the country because that is what is obtainable in organised societies so that we can put an end to the menace of armed herdsmen."

"The government is contradicting itself by advocating that we move away from an oil-based economy by encouraging agricultural production, but armed herdsmen are allowed to kill the farmers who will drive agricultural production. What then happens to food security in the country? A government that is emphasising food security is failing to protect the farmer to produce for domestic consumption and export. There is obviously no sincerity of purpose in that advocacy."



Alkali

the season nor to exploit the unmatched sacrifice of Jesus Christ inordinately."

The apology, written by Ore Famurewa, Executive Director (Corporate Affairs), on behalf of the company, was addressed to the CAN President, Archbishop Daniel Okoh,

The letter, titled, 'Apology For The Good Friday Social Media Post by the Peak Brand', reads in part: "On behalf of FrieslandCampina WAMCO Nigeria PLC, I hereby tender our unreserved apology to the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), as well as to the Christian community at large for the recent Good Friday social media post on the Company's Social Media Handle."

"We acknowledge the sensitivity of the social media

post considering the sobriety of the season. It was neither intended to make light of the season's significance nor to inordinately exploit the unmatched sacrifice of Jesus Christ."

"We wish to inform the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) that the social media post has since been withdrawn."

"We hereby restate our commitment to our unwavering mission of nurturing Nigeria while maintaining the respect of all religious laws, tenets and guidelines."

"Once again, please accept our deepest apology and pledge to prevent a reoccurrence of such in the future. Do accept the assurances of my esteemed regards."



Zulum

Permanent Secretary, Malam Yusuf Garga.

"The attention of all teachers is hereby drawn to the fact that Gov. Babagana Zulum, has approved the extension of years



## Foreign Commentary

### Good Friday Agreement: Biden trip reflects enduring US-Ireland bonds

***For a place roughly the size of Connecticut, Northern Ireland has received plenty of presidential attention. Bill Clinton visited three times during his presidency, George W Bush twice, and Barack Obama once. It is sometimes said that the United States is the "third guarantor" of the Good Friday Agreement - after Britain and Ireland, which are the two nations charged in international law with upholding the deal.*** Chris Page writes

Ancestral links are the bedrock of the bonds between the US and the island of Ireland.

It had long been expected that Joe Biden - a president who speaks of his Irish roots more than most - would visit Northern Ireland to mark the 25th anniversary of the peace deal which largely ended the conflict known as the Troubles.

However, the circumstances are less than ideal.

Northern Ireland has been without a power-sharing government since February 2022.

The power-sharing political institutions set up by the agreement have not been fully operating for more than a year.

The Democratic Unionist Party is vetoing the formation of a devolved government in protest against Brexit trading arrangements for Northern Ireland.

The DUP has said it will not allow a coalition to be formed until it is satisfied there are no economic barriers between Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK.

The White House has welcomed the deal between the UK and the EU, known as the Windsor Framework, which is designed to deal with unionists' concerns.

The British government is hoping Mr Biden's visit will promote the framework as the internationally recognised way forward.

Other parties have suggested the presidential itinerary would have been more comprehensive if the Northern Ireland Assembly was up and running.

President Biden had been invited to address the assembly, at Stormont on the outskirts of Belfast.



**Lord Empey**

But the invitation from the Assembly Speaker, Alex Maskey, was not accepted.

So you can expect the likes of Sinn Féin - the Irish nationalist party which is now the largest in the assembly - to blame the DUP for a "missed opportunity".

However, the DUP will point to the basis of the power-sharing settlement backed by the US - that both unionists and nationalists must have

confidence in the governance arrangements for Northern Ireland in order for them to work.

Some DUP politicians have been strident in criticising President Biden for his backing of the Northern Ireland protocol - the previous deal between the UK and the EU after Brexit, which created a trade border in the Irish Sea.

Over the years nationalists

have been more enthusiastic about US input than unionists, who have been suspicious of influence being exerted in Washington by lobby groups and politicians who identify as Irish-American.

If previous US diplomatic tactics are anything to go by it is unlikely that President Biden's public remarks in Northern Ireland will be accusatory towards any one party or group.

He was on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in the 1990s when Bill Clinton - another Democrat - demonstrated his commitment to the peace process by becoming the first president to visit Northern Ireland while in office.

The British prime minister at the time, Tony Blair, spoke to me about Mr Clinton's approach in an interview for the BBC iPlayer film, 'Troubles and Peace'.

He said that when he called Mr Clinton, the then president "would immediately understand the politics of the situation - who to call, what to do, what to say, how to frame it".

"It meant you had the power of the United States behind you - not just in itself, but also operating with immense sophistication and subtlety," Mr Blair said.

Bríd Rodgers was a negotiator

for the Irish nationalist Social Democratic and Labour Party - whose leader, John Hume, prioritised building relations with the White House.

She said: "If it hadn't been for President Clinton in the last 24 hours before the Good Friday Agreement, I don't think we would have got it."

"He was in touch, he was phoning. He recognised unionists' difficulties, he recognised republicans' difficulties - he was able to assure them that he understood their challenges, but he was behind them."

A unionist negotiator, Lord Empey, was more circumspect about Mr Clinton's role during the final hours.

The Ulster Unionist Party peer said: "I don't think it made any difference to the minutiae or the outworkings of the agreement."

He thinks Mr Clinton's most significant contribution came over a longer period of time.

"President Clinton changed the atmosphere, so that America was no longer seen as totally supportive of Irish nationalism."

"No matter what his personal opinions may have been, he made an effort to treat us equally to others - we were no longer shut out."

**Source: BBC News Ireland**



**BIDEN**



## Foreign News

### Kuwait's political crisis leaves opposition waiting

ON Sunday, in an effort to alleviate seemingly continuous political deadlock, a royal decree appointed a new Kuwaiti government, headed by Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Last June, a previous Kuwaiti royal decree dissolved the country's parliament and called for new elections, with the aim of ushering in a "new era" in the Gulf country as it contended with political instability.

However, last month – and after prolonged friction between the government and a parliament that was only elected in September – the legislative body was dissolved by Kuwait's Constitutional Court, and replaced by the very parliament that had preceded it.

The reason given in the ruling was non-cooperation from the government, but the decision had surprised many in Kuwait, particularly considering its divergence from the royal decree, which had been issued just nine months prior.

But, despite the situation, there has been no comment from either the Kuwaiti royal court or the country's government on the issue since the ruling was issued on March 19.

"There is no easy solution out of this dilemma, which was largely created by a surprising governmental resignation in January," said Luai Allarakia, a visiting political science professor at the University of Richmond, calling the court's decision "unnecessary and confrontational." A gradual lack of cooperation from the previous government during assembly sessions ahead of the new year led to the resignation of the cabinet in January, eventually prompting the judicial branch's recent ruling.

In a country with the most active parliament in the Gulf region, the ruling could also be interpreted as an attack on Kuwait's opposition, after the majority of seats in September's elections went to opposition members.

Allarakia, who focuses on Gulf legislatures, argues that the decision has "plunged Kuwait into a constitutional crisis, [putting] opposition members in the uncomfortable position of criticising the court".

On the deepening deadlock, Allarakia points to a "very likely return to square one", where an ineffective assembly leads to another round of elections, regardless of the possible routes ahead, he said.

Allarakia outlined two possible scenarios for where Kuwaiti politics goes next. The first would see new elections called, particularly given the newly reinstated parliament's unpopularity. The second would involve the dissolution of the reinstated assembly, either as a result of opposition pressure or another royal decree. But in either of the two scenarios, Allarakia says, "recurring deadlock remains a real possibility" if there are no guarantees of cooperation from the executive branch.

The 2022 elections saw the return to parliament of several opposition figures who had boycotted previous assemblies after they lost their seats following a previous court ruling in 2012, which had similarly annulled the parliament, declaring it constitutionally invalid.

Then, much like now, gridlock between parliament and the government was at the root of the political instability.

Following the elections, Kuwait's emir appointed his son, Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, as prime minister. In less than six months, he had been forced to appoint a new government, after the parliament disapproved of his initial selection.

Members of parliament then presented a populist loan



Al-Sabah.

forgiveness bill. Disapproval from ministers and a failed attempt at compromise ultimately lead to deadlock in the national assembly.

Given that situation, there are many voices in Kuwait's political establishment who argue that there should be no going back on the court's decision to annul the previous parliament.

Yaqoub Al-Sane, a former minister of justice, is one of those.

Mohammed Alfahad, a professor of constitutional law at the Kuwait International Law School, argues that,

beyond the legal discrepancies in the constitutional court's ruling, there is a more immediate political concern: public disapproval of the returning parliament.

The election results led to a majority opposition presence, added two women back to the legislature and dropped a medley of establishment politicians from the previous assembly.

Now those opposition gains, won off the back of the vote, are gone – and with them, the new era that had been promised.

### US urged to take serious threat to Taiwan

THE chairman of the House Select Committee on China said Saturday the U.S. must take seriously the threat posed to Taiwan, as Beijing launched military drills around the island in the aftermath of the Taiwanese president's meetings with American lawmakers.

Rep. Mike Gallagher, R-Wis., who attended the meeting with President Tsai Ing-wen in California last week, told The Associated Press that he plans to lead his committee in working to shore up the island government's defenses, encouraging Congress to expedite military aid to Taiwan.

"I think it all just points to what is obvious," Gallagher told the AP, arguing that Chinese President Xi Jinping is intent on reunifying Taiwan with the mainland.

"We need to be moving heaven and earth to enhance our deterrence and denial posture, so that Xi Jinping concludes that he just can't do it," Gallagher said.

China conducted drills with warships and dozens of fighter jets around Taiwan on Saturday, the Taiwanese government said, in what was viewed as retaliation for the meeting between the U.S. lawmakers and the president of the self-ruled island democracy claimed by Beijing as part of its territory.

House Speaker Kevin McCarthy hosted Tsai in a bipartisan session at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library in Simi Valley, California, with more than a dozen members of the U.S. House for what was the most sensitive stop during her

transit through the U.S.

China's response to Tsai's transit through the U.S. has not, so far, been as intense as its reaction last year after then-House Speaker Nancy Pelosi visited Taiwan.

While both McCarthy and Tsai spoke in measured remarks after the meeting about maintaining the status quo between their countries, which have no formal diplomatic ties, the daylong meeting enraged China.

The Chinese military announced the start of three-day "combat readiness patrols" as a warning to Taiwanese who want to make the island's de facto independence permanent.

Taiwan split with China in 1949 after a civil war, and the United States broke off official ties with Taiwan in 1979 while

SUDANESE civilian groups and the ruling junta have missed Tuesday's deadline to form a civilian-led transitional government amid disagreements on security reforms and other issues.

According to a timeline set up by the parties, a new prime minister would have been announced on Tuesday as well as other officials of a civilian-led government.

The deadline lapsed after the parties failed to sign a final transition deal on 1 and 6 April over disagreements on the integration of the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) into the army.

A joint committee from the military and RSF, which was set up to discuss

### Sudan misses deadline to form Government

contentious issues, reportedly suspended the talks for one day for further consultations, Al-Intibaha website reported.

Meanwhile, the RSF has reportedly sent "about 14 armoured vehicles" to Khartoum "in anticipation of any emergency", Paris-based Sudan Tribune news site reported.

Citing an unnamed RSF official, Sudan Tribune said that the vehicles were stationed in Zurq locality on the border with Libya, and were on their way to Khartoum, "as part of RSF's plans to deploy its forces in the city".

The Sudanese army and the RSF have in recent weeks been mobilising



Kiir

their troops in the capital.

It follows divisions between Sudanese deputy leader and RSF commander Gen Hamdan Dagalo (Hemeti) and military chief Gen Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, raising fears of confrontations between the army and the RSF.

### Polish to further strengthen defense ties with US

POLAND'S Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki flew to the United States for meetings aimed at strengthening the economic and defense cooperation of the two nations Tuesday.

Morawiecki is due to meet with Vice President Kamala Harris on Tuesday at the White House for talks including on further support for Ukraine. He is also scheduled to have meetings with the representatives of American defense

companies during his three-day visit.

"I am flying to the United States to strengthen the alliance with our most powerful ally, with a country that guarantees security in Europe, that especially guarantees security in our part of Europe," Morawiecki said.

Following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine last year, the United States increased its military presence in Poland — a

for its first plant, to be opened in 2033.

Before departing Warsaw early Tuesday, Morawiecki told reporters at the airport that Polish-American relations "have not been so good for a long time, and perhaps they have never been so strong."

He said his talks with the U.S. defense industry will also include talks on financing the billions of dollars of current and planned purchases. Poland is buying U.S. F-35 fighter jets,



DUDA

nation on NATO's eastern flank that borders Ukraine and Russia's Kaliningrad exclave — and has used Poland as a transit country for military and humanitarian aid going into Ukraine.

Poland is also a major donor of aid to Ukraine, and has been ordering fighter jets, tanks and other modern military equipment, mostly from U.S. and South Korean producers, to strengthen its own forces and replace some older equipment sent to Ukraine.

As Europe seeks to gain energy independence, Poland is also planning to build nuclear power plants, and has chosen the U.S. government and Westinghouse as its partners

Abrams tanks, HIMARS artillery systems and Patriot missile launching units.

Morawiecki's visit follows two visits to Poland by U.S. President Joe Biden since Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy also paid an official visit to Warsaw last week.

The prime minister said Poland's alliance with the U.S. is "an absolute foundation of our security."

"It is based on two pillars: economic and defense cooperation. I am going to the U.S. to strengthen both of these pillars," he said.

Morawiecki said that U.S. companies have invested some \$25 billion (euros 23 billion) in Poland, creating thousands of jobs.



Jinping



## Feature

# Passion for passion at Easter

**Passion is someone's practical drive or motivation towards achieving something worthy. It is a mix of interest & determination in the process of getting a cause reached! Modest Thoughts with Ayuba Yilgak'ha.**

IT is so critical in the world of dreams and work. David Jeremiah's book, "Life Wide Open" which was published in 2003 profoundly chronicles how important passion is through the following statements:

- i. Without a purpose fueled by passion, nothing in life matters.
- ii. Passion is the inner spark, provided by God, that ignites you to live out your God-given purpose.
- iii. I can think of nothing worthwhile in life that was achieved without great passion.
- iv. A purpose not fueled by inner drive and enthusiasm is mere drudgery. In other words, passion is purpose and purpose is passion.

Socrates once wrote that a man who has no passion for anything is not worth living. This means that passion is the proof of someone's living.

Anyone who is lacking in passion is only existing and cannot add to the value chain of the society in which he found himself. One is as good as dead when he is bereft of inner drive for something.

Lack of passion is an advanced form of laziness. Laziness is sheer indifference or unyielding attitude toward work.

A lazy man fears that work kills and, therefore, submits to conditions that kill even faster: rent seeking, dependency and poverty. These are existential problems which are demeaning in all ramifications even if one survives them!

Passion is what will is, to a man. It is what wheel is to any locomotive or fuel to automobiles. This shows that without passion, nothing moves or gets done.

Passion is the revealer of interest. The expression of it tells a lot about what one really cares about. Like a punctured tire, passion goes flat when interest is lost.

Passion is a silent energiser. When situations get tough, only passion can



keep someone going. Where there is no passion, even easy tasks are abandoned with no regrets.

It is important to note that nothing good comes easy. Anonymous puts it thus: 'Life doesn't get easy, you just get stronger'. And you know what? Only passion can guarantee one becoming stronger or even strongest!

Passion is an overcoming spirit. It greases the wheel of one's determination to realise a dream. Therefore, to be passionate about something means to go all out for it. It is an insurance for patience and diligence in workplace!

Passion is what love is to a man. It is as strong as death. When it comes, laws and logic are suspended. It gets someone waking up daily to pursue a cause without asking many questions.

The worth of passion is in its ability to get good things done. This entails that passion is worthless when deployed to crush or destroy someone or anything.

Passion is insistence personified. Like a river, nothing can block its way. Passion will always negotiate its way through and get to its destination with time.

Passion is involved when glass ceilings are shattered and new standards set in

the world of work. Show me a man who has achieved any great feat and I will show you a man with passion.

It takes great passion to produce that great engineer you read about in the news. It is passion that is behind that great scientist that discovers the law of motion. Passion makes great sportsmen, women and business moguls. It is the rudder that changes the course of history.

With passion, comes obsession; and with obsession comes unique skills that comes from doing something constantly.

If you have passion for something worthwhile, be it school, business, professional career, etc., pursue it. There is no better charge than this!

This piece: Passion for Passion at Easter, is primarily and summarily all about eulogising the undiluted good news of the Love of God which requires all partakers of the grace of God to passionately uphold and share.

In Psalm 107: 2 (NIV), the scriptures says: Let the redeemed of the Lord proclaim that he has redeemed them from the hand of the for (the Devil). It is a passionate call to duty but a command too:

"Go tell it on the mountain

Over the hills and everywhere

Go tell it on the mountain" (about the salvation of Jesus Christ). "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations..." (Mathew 28:19). There is a literally esthetic reward: How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, 'Your God reigns!' (Isaiah 52:7).

Remember the passion week of Jesus Christ? He gallantly went through the agony of the cross for the sake of passion-cum-love for the redemption of man kind. He went through it all for your sake and my sake too. He has paid it all! It is finished! But the task of publishing the good news has just begun! Happy Easter celebration to Christians all over the world!





# EVER'S WORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Living

## Why You Shouldn't Strive For Perfection

PERFECTIONISM is a major problem in today's society. We see it everywhere, from the way we dress to how we do our hair and makeup.

But what about when perfectionism starts to affect your work? It can be a serious issue if you're trying to finish projects and are never satisfied with the outcome.

### What It Means to Strive for Perfection

So what does strive for perfection really mean? It means that you are holding yourself to a higher standard. You want or need, to do your best and give it your all in whatever endeavor is on the table.

You strive with everything you have to be perfect for something. And if there's one thing we can strive towards without being discouraged by our inevitable imperfections, it should be excellence instead of perfection.

### Reasons Why You Shouldn't Strive For Perfection

**It's impossible to strive for perfection.**

It's not possible, because humans are by nature imperfect beings. We make mistakes and we have bad days. And if you set a high standard of perfection that is unattainable, then you will always be striving and never satisfied with your place in life.

**There are always going to be things that you can't control, so it's better to focus on what you want instead of what you don't want.**

We often try to perfect situations that we have no control over, like our relationships and the way people



treat us. This can lead to frustration when things don't go according to plan or expectations.

Trying to be in charge of everyone else's actions is simply not possible--you'll just end up resenting them and yourself instead. Instead, make a list of what you want from others as well as what you would do if they did those actions automatically with little effort on your part. Then strive for it!

**Perfectionism can be a**

**major obstacle for creative people.**

Many of us strive to be perfect in the way that we respond, think and act.

This can lead to feeling like you're not good enough, which is a major obstacle for creative people--the worst thing on earth for an artist!

Strive instead for progress by giving yourself lots of time to do what's important first before getting distracted with minor details or unnecessary tasks (e.g., checking your social media feeds).

**We're all human, so we don't need to strive for perfection.**

The average human will make around 300 mistakes in a day.

We're all going to mess up sometimes, so it's better to strive for progress than perfectionism. Otherwise, we'll have 300 reasons that you should strive for perfect.

**It doesn't work when you're under pressure.**

It's hard to strive for perfection and be flexible at the same time, so it may not happen in times of crisis or emergency. The circumstances will dictate what needs to get done first--not your need for that perfect outcome.

If you mistakenly strive towards a goal that is no longer possible then there are serious consequences (e.g., missed deadlines). Sometimes coping with change means adapting as opposed to trying harder than ever before. You'll fail again--and end up even more frustrated!

**It takes away from what matters most**

When people strive too much

for perfectionism, they tend to do things like check their social media feeds and use Facebook or Instagram more often because they want everything on their profile to be perfect, which is counterproductive if your goal is actually accomplishing something meaningful with your life.

This means that striving for perfection can take time and energy away from what really matters most

**Striving for perfection can make you feel like a fraud.**

It's true, there are those days when people strive so hard to be perfect that they spend too much time feeling fraudulent--as if they don't deserve success because of their imperfections. It doesn't matter how many times we strive towards something else or at least try our best, it never feels good enough and always leaves us feeling inadequate as humans trying to achieve the unachievable goal of perfectionism!

**Perfectionists tend to fear failure more than others do, which is stressful in itself.**

Perfectionists tend not only worry about failing to reach whatever standard has been set for them but also what other people might think of them.

This is a huge source of stress and anxiety--even if they strive for any type of perfectionism, it's not good enough because the fear of failure is so great that their performance suffers as a result!

**Perfectionists tend to be unhappy more often than others are.**

In general, perfectionists have been found to experience unhappiness on more days in comparison with those who strive less and live life naturally (i.e., without trying too hard). They're constantly comparing themselves with others who seem to achieve things better or faster than they do due to their lack of imperfections which makes them feel even worse about themselves and can lead to depression, among other serious conditions

**It's nearly impossible to get everything done that needs to be done, so it's better to strive for progress instead.**

To strive for perfection more often than not leads people into procrastination - a place where they never make any progress because they're waiting until their work is perfect before presenting anything.

They have this mistaken idea that if they don't strive for perfection then their work will be subpar and people won't take them seriously or value the effort they put in. The thing about striving for perfection is you can always do better which means as soon as your task is finished you feel like it isn't good enough...and on and on we go! This creates an endless loop of dissatisfaction with one's work.

If you strive for progress instead then it becomes about getting things done - not how good they look while you're doing them which opens up space for creativity and satisfaction with what's being accomplished rather than whether or not your work looks like a masterpiece.

Source: [basicsbybecca.com](https://www.basicsbybecca.com)





# EVER'S WORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

## Health

### Benefits of Avocado Seeds

AVOCADO seeds make up more than 18% of the deliciously creamy avocado fruit and are often tossed aside habitually. However, the seeds have been found to contain more than 70% of the antioxidant content in each avocado, making it an excellent source of nutrition with multiple health benefits.

The incredible fiber content combined with natural oils, vitamins and minerals lead to improved digestion, reduced inflammation and have even been linked to preventing the development of cancer cells. While it may seem unconventional to keep the seed, it's as easy as slicing it into quarters and blending it into juices, smoothies and sauces for an incredible health kick. It can also be ground separately into a powder and sprinkled into meals and creative recipes, helping you to reach new heights of health with minimal effort. Here are health benefits of eating an avocado seed

**Rich Source of Antioxidants**  
The National University of Singapore conducted a study in 2003 to observe the antioxidant content in the seeds avocados, mangoes and other tropical fruit. It found that the seeds of the fruit contained 70% more antioxidant value than the fruit itself which, if eaten, can help to prevent oxidative stress at a cellular level in the body. Antioxidants reduce cellular aging, fight inflammation and improve the condition of the entire body.

**Helps to Prevent Cancer**  
Decades of research have gone into finding a cure for multiple types of cancer, but one study

that has recently gained attention is the link between avocado seeds and the prevention of Acute Myeloid Leukemia (AML). AML originates in bone marrow and, once developed, spreads to the bloodstream in the form of leukemia.

**Heals Digestive Disorders**  
South Americans have been familiar with the digestive benefits that avocado seeds contain for hundreds of years and have been using it to treat ulcers, constipation and diarrhea.

Avocado seeds contain soluble fiber and powerful anti-inflammatory compounds which help to reduce flatulence and bloating and eliminates toxins and waste that can cause complications.

**Helps to Lower Cholesterol and Prevent Heart Disease**  
It's confirmed that avocado seeds offer some of the most intense amounts of soluble fiber compared to any other natural food source.

Soluble fiber helps to rid the cardiovascular system of plaque buildup and cholesterol, which helps to prevent heart disease, heart failure and stroke. In particular, avocado seeds help to lower LDL (bad) cholesterol levels and contain essential fatty acids that help to raise the HDL (good) cholesterol levels, which helps to restore a healthy cholesterol balance

**Helps to Prevent Cravings and Increases Fat Loss**  
avocado seed



The high amount of soluble and insoluble fiber contained in each avocado pit will help to keep you feeling fuller for longer, which reduces cravings in between meals and can encourage accelerated fat loss. It also helps to eliminate excess toxins and waste, which improves nutrient absorption and boosts metabolism, helping to improve the rate at which food is

broken down. This means a leaner, healthier composition from just one simple ingredient.

**Helps to Prevent Blood Sugar Imbalance**  
A diet high in fiber and low in sugar helps to prevent blood sugar spikes and dips and can prevent the development of Type 2 Diabetes.

Avocado seeds are the perfect addition to any smoothie or meal as the rich source of fiber helps to balance out any intake of sugar, keeping blood sugar levels stable.

**7. Reduces Inflammation**  
Avocado seeds contain powerful anti-inflammatory compounds known as catechins and procyanidins which help to reduce the risk of developing chronic inflammation. Chronic inflammation can lead to a number of diseases and discomforts, such as arthritis, hypertension and even Alzheimer's disease, which makes it an important issue to face and manage.

**Improves the Health and Appearance of Skin**

The intense burst of antioxidants in each avocado pit helps to reduce oxidative stress caused by the sun's harmful UV rays as well as pollution, chemicals and our modern environment. This helps to reduce the visible signs of aging, as well as rejuvenating the tone and condition of skin tissue.

Avocado seeds also contain nourishing oils which help to smooth wrinkles and improve the elasticity of skin, making you look younger and healthier in just one simple step.

**Inhibits Fungal Infections**  
avocado with the seed showing

Researchers found that avocado seed extract helped to inhibit pathogens such as fungal bacteria and candida. Interestingly, it also helped to prevent yellow fever. Adding avocado seed to your diet may help to reduce fungal infections and restore the balance of good bacteria in the digestive tract.

**Excellent Source of Potassium**

Avocado seeds are a rich source of potassium, which makes it an excellent source of fluid-balancing nutrition.

Potassium helps to eliminate excess toxins and fluid from the body as well as reducing muscle cramps.

**How Can You Include Avocado Seeds in Your Diet?**

Avocado seeds are not as strong as they look and can be easily sliced into quarters. Thereafter, add it to a blender or grinder to make a bitter and tannin-rich powder for future use in sauces, soups and smoothies. Alternatively, it can be added immediately to a smoothie for a healthier drink- just be sure to use a high powered blender.

**Source: Health news.com**





## Editorial

### Attitude change and new dispensation

**THE** first quarter of 2023 has been eventful. The general elections to elect a new crop of leadership for the nation was done starting with the Presidential and National Assembly elections. Thereafter, the Gubernatorial/State Assembly elections were held. Currently, the country is in transition. Those elected are waiting for power to be handed over to them, having received certificates-of-return from the electoral body.

**IT** seems like a period of time where everything is of the essence, and therefore everything matters. How we carry on from here is important. Among other things, our attitude towards work needs to be right. We have for so long clamored for attitudinal change in many aspects of our existence as a nation. Whether or not we ever got it right is a matter of perception. However, it is obvious that we are a long way off the mark. That is evident. Whatever rhetoric we engage to hide the reality of the position we are in, may not suffice this time around. The mood in the nation says it all.

**IT** is believed that if you are able to change your attitude, it changes your life. You have very little control over what happens to you in life, but you however can control how you respond to situations you encounter, however challenging or difficult they may be. We have a choice. Your response mirrors your attitude, and so by changing your attitude you can change your perspective and change your life.

**YOUR** attitude reflects the way you see the world and how you live in it. It affects every aspect of your life, your happiness, relationships, health, wellbeing and success. We need to develop a positive attitude that we can apply with action in order to change the way we live our lives regardless of the challenges or adversity we face.

**THERE** are three bases for attitude change, the processes of which therein lies the levels of attitude change.

**TTHE** first is compliance, which refers to a change in behavior based on consequences, such as an individual's hopes to gain rewards or avoid punishment. There may not be changes in beliefs or evaluations of an attitude object, but rather is influenced by the social outcomes of adopting a change in behavior.

**Identification** is the second, and refers to one's change of beliefs and affect in order to be similar to someone one admires or likes. You adopt the new attitude, not due to the specific content of the attitude object, but because it is associated with the desired relationship. Often, children's attitudes on race, or their political party affiliations are adopted from their parents' attitudes and beliefs.

**LASTLY** is internalization, which refers to the change in beliefs and affect when one finds the content of the attitude to be intrinsically rewarding, and thus leads to actual change in beliefs or evaluations of an attitude object. The new attitude or behavior is consistent with the individual's value system, and tends to be merged with the individual's existing values and beliefs. Therefore, behaviors adopted through internalization are due to the content of the attitude object. The behavior towards some object is a function of an individual's intent, which is a function of one's overall attitude towards the action.

**AND** so in this new dispensation, our work must reflect the attitude we desire to see. We quite often expect change to start from the top, but that may not have to be the case. We are all expected to "shine the light" in our own little corners. As individuals, it is important that we are mindful of the attitude we choose, because it would determine the outcome. There's need to select the most useful attitude that will help with the challenges faced, and can determine how successful you will manage the challenge or situation.

**IT** is vital that actions be taken with a purpose. See how it will serve your greater goals. Act with thought and consideration when choosing an attitude that will help you take the actions that will manage the challenges you face.

**ALCOHOL** is a liquid substance containing chemical mixture that when consumed to the system it changes human behavior and mode of action, is a distilled or fermented drink that can make you drunk. Scientifically alcohol is a liquid made up of distilled hydrocarbon that is also known as ethyl alcohol or ethanol, alcohol beverages like whiskey are produced by fermentation of yeast, sugar and starches and also have the power to make a person intoxicated.

Knowing the effect of alcohol to the body system most especially the human brain, according to research alcohol slows down the central nervous system, the central nervous system controls thought and how the brain communicates to the body system, and also the most immediate effects of alcohol are on brain affecting the way they think, feel and behave any time they consume excess of it.

According to statistics, the number of mad people roaming around in markets and highways most especially the youths who are supposed to be our leaders of tomorrow is all as the result of drug abuse and excess consumption of

alcohol that affect their mental health. Taking, alcohol also impact on the ability to process thoughts and make rational and reckless decision which can lead to increase in violence or any form of aggressive behavior, this is because alcohol can make one lose self-control and self esteem and ability to process multiple issues and decreased the ability to resolve conflict.

## Consequences of alcohol intake on youth

Some people take alcohol to help them forget their worries and also enables them sleep peacefully, while alcohol may help induce sleep in short time and first half of the night, they likely experience more sleep disturbance in the second half of the night which is the heavier part of the night and the most importantly hour during sleeping hours.

Also, quality sleep is critical to positive mental health and wellbeing, and lack of quality sleep can negatively impact to our daily functioning and reduce our overall quality of life.

He later added that some people take alcohol to make them courageous in terms of approach, for example some young boys that are not bold enough to stand confidently to express love advances to a lady, some of them take alcohol to help erase tension in terms of approach, in our tertiary institutions some students take alcohol before presentation on stage which may you maid end up staying something contrary.

Moreso, looking at the rampant cases of accidents on roads which is as the result of excess

consumption of alcohol where driving under the influence of alcohol has send many young people to their early grave which is a great lost to the society.

Knowing the consequences of alcohol to the system, it is advisable that alcohol should not be taken in excess to the extent that will make someone lose self-control to avoid especially in facing some problems and challenges.

**Ngot Bwehmasi Caleb I. is an IT Student from Federal Polytechnic Bauchi.**

## The collapse of our educational system

**EDUCATION** they say is the bedrock of every society and should be taken seriously, but the reverse is the case now because of how poor the system is being managed these days.

Instead of focusing on how to improve the system, we are busy politicizing the future of our children and it is gradually consuming us. It is sad that the educational institutions that have baked and groomed our leaders who are at the helm of affairs today are in dhambles.

Worthy of note is how our primary schools are left with pupils sitting under trees on

stones to receive lesson, with half-baked teachers whose qualifications are questionable. In a country called "giant" of Africa, it is shameful that we are still operating a "stone-age" style where pupils still sit under the tree to learn in this modern age.

The secondary schools are not left out of the dilemma, most government owned school have poor structures poor funding, low quality teaching and are without enough teachers. Imagine, having a teacher, teaching all subjects that he or she is not professionally trained.

This has grossly contributed in producing students of low quality where could hardly read and write effectively. They had no option than to engage in examination malpractices to scale through to the University or any higher educational institution.

The most worrisome of all is how students are clustered in a room in the name of accommodation. It has been on record that, more than four to five students are kept in a room and it has forced so many to look for alternative means of renting an apartment off campus where

their safety is guaranteed.

Therefore, we should stop playing politics with such a sensitive sector and focus more on building strong and functional education system that will take off our younger generation off crime and vices.

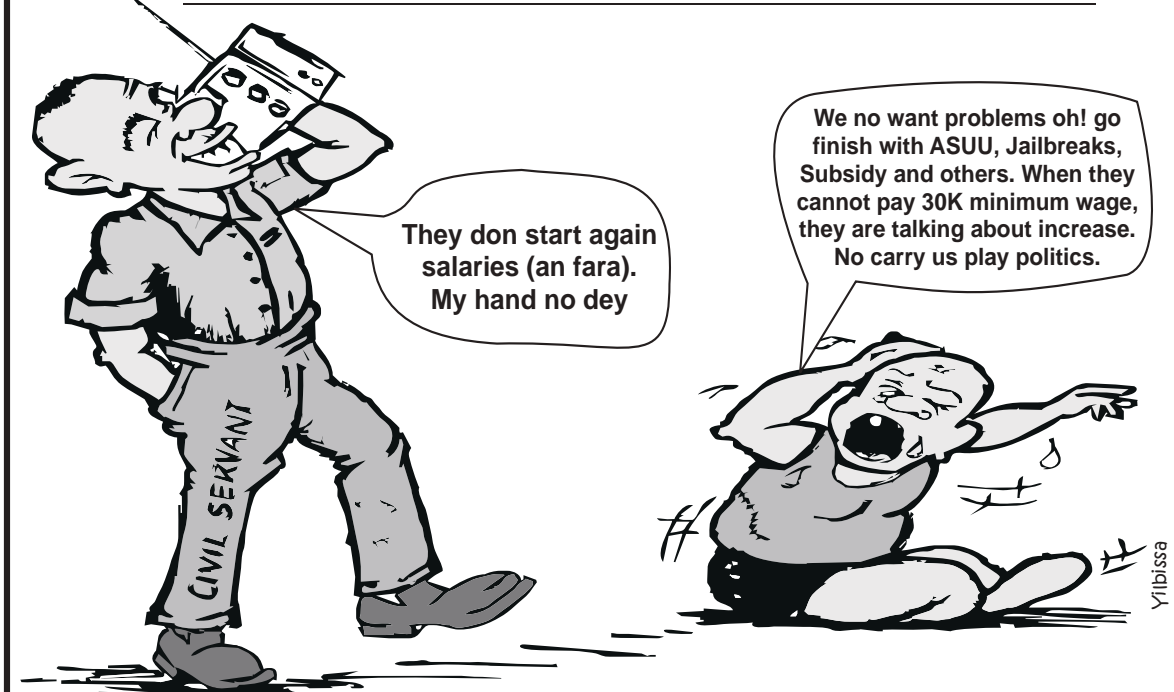
Government should prioritize or put more funds on repositioning our educational sector so that, our schools will have other countries coming to learn in Nigeria instead of embarking on shameless educational tourism to other schools abroad.

**Ayuba Bulus Apata, Jos.**



## Standard Cartoon

### FED. GOVT. PLAN TO INCREASE SALARY





## Opinion

By  
**UTHMAN SHODIPE-DOSUNMU**

### The failed interimists and the moderating middle

THE last elections have demonstrated a new destructive loser variant in the Nigerian isle. It is a stubborn unwillingness to accept defeat, to twist an obviously failed candidacy into an ethnic circus by an extremist rump, unfortunately now widening their sphere by coupling into their midst an otherwise civil, enlightened camp.

The thronging of a particular section of the Nigerian entity towards their preferred candidate is legitimate and valid in a Nation/State still stripped of the classical ideals of true nationhood.

Nigeria is still much an ethnic spectacle where many hurry to the tribal laager for a protective cordon. The last elections, however, revealed graduation to a redeeming largeness wherein others beyond the home base of some candidates were willing to stretch beyond the ethnic boundaries embracing a Pan - Nigerian Presidency, giving hope to a new beginning.

But yet, others still retained a mulish emotionalism, fervent in crude withdrawal, insistent that if there is no coronation of a failed and defeated candidate, the nation must know no peace, that the legitimate electoral process must be overturned in favour of their own.

True, democracy is about peaceful adumbration of

differences, the polemical pitting of ideas, the arbitration of the ballot and the eventual adjudication of a neutral judiciary.

However, the failed interimists are consumed by a storm and fury of a despicable end-game. First, they conjured a paid gaggle of protesters lacking animation, denuded in spirit, devoid of the content of their fabled cause.

They then graduated into violence and intimations of disorder, threatening the nation with ruin while they scoff at the arbitration of the courts.

Now, they have swung their venom into the international arena, fabricating malice, sponsoring malignity, and scribbling outrageous idiocy to defame, destroy, and thwart the steady pace of democracy simply because they have lost.

I take no refuge in ethnic triumphalism. It diminishes, discounting the gravity of a victory won, of a system rectifying its own imperfections.

From the Greek Agora to the Roman Capitol, from the British House of Commons to the American Congress, there is no such thing as a perfect electoral system. It is a continuous remoulding, reworking, rebuilding, rectifying and amending of observable flaws to enhance and strengthen the promotion of liberty.

The Nigerian Democracy is still much inchoate, cradled in the

susceptible flaws of infancy. But it is developing. It is maturing. It is eradicating the flaws of old, mastering the challenges of yesterday with new modernized tools.

The last general elections were far superior in their integrity and probity to the earlier ones. Despite some rough edges in some narrow, limited spheres, the elections were credible, valid, and legitimate in all basic parameters.

Those who will not let it go, those who are contumaciously resolved on discrediting a free and fair democratic expression,

do no justice to themselves, do no justice to their nation. They are self-inhabited, woven in a carapace of stunted vision. While they do have the right of engagement at the highest court in our land, they have no right to twist the narratives, to distort the truth to suit their emotional, tendentious fabric. They should let it go after they would have exhausted the judicial process. That is the most enlightened path. Anything else strains normative civility.

The failed interimists are now

damaging and eclipsing the moderating middle. In their unguarded mouthing, in their misguided tantrums of ushering in a storm of cudgel and iron to settle scores, they put pressure on the moderating middle to join the fray, to insert themselves blindly without reflective candour. We must never dissipate the gains of the moment on the altar of ethnic usurpation.

**Written by Uthman Shodipe-Dosunmu, the National Coordinator of Patriots Roundtable.**

***"Nigeria is still much an ethnic spectacle where many hurry to the tribal laager for a protective cordon. The last elections, however, revealed graduation to a redeeming largeness wherein others beyond the home base of some candidates were willing to stretch beyond the ethnic boundaries embracing a Pan -Nigerian Presidency, giving hope to a new beginning. But yet, others still retained a mulish emotionalism, fervent in crude withdrawal, insistent that if there is no coronation of a failed and defeated candidate, the nation must know no peace, that the legitimate electoral process must be overturned in favour of their own."***

## Understanding foreign financial inflows in Nigeria

THE presence of foreign investments is one of the major factors that boost growth in any given economy.

There is always a gap between the level of resources required for investment to propel the minimum required growth in an economy and the actual resources that are invested, particularly in developing countries. The resources available for investment can be sourced domestically or internationally.

However, the domestic resources are generated from savings which are most times grossly inadequate for the required investment to propel growth. Thus, the need to source for foreign capital to complement the domestic capital that is available and as such it has played vital roles in the process of economic development of many developing countries.

Foreign capital inflow comes through various sources either in the form of

By **OZUMI ABDUL**

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), Foreign Portfolio Investment (FPI), foreign grants and aides, foreign loans and Foreign Remittances.

Within Sub Saharan African countries, Nigeria inclusive, foreign inflows come primarily through foreign aid, either directly from developed country governments or through different types of grants supplied by developed country governments and non-governmental organisations.

Additionally, private capital inflows to Africa have surged in recent years. While foreign direct investment has begun to play a greater role in recent years, remittances remain the primary source of private foreign inflow to Sub Saharan Africa and African countries in general.

For instance, a quarter of inflow in

Nigeria in 2007 was remittance and some other countries like Kenya, Ethiopia and Ghana had the same experience.

However, some economists are of the view that the economic downturn in Nigeria was as a result of the foreign capital inflows into the country and other developing countries and therefore the economy does not require foreign capital inflow to cause growth. But others (the neo-liberals) were of the view that the economic downturn was not as a result of foreign capital inflow but was due largely to corruption, fraudulent use of public funds, insecurity on the part of lenders and borrowers, among others.

Thus, the neo-liberals advocated for foreign capital inflows that may bridge the gap between the expected investments and the actual amount invested.

Therefore, considering the crucial place of international capital in a nation's development process, it becomes expedient to investigate the flow of international capital into Nigeria and its effect on economic performance of the country.

Capital is an important aspect of production that cannot be neglected. As a major component of production, its domestic inadequacy, mostly, in developing countries is a challenge in terms of economic growth.

This has made countries to source for capital elsewhere since where it originates from is not significant as long as it will propel rapid economic growth.

The capital gotten from outside the

country is what is known as foreign capital.

Therefore, foreign capital inflows could be seen as the influx of funds (capital) from a source or sources outside the country. Basically, foreign capital inflows are divided into two categories; official and private capital inflows. Official capital inflows involve all well documented or recorded financial transactions from outside the shores of the country in both the private and public sectors.

Whereas, the private inflows have to do with capital or fund that is transferred into a country. Such funds (in some instances) are smuggled into a country and most times are not accounted for.

Studies have shown that economic growth which is the numerical increase in the produced goods and services is determined by some determinants (factors).

There exists a relationship between FPI and economic growth. This implies that FPI can be a factor that influences economic growth, employing the necessary econometric tests of Johansen co -integration, unit root, Granger Causality and Error Correction Mechanism (ECM), will be economically good for Nigeria.

Economic growth adjust slowly to long-run equilibrium changes in the aforementioned positive variable of foreign portfolio investments.

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***"Within Sub Saharan African countries, Nigeria inclusive, foreign inflows come primarily through foreign aid, either directly from developed country governments or through different types of grants supplied by developed country governments and non-governmental organisations. Additionally, private capital inflows to Africa have surged in recent years. While foreign direct investment has begun to play a greater role in recent years, remittances remain the primary source of private foreign inflow to Sub Saharan Africa and African countries in general."***



## Feature

# What 2023 presidential election voting pattern is saying

By KABIR YUSUF

ON February 25, Nigerians went to the polls to elect their preferred presidential candidates in the seventh general election since the end of military rule in 1999.

Since the beginning of the Fourth Republic, Nigeria has enjoyed uninterrupted democracy for 24 years, the longest stretch since its independence in 1960. Up to 93 million people in Africa's most populous country and biggest economy registered to vote ahead of the 2023 elections.

The election produced Bola Tinubu, the candidate of the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC), as Nigeria's next president, extending the APC's rule in Africa's largest democracy.

Mr Tinubu, 70, scored 8,794,726 votes. His closest rival, Atiku Abubakar of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), scored 6,984,520 votes to emerge second in the election. Labour Party's Peter Obi got a total of 6,101,533 votes while Rabiu Kwankwaso of the NNPP came fourth with 1,496,687 votes.

The national voter turnout was 29 per cent; no election had a lower participation rate in the six decades of Nigeria's



independence. Of the 40 per cent turnout.

93.4 million registered voters this year, 87.2 million people collected their Permanent Voters Card while the total number of actual voters on election day was only 24.9 million. Barely 9 million people voted for President-elect Tinubu to govern 220 million Nigerians.

In each of the 36 states, less than half of the eligible population turned out to vote, and only Jigawa State had a turnout above 40 per cent. While the northwestern state had a 41 per cent turnout, Plateau State recorded a

40 per cent turnout. In the three largest states based on voter registration — Lagos, Kano and Rivers — less than a third of the eligible population voted. Rivers turnout was a shameful 16 per cent, the lowest in the country, despite producing a lot more votes in past elections, which though were criticised as violent and irregular by observers.

Only about ten states recorded more than 30 per cent turnout and participation in other states was a little more than 20 per cent.

Election participation in Osun was 39 per cent.

This was followed by Adamawa — 35 per cent, Gombe — 34 per cent, Bauchi — 32 per cent, Ekiti — 32 per cent, Kaduna — 32 per cent, Katsina — 31 per cent, FCT — 30 per cent, and Niger — 30 per cent.

Voter turnout in each of Benue, Kano, Kebbi, Kwara, and Nasarawa states was 29 per cent. Ondo and Sokoto states recorded 28 per cent turnout each.

On the other hand, Zamfara had 27 per cent followed by Oyo at 26 per cent; Taraba at 26 per cent; Akwa Ibom at 25 per cent; and Kogi at 25 per cent.

Meanwhile, the trio of Anambra, Cross River and Edo had a 24 per cent turnout performance. Southwestern Ogun State recorded 23 per cent; Enugu 22 per cent; Ebonyi 21 per cent; Borno 20 per cent; Delta 20 per cent; and Imo 20 per cent.

Lagos, Nigeria's most populous state and the state with the highest number of eligible voters recorded an abysmal 19 per cent voter turnout amid reports of violence and voter suppression.

The state was just a little above southeast Abia state where turnout was 18 per cent.

Participation was worse in Bayelsa and Rivers states with only 16 per cent of people turning out to vote in the oil-rich states.

Although less than a third of the eligible population voted in Kano, the state had the highest number of votes with 1.74 million total votes cast. This was followed by Kaduna where 1.4 million people voted.

The total votes cast in Lagos was 1.3 million; Plateau 1.1 million and 1.09 million in Katsina.

Only the five aforementioned states recorded more than one million votes in the 25 February presidential elections.

Total votes in Jigawa was 954,805; Bauchi 882,546, Oyo 851,956, Niger 813,355, and Benue 797,762.

Official data shows that at the bottom of the list is Imo State with 478,652 total votes; Kogi with 476,038 votes, Enugu — 468,891 votes, Cross River — 416,968, Yobe — 397,331, Abia — 381,683,

**"In the three largest states based on voter registration — Lagos, Kano and Rivers — less than a third of the eligible population voted. Rivers turnout was a shameful 16 per cent, the lowest in the country, despite producing a lot more votes in past elections, which though were criticised as violent and irregular by observers only about ten states recorded more than 30 per cent turnout and participation in other states was a little more than 20 per cent."**



## News

## Gov. Lalong tasks Christians on forgiveness, reconciliation

By PALANG KASMI

AS Christians mark the celebration of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, Plateau State Governor Simon Bako Lalong has in a message called for the spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation.

He said these attributes are vital because they are the dominant virtues that Jesus Christ bequeathed to mankind as a result of his death and resurrection.

Lalong in the Easter message expressed delight that God has continued to preserve Nigerians demonstrating his love and compassion for the peace, unity and progress of the nation.

"Through his death and resurrection, Jesus Christ has demonstrated selflessness and redeemed humanity from condemnation and chaos, giving hope and optimism for a good life on earth and eternity".

"Nigerians should imbibe the



Lalong

spirit of forgiveness, sacrifice and reconciliation which are the dominant virtues that Jesus Christ bequeathed to mankind as a result of his death, burial and resurrection".

The Governor also reminded Nigerians that the 2023 Easter is being marked at a moment when the nation is undergoing

a democratic transition.

"This therefore calls for more love and resolve to eschew all forms of bitterness and anger towards building a greater country" he advised.

The Governor further tasked Christians to pray that the reason for the season will continue to prevail in their lives now and always.

THE National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) in Kano State, said it had secured the conviction of 37 drug peddlers and users between January and March.

The State Commander of the Agency, Mr Abubakar Idris-Ahmad told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Kano on Monday, that the command arrested 352 suspects within the period.

He said apart from the 37 convicted by the Federal High Court, the command had filed 39 fresh cases, while 127 other cases were pending.

He said between January and March, 955.304kg of cannabis sativa, 1,225.05kg Codeine and Tramadol, 25 grams of cocaine, 17 grams of heroine and 52 grams of methamphetamine were confiscated.

"We have made good strides in our drug demand reduction efforts where 5,060 people in secondary and tertiary students, traders' associations, vigilante groups and political thugs, among others, were sensitised on the menace of drug abuse.

"We have also carried out

## 37 convicted for drug peddling in Kano – NDLEA



Marwa

series of educative programmes on War Against Drug Abuse among youths, women and others," Idris-Ahmad said.

He enjoined residents to furnish the agency with information on activities of drug dealers in their communities.

He also called on the general public and parents as well as

community leaders to be the watchdog of their wards to tackle the menace of drug trafficking and abuse.

"The agency will not relent in its efforts in the fight against drug abuse and trafficking.

"We will continue to move around every nook and cranny of the state to ensure a drug-free society," Idris-Ahmad said.

## Dangote commended for adopting road safety standard

The Corps Marshal of the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), Dauda Biu has commended Dangote Industries Limited (DIL) for the adoption and implementation of safety standards in the Road Transport Safety Standardisation Scheme (RTSSS) in the company's operations.

Biu stated this in Abuja when he hosted a team from the Dangote Cement Plc, Transport Division, said the significant reduction in crashes was made possible through the collaboration with his agency and the implementation of some mutually agreed safety standards by the company.

The Dangote team was led by the Divisional Director of Transport, Ajay Singh.

The commendation is an outcome of several strategies executed by the company to ensure Dangote truck drivers adhere strictly to safety

standards as prescribed by the FRSC across the country.

He said "Notable among this is the reduction of road traffic crashes involving Dangote Transport Trucks through the implementation of minimum safety standards in the Road Transport Safety Standardisation Scheme (RTSSS)." "In order to effectively achieve this success, the FRSC collaborated with the Technical Committee comprising Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON), the National Automotive Design and Development Council (NADDCC), and the Nigeria Society of Engineers (NSE) on speed limiting device implementation in Nigeria".

He said the establishment of an Outpost at Dangote Cement Plant Obajana, has contributed tremendously to the reduction of road traffic crashes along the ever-busy Obajana – Kabba road in Kogi

State.

Other areas of collaboration with the company, he said, include, the establishment of standard and functional driving school, collaboration in conducting professional Road Assessment (Road Safety Audit) for issues of safety concerns on the roads, as well as partnership on the Dangote Drivers' Training Centre (Driving Range).

Also speaking on various efforts by the company geared towards reduction of accidents involving Dangote Trucks, Dangote Cement Group Head, Transport, Health, Safety & Environment Nigeria & Pan Africa, Ebere Okonkwo stated that the company adopted several strategies to ensure compliance with Nigeria road safety standards.

She listed the strategies to include: Improvement of drivers and journey managers' competence in both HSE and job skills in order to achieve line ownership of safety and safe delivery.

She said "Plans were put in place to improve our maintenance management. Actions were developed to improve and embed an effective journey management system with focus on supervision. We introduced compliance monitoring and reporting such as performing check-ins on drivers while on trips, random alcohol and drugs tests etc".

"We increased the sphere of influence by showcasing visibly-felt safety leadership at the frontlines through engagements, campaigns, general empowerment to stop unsafe work, behaviours etc. Consequence management (reward and sanctions); reward for compliance and sanctions for non-compliance was also introduced and

behaviours monitored based on criteria, to determine who gets rewarded as a result of safety performance and who gets sanctioned".

Okonkwo equally noted that the HSE team embarked on HSE competence development trainings for all staff across categories to improve their competence on safety and their influence/supervision skills to the frontline workers (drivers).

She said internal behavioural-based safety trainings, safety stand-downs to cascade learnings from internal and industry incidents, safety campaigns covering different prevailing risk areas, pep talks by "HSE teams and transport trainers across locations, engagement of shop floor workers by various categories of management e.t.c. were carried out.

"The FRSC carries out recertification training exercise for our drivers, operations staff and trucks in Nigeria every six months. Across our Pan Africa locations, engagements, competence development trainings are deployed internally and externally based on risks using our experienced and well recognised internal resources and approved government resources. Where available, simulators are used for defensive driving trainings; for example in Cameroon, the training is facilitated by the Safe Way, Right Way Foundation e.t.c."

Speaking earlier, Divisional Director Transport, Dangote Cement Plant, Obajana, Ajay Singh said the collaboration between the Dangote Group and the FRSC was paying off.

He, on behalf of the company, also congratulated the Corps Marshal for his elevation and appointment.

## University of transportation'll transform sector, develop manpower

— FG



Masari

The proposed Federal University of Transportation in Daura, Katsina state will serve as a training institution for the development of transportation engineering, logistics and courses that will support post-modern transportation industry in Nigeria.

President Muhammadu Buhari assented to the bill to establish the tertiary body on the 30th of March having received it from the national assembly on March 1st 2023.

A document from the office of the Minister of Transportation revealed that the Act establishing the university provides the legislative framework to explore in-depth and continuous cutting-edge research in transportation engineering.

The transportation University Daura would, among other things, pave the way for the domestication of railway engineering and general transportation sciences in Nigeria, thereby bridging the technology and skill gap in the railway and ultimately the transportation sector, the document noted.

The transport ministry told journalists that a copy of the document was recently presented to the Minister of Transportation, Mu'azu Jaji Sambo by a former member representing Daura/Maidua/Sandamu Federal Constituency, Prof.

Umar Adam Katsayal, who doubles as the consultant on the establishment of the university as well as the Chairman Interim Management Committee of the institution alongside the Chairman CCECC Nigeria Limited, Mr Jason Zhang.

The Chinese firm CCECC had disclosed it is constructing the university as part of its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) at no cost to the federal in President Buhari's home town.



Biu



## Feature

# Of the DSS, state stability and electoral heist

By ACHIKE CHUDE

THE only reason the ghosts of the just concluded national elections still linger and will not go away is down to the novelty of the method and strategy used to achieve intended results. It was not so much about the tactics - the motivation was the same old greed and lust for power that excludes any consideration for democratic ideals and ethos in the attainment of political power. The execution was atavistic and machiavellian in its purest form. There was nothing new in the method applied. It was as crude as they come and as brazen as it could be - a reflection of the thinking by the old guards that things had remained the same.

That thinking was obviously wrong. There was, and there still is a problem because new socio-political dynamics have arisen to keep the momentum of the current motionless movement going.

The general belief still persists that a stolen product is still in the hands of the thief and must be given back. An election is supposed to have a starting point and an endpoint. We knew the starting point of the last general elections but the endpoint is unknown, and might not be known even after the supreme court decision depending on what they do as arbiters under very domestic and international scrutiny. But what is obvious about the intervention of the court this time around is that its decision will finally sink the entire judiciary in the country in the estimation of many and mire it in the cesspool of almost irretrievable infamy or, conversely, resurrect hope in many that judicial debauchery of the vilest kind can be overcome, and dignity and respect restored to a once respected and dignified institution in which people once dared to believe that the hope of the common man rested.

More than any other election in our country's annals, at least since 1999, the ghouls, and fiendish creatures exhumed from Yakubu Mahmud's electoral brew are hovering around our nation and are baying for blood. They will not be satiated until the chaos is complete.

But there is a countervailing force that is very much at work right now in the country, a force that is refusing to let bygones be bygones, that is insistent that this time around, those with a stolen mandate must relinquish it. It is a battle between the forces of good and evil - a battle for the soul of Nigeria.

It is why, weeks after the elections, the so-called victors of the presidential election are still in propaganda mode, battling to pull down every vestige of resistance, and failing miserably in the process. It is why the DSS, Wole Soyinka,



Chimamanda, the Obidients et al are all engaging in open confrontations, brickbats, and whatnot.

In fact, the DSS recently claimed that they were perturbed about an insidious plot by some people to 'set aside civil rule and plunge the country into an avoidable crisis.'

They made the fraudulent assertion that the elections were well conducted, barring a few insignificant disturbances.

In their words;

This is even more so that the machination (for civil disturbances) is taking place after the peaceful conduct of the elections in most parts of the country."

They have therefore read the riot act once again to those hell-bent on destabilizing the country.

And we saw the consequences of their intervention or non-intervention. The hoodlums, ballot box snatchers, and unconscionable politicians are all enjoying the heist

from a discredited election obtained while the security services including the DSS looked on.

But we must forgive the DSS. They have no serious powers over ballot box snatchers, hooligans, and dubious politicians - especially politicians that are properly 'aligned.' The real powers over electoral security lie with the politicians who dispense it as they like. The DSS is very much aware of this but likes to give us the impression that they are in charge of their areas of influence and authority.

When the DSS tells you that they are resolved to ensuring internal stability, what they are talking about is the maintenance and protection of a decadent and moribund political order led by the old brigade whose time should have expired a long time ago but for their amoral grip on power through indecent and impious acts.

The first and primary responsibility

of the men of cloak and dagger (DSS) should be the preservation of the Nigerian state - under the supposition that the state is run by decent men and women. But it does happen that ever so often, a country's socio-political contradictions throw up a group of armed robbers and conmen as political leaders (quoting Goodluck Jonathan) to run the state. This has in reality, been the rule since 1999 to date. Though we have had a marginally fair number of decent politicians during this period, the vast majority have been conmen and armed robbers.

And because the DSS is supposed to protect the state even when the state is run by conmen and illegitimate grabbers of political powers, we then have a situation where the loyalty of the DSS is to the conmen and robbers in charge of the state. Presidents and governments are not necessarily the state nor do they always represent the state. The Nigerian people themselves make up the state because, in an ideal situation, power flows from the people to those who hold power on their behalf.

Sometimes, therefore, the biggest threats against the state come from those who hold the levers of the state, or the politicians who hold control over those who hold control of the levers of the state. When rogue elements occupy the top echelons of the Nigerian state, the responsibility of the Department of State Services becomes one of loyalty to the criminally minded state officials even as they exploit the system for personal benefits.

This truth does not only apply to the Directorate of State Security

Services but extends to all other security agencies including the military and the police. The sabotage, entrapment and manipulation of the electoral processes and the consolidation of the illegal victory obtained therefrom cannot be achieved without the cooperation and collaboration of highly placed security personnel within these institutions. It has been suggested severally in different media that the instructions to aid and abet electoral malfeasance go as high as the highest echelons of these institutions who then delegate instructions to junior officers to either interfere in the process to further specific political ends or ensure non-interference for the same ends.

Every successful political electoral heist or banditry must have the input of the security services, just as every ideally, a democratic-conforming election must have the input of these same institutions. It speaks volumes about the man who has been in occupation of centralized political power in Aso Rock. It speaks volumes about, not just his capacity, but his patriotism for our country.

His considered traducer for most of his eight years in power, Bishop Hassan Kukah in wishing him a good retirement from the office asked the president an important question - does the president feel fulfilled in retirement?

I mean, how can a person fail so spectacularly in virtually all the promises he made to his country?

All of these fault lines within our polity must change if we must move our country forward. But first, the Supreme Court.

**"The first and primary responsibility of the men of cloak and dagger (DSS) should be the preservation of the Nigerian state - under the supposition that the state is run by decent men and women. But it does happen that ever so often, a country's socio-political contradictions throw up a group of armed robbers and conmen as political leaders (quoting Goodluck Jonathan) to run the state. This has in reality, been the rule since 1999 to date. Though we have had a marginally fair number of decent politicians during this period, the vast majority have been conmen and armed robbers."**





By HOSEA NYAMLONG

NELSON Mandela, once said that "Education is the most powerful weapon which we can use to change the world". He advocated for the value of education.

The value of education cannot be overemphasized, because education forms the basics of development, literacy, skill acquisition, technological advancements, and the ability to harness human and material resources towards the achievement of etal goals.

Public Schools were established for the learning of both the rich and the poor in the country and education then was given the desired attention in which the necessary learning materials were available for both teachers and students to have a quality education.

In recent times, the rate at which the proliferation of illegal schools in Plateau State and the country at

large have created gaps in the educational system of the country has less value and less attention.

The proliferation of more private schools in the country has given room to most proprietors of private schools to only maximize profit rather than giving quality education to pupils and students.

Today, most private schools' infrastructure is substandard, having many pupils and students stuck in classrooms without much space to accommodate them accordingly.

In addition, even though the pupils and students of some private schools are not safe, there are cases of alleged abuse of these children, either by rapping, killing, or other forms of molestation.

Many schools are now gradually becoming Centers of killings, kidnapping, homosexuality, cultism, and other drugs related cases.

Apart from failing to provide the good necessary educational structures and enabling environment for the students. Some of these illegal schools employed unqualified teachers that accept very low salaries and there is no effective use of the school curriculum, making learning very different for pupils and students.

However, essential infrastructures like the school library, sick bay, and open fields for recreational activities are lacking, leaving the students at the mercy of the teachers.

Nevertheless, the loss of confidence in public schools by parents,

guidance, and caregivers has been on the increase for a very long time.

It has now become very difficult for parents to differentiate between legal schools to illegal ones.

The Plateau State Government last year 2022 shuts down all private primary, and secondary schools and revokes

and manpower to operate as schools going by the guidelines and regulations of the national policy on education

Therefore, these illegal schools only exist to extoll money from parents, guidance, and caregivers who are engaged to send their children, and wards to school, just in the name to



## Checking the proliferation of illegal schools

licenses for operation

Hon.Elizabeth Wapmuk the commissioner of Education said that the government took action because of the low standard of operation, and non-adherence to government policies among other issues by the private schools in the state.

It was gathered that some of the private schools have concealed their premises to avoid routine inspection of places serving as hideouts for criminal activities and the proliferation of unregistered/illegal private schools in the state has robbed the state of the potential impact of education.

According to the education commissioner, anyone intending to operate private schools in the state must secure approval and revalidation of their certificates as the Ministry of Education would be embarking on the exercise to verify claims by proprietors of the schools. She said.

On this note, many of these schools illegal schools lack the basic infrastructure equipment,

be in a private school.

In most cases, the school proprietors see nothing wrong in running the school system in a profit-maximizing manner and conversing with parents to bring their children, rather than impacting knowledge for the future leaders of the country.

The system has become an avenue to cut corners not minding the effect on the destiny of the children and exploitation of these substandard schools is on

the increase day by day.

To this end, the Government as a matter of fact to pay attention to the areas and development of the formative years of the citizenry that consist of the basic learning stage and post should be taken seriously in other to better the system.

Proprietors of schools must see education as a social investment that is guided and not only profit-oriented but an avenue to train the county's future leaders of tomorrow.

To achieve this, investment in education must be done with the right materials, qualified manpower, a good salary structure, enabling environment for both the teachers and students in public and private schools in the state and the country at large.

Government should ensure that they inspect the well-being of the private schools and also improve the standard of the public schools.

**"The value of education cannot be overemphasized, because education forms the basics of development, literacy, skill acquisition, technological advancements, and the ability to harness human and material resources towards the achievement of etal goals. Public Schools were established for the learning of both the rich and the poor in the country and education then was given the desired attention in which the necessary learning materials were available for both teachers and students to have a quality education."**



By VICTOR GAI

THE 2023 elections have come and gone and they have been won and lost. What remains now is the May 29th inauguration and the epic legal battles that may last beyond the inauguration day. The forces of religion have however taken the shine off the polls, over shadowing issues that ought to have set an agenda for the country going forward.

The major contenders, political parties and religions are guilty in one way or the other of allowing religion to influence their quest for power and that

## 2023 elections and the forces of religion

has come with a cost for national inter-faith peace and harmony.

In the run-up to the elections, the APC came up with the Muslim-Muslim ticket which did not go down well with Nigerian Christians especially northern Christians. Whether this plan was ill-motivated or driven by the general goodwill for the nation remains to be seen.

Then comes the Obident movement of the Labour Party which is perceived by a section of the country as driven by Christians and the church. Peter Obi has been accused by the opposition

of using the church to canvass massive votes for his party, the LP. The over six million votes he garnered was interpreted to be majorly Christian votes and that may be true considering the states he won and lost.

The Muslim-Muslim ticket has ignited religious consciousness among the Christians and Muslims. The church stoutly rose against it while a section of the Muslim ummah rose in defense of it and describing it as an act of jihad and an evidence of Islamic supremacy in Nigeria. All

these sentiments actually shaped the outcome of the presidential elections as Nigeria experienced the most keenly contested election in the history of the country. The 36 states were almost evenly distributed between the three contestants: Bola Tinubu, AtikuAbubakar and Peter Obi with each winning his region.

Having lost the presidential election, the Labour Party and the PDP braced up for the governorship elections and religion played a significant role in the outcome.

In some of the states where we have religious plurality such as Taraba, Plateau, Kaduna, Nasarawa and Adamawa, the issue of religion was amplified more than anything else.

In Taraba, as has been the tradition, the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) endorsed a Christian candidate, Lt. Col AgbuKefas, in order to evince Christian superiority in the state. This triggered the Muslims to collaborate and give the only top Muslim contender, Professor SaniYahaya, a massive vote. Therefore, the votes were cast sharply along

religious lines but the quest for realizing the first Muslim governor has once again been lost.

In Plateau state, the minority Muslim population, especially in the cosmopolitan Jos North LGA, was well positioned to swing the votes to the APC candidate whom they felt would protect their interest.

An Islamic cleric, ShiekhYahayaJingir was championing that cause right from his mosque, Izala Mosque.

Unfortunately, the sentiments he shared did not go down well with the Christian native population, who collaborated across tribal lines to turn the table against the APC in Plateau.

In Kaduna, the Muslim-Muslim governorship ticket as championed by El-rufai was fast losing relevance and the PDP and Labour Party capitalized on that to gain massive votes for the PDP candidate. Although the PDP narrowly lost, the case is still being contested in court.

In Nasarawa state, for the first time, religious sentiments were whipped-up ahead of the governorship election. Despite the majority Christian population, a Christian has

never been a governor in the state and that has never been an issue until now. The governorship candidate, David Umbugadu forged an alliance with frontline politician, David Ewuga and LabaranMaku, all coming from the dominant Eggon tribe, to wrestle power from the Muslim incumbent governor, AA. Sule. For the first time, the votes were cast in Nasarawa along religious lines.

In Adamawa, the two frontline candidates, PDP's AhmaduFintiri and APC's Aisha Binani, both Muslims, found themselves in a fierce contest for the Christian and Muslim votes. Up till now, a winner has not been announced.

Unfortunately, the influence of religion in the 2023 elections has taken us back in our quest for national unity and cohesion. More fault lines have been created thereby compounding the matter. The Buhari-led government has not helped matters with the way it has handled religious diversity in terms of appointments and the Fulani ethnic insurrection.

It is only hoped that the Tinubu/Shettima government would work

hard in closing those fault lines. This would be one of, if not the greatest challenge for the incoming administration.

“

**The Muslim-Muslim ticket has ignited religious consciousness among the Christians and Muslims. The church stoutly rose against it while a section of the Muslim ummah rose in defense of it and describing it as an act of jihad and an evidence of Islamic supremacy in Nigeria. All these sentiments actually shaped the outcome of the presidential elections as Nigeria experienced the most keenly contested election in the history of the country. The 36 states were almost evenly distributed between the three contestants: Bola Tinubu, AtikuAbubakar and Peter Obi with each winning his region.**

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By JIDAUNA DARING

IN an effort to make the judicial arm of government to be more vibrant or effective in service delivery in Plateau State, the legal profession since the inception of the present administration in 2015, has continued to receive a boost with the increase of judges that have been sworn-in as state High Court and Customary Court Judges. This is no doubt a welcome development to the judiciary and the entire people of Plateau. This also indicates that the Rescue Administration, led by Governor Simon Bako Lalong of Plateau State has accorded premium to the judiciary, which remains the last hope of the common man in the society, since it is saddle with the responsibility of interpreting the law of the land.

It was in this regard that Plateau State Governor, Barrister. Simon Bako Lalong recently Swear- in Five state High Court judges and a Customary Court judge. This epoch making event took place at the new Government House, Little Rayfield Jos. Governor Lalong who performed the swearing-in ceremony of the 6 judges said that; he is leaving behind a robust and vibrant Judiciary which is capable of meeting the needs of the people for effective justice delivery in the state.

Lalong said so far, 25 Judges have been appointed during his tenure and he has been one of the few Governors to grant Autonomy to the Judiciary which has assisted the judicial system to work better. He noted that, the new High Court Headquarters Complex which God's willing, the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Muhammadu Buhari will soon commission. Similarly, the Multi-Door Courthouse which has also been completed will also be commissioned and put to use for Alternative Dispute Resolution.

Lalong While congratulating the new Judges on their appointment, said there is no doubt that the appointments are based on merit and in recognition of their excellent service to the state and Nigeria over the years. He reminded them that the task before them is enormous and the expectations of the citizens are very high. This he said is the reason why they must demonstrate total dedication and commitment to the assignment for the peace, progress and stability of Plateau State and Nigeria at large. "As Judicial Officers, I do not need to remind you that your calling gives you the rare privilege of making decisions that affect the lives of the people and sometimes bordering on life and death. This means that you must never take this assignment lightly or allow frivolous considerations to influence you. Consider this duty as a Public Trust given to you by God to represent him in

the affairs of men, he said,

Lalong charged the 6 judges to discharge their duties with the fear of God and without fear, favour, affection or ill-will. Failure to do so will not only erode their integrity, but also put the entire society on the path of chaos and anarchy. He noted that, When people cannot get justice, they may be forced to resort to self-help and other unconventional

the oath you have taken and discharge your duties according to the laws of the land and the dictates of the legal profession" he said.

Responding on behalf of the new Judges, Justice Mary A. Izam assured the Governor that they will carry out their duties with the fear of God and serve justice to all manner of people without affection or ill-will. The

## Lalong swears-in new judges



**Governor Simon Bako Lalong (CON) in a group photograph with the newly Sworn-in Judges**



**Former chief Judge of the State (2nd right) with other retired Justices at the ceremony**

means to resolve issues. This will not augur well for the well-being of the society". He told the new appointees that they were coming on board at a time when the nation is in a process of transition from one administration to another both at the State and Federal levels. This he said gives them the opportunity to help build democracy and rule of law in Plateau State and Nigeria at large.

"My Lords, it is also proper for me to remind you that the 2023 general elections are over and the battle now shifts to the Courts. At times like this, there is high tendency for enormous pressure to be mounted on Judges by politicians who want to get underserved advantage at all costs. I know you have the capacity to resist attempts to corrupt, confuse, intimidate or blackmail you towards participating in unethical conducts. Please stay focused on

new Judges are: Justice Mary A. Izam (High Court) Justice Ashakabu Suleiman Wase (High Court) Justice Charles Donglong (High Court) Justice Shikamma Kassam Shehu (High Court) Justice Nanle Titus Komak (High Court) and Justice Jettei P. Tutie (CCA).

At the reception of justice Nanle Titus Komak at Retna Hotel, Sabon-Barki in Jos South LGA of Plateau State, in his remarks, Mr. Garba Pwul, SAN, said that, he was delighted to witness such a wonderful occasion. He said that so far, his office has produce two state High Court Judges in the State. Pwul while congratulating justice Komak on his appointment as a judge, described his elevation from the Bar to Bench as a stepping stone to him in his life.

He said that, he is optimistic with the capacity of justice Komak whom he had tested when he was practicing with him, before he later open his chamber. He added that, justice.



**Plateau State Governor, Rt Hon. Simon Bako Lalong reading his address during the Swearing in of 5 Judges and a Judge of the customary Court**



**Justice Nanle Komak in a photograph with his family**

Komak will be delivering good judgment in the course of discharging his duty. Pwul also told the celebrant that every step he will take in the course of the work would need mentoring, which he said is key to his progress in the judiciary, and also prayed that God will continue to give him more wisdom to do the work.

In his remarks, Justice Nanle T. Komak who was flanked by his wife, Mrs. Nanbot Nanle Komak expressed happiness and thanked God for what he has done to him, particularly for attend this feat in the judiciary. Justice, komak also promised to be transparent in his conduct at the Bench at all times. He said that he would not disappoint the judiciary in the course of performing his duty.

Justice Komak appreciated his able mentor, Mr. Pwul for the good training he had received when he was at his chamber. He also appreciated his colleagues at the Bar for the good working

relationship he had with them before his new position. He thanked his parents for the training given to him in the area of education among others which has made him to be who he is today and pray God to bless all of them for the good things that they have done him.

Speaking on behalf of the Mwaghavul people, President, Mwaghavul Development Association (MDA) Sir, Joseph Gwankat (KSM) while congratulating Justice Komak urged him to great a different in the judiciary Gwankat told the celebrant that the work is a challenging one. He prayed that he would not be found wanting in any sharp or corrupt practice while carryout his duty. Our correspondent reports that justice Komak become High court judge at the age of 38 years which was first of its kind ever since in any given appointments of the state judges in the state.



IMAGES

BUHARI RECEIVES ANGOLAN, UAE AMBASSADOR TO NIGERIA

President Muhammadu Buhari recently received on Farewell Ambassadors of Angola and United Arab Emirates to Nigeria at the Presidential Villa, Abuja



President Buhari (right) with the outgone Angolan Ambassador, H. E. Dr. Eustaquio Januario Quibato during the farewell visit



UAE Ambassador to Nigeria, H.E. Dr. Fahad Obaid Al Taffaq with President Muhammadu Buhari during the farewell visit at the Aso Rock Abuja



Nigeria’s President Muhammadu Buhari (middle), Dr. Quibato, Foreign Affairs Minister, Geoffrey Onyema and the Chief of Staff, Prof. Ibrahim Gambari (left)



President Buhari with the outgone United Arab Emirates, Envoy, Prof. Ibrahim Gambari (left) Minister of Foreign Affairs, Geoffrey Onyema and Dr. Saeed Al Remaithi (right)



President Buhari exchanging views with the outgone Ambassador, Dr. Eustaquio Quibato with the Embassy Staff (left)



Outgone United Arab Emirates Ambassador to Nigeria exchanging views with Nigeria’s President Muhammadu Buhari during the farewell visit



Plateau State Governor-elect, Barr. Caleb Mutfwang (left) receiving souvenir from Raz Phil, team leader #Onemoresoul during a visit to the Governor-elect at JD Jana Loda. Government House Ravfield. Jos



Team Leader #Onemoresoul, Barr. Caleb Mutfwang, Plateau State Governor-elect in a group photograph with members of the team

PHOTOS: STATE HOUSE PRESS ABUJA



## Odd World

### 'Man slammed for being 'unrealistic'

A woman has told how her husband's actions were really starting to irritate her as whenever she went to breastfeed when they were out he would tell her not to, claiming it is not safe.

A mum has grown irritated by her husband as he did not allow her to breastfeed their newborn in public—he has since had to apologise for his actions.

The woman claims that whenever she felt she was in a comfortable position to breastfeed their baby she would try to do so but her husband would tell her not to and get her to pass the baby over to him.

The husband says that doing this in certain public situations is not safe, like in the back of taxis, but she says sometimes it just needs to be done, but he has not been comfortable with it.

Taking to Reddit, the woman, who remained anonymous, wrote: "It's really starting to irritate me. Initially, I was not comfortable with doing it, but if I'm not facing people and I can cover or obstruct my nipple I am fine."

"Whenever I try to feed our loved

one he will tell me no and ask that I pass her over to him. Even when she is crying or fussing and it's clear she wants feeding to calm down he is still adamant that I not feed in public."

The mum does not have a blanket to cover up as she prefers for her baby to be able to breathe freely.

Since raising this with her husband, she claims he has been understanding and has come around to her point of view, which she explained in updates to the post.

"I spoke to him and he said he doesn't think it's safe to breastfeed in taxis and he wants me to use a courtesy blanket in other public spaces. He says he will buy one if I'd like," she wrote.

"My husband apologised and said he has to deal with his insecurities. He said I should feed our loved one when she is hungry and again that he is sorry."

In response, many agreed the husband had been acting unreasonably and he should get past his insecurities as it is a crucial part of feeding a baby.

**Source: The Mirror**



### Our refugees, crammed in double captivity

SOME years back, the Nigeria Association of Women Journalists, Plateau State chapter decided to visit one of the many refugee camps in the state and bequeathed their widow's might towards the upkeep of the Internally Displaced Persons, (IDP's) there. Yours frankly was unpredictably conscripted to drive these women Journalists to the camp where some of us eventually sniveled as a result of the harrowing and agonizing quandary these citizens are experiencing at the camp.

Though the situation at this camp may be a replica of several such camps elsewhere in the country; it is quite a pity to see these inmates suffering in such a disgusting and unspeakable manner. Unimaginably, these brothers and sisters of ours were crammed in a "cage" like broilers waiting for Christmas to be slaughtered; it is indeed very disturbing and unpleasant to me including many others who had the opportunity of going there to see the situation for themselves.

Though the accommodation at the camp was not that which could be cherished, toddlers in the camp were mostly hit by this unexpected horrifying development. Most painful were the glaring fact that most of these children are orphans who had lost both parents during acts of aggression perpetuated by the Boko Haram insurgents in the North Eastern part of this country.

Yours sincerely cannot believe it when the leader of the center revealed the difficulty faced by these IDP's who reportedly come from Yobe, Maiduguri and Adamawa States in north eastern part of this country.

For God's sake, these people are also citizens of this same country of ours. In fact, if for nothing else, they don't deserve to be left in this precarious and dehumanizing situation without any pity. To say the truth, if not for the humanitarian services offered by some None Governmental Organizations to these brothers and sisters of ours at these camps, their future would have long been gone with the wind. However, in spite these painful unending experiences which the inmates face on daily basis as a result of activities of insurgency and poor and visionless strategies of governance, the politicians in this country must be blamed for dragging them into this mess.

Come to think of it, the president of this country, Mohammadu Buhari had at a point disclosed that our country was broke. Immediately after this proclamation, opposing parties raised against him claiming that such utterances would scare investors out of the country. Therefore, in their usual antics, they were expecting the president to lie to the entire citizens of this country in order to save their business links and connections across the globe. In other words, they had wanted the president to deceitfully declare that all is well even when most states in this country cannot pay salaries to their dedicated workers.

When former President Olusegun Obasanjo was this country's leader, we were made to believe that he had the best cabinet one can ever imagine in this contemporary nation of ours. Though one cannot forget the role his government played in the debt relief granted this nation, the crux of the matter is; how did

they fail to identify any of these indicators of economic failure as it were.

I am yet to comprehend the competency of our technocrats as they failed in issuing warning signals when our economy was under threat. Many of them are well read in world class universities across the globe but always mess us up when it comes to assignments such as this.

How can one describe the degree of insensibility of the immediate past administration particularly as regards the true position of our economic status then? Here was a president sitting on an economically shaky nation but he did not even border to dwell much on solvable strategies at his disposal and was only busy campaigning for self succession.

Even when journalists confronted relevant authorities during his tenure to know the socio-economic status of this nation then, the response was that nothing was indeed wrong with the country's economy. Unfortunately, some months before he handed over power, states became cash-trapped.

As a result of this, most states became incapacitated and were unable to pay salaries to civil servants. Then the worse began to happen; the nation could no longer stand the heat in the fight against the insurgents causing sleepless nights for this country.

Though I strongly believe that this nation will come out of these present surmountable problems, one thing I am yet to comprehend is why our politicians find pleasure lying to us both during their campaign periods and even when they find themselves on leadership positions. Where did they pick up these hobbies of deceit and insincerity which has become one of the fundamental problems bedeviling this country?

Not once and not twice, I have witnessed some politicians unveiling their campaign promises, full of lies and deceptions. These people also dished out lots of monies to the electorate as if tomorrow will never come are today not helping us. Unfortunately, as a result of these lies, Nigeria has found itself in a more precarious and unpredictable disposition ever imagined today. Thus, it is becoming more realistic that in a few years time to come, the country will be unable to feed its teeming population.

Sad enough, the oil we were generating our resources from is almost drying and the reality is beginning to hit us on the face. Without credible and formidable framework to hasten our expectations in the industrial sector, the rate of unemployment in this country is becoming unbearable and unimaginable by all standards.

The indicators are glaring, if care is not taken, we will all in no distant future become Internally Displaced Persons, (IDP's) in this country of ours. This is because, if a nation becomes broke and cannot take care of its citizens; then the worse is expected to happen. At this juncture however, it is our hope that our leaders and politicians will learn lessons and turn a new leaf in the best interest of the generality of the people of this country. Beyond this development however, it is our humble prayer that God will prevent this country from nose-diving into any chaos for our sake and that of our future generations.



## View Point

## Day Anguwan Rukuba youths stood for translucent polls

By BULUS GAMBO

IF not for the doggedness of the youths of Anguwan Rukuba throughout the 2023 Gubernatorial and state Houses of Assembly elections in Plateau State, the upshot of the polls would not have replicated the reality of things on ground. After the harrowing experiences of the Presidential and National Assembly polls which undoubtedly fell far below expectations, the electorate decided that following the ballot boxes bumper-to-bumper was the only way they would be able to safeguard and protect their mandate from being stolen and or results craftily substituted.

On that fateful day of the elections however, even after exercising their democratic franchise, the youth under the burning sun still motivated themselves to remain close to the ballot boxes until the needful was done. Consequently, after the polls were conducted, the electorate followed their election material from respective polling units to the Federal Government college Zaria road collation center in anticipation for onward movement to the central collation center for the final stage of entering of results collated.

Even when the situation at the collation center became nearly uncontrollable, the Anguwan Rukuba youth who eventually got backups from the youth of Gada Biyu remained adamant exhibiting unshakable resilience and protecting their results until it finally got to where it mattered most. Though, later reports indicated that BIVAs of about 24 polling units were allegedly taken away to be compromised, these heroes of democracy ensured that this did not dampened their moral and with the help of the security, these BIVAs were later recovered. At the end of the elections, the results stood as it ought to be and the entire citizens were happy. Commending the youth's sacrifice towards ensuring that the results remained intact during the Plateau State Governor-elect Barrister Caleb Mutfwang's certificate of return presentation ceremony, the Director General of the Atiku/Okowa/Mutfwang/Piyo Campaign Organization, Chief. Latép Dabang disclosed that the youth of Anguwan Rukuba and Gada Biyu exhibited a high sense of responsibility by protecting democracy when it mattered most in the state.

According to Chief Dabang, these youths deserve to be commended including security officials who against all odds refused to compromise during both the gubernatorial and state Houses of Assembly elections which eventually necessitated the victory of the People's Democratic Party, (PDP) at the polls adding that a special occasion will be organized to present these heroes to the Governor-elect, Plateau State, Barrister Caleb



Hassan

Mutfwang in no distance time.

Reminiscent, for over a decade now, all the candidates which Anguwan Rukuba youths supported have won their elections convincingly. In 2015 after the former Plateau State Governor, Da Senator Jonah David Jang decided to field, GNS Pwajok as his successor under the platform of the PDP against the spirit of rotational arrangements, most of the youth of Anguwan Rukuba went the contrary. Sooner than later, the campaign aides of the incumbent Governor, Rt. Hon. Simon Bako Lalong came to Anguwan Rukuba providing an alternative candidate in him under the platform of the APC which was immediately endorsed.

That fateful day, the former Vice Chancellor of the University of Jos, Prof. Sebastian Maimako, Lalong's now deceased younger brother, Wumen Tsenba Bako and Chief of Staff, Deputy Governor's Office, Silas Vem all came over to Anguwan Rukuba soliciting for support. After about an hour's meeting, the youth of the area who are from almost all the local government areas in the state accepted to work with them which eventually ended up in the victory of the incumbent Governor at the polls. Sad enough, in the aftermath of this resounding victory by APC during the elections of 2015, the youth of the area were completely not carried along particularly after the demise of Lalong's younger brother, Wumen Tsenba Bako who kept fate in them until his ailment took a greater part of him. The sincerity of purpose of Tsenba was what the vulnerable youths of Anguwan Rubuka have

missed the most. With the passage of time, many people came to notice with relentless appreciation Lalong's deceased brother's vibrant character as one who cared for the less-privileged people of the state. Interesting, till Tsenba prematurely went to his grave, he consistently had Anguwan Rukuba youths in his thoughts even after many of them felt used and dumped by the other members of his team. Thus, the untimely death of Tsenba certainly left a lot to be desired. Towards his dying moment and when it obviously became quite difficult for Tsenba to pick calls, he kept on communicating with the people of Anguwan Rukuba until his strength betrayed him and he could no longer talk. A few days later, we heard that he had finally gone to be with our Lord, his creator. But for the death of Wumen Tsenba Bako, many people strongly still believe that things would not have turnout to be as bad as it is today.

During the 2023 general elections, Anguwan Rukuba youths galvanized their strength and motivated one another into accepting the reality of the fact that the elections must never be regarded as a do or die affair. However, they also resolved that their votes must be protected and it must also count so as to help consolidate Nigeria's quest for sustainable democracy in the country. This consensus arrangement propelled them into massively participating and protecting their votes throughout the polls.

Satisfied with their performance, a Non-Governmental Organization, Plateau 1<sup>st</sup> decided to stage a gathering of some political



Mwadkwon

heavyweights to appreciate these youths over their doggedness in protecting their mandate when it mattered most. The memorable event which was witnessed by traditional rulers, various politicians including the Chairman of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) in Plateau State, Hon. Chris Hassan, Senator-elect of Plateau Northern District, Dr. Simon Mwadkwon Fwet and former Speaker of the Plateau State House of Assembly, Rt. Hon. Istifanus Caleb Mwansat admonished the role played by the youths towards ensuring a peaceful election in the area and Jos North Local Government Area as a whole.

Speaking during the event, a traditional ruler in the area, Phozo Bala Haruna noted that in the past few years, the youth of Anguwan Rukuba have channeled their energy where is mattered most ensuring that the entire community moves forward. According to him, unlike what was obtainable in the past, the youth of the area resolved to embrace peace and set a positive agenda for the entire progress of the community.

Phozo Haruna noted that in the past, youths in the area have been used and dumped by politicians with nothing tangible to show for it adding that despite the positive role played by the youth, the area had continued to suffer due to absence of some basic social amenities.

In her contribution, former Chairman, Nigeria Association of Women Journalists, (NAWOJ) Plateau State, Mrs. Jennifer Yarima lamented the total absence of some basic social amenities in the area to include hospitals and portable drinking water noting that "our women have for years now been subjected to untold hardship due to none availability of some of these basic necessities of life.

Yarima who is consistently working with the youth in the state and one of the stakeholders in the community emphasized that though the youth of the area have continued to sacrifice a lot for sustainable democracy, not much has been done to them as a reciprocal gesture to motivate them.

"I want to call on our politicians not to forget the youth and people of Anguwan Rukuba who have continued to do their best and will not relent in ensuring that democracy is sustained noting that "we want to thank God that the youth of the area have refused to be bought over and neither did they participate

in any act of violence throughout the duration of the elections. We must thank them for putting Plateau State first in their hearts and should thus be encouraged to do more for the state and the country at large."

Earlier in his remarks, the Chairman of the People's Democratic Party in the state, Hon. Chris Hassan appreciated the youth of Anguwan Rukuba who stood their ground and refused to compromise during the 2023 general elections in the state.

He noted that, as a party chairman, he would contribute meaningful ideas which include carrying the youth along in the act of governance to ensure that they are integrated into the fabrics of the nation's developmental anticipations.

Also in his contribution, the Senator-elect of Plateau North, Dr. Simon Mwadkwon Fwet disclosed that the state's Governor-elect, Barrister Caleb Mutfwang has the youth close to his heart and will do everything possible to ensuring that they are carried along. According to Mwadkwon who is the incumbent member representing Barkin Ladi/Riyom Federal Constituency at the hHouse of Representatives, "we sincerely acknowledge the significant role played by the Anguwan Rukuba youth towards the coming to be of the Governor-elect and some of us. We are aware of the huge sacrifices you made and will only pray that God will reward you. However, we will do the little we can to help the youth of this area. I assure you that the Governor-elect will not disappoint you in his anticipated obligations even as you are expected to continuously pray for him to succeed."

For the Divisional Police Officer of Nassarawa Gwong, CSP Hassan Musa, the youth of the area made him proud for not getting involved in any act of violence both before, during and after the elections.

The DPO acknowledged the fact that in the past, Nassarawa Gwong has been always on the news for a bad reason which has not augured well for the development of the area. This time around, the DPO noted with significant satisfaction that the youth of the area irrespective of ethnic and or religious affiliations have come together to work for the benefit of the citizens of the community which has positively worked for the progress of the people of the area.

"We here can attest to the obvious fact that the behavioral attitude of the youth of this area has changed for the better, certainly, we are recording more progress in this community and we will continue as policemen to protect innocent citizens from harm. We want to also thank our elders for their support towards transforming this society for the better. We hope that this successes so far recorded will be sustained and we will continue to work together in this regard." He added.

So far, Anguwan Rukuba is not the way it used to be as all acts of lawlessness are now gone with the wind. The youth of the area are also taking their destiny in their hands even as the country is about transiting into another administration both at the national and state levels. It is therefore the hope of many that the teeming youth and people of Anguwan Rukuba will not be forgotten this time around as was the case in time past. After all, they also have many qualified individuals who can occupy any sensitive office while the youths are engaged in several lucrative skills acquisition programmes.

***"That fateful day, the former Vice Chancellor of the University of Jos, Prof. Sebastian Maimako, Lalong's now deceased younger brother, Wumen Tsenba Bako and Chief of Staff, Deputy Governor's Office, Silas Vem all came over to Anguwan Rukuba soliciting for support. After about an hour's meeting, the youth of the area who are from almost all the local government areas in the state accepted to work with them which eventually ended up in the victory of the incumbent Governor at the polls. Sad enough, in the aftermath of this resounding victory of APC during the elections of 2015, the youth of the area were completely not carried along particularly after the demise of Lalong's younger brother, Wumen Tsenba Bako who kept fate in them until his ailment took a greater part of him. The sincerity of purpose of Tsenba was what the vulnerable youths of Anguwan Rubuka have missed the most. With the passage of time, many people came to notice with relentless appreciation Lalong's deceased brother's vibrant character as one who cared for the less-privileged people of the state. Interesting, till Tsenba prematurely went to his grave, he consistently had Anguwan Rukuba youths in his thoughts even after many of them felt used and dumped by the other members of his team. Thus, the untimely death of Tsenba certainly left a lot to be desired. Towards his dying moment and when it obviously became quite difficult for Tsenba to pick calls, he kept on communicating with the people of Anguwan Rukuba until his strength betrayed him and he could no longer talk. A few days later, we heard that he had finally gone to be with our Lord, his creator. But for the death of Wumen Tsenba Bako, many people strongly still believe that things would not have turnout to be as bad as it is today."***





## At the inauguration of 6 new Judges

ANOTHER historic event was recorded on Tuesday Last week, on 4th April 2022, with the swearing in of 5 new Justices for Plateau High court, and one Justice of the Customary Court of Appeal, by Governor Simon Bako Lalong.

The event which took place at the Victoria Gowon Hall, of the new Government House, Rayfield, Jos drew a large crowd of family, friends, colleagues, party stalwarts, heads of Military and Para Military Agencies, top government functionaries and political appointees.

Other groups present at the occasion were civil society organisations, religious and traditional rulers, including tribal, youth, women and other groups who converged to celebrate with the government and recipients on the great feat.

With barely 7 weeks left in office, the inauguration is coming at a period when the Lalong-led All Progressives Congress (APC) Rescue administration is coming to an end in May 29 after 8 years.

However the emergence of Judges was done as a result of recommendation the National Judicial Council (NJC), based on their hard work and past antecedents, said Governor Lalong as he gave a speech at the forum.

He performed the swearing in ceremony, enjoining them to dispense Justice with the fear of God in line with their oath of office and ensure they render service to all irrespective of ethnic, religious, political and other affiliations.

He said he was determined to ensure the Judiciary gets a befitting working environment, that was why his administration has built a new High Court Complex, alongside a Multi-door Courthouse, to be utilised for Alternative Dispute Resolution in the state.

The new judges are Justice Mary A. Izam, Justice Ashakabu Suleiman Wase (High Court), Justice Charles Donglong (High Court), Justice Shikamma Kassam (High Court), Justice Nanle Titus Komak (High Court) and Justice Jettei P. Tutie (CCA).

Highly elated by their elevation to their current status and the historic development, spokesperson of the newly inaugurated judges, Justice Mary Izam praised the Governor for fulfilling his promises to the judiciary and creating a conducive environment for it to strive in the state.

Izam, who is also a Legal consultant, advocate for gender and social causes assured that they will all do their best to justify the confidence reposed on them, by carrying out their duties with the fear of God in a manner that will show Justice, and fairness to all.



## News

### Former PDP LGC chairmen, councilors visit Mutfwang

By PETER TITLE

FORMER Chairmen of Local Government Councils as well as elected and appointed councillors in the People's Democratic Party (PDP) who served the third tier of Government from 1999 on Monday paid a courtesy visit on the Governor -elect of Plateau State, Barrister Caleb Mutfwang.

Speaking, the leader of the delegation known as "Third movement for Atiku and Mutfwang" and former Chairman of Qu'an -Pan Local Government Council, Hon Theophilus Dakas Shan said they were at the lodge to facilitate with the gov-elect on his recent victory over the polls and described it as well deserved.

Hon.Dakas Shan said they were solidly behind him and would do all within their reach to ensure that he succeeds when he is sworn-in as governor.

According to him, he came at the time the state was at the



Mutfwang

verge of collapse and urged him to do all within his power to ensure he rescues the state from total collapse.

The former Chairman explained that all of them have been tested, trusted with different leadership

positions in the past within the third tier and posited that any person that has served at that level would serve anywhere successfully.

Responding, the Governor -elect, Barrister Caleb Mutfwang said he considered the visit as a home coming of colleagues, and assured them that he was proud to be one of them.

According to him, ALGON before the governorship election was reinvigorated which played a vital role in the elections which culminated to their victory.

Barr.Mutfwang promised to strengthen leadership standard at the local level and frowned at the injustice being meted to the local government system. He promised to correct the anomalies.

He also promised to improve on the traditional institution at all levels to ensure it functions according to laws of the land.

GROUPS as well as well wishers from all walks of life have continued to pour in, in their numbers to felicitate with the Governor -elect of Plateau State, Barrister Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang over his recent victory at the polls.

Amongst the groups that came to rejoice and pray for the governor -elect where the Arewa Pastors Forum(APF), led by Rev.Shehu Luke. They congratulated and urged him to see the victory as a victory for the state.

According to the Pastor Luke, the forum long before the elections have been praying for the state for a good leader, stating that God has answered their prayer. They enjoined him to be fair to all irrespective of their political differences.

They intimidated the governor -elect of a programme ahead of them which would pave way for them to pray for him before his inauguration in Northern zone of the state so that God would empower him to carry out the affairs of the state.

After that, according to the leader of the forum, they would converge in Mangu, Central Zone to perform a similar function as well as the Southern Zone at a later date.

He also informed Barr.Mutfwang that the forum always interface with other Church leaders from all denominations where issues are raised and solutions

### APF, Kaduna Mwaghavul community facilitate with Mutfwang

By PETER TITLE

proffered concerning the social ills bedeviling the society.

Also, the Mwaghavul Bible Translation Committee and the Mwaghavul Ministers Forum also paid a congratulatory visit to the governor -elect where they advised him to be bold and not be afraid.

Led by Rev.IdiTongpan , the Committee enjoined him to be up and doing and to carry all people along saying that God gives power to whoever he wishes and prayed for God's guidance throughout his tenure.

The retired clergy informed the governor -elect that the committee had successfully translated the New Testament of the Bible, adding that they have gone far in translating the old which he said remained only few chapters to be completed.

The Mwaghavul Community Resident in Kaduna where not left out on the visit to the governor -elect.They said they had come to congratulate him all the way from Kaduna because he said he was one of them.

Mishkaham Titus Zakka who led the delegation was full of praise for the people of Plateau State for electing

Mutfwang, saying that they have known his capabilities and was optimistic that he would not disappoint the people of the state.

He advised him to carry all people of the state along, pointing out that he was a leader to all irrespective of party differences.

Responding to all, the governor -elect thanked all groups for the congratulatory visits and promised not to disappoint the people.

According to Mutfwang, there was so much ignorance that people in the South do not know that Christians exist in the Northern parts of the country. He advocated for awareness.

The governor -elect noted that Mwaghavul nation has benefitted immensely from the gospel with the establishment of missionary schools as well as hospitals. And promised to assist them in his own little way.

He said "Language should not divide us but instead it should be used as a tool to promote unity of the state".

Mutfwang said that after the elections, the rousing welcome accorded him in Kaduna was touching by his people based in Kaduna and promised not to let them down.



## Sports

### “We can cause upsets at the World Cup”



**The Super Falcons have dominated Africa but they always falter on the international level**

SUPER Falcons defender Ashleigh Plumptre believes the Super Falcons can pull off some good results at the 2023 FIFA World Cup in Australia and New Zealand **Soccernet.ng** reports.

**Newsnow** said that, despite dominating Africa with nine Women Africa Cup of Nations titles, the Super Falcons have failed to translate their dominance to the World stage.

They have consistently wobbled and fumbled at the World Cup. The Super Falcons have only managed to reach the quarterfinals once in the 1999 edition. But since then, they have failed to replicate the same feat.

This year, the Super Falcons have been drawn with Canada, Australia, and the Republic of Ireland. Nonetheless, Plumptre believes the nine-time African Champions can make a statement at the Mundial.

“We know we are obviously against good competition, and we definitely can't look past

that,” Plumptre told NFF TV.

“But I think we are in a group where people look at us as underdogs which I really like.

“The pressure is on the likes of Canada and Australia, but we have some amazing talents in this team, so with that, we are going to put in some fight and some decent performances. With that, I think we can cause a couple of

upsets,” she added.

Nigeria have not been convincing since Randy Waldrum took charge of the team in 2020. They finished fourth at the last Womean Africa Cup of Nations- one of the worst outings by the country.

Nonetheless, Nigerians would hope that the team produces a spirited

### “Osimhen is extraordinary”

FORMER Napoli defender Ruben Maldonado believes Super Eagles striker Victor Osimhen is an extraordinary player **Soccernet.ng** reports.

The 24-year-old hitman has been phenomenal for Napoli this season. The Nigeria striker has morphed into the striker Aurelio De Laurentiis envisioned when he paid Lille €72million for his signature in 2020.

He has struck 25 goals in 29 appearances for the Partenopeans this season, helping them to the summit of



**Osimhen**

the Serie A.

Osimhen is the highest goalscorer in the Italian top flight with 21 goals. And he is leading Napoli's charge to their first Scudetto win in over 30 years.

Ex-Napoli defender Maldonado has been impressed by Osimhen this season, and he believes he is a crucial part of the setup at Naples.

“Osimhen is an extraordinary and fundamental striker, one of a kind,” Maldonado told Napoli

### Chukwueze almost equaled Messi's record

at the Santiago Bernabéu (7 out of 8) since Lionel Messi in April 2017 (7 out of 11).

Despite his almost-perfect performance against Los Blancos, Chukwueze still has a lot to prove. His form tends to

come in patches, and his consistency has continually been under scrutiny.

Hopefully, his show against Real Madrid will be the turning point in his career and he can start delivering the goods consistently.



**Chukwueze played the game of his life against Real Madrid and he was very close to breaking the legendary Lionel Messi's record at the Bernabeu**

season. They have almost wrapped up the Scudetto, but they have a chance to reach the final of the Champions League for the first time in their history.

They take on Milan in midweek, and if they want to get something from the tie, Osimhen would have to play an important role.

### NPFL: Ibrahim scores as Sunshine Stars settle for draw

SUNSHINE Stars Football Club of Akure had to settle for a 1-1 draw against Rangers International FC of

Enugu in their Group B campaign match on match day 13 of the 2022/2023 Nigeria Professional Football League (NPFL).

**Newsnow** said that, the match played at the Ondo State Sports Complex in Akure saw Yusuf Ibrahim score for the home team in the 13th minute, while Rangers drew level in the 25th minute after a defensive mix-up between the home team goalkeeper and a defender.

This was Sunshine Stars' third consecutive draw after their earlier draws against Wikki Tourists FC and Doma United on match days 10 and 11, respectively.

Sunshine Stars still have a game in hand against Rivers United on match day 12, and they currently sit fifth on the log with 18 points, while Rangers are eighth with 14 points in the group B of the NPFL.

Despite their efforts to break the visitors' defense in the second half, Sunshine Stars couldn't find a winner. Their late goal in the 89th minute was disallowed due to a foul on the Rangers goalkeeper by the centre referee.

No post-match interviews were conducted as there was tension between both teams and their officials after the referee blew the final whistle.

### Saviour hungry for Super Eagles call-up

CASA Pia star Godwin Saviour has stated that he is ready to play for the Super Eagles whenever he receives a call-up **Soccernet.ng** reports.

The last three years have been wonderful for 26-year-old attacker Saviour. He has grown from being without a club in 2020 per transfermarkt to becoming one of the most important players for the newly-promoted Casa Pia.

Saviour is the best dribbler at his club, with 28 successful dribbles. In the Portugal Liga, the Nigeria striker ranks eighth for most attempted dribbles.

His pace and trickery has proven to be a vital weapon for coach Filipe Martins this season. And his brilliance earned him a call-up to the Super Eagles in September 2022.

Saviour got his debut for the Super Eagles in their 2-1 loss to Algeria, replacing Ademola Lookman in the 68th minute.

The 26-year-old striker has revealed that making his debut for Nigeria was exciting. Nonetheless, he is hungry for more after failing to make the previous squad for the Guinea-Bissau doubleheader.

“It was a dream come true to make my debut for the Super Eagles,” Saviour told Proxima

Jornada.

“To mix up with the big boys was really amazing. Just imagining how my family, my friends, and my club

teammates felt at that moment made me happy.

“I was happy to play, I was really excited. I really want to work hard during training and

give my best. At any time when the opportunity comes, I'm always ready to represent my nation,” he added.

The next time the Super



**The Super Eagles striker made his debut for Nigeria last September but he has not made the team again since then**



## Sports



Arteta and Guardiola

# Reasons why Arsenal will lose the League title

By JAMES WESTWOOD

ARSENAL have been fantastic this season, there is certainly no doubt about that. They have exceeded all expectations under Mikel Arteta, who has built one of the most exciting squads in Europe while sticking to his core principles in admirable fashion.

The Gunners dropped valuable points from a winning position at Anfield, leaving the reigning champions smelling blood.

But they are not quite ready to win the Premier League. Sunday's 2-2 draw with Liverpool was the latest reminder of that, as they let a two-goal lead slip in front of a raucous Anfield crowd and ended up being lucky to escape with a point.

The Gunners are now just six points clear of Manchester City having played a game more, and still have a blockbuster trip to the Etihad Stadium on the horizon.

Mental fragility held the Gunners back throughout the second half of Arsene Wenger's reign at the club, and Arteta deserves huge credit for bucking that trend. However, his side are now in uncharted waters.

City are used to the pressure of getting results when it matters most; they thrive on it, and will not relent in their pursuit of a fifth title in six years.

Arsenal will ultimately be unable to hold off Pep Guardiola's side, and **GOAL** has examined the main reasons why...

Everywhere you look in City's squad there are serial winners. The likes of Kevin De Bruyne, Ilkay Gundogan, Bernardo Silva, Riyad Mahrez and John Stones have all been here before.

Guardiola's men know how to raise their game when the stakes are highest, and they are driven by a desire to break records while maintaining their dominance of the English football landscape.

Arsenal have two former City stars in their ranks that have the same mindset, with Gabriel Jesus and Oleksandr Jesus both having played key roles in their charge for the top-

flight crown.

But the rest of the Gunners squad lacks experience at this level. Their three standout performers - Bukayo Saka, Gabriel Martinelli and Martin Odegaard - are running on pure adrenaline at this point.

"Because not a lot of us have been here before, we don't really know how to handle it," Arsenal No.1 Aaron Ramsdale admitted after their 4-0 victory over Everton last month. "So we're just going in and playing the games as if we were 10th, 12th, whatever. We're just going out to play with our group of team-mates and try and win as many games as possible."

That naive streak was painfully evident at Anfield as the Gunners failed to close out a victory after a sublime first-half display that saw them play Liverpool off the park. It's safe to say that we can expect more of the same in the coming weeks.

Martinelli is currently Arsenal's top scorer for the season in the Premier League with 14 goals - a highly respectable career-best tally for the Brazilian winger.

Saka has 13 to his name and Odegaard is on 10, while Jesus would almost certainly have been in double-figures too were it not for the knee injury that kept him out of action for three months after the World Cup.

City's terminator scored his 29th and 30th Premier League goals in the 4-1 rout of Southampton on Saturday, bringing his overall total for the season across all competitions to 44 - the joint-most for an English club in a single campaign alongside Ruud van Nistelrooy and Mohamed Salah.

Haaland will inevitably break Salah's record for the most goals in a Premier League season (34) and could go well past the 50 mark by the time his debut year at the Etihad Stadium is over.

He is quite simply, the most lethal striker in world football, and his presence gives City an advantage in

any game.

Guardiola gave Haaland the highest possible praise after his latest brace, telling *BBC Sport*: "We have lived two incredible decades with Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi, but he is on that level."

It is unthinkable that City could end up missing out on the title with a player like Haaland firing on all cylinders - and the smart money says that they won't.

"You have to show a little bit of fight, but there's a time when to poke the bear and to leave the bear sleeping. He poked it at the wrong time."

Manchester United legend Roy Keane aptly summed up in the *Sky Sports* studio why Granit Xhaka's angry outburst at Anfield ultimately cost Arsenal all three points against Liverpool.

The Gunners were 2-0 up and in complete control before the Switzerland international decided to square up to Trent Alexander-Arnold after failing to win a foul. He thrust his elbow and butted heads with the Reds full-back before both sets of players rushed in to separate the pair, who were subsequently shown yellow cards.

The incident sparked the Anfield crowd into life, Salah halved the deficit moments later and Liverpool eventually secured a hard-earned point.

Xhaka's contribution to Arsenal's cause has been immense this term, but he is still prone to moments of madness like this.

"I'm not an Arsenal fan, but if I was an Arsenal fan: what are you doing?! It's absolutely daft," former Liverpool defender Jamie Carragher added on *Sky Sports*. "The game is in your hands and you get involved. Even the challenge, the arm, why do it? And now coming back, head-to-head with Trent, riles the crowd up. Absolutely idiotic from Xhaka to do that. That was going back to the old Xhaka."

The 30-year-old let his team-mates down with his loss of composure, and

it's unlikely that he will learn his lesson. Xhaka has always played on the edge, which is partly why he is so good at his job in the middle of the park, but he has not yet learned how to control his temper.

Arteta spent three years learning his trade as a coach alongside the best in the business at the Etihad Stadium.

The Spaniard absorbed as much as he could from Guardiola while serving as his assistant before going out on his own at Arsenal in 2019. He was unable to deliver instant success at Emirates Stadium, in the same way that Guardiola did at Barcelona back in 2008-09, but the Gunners are now reaping the rewards for their patience.

City's head coach played down his influence on Arteta's career back in October, telling reporters: "I'd like to say a lot (of City influence at the Emirates) but I'd lie to you. Maybe I learned more off him than he did off me when we worked together."

The truth is that Guardiola was just being modest. He remains the master and his apprentice has a long way to go before he can be mentioned in the same breath.

City's 3-1 win away at Arsenal on February 13 provided solid evidence of that, as Arteta cut a frantic figure on the touchline throughout. He was regularly seen barking instructions at his players, and even called an impromptu team-talk at one stage, while Guardiola was a model of calm.

Arsenal edged the first half, which prompted Guardiola to ditch his experiment with a 3-2-2-3 formation and revert to a flat back four, with Manuel Akanji brought on for Riyad Mahrez. The tactical tweak allowed City to move through the gears and gain full control of proceedings as Arsenal were overwhelmed by their attacking power in the second 45.

Guardiola's incredible record at domestic level is built on victories like that. He very rarely gets it wrong in the biggest games and his in-game management is as shrewd as

ever.

Arteta will have the opportunity to try and exact revenge over his former mentor in Manchester on April 26, but Guardiola will be ready for whatever he throws at him, which is why City will be clear favourites once again.

City have some challenging fixtures still to come aside from their clash with Arsenal, including away games against Fulham, Brentford and Brighton, but no one would be surprised if they picked up maximum points through to the end of the season.

They've done it before, and have the squad depth to juggle Champions League and FA Cup commitments alongside their title challenge without a hitch.

Arsenal have only the league to focus on, which adds more pressure. They travel to a relegation-threatened West Ham for a London derby clash next, before welcoming bottom-of-the-table Southampton to the Emirates.

Arteta's side must win both of those games before facing City, and they need a positive result at the Etihad to set them up for the three fixtures that could define their season.

The Gunners will host Chelsea at the end of April before taking on Champions League-chasing Newcastle at St James' Park and facing Brighton at the Emirates - with Roberto De Zerbi's side also in with an outside chance of a top-four finish.

A subsequent trip to Nottingham Forest could also be a banana skin, and Arsenal are due to wrap up their campaign at home to Wolves, who are looking like a well-drilled outfit again under Julen Lopetegui.

If Arsenal can stay on top after that run of games, they will certainly be deserving champions, but it feels inevitable that they will be pipped to the post by a City side that is just all-round better equipped to finish the job.



## Sports

# Chukwueze channels Messi, Robben in Madrid wins

**With Victor Osimhen sidelined by injury, one of his Super Eagles teammates -- Samuel Chukwueze -- starred as Africa's top performer of the weekend, netting a double in a remarkable display as Villarreal defeated Real Madrid. In the Premier League, Bertrand Traore and Jordan Ayew continued their revival for Aston Villa and Crystal Palace respectively, while Mohamed Salah went from zero to hero as Liverpool held Arsenal at Anfield.**



CHUKWUEZE drew criticism from Nigeria fans for his iffy performances for the Super Eagles against Guinea-Bissau during the recent international break, the winger's profligate showing prompting some supporters to question whether he's regressing. But there are no such complaints at Villarreal, as the 22-23 campaign draws to a close, with his performances in recent weeks setting him apart as one of Europe's most dangerous wide-men.

He produced his latest star turn against Real Madrid, no less, with two goals -- including the breathtaking 80th-minute winner -- as the Yellow Submarine stunned Carlo Ancelotti's side 3-2 away.

It is rare indeed that a visiting player scores twice at the Santiago Bernabeu, let alone two goals in a display so overflowing with individual class and elegance, as well the decisiveness that was completely absent from his game during the international break.

Beyond his goals, he won 10 duels, having set the tone for a magnificent performance by

stretching poor Nacho down the outside during the early stages.

Remarkably, he eclipsed Vinicius Junior and completed a game-high seven successful dribbles -- denied only once; in fact, he became the first visiting player to beat his man seven times at the Bernabeu since Lionel Messi in April 2017, when the then-Barcelona superstar also scored twice to inspire his side to a 3-2 victory.

Much as Chukwueze's dribbling was reminiscent of Messi, there was also something of Arjen Robben about his winner -- as the 23-year-old cut in from the right flank, parallel to the goal, and slammed home a curling left-footed effort into the far corner of Thibaut Courtois' net.

This was a sensational showing, but, in truth, we've seen scintillating one-off performances from Chukwueze before; this outing came almost four years to the day the winger scored once and registered another assist as Villarreal drew 4-4 with Barcelona.

Such occasions have been too few and far between in the

intervening years, with outstanding showings or purple patches often followed by fallow spells. You wouldn't know it witnessing his control and insouciance against Real, although this season he has had a hand in 24 goals in 40 games in all competitions; it's already more than his combined goals-assists tally from the past two seasons combined.

Working with former Barcelona head coach Quique Setien appears to be helping Chukwueze thrive on a more consistent basis, and the manager is delighted with the winger's recent performances.

"For a few weeks he's been giving us a lot, he's a permanent threat," Setien said. "Not just in goals, but in passes, chances. He's an extraordinary player who is giving us a lot. He pulled two golazos out from his sleeve, and did everything else as well."

With Chukwueze in such form, Villarreal remain firmly in the hunt for UEFA Champions League qualification: they're four points behind fourth-placed Real Sociedad with 10 matches to play,

having won five and drawn one of their past six games in LaLiga.

Osimhen is set to be at the heart of the transfer talk this summer, but don't be surprised if his international teammate is also courted by some of Europe's biggest clubs -- once again -- in the months ahead.

## Are Man City now title favourites after Arsenal's Anfield draw?

Steve Nicol gives his take on the title race after Arsenal dropped points in a 2-2 draw with Liverpool at Anfield.

In the English Premier League, all eyes were on Anfield as Liverpool aimed to put a roadblock on Arsenal's route to the title; and it was a pulsating encounter -- one of the best games of the season -- with Salah at the heart of the hosts' comeback from two goals down.

Liverpool were a shambles defensively during the first half, but the initiative shifted away from Arsenal, and Salah struck at the far post, giving the Reds a 42nd-minute lifeline when he met Jordan Henderson's cross after Gabriel had failed to clear his lines.

Salah clearly enjoys facing the Gunners; this goal was his ninth against Arsenal, and he has scored more goals only against Manchester United in the top flight.

The second half belonged to Liverpool, and Salah was the Reds' most likely source of an equaliser albeit his killer touch deserted him with the Gunners rattled.

Salah missed a penalty early in the second half, after Rob Holding had brought down Diogo Jota in the box, firing wide of Aaron Ramsdale's right-hand post as he sought to direct his spotkick just inside the woodwork.

Having missed his previous penalty, Salah could be forgiven for over-thinking this one, although it was an uncomfortable change from the unswerving instincts that have led to him to become Africa's all-time top scorer in the Premier League. Certainly, something has changed: Salah missed just two of his first 20 Premier League penalties, but he has missed his past two efforts -- shooting wide with both attempts.

Nonetheless, he had opportunities to make amends -- volleying over from close range before having a swerving, deflected effort saved sublimely by Ramsdale.

In total, Salah had 10 shots -- the first time he's hit double figures for attempts this season -- but he tested Ramsdale on only three occasions.

Traore and Ayew are two players enjoying a final furlong to their season that had hardly seemed possible a week or two ago, and both were among the

goals again at the weekend.

Former Chelsea wideman Traore has hardly set the world alight since joining Aston Villa from Lyon, failing to build on the seven goals he scored in his first season back in England before being deemed surplus to requirements under Steven Gerrard.

However, he was recalled in January, following an injury on loan at Istanbul Basaksehir, and has subsequently made four substitute appearances after being registered in Aston Villa's Premier League squad by Unai Emery.

He came off the bench to score the winner against Leicester City the week before, and he was on target against Nottingham Forest on Saturday -- opening the scoring in the 48th minute have been introduced early on for the injured Leon Bailey.

"My last two seasons have been hell," Traore said. "I picked up many injuries and had lots of problems with Gerrard. There were no personal issues, he's a good coach; it's just I was injured a lot, and despite that, I still went away to the Africa Cup of Nations in 2022, where I sustained another injury. He took it badly and made me train with the reserves before sending me out on loan."

Ayew has been another unlikely Premier League hero in recent weeks, the 31-year-old revitalised by the arrival of Roy Hodgson in the stead of Patrick Vieira. Having registered an assist against Leicester on April 1, he scored twice as Crystal Palace eviscerated Leeds United 5-1 away on Sunday.

The Eagles produced a magnificent display, building on their immense chance creation against the Foxes to bury five of the openings they fashioned at Elland Road to move six points clear of the dropzone.

Ayew's four attempts on goal represented the most he's registered in the league this season, while he had never before scored twice in a Premier League match.

Eberechi Eze also starred -- registering nine completed dribbles -- but Michael Olise was the pick of the players with a hat-trick of assists as he ensured the injured Wilfried Zaha wasn't missed. He the youngest player to register three assists from open play in a single match in Premier League history, while Bukayo Saka, since the beginning of last season, is the only player aged 21 or under with more assists than Olise's 12.

"In the second half [Olise] got it all right in both defence and attack, and he showed what a wonderful player he is... he has got a great possibility to have a wonderful career and a wonderful future," Hodgson told the club's official website. "We can only hope we at Crystal Palace can give him that platform."





Quest



writer

EMMANUEL MENSEH MADAKI ESQ.(LLM)

FRAGMENT

"Interestingly, as at the time the committee came from the national body, PDP in the state was already comfortable without any defect in the party structure and leadership since the party at that time had already conducted its congresses in compliance with the express orders of Hon. Justice S. P. Gang and Hon. Justice Kunda respectively."

**Emmanuel Menseh Madaki Esq. (LLM)**

## Re:Supreme Court ruling and Plateau guber litigation

*Continued from last week*

(2) Notwithstanding the provisions of Chapter IV of this Constitution, the National Executive Committee shall regulate the procedure for selecting the party's candidates for elective offices in the following manner prescribed below;

(3) In the conduct of primaries for the party's candidate for the post of the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the primary shall be held at the National Convention of the party specially convened for that purpose;

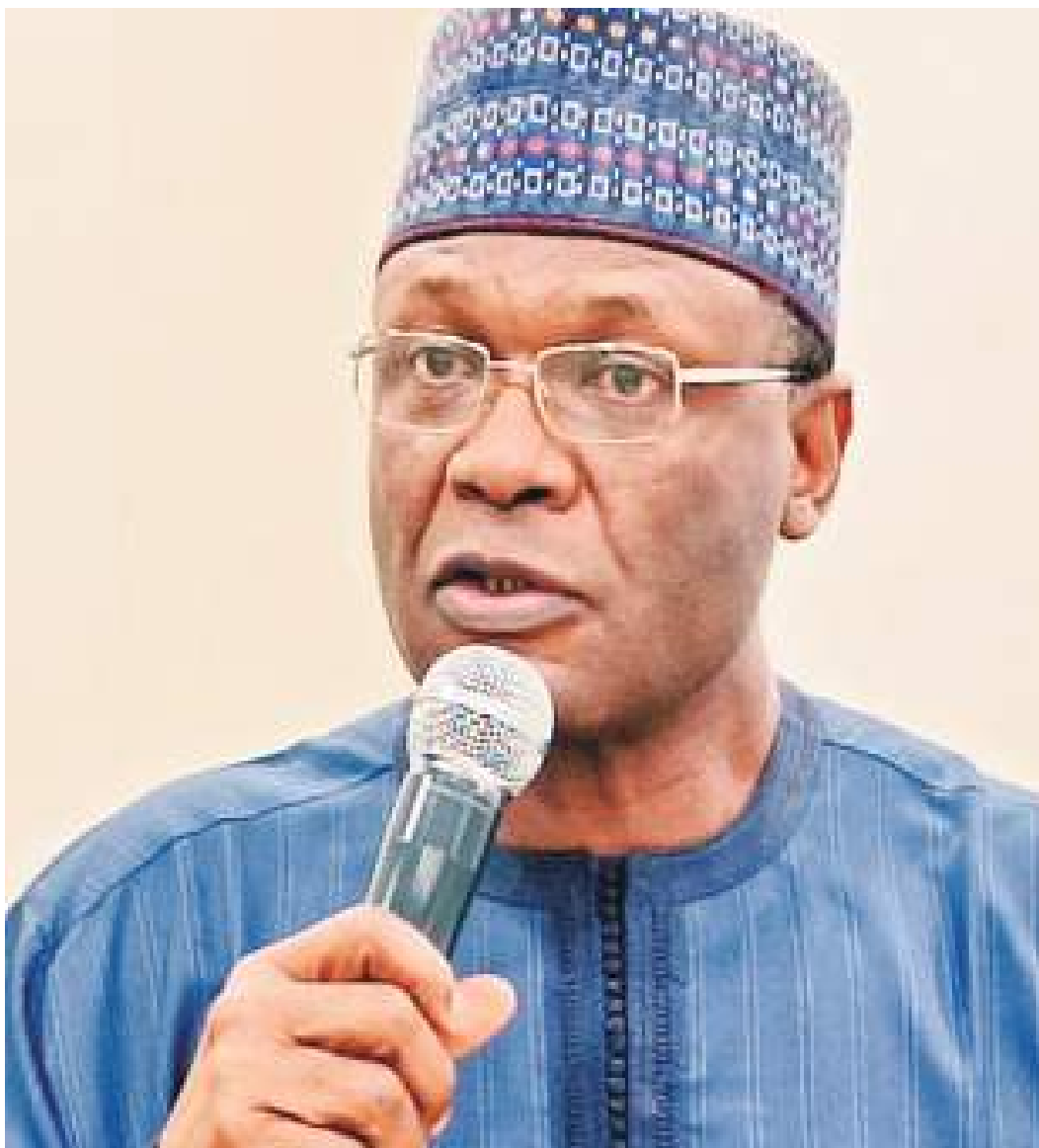
(4) In the conduct of primaries for the party's candidate for the post of Governorship of a state, the primary shall be held at the State Congress of the party specially convened for that purpose;

(5) In the conduct of primaries for the party's candidate for the post of Senator, the primaries shall be held at Senatorial Constituency headquarters;

(6) In the conduct of primaries for the party's candidate for the post of member of the House of Representatives, the primaries shall be held at the constituency headquarters;

(7) In the conduct of primaries for the party's candidate for the post of Local Government Council Chairman and House of Assembly, the primaries shall be held at the local government constituency headquarters;

As could be gleaned from the provisions of the law cited above, nothing robs the NWC of its powers so donated under section 50 of the constitution to regulate the procedure for selecting the party's candidates in the state. And for the records, the



**Mahmood**

delegation that came from the national body wasn't a "CARETAKER COMMITTEE" but a delegation of the National Executive Committee (NEC) that came pursuant to the powers donated under section 50 of the constitution (supra) to regulate the selection of the party's candidates for the 2023 general elections.

Interestingly, as at the time the committee came from the

national body, PDP in the state was already comfortable without any defect in the party structure and leadership since the party at that time had already conducted its congresses in compliance with the express orders of Hon. Justice S. P. Gang and Hon. Justice Kunda respectively.

SHOULD PLATEAU PDP PANIC?

The Peoples Democratic Party

in the state need not panic or be distracted by the ruling APC for the following reasons.

1. The party is in a good footing and standing in law and conduct and has so far not violated any known law anywhere.

2. The party endeavored to comply with the express orders of Hon. Justice S. P. Gang and Hon. Justice I.I. Kunda respectively.

3. What the party sought to achieve by the suit that journeyed up to the supreme court had been laid to rest with the compliance with the judgments of the courts below and that has nothing to do with the present candidates that emerged in the just concluded general elections. So, there was no need pursuing the case at the supreme court.

4. The suit at the Supreme

Court was already academic before its dismissal and existence of the party as at today has no defect whatsoever see CA/J/300/2023 Between Augustine Timkuk vs INEC & Ors decided in 2023.

5. The scenario that led to APC losing seats in Zamfara in 2019 is radically different from the PDP Plateau scenario whereas that of Zamfara was purely a preelection party dispute involving members of the party, there is no dispute between the members of PDP in plateau state anywhere before the emergence of the candidates of PDP that contested the 2023 general and even after the election.

6. Assuming but not conceding that there is a crisis rocking the PDP in the state who has the locus standi in law to raise that issue? Is it a preelection matter or an issue for the tribunal? What is even more interesting is the fact that the supreme recently held in UFOMBA v. INEC & ORS (2017) LPELR-42079(SC) that: "the law is trite that Courts' jurisdiction is ousted in matters dealing with internal affairs or resolution of a political party regarding nomination or leadership of that political party as in this instant case." P47, paras A-B

7. The APC in Plateau State is simply dancing naked and or nude in an open market by deploying all efforts to invalidate, intimidate, scare and or present a hopeless scenario for the PDP candidates that won the 2023 general elections instead of focusing on the defeat and allow the tribunal to do its job since the APC candidate vowed to challenge the outcome of the election in court.

There is no law or legal burden placed on the PDP in the state which it is yet to discharge or in violation.

Let the celebration continue as the PDP suffers no defect in law and all the candidates are proper in law.

**Emmanuel Menseh Madaki Esq.(LLM), Solicitor at M. Y. Saleh (SAN) & CO. Jos Plateau State . talktomenseh@gmail.com**

**Concluded**

**As could be gleaned from the provisions of the law cited above, nothing robs the NWC of its powers so donated under section 50 of the constitution to regulate the procedure for selecting the party's candidates in the state. And for the records, the delegation that came from the national body wasn't a "CARETAKER COMMITTEE" but a delegation of the National Executive Committee (NEC) that came pursuant to the powers donated under section 50 of the constitution (supra) to regulate the selection of the party's candidates for the 2023 general elections.**