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THE Nigeria Standard



VOL. 13 NO. 799

WEDNESDAY, April 19, 2023

N200

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Cholera outbreak: Nigeria registers 79 deaths, 1336 suspected cases

The Nigeria Centre for Disease and Prevention Control (NCDC) has registered 79 deaths and a total of 1,336 suspected cases of cholera in the country so far in 2023.

The NCDC, via its official website, said this in its latest cholera situation

epidemiological report. The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reported that cholera is an acute diarrheal illness caused by infection of the intestine with *Vibrio cholera* bacteria.

People can get sick when they swallow food or water contaminated with cholera bacteria. The infection is

often mild or without symptoms, but can sometimes be severe and life-threatening.

The agency said that 12 states across 43 local government areas reported the suspected cases, with a case fatality ratio of 5.9 per cent.

It said that the 12 states reporting cases in the

country included Abia, Bauchi, Bayelsa, Cross River, Ebonyi, Kano, Katsina, Niger, Ondo, Osun, Sokoto, and Zamfara.

According to it, of the suspected cases since the beginning of the year, age groups 15-24 and >45 years were the most affected age groups for

males and females respectively.

It said that of all suspected cases, 53 per cent were males and 47 per cent were females.

Six states, Cross River (647 cases), Ebonyi (97 cases), Abia (72 cases), Niger (38 cases), and Zamfara (28 cases) account for 96 per cent of

all cumulative cases.

"Fifteen LGAs across nine states Ebonyi (4), Cross River (3), Ondo (2), Bayelsa (1), Abia (1), Katsina (1), Sokoto (1) Niger (1) and Zamfara (1), reported more than 5 cases each this year," it said.

The NCDC said it would continue training on cholera

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Vice President Yemi Osinbajo flanked by Governor Lalong and other high powered delegation during the lecture at the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS) Kuru, Jos-Plateau State. Photo: DANLADI DUK

Ethnic, religious bigotry played during 2023 elections

By PALANG KASMI
 Vice President Yemi Osinbajo has said that during Nigeria's 2023 general elections, ethnic, religious profiling and bigotry played out influencing the decision of voters.

He also warned that such

acts, spearheaded by politicians and elites in their quest for power only promotes divisive rhetoric and setback in the country's development.

Osinbajo raised these issues Monday, April 17, 2023 while delivering an Inaugural lecture series for

Executive Course 45 Participants at the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS) Kuru, Jos South Local Government of Plateau State.

The topic of the lecture which is "Creating a Homeland for All: Nation

Building in a Diverse Democracy" is part of the Policy Making and Good Governance Lecture Series initiated by the NIPSS Management which seeks to provide a platform for the 97 Executive Course 45 Participants to interface with intellectuals from

various backgrounds.

Osinbajo said just to secure power, elites and politicians used ethnic and religious profiling by criminalising the acts of particular tribes and religions, but it is a dangerous trend.

The paper which strived

-Osinbajo

to address how Nigeria should harness its ethnic diversity for development urged for caution from the key players so as not to take Nigeria back to its past bloody experiences of the first and second republic,
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News

Cholera outbreak: Nigeria registers 79 deaths, 1336 suspected cases

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surveillance, hotspot mapping, state-level preparedness and response plans.

Meanwhile, according to the World Health Organisation, at least 24 countries continue to report cholera cases.

Regarding historical transmission patterns and seasonality, large parts of

the world are currently in low or inter-epidemic transmission periods, therefore this number could increase in the months to come.

In Nigeria, cholera is an endemic and seasonal disease, occurring annually mostly during the rainy season and more often in areas with poor sanitation.

Ethnic, religious bigotry played during 2023 elections -Osinbajo



Osinbajo at NIPS

Continued from page 1

or the bitter experiences of Rwanda due to ethnic and religious bigotry.

The paper x-rayed how the elites of Tanzania, Singapore, and Rwanda came together to bring out policies for unity, peaceful coexistence and pointed out that the Nigerian politicians can do so.

"The country can only grow with unity, stability, if professionalism not ethnic or religious bigotry is prioritised. Nigeria must prioritise its unity, cohesion and progress by doing away with prejudices that have impeded the nation's growth".

"Elites and governments should deliberately make peaceful coexistence a part of its policies. The task of changing the situation lies with both the citizens and the Government which is expected to drive reforms and enforce the rule of law at all times".

While urging the media to be mindful of the kind of narrative it spearheads in a multi-ethnic society like Nigeria, VP Osinbajo called for an Ethnic Integration Policy like the one adopted in Singapore and Rwanda

which taught children and people to first identify as Singaporeans, and Rwandans for unity.

The Lecture however noted that Nigerians are changing, while the youths are mingling through technologies and social integration, that is why in the recent elections, they joined hands to choose where they will be.

Plateau State Governor Simon Bako Lalong at the forum said the Lecture Series is a well-conceived idea that addresses the long standing challenge of policy-making and delivery of people-centred governance in Nigeria.

He said "Policies are ordinarily supposed to be formulated on the basis of national or State aspirations and driven by the concept of the "general good".

Unfortunately he said "We have witnessed time and again where good policies have been either jettisoned or poorly executed in Nigeria on the basis of politics and other considerations that do not reflect the general interest".

"This situation which has

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has declared Gov. Ahmadu Fintiri of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) as the winner of the governorship supplementary election in Adamawa.

Fintiri polled 430,788 votes to defeat his closest opponent, Sen. Aishatu Binani, of the All Progressives Congress, APC who scored 398,788

deteriorated over the years particularly within our democratic experience continues to impact negatively on the slow level of development in virtually all sectors".

Lalong pointed out that "It is sad to note that rather than focus on sustaining good policies that drive national agenda and strengthen the Nigerian State, many office holders sacrifice this virtue on the altar of politics which is sometimes motivated by parochial considerations driven by ethno-religious considerations among others".

He said his administration among some of its policies focused on continuity and implementation of projects abandoned and inherited by past governments rather than jettison such projects due to party differences and parochial reasons so as not to waste public resources.

Lalong said the good governance lecture is a well-conceived idea and the theme is apt adding that President Buhari has in his 8-year rule built great policies that the country has benefitted from and said there are high expectations on the President Elect Asiwaju Bola Tinubu to deliver the laudable policies enshrined in his manifesto "Renewed Hope".

Director General (DG) of NIPSS Prof. Ayo Omotayo said the lecture series is another initiative of Institute aimed at generating discourse on critical issues such as policy-making and good governance which are key to attaining Nigeria's national aspirations.

In a goodwill message, Gbong Gwom Jos, Da Jacob Gyang Buba also commended NIPSS for sustaining the culture of research and policy incubation which has been very useful for the nation's growth.

He said hosting the nation's highest think-tank and policy making institution in his domain has been of immense benefit to the state and country at large.

Fintiri of PDP wins Adamawa supplementary election-INEC

votes.

Announcing the result on Tuesday in Yola, the Returning Officer, Prof. Mohammed Mele, said that the supplementary poll was conducted in 69 Polling Units across 20 local government areas of the state.

"Ahmadu Fintiri of the PDP, having satisfied the requirements of the law and scored the highest number of votes in the election is hereby declared the winner and returned elected," he said.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that INEC had fixed April 15 for supplementary governorship poll following the declaration of the March 18 election inconclusive in the state.

However, controversy trailed the purported declaration of the APC's Binani as the winner of the supplementary poll by the INEC Resident Electoral Commissioner.

The commission, thereafter, declared the pronouncement null and void.

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has announced Ahmadu Fintiri as the winner of the governorship election in Adamawa State.

INEC, in its declaration on Tuesday, announced Fintiri as Adamawa's Governor-elect as announced by Prof Mohammed Mele as the Returning Officer in the state.

Fintiri emerged winner having secured 430,861 votes.

PDP NWC voids purported suspension of Sekibo, Opara

Mbah not a convict, party

Fintiri emerged winner having secured 430,861 votes.



Alkali

Scores of residents have been killed by gunmen who invaded at least four communities in Mangu and Bokkos Local Government Areas of Plateau State.

According to reports,



Fintiri

to plea bargaining — Counsel

Aregbesola rolls out five-year plan to tackle insecurity

Here is some information to know about Fintiri:

Ahmadu Fintiri is the incumbent Governor of Adamawa State since 2019.

He served as a member of the Adamawa State House of Assembly and also as the Speaker of the Assembly.

He became the acting governor of Adamawa State following the impeachment of Governor Murtala Nyako in July 2014, serving until 1 October 2014.

Fintiri emerged as the governor with the highest number of votes after an election held on 9th March 2019.

The election, however, was declared inconclusive because the number of cancelled votes was greater than the margin between the winner and his close opponent.

In the early hours of Friday 29th March 2019, he was declared the winner

of the by-election having secured 376,552 votes to defeat incumbent Bindo Jibrilla of the All Progressives Congress who polled 336,386 votes.

The governorship election which took place in the country on 11th March 2023 was suspended and postponed in Adamawa by INEC on the grounds of being inconclusive.

The supplementary election was held on 15th March but in what seemed like a de javu, the now suspended-Adamawa REC, Hudu Yunusa Ari declared the All Progressives Congress (APC) candidate, Aishat Binani as the Governor-elect on 16th March 2023.

INEC headquarters rejected the result that declared Binani as Governor-elect, and on Tuesday announced Fintiri as the winner.

The announcement today, made Fintiri emerge as governor and defeat APC twice through supplementary elections.

Fintiri is married to Lami Ahmadu Fintiri and they have three children. (NAN)

Terrorists kill scores of residents in fresh attack on communities

suspected bandits stormed the communities on Sunday night, unleashing a wave of violence.

Although the exact number of casualties has yet to be determined, several residents were believed to have died in the attack.

The Plateau State Governor, Simon Lalong, has directed security forces to identify those responsible for the attacks.

In a statement on Monday, Makut Macham, Lalong's press and public affairs director, quoted the governor as saying the attackers must be "brought to justice without delay".

He said the swift intervention of security agencies has doused the tension in the communities.

"The attacks are another attempt to reintroduce the era of violence and crises which have been largely contained due to the government's huge investment in security, peacebuilding and reconciliation," the governor said.

"While commiserating with those who lost their lives and properties, the Governor directed the Peace Building Agency and the State Emergency Management Agency to immediately reach out to the victims with support."

Meanwhile, TheCable Index in a review of the killings and kidnappings in 2022 that Plateau, along with Niger, Zamfara, Kaduna, and Benue, accounted for 40% of the 4,545 people killed during the year.



Business & Economy

CBN and the imperative of brand damage control

In his executive summary of what constitutes strong brands, a global business consultant, Nick Cober, says such brands focus on their niche, remain consistent, reflect the communities they serve, create excellent products and services and have strong and authentic personalities. It is debatable to ascribe these attributes to the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) in recent times. SOLA ONI writes.

WHEN the incumbent governor of the CBN, Godwin Emefiele, announced the plan and justification by the apex Bank to redesign some of the Naira notes on Wednesday, October 26, 2022, he never envisaged that he had unwittingly set up a booby trap that will later plunge the innocent Nigerians into an unprecedented fit of rage to withdrawal their money from deposit banks.

Communication strategy is critical to the success of any initiative at individual or corporate level. In the public relations parlance, it is said that brand communication, brand image and brand trust are antecedents of brand loyalty.

The whole world is watching with shock and disbelief why redesigning of a country's currencies has led to loss of lives, protest in many states of the federation, wanton destruction of property, recourse to the use of CFA franc- currency used in the Francophone countries, by Nigerians in the land borders following scarcity of new Naira notes. In some places, trade by batter has been adopted.

The Central Bank's poor stakeholder engagement became public knowledge when the announcement of the new currency redesign was faulted by the Minister of Finance, Mrs. Zainab Ahmed that her Ministry was not consulted.

The failure of the apex bank to consult the key stakeholders, including the legislators to work out the impact analysis of the project ahead of implementation was in itself a public relations blunder. There are other instances of gross abuse of public relations practices by the apex



Read also: Heap of CBN loans to FG defies naira redesign logic

bank. In the early hours of Thursday, February 16, the expectation was high that President Muhammadu Buhari's nationwide broadcast would douse tension as he shall announce the CBN's compliance with the ruling of the Supreme Court that the old Naira notes

should remain legal tender alongside the new ones until the determination of the substantive suit filled by some states. But the broadcast was a misplaced optimism as President Buhari said only N200 note would remain legal tender for 60 days.

The brazen disregard for the Supreme Court ruling elicited protests in many states of the federation as people could not withdraw their money and they desperately need cash. As of today, the Nigerian economy is predominantly cash-based. The Federal Government's disregard to the Supreme court order is a mockery of the Nigerian legal system.

With all his strong campaign for the All Progressive Congress (APC), Festus Keyamo, the Party's Spokesman could not hide his condemnation of the abuse of court order by President Buhari, saying he was misadvised.

Who are those misadvising the President and what is the motive? What does it cost the CBN to comply with the court directive which would have calmed the frayed nerves? Hopefully, Emefiele shall one day tell his story and unveil the cabals that have messed him up as the brand personality of the CBN.

Unfortunately, due to bad planning and poor timing, the objectives of the new Naira notes

are far from being achieved. Against the market expectations of further reduction in the inflation rate, the Nigerian inflation rate in January inched up to 21.82 percent from 21.34 percent in the prior month. Similarly, the country's foreign reserve has dipped further to \$37.1 Billion on January 30, 2023, from \$37.8 Billion in December 2022.

Other objectives of the new Naira notes are more of wrong permutations by the apex bank. Nigerians have lost confidence in the financial system. There is a trust deficit already. The apex bank's brand value has lost steam. Many investors would rather prefer to be on the sidelines until after the general election. This is understandable in view of the uncertainty in the country.

For the apex bank to remain relevant, it is now a game of brand recovery. The Central Bank shall be more effective and trusted if Nigerians perceive it as transparent. One of the lessons from the global financial crisis of 2008 is the obligation of every central bank to deploy effective communication with all its stakeholders to reduce uncertainty and enhance better policy choices.

The Nigeria Economic Summit Group (NESG), has offered some

tips as brand recovery strategies for the apex bank to address its reputational damage. The Bank should embark on a gradual phase-out of the old notes, an indication of obeying the Supreme Court order.

It should take advantage of a gradual phase-out of the old Naira notes to commence massive production of the new ones. The bank should embark on renewed public enlightenment of Nigerians on the substance and essence of redesigning some Naira notes.

These assignments should be undertaken immediately by the CBN's High Priest of Image Makers, Osita Nwanisobi and his team. The apex bank should lead the campaign for the federal government's investment in critical infrastructure for a seamless transition to a cashless economy, especially in rural areas.

As the Presidential Election is at the back of the corner, President Buhari must disprove the insinuations making rounds that the ongoing confusion is to scuttle the election and constitute an interim government. He should direct the CBN to obey the Supreme Court order and thereby reverse the abuse of executive power, a subtle invitation to anarchy.

Source: Business Day

"Unfortunately, due to bad planning and poor timing, the objectives of the new Naira notes are far from being achieved. Against the market expectations of further reduction in the inflation rate, the Nigerian inflation rate in January inched up to 21.82 percent from 21.34 percent in the prior month. Similarly, the country's foreign reserve has dipped further to \$37.1 Billion on January 30, 2023, from \$37.8 Billion in December 2022. Other objectives of the new Naira notes are more of wrong permutations by the apex bank. Nigerians have lost confidence in the financial system. There is a trust deficit already. The apex bank's brand value has lost steam. Many investors would rather prefer to be on the sidelines until after the general election. This is understandable in view of the uncertainty in the country."



Business & Economy

'Sustain Buhari's policy on food production'

THE Rice Processors Association of Nigeria (RIPAN) has called on the President-elect, Sen. Bola Tinubu, to sustain ongoing initiatives on food production for economic development.

The Director-General of RIPAN, Mr Andy Ekwelem, made the call recently in Abuja at a news conference.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the theme of the conference was "Strategies for Deepening and Strengthening the Nigeria Rice Sub-Sector towards More Sustainable Development."

According to Ekwelem, RIPAN is an association of investors in integrated rice processing, formed as a direct response to the Federal Government of Nigeria's deliberate initiative to grow local capacity in rice.

"Members of the association and indeed other actors in the rice processing and milling sub-sector are presently key players and major contributors to the growth of the Nigerian economy.

"Our processing and milling activities contribute several thousands of direct employments and millions of indirect employments to the various stakeholders in the rice value chain and other complementary sectors," he said.

He said that the rice industry was the single largest employer of labour in Nigeria, providing jobs for over 13 million people.

"These include direct staff, casual worker, haulage service providers, agrochemical and input suppliers and of course millions of small holder rural farmers who are made up of majorly youths and women," he said.

According to him, the Nigeria rice industry has enjoyed considerable support from the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari.

"Before the current administration, Nigeria officially allowed imported rice into the country.

"As at the last quarter of 2014, official rice import into Nigeria from Thailand was about 1.24 million tonnes of rice; by the end of 2015, these imports had dropped to about 644,131 metric tonnes, and by the end of 2016, it dropped to 58,260 metric tonnes.

"In 2017, the imports further dropped to 23,192 metric tonnes but by 2022, it dropped to an all-time minimal of 438MT.

"The reason for the drops - which to us at RIPAN is a very positive development - is nothing more than Mr President's hard stand approach against food importation," he said.

He commended Buhari for his agricultural development initiatives that had boosted food production over the years.

"Recall that President Buhari is a strong advocate of "grow what you eat and eat what you can grow".

"To ensure that he walked his talk, through the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), he launched various programmes that encouraged local production and processing of rice.

"Programme such as the Anchor Borrowers' Programme, the Paddy Aggregation Scheme, the Private Sector-Led Accelerated Agriculture Development Scheme and the Real Sector Support Facility (RSSF) were floated.

"They were deliberate strategies that encouraged indigenous and foreign business concerns to invest massively in the rice value chain.

"Today, Nigeria boasts of over 100 large-scale integrated rice processing facilities scattered across the country.

"This is more than 700 per cent increase from the mere 13



Buhari

integrated mills operating in the country between 2010 and 2014," he said.

He also commended Buhari for his various initiatives to encourage consumption of locally produced rice.

"To ensure that product dumping and other forms of international trade malpractice do not affect the huge private-sector investments as well as the various programmes of government, the CBN placed restrictions on importation of food items including rice.

"The apex bank did that by categorising them as not valid for foreign exchange from the CBN's Foreign Exchange Window.

"To further protect and strengthen the industry, the administration introduced the Border Restriction Policy of 2020," he said.

He said that before the border restriction policy, there was a maddening proliferation of all manner of items and food stocks, even light arms and small weapons into Nigeria.

"Fortunately, with the Border Restriction Policy of the Buhari administration, the menace was effectively stemmed between the period starting August 2020 and the end of 2021.

"As a matter of fact, over 1.2 million metric tonnes of rice imported to Benin from India and Thailand between May 2019 and August 2019, became trapped in Benin.

"This caused the imports of rice from India to Benin to drop from a monthly average of 75,000 metric tonnes between January and September 2019 to less than 2,000 metric tonnes in the last quarter of 2019.

"Also, the volume of Thai rice imported to Benin Republic fell from a monthly average of 100,000MT to 5,000MT tons by November 2019.

The dividend of all these was that the demand for Nigerian home grown and locally processed rice increased quite immensely, causing an increase in both the production of paddy rice as well as rice processing facility," he said.

According to him, in 2020 during the COVID era, Nigerian farmers produced as much as 8.2 million metric tonnes of paddy rice and another 8.4 million tonnes in 2021.

"At the time, all of the paddy produced were off taken by the rice processors/ millers who processed them and supplied good quality finished rice to Nigerians.

"Even as the borders were closed and COVID Pandemic raged on, Nigeria did not suffer lack of food, particularly rice," he said.

He, however, said that the

situation began to deteriorate again after the borders were reopened.

He called on the incoming Tinubu's administration to emulate some of the laudable policies of the Buhari administration to boost food production.

"The numbers in metric tonnes of paddy rice produced by Nigerian farmers began to decline after the borders were reopened in 2022.

"Smuggling also commenced again in earnest, causing a drop in the volume of paddy offtake by the rice processors/millers.

"Indeed, it is on record that upon the reopening of our borders, official rice import to Benin republic from Thailand rose from meagerly monthly average of 5,000 MT in 2019 to a monthly average of 26,861MT in 2022.

"RIPAN hopes that the incoming administration will follow through some of the laudable policies of the current administration as well as design and launch new ones to further strengthen and sustain the Nigeria Rice Industry," Ekwelem said.

On prices, he said that Nigerian rice were most affordable, adding that the expensive rice were the imported ones which people wrongfully refer to as local rice.

"No Nigerian rice costs more than N31,000 ex factory price," he said. (NAN)

E-payments rise to N49trn over Naira crisis

THE new industry statistics from the Nigeria Inter-Bank Settlement System (NIBSS) showed that Nigerians used electronic gateways 1.35 billion times in March, 448.54 million times more than the 901.46 million times they did in February.

The NIBSS records cashless transactions from the Nigeria Instant Payment System and Point of Sales terminals. The value of total instant payment in March was N48.33tn. PoS terminals recorded N1.15tn in total transactions in the month.

More Nigerians are depending on mobile devices for transactions as their usage increased by 106.93 per cent month-on-month allowing for a 61.99 per cent increase in transaction value from N2.56tn in February to N4.14tn in March.

Cashless transactions grew by 44.84 per cent to N126.73tn in first quarter of 2023 from N87.49tn in the corresponding period of 2022.

Data from the NIBSS suggests that the country's

THE Vice President, Prof. Yemi Osinbajo, recently announced that the \$2.8bn Ajaokuta-Kaduna-Kano natural gas pipeline project being constructed by the Federal Government through the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited and its partners, is now 43 per cent completed.

He also revealed that the project would help in generating 3.6 gigawatts (3,600 megawatts) of electricity, adding that the AKK pipeline was a major project of the regime of the President Muhammadu Buhari.

Osinbajo spoke at the opening ceremony of the 6th Nigeria International Energy Summit in Abuja. He was represented at the event by the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Boss Mustapha.

Buhari inaugurated the AKK pipeline project in July 2020, where it was announced that the Bank of China and Sinosure, a Chinese export and credit insurance corporation, were to fund the \$2.8bn facility.

Buhari had through a virtual conference, flagged-off the commencement of the construction work on the project at the Ajaokuta and Kaduna camps simultaneously.

Brentex/China Petroleum Pipeline Bureau-CPP Consortia and Oilserve/China First Highway Engineering Company-CFHEC Consortia were announced as the Engineering Procurement and Construction contractors for the contract.

Speaking on some of the accomplishments of the current government, which winds down in May, Osinbajo said the AKK project was one of the government's giant strides, particularly in the oil and gas sector, and was 43 per cent completed.

He said, "We've made giant strides in infrastructure. We kick-started the \$2.8bn Ajaokuta-Kaduna-Kano natural gas pipeline project. The AKK project will transport up to 3,500 million cubic feet of gas a day from various gas gathering projects.

"It will help to generate 3.6 gigawatts of power and support gas based industries along the route when completed. At present, the 614km gas pipeline is 43 per cent completed."

He also mentioned the revenue generated by the Federal Government from the 2020 Marginal Fields bid round that was concluded last year.

"We implemented the marginal fields bid round and saw to the conclusion of the process, which resulted in the award of Petroleum Prospective Licenses to

\$2.8bn gas pipeline ready to power 3,600MW plants



Abubakar

161 successful firms with the Federal Government raking in about N200bn, as well as \$7m from the process," the Vice President stated.

"We have also reinvigorated the private sector in the industry. We ensured an attractive framework for the indigenous companies to take advantage of divestments by international oil companies.

"This will ensure that the indigenous companies grew their capacities tremendously, as they are now accountable for about 30 per cent of national oil and gas production, as from just two per cent in 2010," he stated.

In his speech, which was made available to our correspondent in Abuja, the Group Chief Executive Officer, NNPC Ltd, Mele Kyari, said oil and gas remained a significant component of the global energy mix.

"Therefore we are unlocking more opportunities across both the oil and gas value chain spanning from supply and infrastructure to the markets.

"For instance, NNPC Ltd is actively supporting the Federal Government towards the realisation of key initiatives such as the Decade of Gas and the National Gas Expansion Programme," Kyari stated.

He said the initiatives sought "to deepen natural gas utilisation as an alternative transportation fuel,

virtual gas supply to off-pipeline grid gas customers and gas utilisation as feedstock for the development of gas-based industries."

He added, "This is evident in the definite actions taken to utilise CNG and LNG (Compressed Natural Gas and Liquefied Natural Gas) to power vehicles, buildings and power plants."

He said NNPC Ltd was also investing heavily in critical gas infrastructure such as the AKK gas pipeline and the OB3 gas interconnector to support five billion standard cubic feet/day of domestic gas utilisation, including 5GW of power generation capacity by developing power plant projects along the AKK pipeline corridor and across the country.

"For the gas export market, the ongoing NLNG Train 7 will expand Nigeria's LNG production capacity to about 30 million tonnes per annum. This is in addition to the planned Nigeria-Morocco and the Trans-Sahara Gas Pipeline projects which will supply gas to sub-regional African countries and subsequently Europe," Kyari stated.

The oil firm's boss said the company was deepening exploration activities of the nation's frontier basins, as this was already yielding results such as the oil discovery in Kolmani, adding that "we are hopeful that the recent spud-in of the EBENYI - A in Nasarawa State will yield positive



Emeifele

banking infrastructure is shaking off glitches that initially impacted the ability of customers to rely on cashless transactions.

Since a now postponed Central

Bank of Nigeria's naira redesign policy forced many Nigerians to electronic forms of payment, the volume of cashless transactions in the country has grown.

Despite this growth, failed

transactions are still a common sight in the country's payment landscape. On Easter Sunday, customers of Guaranty Trust Bank Plc were unable to access the bank's digital channels until the latter part of the day, leaving many stranded.

Recently, the Instant Payment channel of the NIBSS suffered a glitch that lasted for about four hours, throwing many Nigerians into confusion in the process.

On Monday, Cowrywise, a fintech, explained to its customers that intermittent downtimes with a couple of banks as well as the central processor of electronic payments in the country were affecting its ability to serve them well.

It said, "There have been intermittent downtimes with a couple of banks as well as the central processor of electronic payments, resulting in substantial delays with transfers.

"We apologise for any delays that you may have encountered and can assure you that steps are being taken to ensure that any potential future delays are kept to a minimum."



Business & Economy

RS' N10.1 trillion collection – major matters arising

FIRST off, our Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) – soon to be known as Nigeria Revenue Service to capture the fact that revenue everywhere including online (not only inland) must be captured – must be commended on their unprecedented and superlative achievement of N10.1 Trillion collection for the year 2022. Honestly, in our country, replete with bad news, this is one news that gladdened my heart and for which I have heard or read little commentary since announced, writes TOPE FASUA.

THE Muhammad Nami-led service bested itself in a performance that is also reflective of the ongoing economic recovery, after the second slump due to COVID-19 under President Buhari's leadership since 2015. We had never neared that double digit in the trillions of Naira.

Let us do a quick rundown of our revenue performance over the years since the year 2000. In that year as the civilians settled into government, the FIRS collected a total of N455 billion across the board. By 2001, this increased to N587 billion. In 2002, collections dipped to N434 billion. But in 2003, 2004, 2005, and 2006, the numbers increased to N703 billion, N1.19 trillion, N1.7 trillion and N1.87 trillion respectively, before we saw another slight dip in 2007 to N1.85 trillion. Due to the performance of the crude oil sector, the FIRS witnessed a leap in collections in 2008 when it hauled in N2.97 trillion.

But a dip occurred in 2009, when collections slumped to N2.2 trillion. The growth trajectory was resumed the year after and maintained for another two years when in 2010, 2011 and 2012, the FIRS collected the sums of N2.8 trillion, N4.62 trillion and N5.007 trillion respectively, before another dip to N4.8 trillion and N4.7 trillion in 2013 and 2014 respectively. The year 2015 was a transition year, and it witnessed underperformance by the FIRS when collections slumped to N3.7 trillion. An economic recession would follow in 2016 which further collapsed collections to N3.3 trillion (by then the lowest collection in seven years).

Luckily, revenue collections improved the year after, when the FIRS collected N4.03 trillion, increasing in 2018 to N5.3 trillion, and dipping slightly to N5.26 trillion and N4.9 trillion in 2019 and 2020 (the COVID-19 year). Global economic recovery and resilience on the part of the service saw to an increase in collections to N6.45 trillion in 2021 and now, a superlative performance of N10.1 trillion in 2022. A graphical representation of the journey is presented below:

Matters Arising

1. Growths in collection must be discounted for inflation and devaluation.

Whereas I will commend the FIRS Chairman and his team for being focused and having ploughed through a very difficult time (COVID-19), we all must note that the growing figures must be discounted for yearly inflation and devaluation. Just as the Naira gets weaker and weaker in the hands of the common man, so also is it getting weaker in terms of the public goods it can procure for the masses. Indeed, it may be prudent to represent these numbers in dollar terms, since our economy is quite externalised and linked to the dollar. If we do this, the excitement may wane. It must however be noticed that despite inflation and devaluation, the period of 2014 to 2017 were years of decreased revenue even in absolute terms.

That meant inefficiency and low value for Nigerians. This collection of N10.1 trillion happened in a year that we didn't have shocking



devaluation – at least not officially. Therefore, it passes the test for good performance. But we must keep challenging ourselves. Rather than the political capture and executive tardiness that has held Nigeria down so far, a more articulate and focused approach could lead to significant leaps in FIRS collections. I see that figure hitting N20 Trillion soon. Customs collections, which is part of what FIRS accounts for, is impacted by Naira devaluation, and must be benchmarked appropriately so that we know when we are making real progress.

2. Non-oil sector is here to stay

The Nigerian government has been very deliberate about the need for the economy to be diversified. It was however impossible to achieve this under the Obasanjo administration and it remained a struggle throughout the Yar'Adua and Jonathan administrations. We could however say this is now a reality given that we are seeing a reversal of fortunes so to speak. The oil sector used to contribute almost 65% of FIRS collections in the early 2000s. In the year 2011, non-oil contributed N1.56 trillion as against oil sector contribution of N3.071 trillion (almost double). 2022 performance shows that non-oil collections have now surpassed what accrues from oil. Oil sector in 2022 contributed N4.09 trillion, while non-oil accounted for N5.96 trillion (59%). This is good if it depicts the seriousness of our economic diversification efforts, and FIRS's ingenuity in going after those who should pay taxes. However, it also may belie the fact that Nigeria really lost grounds in the oil sector in 2022 and for some years now, with production dipping to somewhere below 1,000,000 barrels per day as against our OPEC quota of at least 1.6 million barrels a day. Thankfully, with the contracting of Tompolo's Tantita Security Services company, we now understand that crude oil production has ramped up considerably. With some luck, production from the Gombe/Bauchi axis may weigh in and 2023 should tell a different story, for good. We can walk and chew gum at the same

time. We should be optimising both sectors – oil and non-oil.

3. Silo mentality affecting Nigeria very adversely

It must be said that silo mentality and ego trips among government functionaries was a major problem. This is more so under the Buhari administration. I wrote about that recently when the suggestion (indeed the recommendation per the 2022 Finance Act), of an introduction of 5% tax on telecommunications was stepped down ostensibly on the orders of, or with the influence of the Minister for Communications and Digital Economy. I felt this was an overkill and powerplay by Sheikh Isa Pantami and an embarrassment to Dr Zainab Ahmed who had agonized for too long about low revenues and insisted that what Nigeria has is a revenue problem more than anything else. There she was, trying to do something about it with what could be considered a good tax – easy to pay, may not be felt, and easy to collect – and being shut down summarily on national TV. This time, the FIRS Chairman could not help but express his frustration at some of what he had experienced so far, including the tendency for agencies of government to sue each other and to compete for what is beyond their remit. Hear him as quoted in *ThisDay* newspaper of 24 January:

"We would have actually done better, but for several issues, some of which are political and very sensitive to discuss in the public domain... But the most important one is distractions from certain interests within the federal government itself and the sub-nationals or people who want to do what FIRS is doing – in other words, those that want to perform the statutory functions of FIRS of assessing, collecting, and accounting for taxes in Nigeria... These are not just mere issues but people instituting legal actions against FIRS to further distract us. People instituting, even federal agencies instituting legal actions against laws that have been passed by the National Assembly and signed into law by Mr. President... So, these challenges impacted negatively, because you see on so many occasions people writing in to find out that 'tax A, we are confused, we don't know who to pay to now, that there's a court ruling to restrict you from collecting such taxes'. So, this really impacted negatively on what we did last year... We appeal to

them to continue to invest the little we are generating judiciously so that they are able to encourage taxpayers to continue to comply and pay more so that together we are able to fix Nigeria."

I totally agree with Nami. The dysfunction in the current administration is very sad to watch. Who knows how many billions Nigerian masses lost to some fat cat somewhere as a result of infighting? Nami also stated briefly that N1.8 Trillion of waivers under several arrangements, were granted in the year.

4. Waivers, concessions and forbearances need to be curbed

Flowing from 3 above, it will be good for government to have a relook at the system of waivers because this nation – with a huge debt overhang – can ill afford them. We cannot be servicing debts with over 90% of our revenue and be gifting some away at will for any reason. Personally, I think the idea of exempting companies with turnover of less than N25 million and below from all forms of taxes is preposterous and needs to be reviewed. Nigeria is an open sesame and companies are thriving here. Even if it was minimum taxation, I believe we should get. There is a strong correlation or even causation between tax responsibility and economic development. Indeed, I am proposing that we start to operate as they do in the UK and UAE (countries in which I have done business corporately).

In these countries, they don't joke with their taxes. The UAE is even introducing company income tax by June 2023. That is an Arabic country reforming. In these two countries anyway, no company can do any business or even operate a bank account in any given year except they file company returns. And the company house (like our own Corporate Affairs Commission) will not collect your returns unless you show evidence of tax payment – including remittance of your staff PAYE and National Insurance. Note that the idea of Annual Returns also has security implications as it is primarily meant to be an update of company address and director or circumstance change in a given year. This is precious data. And data is king today. Anyway, in both countries that I've mentioned, as it also happens in every serious country, your bank will close down your company account if you don't supply your annual return after a deadline every year. This is what happened to Peter Obi's Next International UK Limited. If Nigeria could

effect this policy, company income tax collection will explode.

5. Are Nigerians paying too much taxes already?

There's also this argument flowing from five above, about whether Nigerians are already overtaxed as a result of multiple agencies and even non-state actors shaking everybody down. There was recently a short clip of a transporter of farm products in my Ondo State, who had to pay dues to about 60 agencies to do his business. There is also the popular knowledge that 'agberos', or those who work for transport unions around Nigeria, rake in billions of Naira daily. I want to add that I disagree though, with Messrs Taiwo Oyedele, Andrew Nevin, and others who believe that Nigerians are already overtaxed. Whereas we could define 'taxes' as every statutory payment that Nigerians are obliged to pay to government – including rents, rates, dues, duties, fees, levies, fines and others – I believe that it is dangerous to sell the idea to our publics that they are overtaxed already. Not many people are subjected to the multiple taxes that we complain about. And Nigerians do not pay anything near what people pay abroad. Dr Nevin argues that because Nigerians have to build their own infrastructure, we are already overtaxed. However, the idea of obligations to the state is about promoting responsible citizenship. We cannot short-cut that process. Most developed countries are where they are because their citizens feel obliged to support government – to a good degree – by contributing their quotas by way of those taxes, fees, fines, duties etc., and thereby promoting collective development. Our intellectuals should try to take a long view and not discourage that larger, noble objective.

The truth is that most Nigerians pay nothing. Most companies underpay taxes. Most people underpay. Even those charged with enforcement are more sympathetic with payers than being strict with their jobs. It is a fact that our governments have disappointed the people for too long with their ostentation and wrong choices. Still, we should not give up on our nation, promote the disconnection of the citizens from the country, and the eventual disintegration of our country.

Politics

Kogi guber: Braimoh emerges AA flag bearer

From AMEDU JOSEPH,
Lokoja

An Abuja based real estate developer, Mr. Olayinka Braimoh has emerged the flag bearer of the Action Alliance (AA) for the November 11th guber polls in Kogi State.

The Chairman of Kogi State Action Alliance Electoral Committee, James Benebe who announced the result of the party's primary election held in Lokoja on Monday, said that Braimoh defeated his closest rival, Simon Ogwu by 101 votes.

In his acceptance speech, Braimoh thanked God, national and state leadership of the party as well as supporters for the confidence reposed in him, assuring that he will live up to expectations if given the mandate.

"My victory is the beginning of a journey to wealth creation and adequate attention to the welfare of the people of Kogi"

Similarly, Dr Samson Omale, has emerged winner of the governorship primary election of the Young Progressive Party (YPP) in Kogi.

The election was conducted on Monday in Lokoja, in the presence of INEC officials led by Mr Egbeye Olagoke.

Our correspondent reports that Dr Omale was unanimously affirmed and

adopted as the YPP's sole candidate unopposed.

The Chairman Screening Committee of Kogi YPP Primary Governorship election, David Komolafe, said Omale had been duly screened and certified okay to pick the party's governorship ticket.

He said a total of 184 delegates from the 21 local government areas of Kogi were accredited to vote with respect to the party's constitution.

Komolafe, who doubles as the state's secretary of the party, said that the only other aspirant, Mrs Funmilayo Olumodeji voluntarily stepped down for Omale earlier in the day.

"Dr Omale has therefore been unanimously elected unopposed by the delegates since the other aspirant has stepped down," he said.

The state's chairman of the party, Dr Victor Akubo, affirmed the decision of the party's delegates and appreciated the other aspirants from the beginning for their sportsmanship.

He congratulated the party's candidate for emerging winner, and urged him to make the party and state proud when he becomes Kogi governor.

He described the governorship candidate as God

fearing, transparent, accountable and competent man, saying his emergence was the will of God.

Akubo thanked the INEC officials for their presence to monitor the exercise, saying it was a free, fair, credible and transparent process.

In his acceptance speech, Dr Omale thanked the delegates and the entire party members for giving him their mandate, saying he would not disappoint them if elected as Kogi governor.

He assured the people of Kogi of a visionary leadership, digital economic development, and the turning of the state's great potentials and resources to viable and profitable ventures.

He restated that Kogi resources would be well harnessed with improved infrastructure development, better welfare, and unemployment would be gone under his leadership.

"We will make Kogi to become a template of development for Nigeria. It is do able through a viable leadership. Expect a servant leader in me," Omale said.

Omale urged the people to come out en masse and elect credible leaders that would have their interest at heart, saying he is such a man.

From AMEDU JOSEPH,
Lokoja

FORMER Kogi Deputy Governor and Guber aspirant under the platform of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), Abayomi Awoniyi has faulted the emergence of Sen. Dino Melaye as the party's candidate for the November governorship election in the state describing his victory as a prriyic one.

According the statement by the former deputy governor which was made available to Journalists in Lokoja on Monday, "This victory portends great danger to the unity of our party and the prospect of winning the November 11 governorship e l e c t i o n "

The statement reads in parts:

"The primary that threw up Senator Melaye was flawed. 158 delegates who emerged from the State Ad-hoc Congress of the 29th March 2023 were replaced by the woeful Sen. Abdul Ningi Congress Committee, working in concert with Senator Dino Melaye's enablers within the Party hierarchy at the highest level. Let me hastily add this, in the pursuit of justice and correct conduct, it is necessary to state the facts as they are.

"To gift any aspirant, a total of 158 votes in a contest for 739 votes involving 8 aspirants is not a fair contest. It is fraudulent, duplicitous, sinful, and unwholesome because it confers undue advantage on the favoured

the next three days until the INEC in Abuja takes a firm decision on the Adamawa REC. Meanwhile people are still in shock at what is happening in Adamawa State and continually hoping that the State should not be engulfed in crisis.

State capital Sunday shortly after the declaration by the Returning Officer, Dr. Jima Lar at the senatorial headquarters Pankshin on Saturday.

The statement stated that, the results announced by the new Returning Officer, Dr Jima Lar, that Hon DiketPlang, polled 131,129 votes to defeat his closest rivals, YohannaGotom of the PDP who scored 127,022 votes and Barr. GarbaPwul of the Labour Party who polled 36,510 votes.

The state APC Chairman, Hon. Rufus Bature, congratulated Hon. DiketPlang, and praised him over his maturity, patience and resilience while the standoff lasted. "Hon. DiketPlang's emergence as Distinguished Senator-elect for Plateau Central Senatorial District is most well-deserved as he is a grassroots mobiliser who has great confidence in his capacity and abilities to deliver the dividends of democracy to his constituents.

"As a former member of

Former deputy governor/guber aspirant faults Dino's emergence



Melaye

aspirant. Sen Dino Melaye won a fraudulent primary.

"To throw some light on the corrupted delegates list, let me mention just a few of the grave anomalies therein. Firstly, one of the 'delegates' imported into the list was the candidate of APGA in the just concluded House of Assembly elections. Another illegally imported delegate is native to and resides in a ward totally different from where his name emerged. 62 of the 158 delegates imported come from 2 LGAs, Yagba West and Kabbabunu, which are undoubtedly my strongholds for the primary elections. In Ijumu, Senator Melaye's LGA, 29 of the 46 delegates were switched. I stood to be one of the beneficiaries of the delisted delegates. I made the assertion above, at a meeting held at the instance of H.E. Ahmed Makarfi, a fine upright gentleman with impeccable credentials, who was brought in to chair the Primary Election. Present at the meeting, were the State Party Chairman, some stakeholders

and all the other aspirants. Not one voice controverted my statement. If the delegate list which came from the Ad-hoc delegates Congress of the 29th March 2023 had been used for the Primary of the 16th April 2023, we would have had a free, fair and transparent event with probably a completely different outcome. Party faithful across the 3 senator Districts would have accepted the outcome of the election, which was very well conducted under the Chairmanship of H.E Sen Ahmed Makarfi and secretaryship of Barr. Laureta Ogwuche. But you cannot put a veneer of integrity on a cesspool of fraud. What we have today in Kogi State, is discontent within the PDP rank and file, and some measure of elation within the other political party.

"This pyrrhic victory may look like a fait accompli, but the dust is unlikely to settle even beyond the 11th November 2023 governorship election.

From the forgoing, it may surprise many that I do not necessarily blame Senator Dino Melaye for where we find ourselves today.

"He needs to search his heart to see if he has behaved well, as a counsellor of the celestial, which he claims to be. But I blame his enablers.

"It is natural for anyone to make the most of any temporary advantage he or she possesses. But it behoves on the custodians of the party to ensure that such advantages are not misused to the detriment of the common good.

"All entreaties made to the NWC of the party for the rectification of these anomalies were simply paid lip service. The PDP at the national level, seem not to have learnt anything. They continue to foist persons, only known to them in Abuja, on the state chapters and expect to win elections.

This statement is being made to correct the impression being given that the primary was a free and fair process. It was not. This has led to the PDP, in Kogi State, fluffing a great opportunity of winning back the state from the ruling party. We wait to see what happens in the days ahead.

He also expressed gratitude to security agencies in the state who ensured the provision of security and maintenance of peace before, during and after the announcement of the results.

'But for God, Adamawa would have been engulfed'

BY GYANG PAM

THE Tension was high and everyone could feel it because already, the rumors had been in place even before the so-called inconclusive election as claimed by the Adamawa State Resident Electoral Commissioner Barrister Hudu Ari.

On March 18th shortly after the governorship election, there was the rumor that there was going to be a verdict for inconclusive election and true to that allegation, the allegations became imminent.

However, 'him whom the gods want to destroy, he first make that person mad. Sunday was full of tension when instead of continuing with collation from the remaining ten local government areas where the elections were conducted.

The REC on Sunday morning, did not wait for the arrival of results but went ahead to declare Senator Aishatu Ahmed Binani winner.

What really angered the Adamawa people was the lie that collation will commence Sunday by 11:00am but unfortunately the REC went against the norms of the electoral law.

How Barrister Hudu Ari smuggled himself into the centre at about one o'clock just after midnight to throw sand into garri with service chiefs looking on passively. People expected that the

arrogance displayed by Hudu should have been checkmated by the service chiefs but ignorance was what they displayed.

On Monday, there was mass protest by hundreds of PDP supporters at the INEC collation centre with placards

bearing, Hudu should be jailed and prosecuted at the least.

Spokesman of the protesters and D-G. Adamawa South Fintiri for Governor Chief Felix Tangwani told newsmen that the protests will take place for

PLATEAU State Chapter of the All Progressive Congress (APC), has congratulated its Central Zone Senatorial Candidate, Hon. DiketPlang, for emerging as Senator-elect in the recently concluded

rerun as INEC finally and rightfully declared him winner last week in Pankshin LGA.

This came in a press statement signed by the party state Publicity Secretary, Hon. Sylvanus Namang, and made available to THE NIGERIA STANDARD in Jos, the Plateau



Bature

Politics

Women breaking barriers in male-dominated political landscape

That the Nigerian political scene has historically been dominated by men is not in doubt with its attendant and ceaseless advocacy by pro-women groups for a better deal in political and governmental affairs. Despite these obstacles, there have been exceptional women who have stood tall, shattering boundaries to assert their pedigree, MUAWIYYAH YUSUF MUYE writes.

THESE women have proven themselves intellectually and politically astute, with their achievements being the result of hard work and grace. Celebrating them to inspire the womenfolk has become imperative.

Senator Aisha Dahiru Binani

Senator Aisha Dahiru Binani is a politician, businesswoman, and founder of Binani Group which houses Binani Printing Press and Binani Air among others. She obtained her Higher National Diploma in Electrical Engineering from the University of Southampton. She was a member of the green chamber representing Yola North/Yola South/Girei federal constituency, as the Senator Representing Adamawa Central and APC Gubernatorial Candidate. She is known for her industriousness as well as her humility. I have been around her on several occasions, and you will hardly even feel like you are in the presence of a public figure.

Her philanthropic activities in her home state of Adamawa State are well documented, making her a beloved figure. Sen. Binani won her Senatorial Seat in 2019, against all odds and is poised to become the first elected female Governor in not only the North but in the whole of Nigeria, a feat that will undoubtedly serve as a source of inspiration and make her a beacon of hope not only to Northern Women but to women in Nigeria and Africa as a whole.

Ramatu Tijjani Aliyu

Dr. Ramatu Tijjani Aliyu, a certified Urban and Regional Planner from Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria, has gained a lot of popularity in Nigeria's political arena in recent years. Fondly called "The Amazon" by her supporters, RTA has a Master's Degree in Public Administration and a Ph.D. in Security and Strategic Studies from the Nasarawa State University, Keffi. She also earned an Honorary Ph.D. in Public Administration from Commonwealth University, London, and a Certificate in Leadership Skills from Abbey College, London. In 2021, Dr. Ramatu Tijjani Aliyu became an Envoy Extraordinaire of the Nigerian Institute of Town Planners EEO.NITP.

Dr. Aliyu's career trajectory has been fascinating. She has worked in the private sector in a civil engineering firm, serving as one of the Managing Directors of the firm, which made her a practicing town planner as well. She adroitly held several high profile offices from the defunct ANPP to the current APC where her contributions tremendously helped her Party towards resounding successes in 2015 and 2019. She was then appointed the Minister of State for FCT, a role she has been discharging to the admiration of many.

The politician in Dr. Ramatu Tijjani Aliyu is always visible, like the saying, "A Gold Fish has no hidden place". This was evident in the just concluded 2023 general elections, through the group Nigerians Unite for Tinubu/Shettima (NUFTS), her project for the Tinubu/Shettima Campaign. She held several positions during the electioneering campaign, including Chairman of APC FCT Presidential Campaign Council (PCC), Co-Coordinator of FCT APC PCC, Coordinator of the PCC Women Wing, Matron of Tinubu Support Organization, and several other Tinubu Support Groups. She played a significant role in the campaigns across the FCT and Kogi State. APC made tremendous progress in the FCT Winning 1 House of Representatives



Binani



Balarabe



Garba



Usman



Aliyu

seat, a position formerly occupied by PDP going into the election. She is no doubt one of the top politicians to watch out for going forward.

Hadiza Sabuwa Balarabe

Dr. Hadiza Sabuwa Balarabe is the Deputy Governor of Kaduna State. In the 2019 governorship election, Governor El-Rufai who was facing the baggage of the unpopular revolutionary reforms and policies of his administration, as well as the backlash from Southern Kaduna Christians for daring to jettison the Muslim/Christian ticket decided to risk his re-election bid by nominating Dr. Sabuwa Balarabe as his running mate breaking the norm in Northern Nigeria by choosing a woman as his running mate and his unwavering faith in her paid off, she became the first female to be elected to that office in the state.

Like myself, Dr. Balarabe is a graduate of the University of Maiduguri, where she received training as a surgeon with over two decades of experience in public health. She served as the Director of Public Health in the FCT in 2014 and held the position until February 2016 when Governor El-Rufai appointed her as the Executive Secretary of the Kaduna State Primary Health Care Development Agency, she was re-nominated as the Deputy to the Kaduna State Governor-elect, Senator Uba Sani in the 2023 election. She has fortified her

position as one of those exceeding boundaries set for women in a male-dominated field of politics.

Hadiza Bala Usman

Hadiza Bala Usman's impressive career path has made her a source of inspiration for many. She attended Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria, where she earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration. She later went on to receive a Master's Degree in Developmental Studies from the University of Leeds in the UK. As the former Chief of Staff to the Executive Governor of Kaduna State, Mal. El-rufai, Her appointment to this position was a clear indication of her intellectual Capacity, brilliance, and competence. Her rise to the top was not surprising given her previous role as one of the strongest policy drivers of the APC Campaign in 2015.

Ms. Bala Usman's tenure as the Managing Director (MD) of the Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA) was a vindication of the faith placed in her for such a position. She implemented innovative policies that led to the overhaul of the entire port authority. She fearlessly tackled the challenges in her job even if it meant stepping on toes. Her exploits propelled her to the top echelon of the leadership ladder and won her the admiration of many Nigerians. In 2023, Ms. Usman was appointed Deputy DG (Admin) of the APC Tinubu/Shettima Presidential Campaign Council. She continues to inspire young women to strive for excellence in all their endeavors.

Senator Binta Masi Garba

Senator Binta Masi Garba is a

remarkable advocate for women's rights. She attended Kaduna Polytechnic, where she obtained Higher National Diploma (HND) in Marketing. In addition, she attended the Harvard Kennedy School of Government and earned a Certificate in Public Financial Management. She began her professional career as an advert officer at New Nigeria Newspapers.

Senator Garba was elected to represent the people of Kaduna South Federal Constituency at the green chambers in 1999, at the time, she was the youngest Federal legislator in Nigeria. She contested for the same House of Representatives in her home state of Adamawa State, representing Madagali/Michika Federal Constituency, and won, making her the first politician to represent two different Federal Constituencies at different times. When the All Progressives Congress (APC) was formed, she became the first and only Female State Party Chairperson to date. Few individuals, regardless of gender, can achieve this feat. In the 2015 elections, she was the only female Senator Elected in all 19 Northern States of Nigeria.

Late Senator Aisha Al-Hassan

This write-up will not be complete without the Honourable mention of Late Hajiya Jummai Alhassan. She defeated the then-incumbent Senator, former Ambassador Manzo Anthony in Taraba North Senatorial Primaries. She then went on to defeat a former governor in the

general elections. A trained lawyer, she became the first female to be appointed Taraba State AG and Commissioner of Justice. She was also the first woman to be appointed Secretary FCT judicial council and later appointed the Chief Registrar of the High Court of the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, She contested for the Taraba State Gubernatorial seat in the 2015 and 2019 elections under the Platform of the All Progressive Congress (APC) and UDP but lost the former to the candidate of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) Darius Ishaku under controversial circumstances, her enigmatic cult following earned her the name "Mama Taraba".

President Buhari, however, appointed her as Minister of Women Affairs in 2015.

IMAGES

PROF. OSINBAJO DELIVERS LECTURE

Nigeria's Vice President, Prof. Yemi Osinbajo on Monday delivered lecture titled, "Creating Homeland for All: Nation Building in a Diverse Democracy is part of Policy Making and Good Governance lecture series initiated by the National Instituted for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS) Kuru, Jos for the SEC 45 participants



Governor Simon Bako Lalong, CON, Director General, NIPSS, Prof. Ayo Omotayo and others waiting to receive the VP, Prof. Osinbajo at the Aiport



Vice President, Prof. Yemi Osinbajo, SAN with Governor Lalong, CON and the DG NIPSS, Prof. Omotayo



NIPSS Directors of Studies, Prof. Funmi Josephine Para-Mallam and Prof. Dung Pam Sha, Director of Research at the Yakubu Gowon Airport



President, Plateau State Traditional Council, and the Gbong Gwom Jos, His Majesty, Da Jacob Gyang Buba, CFR delivering his remarks



From left are, CP Bartholomew Oyeka, Air Commodore Edward Gabkwet and Major-General Ali Ibrahim



Cross section of NIPSS Directing Staff listening to speeches



Governor Simon Bako Lalong (2nd right) introducing to the VP. Prof. Yemi Osinbajo, PLHA Deputy Speaker, APC Chairman and Secretary to Government of the State



Commissioners for Information and Communications, Hon. Dan Manjang (right) with his colleague, Women Affairs and Social Development, Hon. Rebecca Sambo Adar

PHOTOS: DANLADI DUK

Politics

Peter Obi, Obidients are on the right path

Mr. Peter Gregory Obi, a former governor of Anambra State, is not an unknown political quantity. It was he, who used the judicial means to retrieve his stolen political mandate, and went ahead to rule Anambra State for eight years, recording unprecedented giant strides in diverse areas like education, agriculture, security, economy, infrastructural development, and others. His belief that he possesses leadership qualities, probity, fealty, political cum economic ideologies, and courage motivated him to contest Nigeria's 2023 presidential election, CHIEDU UCHE OKOYE writes.

IT was on the political platform of the Labour Party that he vied for the most exalted political diadem in Nigeria in February 2023 after he had defected from the troubled PDP.

His membership of the Labour Party caused that political party to undergo positive metamorphosis: it transformed from being a small and unpopular political party to being a big and popular political party.

Peter Obi was able to wrought that change in the Labour Party owing to his achievements in the area of political leadership and his possession of charisma, knowledge, moral scruples, political cum economic ideologies, political vision and sagacity, and courage.

More so, before the conduct of our 2023 presidential election, Mr. Peter Obi's rhetoric and electioneering speeches found resonance with millions of Nigerians, especially the youthful demographic of the population. Those young Nigerians, who are disillusioned, dispossessed, and disenchanted with the ugly status quo ante in Nigeria, perceive Mr. Peter Obi as an anti-thesis and foil character of the quintessential Nigerian politicians, who are corrupt, unscrupulous, unknowledgeable, and unpatriotic.

While other presidential candidates utilized the factors of money, religion, and ethnicity to woo the people, Peter Obi, who is passionate about re-making Nigeria, espoused his plans about transforming our economy from being consumptive to being productive. And it is evident to us that he is not predisposed to condoning any acts of corruption, which will be committed by politicians if the baton of leadership is thrust in his hands.

So the army of obidients- the followers of Mr. Peter Obi- came into being owing to the people's disillusionment and disenchantment with the lackluster, uninspiring, visionless, and punitive government of President Muhammadu Buhari. But those dispossessed and underprivileged Nigerians repose



Obi

trust in Mr. Peter Obi. And they believe that he is the political Messiah, who can right the wrongs in our body politic and set our country on the path of irreversible and sustainable economic and technological development.

But the obidients have been described as an irreverent, violent, and unthinking horde of young people, who are given to impulsive actions. And it is said that the obidients are intolerant of opinions that are critical of Mr. Peter Obi, that they are uncouth, and that they have fascist tendencies. Those unflattering characterizations and portrayals of the obidients are not wholly true, though they have their failings, failures, and shortcomings.

But the fact is this, members of the obidient movement want a change for the better in Nigeria. And they have stood solidly behind Mr. Peter Obi in

the aftermath of the 2023 presidential election, which was deeply flawed, because Mr. Peter Obi is symbolic of the change they earnestly desire. They have made condemnatory comments regarding that presidential election, which was characterized by massive rigging. Both foreign and local election observer teams gave thumbs down to the presidential election, too, because it didn't pass muster. And it fell far below the acceptable global standards.

So have Mr. Peter Obi, and his running mate, Baba Ahmed-Datti, done any wrong by criticising and faulting the electoral processes that threw up Bola Ahmed Tinubu as the winner of the Nigeria's 2023 presidential election? They have done no wrong. Rather, they are exercising their right to the freedom of expression, an inalienable fundamental human right, which is enshrined in our constitution.



Ahmed-Datti

That is why the punishment meted out to the television station that granted an interview to Baba Ahmed-Datti should be condemned. That action of our government is emblematic of the doings of a fascist government. And it is unbecoming of a government that brands itself a democratic government to engage in deeds that are aimed at muzzling the voices of dissent. So what is happening in Nigeria now is a throwback to happenings during the dark days of the Sani Abacha era.

And it is saddening that the APC panjandrum, who hold the levers of government, cannot make a distinction between comments that border on treasonous offences and the ones that do not border on treasonable felony. So the APC attack dogs like Bayo Onanuga, Festus Keyamo, Dele Alake, and others have gone for broke, framing Mr. Peter Obi and Baba Ahmed-Datti for treasonable felony offence. And they are relentlessly dishing out falsehoods to the people so as to present the duo in bad light and bring them to the obloquy.

But it should be noted that when the Abacha junta maintained an asphyxiating stranglehold on us, the activists at that time- Bayo Onanuga included- fought Sani Abacha with everything in their arsenal. Thankfully, today, the military had returned to the barracks. And we have been enjoying democratic governance, uninterrupted, for twenty four years.

But it is inconceivable, incredible, and ironic that some of those activists of yore, who made names for themselves by fighting the Abacha military junta are, today, defending the 2023 presidential election, which was characterized by violence and electoral malpractice. So I would like us to answer these pertinent questions: are those asserting that the Nigeria's 2023 presidential election was free and fair true democrats and activists? Or are they pretentious and hypocritical myrmidons, who are motivated and swayed by pecuniary, religious, and ethnic considerations?

In conclusion, I would like to state it emphatically that members of the obidient movement are not fascists, as they are alleged to be; neither are they the unruly partisans people are making them out to be. Rather, they are the disgruntled and dispossessed Nigerians, who are short-changed in our scheme of things. That's why they are fighting to reclaim their country from the jaws of destruction and underdevelopment.

So Mr peter Obi, Baba Ahmed-Datti, and the obidients are doing the right thing, which every patriotic Nigerian ought to do. They are on the right path; and they deserve commendations, and not condemnations.

But the fact is this, members of the obidient movement want a change for the better in Nigeria. And they have stood solidly behind Mr. Peter Obi in the aftermath of the 2023 presidential election, which was deeply flawed, because Mr. Peter Obi is symbolic of the change they earnestly desire. They have made condemnatory comments regarding that presidential election, which was characterized by massive rigging. Both foreign and local election observer teams gave thumbs down to the presidential election, too, because it didn't pass muster. And it fell far below the acceptable global standards.

News

Federal University Gashua matriculates 1,872 students

From WILLIE ATTAH, Gombe

FEDERAL University, Gashua in Yobe State, has on Saturday matriculated 1, 872 newly admitted students into various disciplines for the 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 academic year.

In a press release made available to our correspondent in Gombe by the university's Head of Information and Protocol Unit, Mallam Adamu Saleh, it disclosed that the Vice-Chancellor of the institution, Professor Maimuna Waziri, made the disclosure at the occasion of the university's 8th matriculation ceremony.

According to Waziri, the university has a name to protect, as such, it has zero tolerance for cultism, examination malpractice, indecent dressing, demonstration, corruption, thuggery, harassment, all forms of abuse, stealing, hooliganism and other forms of social vices capable of disrupting students' attention to the pursuit of their academic success.

A breakdown of the admitted students indicated that a total of 1,669 were admitted through UTME while 203 DE students were admitted for the 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 academic sessions.

She stressed that based on the summary of the admissions for the two sets, the institution has admitted students from 34 states of the federation and Abuja. The VC added



Adamu

that the admission of students from various states indicates a good mixture based on federal character principle.

"You should note that FUGA is not a dumping ground for admission seekers but a place where all students would be judged based on the quality of our programmes and their performance," she said.

She also stated that the hallmark of FUGA is academic excellence and pointed out that, "I therefore urge you to work hard and avoid any act that is not in conformity with the university's rules and regulations as well as societal norms, because

anyone found guilty shall be made to face the wrath of the law".

While administering the matriculation oath to the newly admitted students, the university Registrar, Dr. Abubaka Mamuda, said that any student involved in any form of misconduct in the course of their academic pursuit should consider his or her admission terminated by the school authority.

The matriculants were comprised of 199 students from the Faculty of Agriculture, 95 students from the Faculty of Art, 741 students from the Faculty of Management and Social Sciences and a total of 837 students from the Faculty of Science.

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

Sen. Dino Melaye has won the People's Democratic Party Governorship ticket for Kogi State.

Sen. Melaye in a congress held at Kefas Multipurpose Hall, pulled over fifty percent of the votes cast.

Sen. Melaye pulled over 300 votes to beat his closest rival, Barr. Kabiru Usman who had over 100 votes.

In a tension soaked election, with protest leading to the crisis over the delegates list, the process however, went on smoothly, with the supervision of the Independent National Electoral Commission.

Kogi PDP Primaries: Dino Melaye wins



Melaye

Kogi APC guber candidate predicts victory at polls

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

THE All Progressive Congress (APC), Kogi State governorship

candidate, Alhaji Ahmed Usman Ododo has predicted overwhelming victory for the party come November

governorship polls. Ododo noted that the task of leading his party to victory in the next governorship election is a herculean one, but it is a task that must be accomplished by the grace of God.

Delivering his acceptance speech after being declared winner of the APC governorship primary, Ododo, the former Auditor General of Local Government in Kogi State, said that all the aspirants are eminently qualified to fly the flag of the party, but only one person can do so at a time.

To the glory of God Almighty and with the utmost sense of responsibility, I accept the challenge to be the flag bearer of our great party, the All Progressives Congress (APC) in the November 2023 governorship election in Kogi State.

I congratulate all my brothers and sisters who are all aspired to lead the party but in the next governorship election. You have all demonstrated a rare feat in party loyalty, respect for the system, and believe in the spirit of a united APC family in Kogi State. We are all winners because we are in this race together as one family

I call on all of you, my brothers and sisters, and all our teeming supporters to let us unite solidly behind the ticket and work for the victory of the party come November 2023. With your support, our great party will be victorious in the next governorship election and we shall consolidate on the gains of the New Direction agenda in the state. May I at this juncture most respectfully express my profound appreciation to our leader and architect of the new

Kogi State, the Governor of Kogi State, Alhaji Yahaya Bello for believing in me and for effectively leading us through a smooth and rancour-free process that has today culminated in this victory for all our party men and women in the state.

I want to also use this medium and singular opportunity to specially and most profoundly appreciate the relentless efforts of the state party chairman, Alhaji Abdullahi Bello. Today, the party has spoken; the system is working and the APC shall be victorious and we shall retain power in Kogi State come November 2023.



Adamu

Impose taxes on tobacco to reduce consumption - CISLAC

As a frontline measure in improving its public health, the Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC)

From WILLIE ATTAH, Gombe

has advised the Gombe State Government to

impose taxes within its constitutional jurisdiction on retail and consumption of tobacco products.

According to CISLAC's policy brief on Financing for health through taxation, a case study for tobacco taxation in Nigeria, 2021, there is a heavy burden on the use of tobacco thus, reaching high epidemic proportions, it a major global public health challenge.

CISLAC quoted the World Health Organization WHO, which estimates about 13 million smokers in Nigeria in 2012, with over 16,000 deaths attributable to smoking.

With the scaring indices, Solomon Adoga, Senior Programme Officer of CISLAC in Abuja, during a one day stakeholders

engagement for CSOs on tobacco control in Gombe State, advised the Gombe State Government to create a framework that allows it to license tobacco retailers and distributors that are in the state to place levies and fines on people contravening the framework.

He explained that at the national level, the tobacco tax reforms programme aims to increase excise rates on tobacco taxes that will ultimately translate to reduce affordability of the product and improve health.

"But in Gombe State now, being that the state does not collect excise taxes, there are also other forms of taxation that are within the jurisdiction of the state. "For instance, the state

can create a framework that allows it to license tobacco retailers, distributors that are in the state to place levies and fines on people contravening the framework if they are eventually put in place.

"By so doing, it will also contribute to the price and tax measures for tobacco control in the State. And not just doing that, there is also a viable opportunity for the state to increase its revenue through this kind of measures. So it's a win-win situation for public health and public finance", he emphasized.

Participants at the meeting expressed delight and interest to go all out to create awareness and advocate for the tobacco tax reforms in Gombe State.



Inuwa

News

FG to host International Energy Summit

By **JIDAUNA YANUNG, Abuja**

AGAIN, the Federal Government is ready to host the World to the 6th edition of the Nigeria International Energy Summit (NINE2023) scheduled to commence from 16th to 20th April at the International Conference Centre Abuja (ICC).

The summit co-hosted by the Federal Ministry of Petroleum Resources and the Nigeria National Petroleum Company Limited has its theme as, "Global Perspective for a sustainable energy future".

The NIES 2023 that is primed to be the most significant date and the valedictory edition of Mr. president's administrations, is said to provide a platform for this administration to present its scorecard in the energy sector as well as offer roadmap for the incoming administration.

This year's NIES will grace the presence of President



Buhari

Muhammad Buhari as the Special Guest of Honour. It is also expected to feature high-profile attendance by industry leaders, policy makers and stakeholders from both public and private sectors.

The summit will also provide opportunities for companies to showcase their expertise and

exhibit their products and services to major decision makers.

For further inquiry on the summit, visit the event website on www.nigeriaenergysummit.com or the event consultant, James Shindi on james@brevityanderson.com.

I am not working against my deputy's aspiration

From **JIDAUNA YANUNG Abuja**

THE Speaker of the House of Representative said he was not working against the aspirations of his deputy, Ahmed IdrisWase and other lawmakers who want to succeed him.

Gbajabiamila who made this clarification on Thursday while reacting to a cover story in one of the national dailies, said he has not declared support for any of his colleagues who has declared their interest for the office of the Speaker.

The Speaker in a statement on his verified Twitter handle @femigbija said: "Today, April

13, 2023, a national daily carried a cover story in which it reported that I was against the aspiration of my deputy, Rt. Hon. Ahmed IdrisWase, and some other aspirants to the office of Speaker in the 10th House.

I have not declared support for any my colleagues who have declared their interest. I have made my position abundantly clear that there is a need to wait for the party. There is a need to wait for the party to complete work against my party's interest and position.

"I am a product of APC's zoning in 2019, and I shall adhere to that anytime the

– **GBAJIAMILA**

party comes up with its arrangement. Anyone/media peddling rumors of my endorsement of any of the aspirants should desist forthwith".

Meanwhile, a coalition of returning and new members elect from all political parties that won seats in the House of the majority party, APC are for zoning of the speaker and Deputy Speaker seats.

The coalition also pledged to uphold the decision of the opposition parties on minority leadership of the House in line with parliamentary best practices. The coalition, known as the "Joint Task – 10th Assembly" comprises 283 members – elect for the APC, the People Democratic Party (PDP), the Labour Party (LP), the New Nigeria People Party (NNP), the Social Democratic Party (SDP), the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA), African Democratic Congress (ADC) and the Young Progressive Party (YPP).

The chairman and co-chairman of the group, Usman Bello Kumo (APC, Gombe) Kingsley Chinda (PDP, Rivers) disclosed this in a statement on Thursday.

"The main focus of the coalition is to promote the independence of the Legislature; the interdependence of the legislature and other Arms of Government to legislate for good governance and grass roots impact; constituency outreach; equity and fairness among members –elect as well as well as unity, equity and fairness in the emergence of presiding and principal Officers in line with best parliamentary practice", the statement reads in parts.



Gbajabiamila



Pain as part of our existence

NIGERIA has a lot of existential challenges. Since the return to democracy, the country has grappled with many of these challenges and it has shaped the experiences of leaders variously. We have struggled through the Niger Delta militancy to the demonstrations in the Western part of the country. Also, the Central part of Nigeria has not been spared the wrath of land grabbers nor has the North East and North Western Nigeria been free of the activities of insurgents who have revolted against the State first to protest against perceived injustices and later as a way of enforcing their religious beliefs.

In the midst of all these, the country has not been spared other equally devastating catastrophe. Fuel scarcity has remained a constant with the people. So too has been the challenge of insecurity. Our infrastructure are failing as our roads and other means of travels have become increasingly unsafe. The country seems to be on the precipice and something needs to be done fast to redeem it. We have been witnesses to the devastation done in other climes by nature but in our own case, we have been our own catastrophe.

We have demonstrated annoying lack of capacity to run our affairs even when we claim to have some of the best brains in the world. Our citizens are found everywhere in the world and in every profession yet we cannot translate what we give out there into tangibles at home. We compete with the best, yet *wejapa* at any given opportunity and leave the country expecting someone else to come and fix it for us. What can be done to redeem our self-inflicted curse?

There is need to change the process of our leadership recruitment process. Whoever wants to be given a leadership must be schooled in such a manner that he would see the country as first is up to us to take up the gauntlet and change the narratives. We have remove our attachments to some of our primordial sentiments, we might not be able to build a strong and virile country. We must endeavour to demonstrate the Nigerianess in us by serving faithfully and being just and truthful in all we do.

Unless we begin to see ourselves as one people with shared destiny, we are not likely to move forward. When we reduce everything to our small localities, we will continue to be local champions. Our society is over ripe to start churning out leaders who can be trusted to deliver the goods. If we can only replicate the good things we see outside our shores at home, we will build beyond the imagination of our

To be sure, it is time to take back Nigeria from those who have held it captive and are struggling to kill and bury it. That is unacceptable and should not be allowed to happen. We owe our children and those unborn the responsibility of leaving a virile and strong country for them given the kind of resources at our disposal. Like our singers have often said, *Nigeria go survive*, ours is to make sure that happens.

And the opportunity to take charge of our destiny is here. In a few days, the Presidential and national assembly elections will be held. It is up to us to take up the gauntlet and change the choices to make which would either mar or make our society. The choice is ours to make. If we want to repair our fractured society, here is the opportunity, if not it is all in our hands. We must look beyond our enclosures to find leaders who can work for the general good not those who would service themselves and their own.

We must resolve to end insurgency. Respect the mass who are the employers of the politicians and ensure they are held to account when they veer off the mark. No more region, no more religion, no more tribe and more who you know or don't know. All we need now is equal opportunities, capacity, ability and the drive to do that which is right. If we field the best in our society, we are sure to have quality results not what we have seen since the return to democracy in 1999 where rogues and loquacious characters have been occupying the political space and messing everyone else.

To be sure, it is time to take back Nigeria from those who have held it captive and are struggling to kill and bury it. That is unacceptable and should not be allowed to happen. We owe our children and those unborn the responsibility of leaving a virile and strong country for them given the kind of resources at our disposal. Like our singers have often said, *Nigeria go survive*, ours is to make sure that happens.

News

World Health Day: WHO celebrates 75 year anniversary

BY EZEKIEL DONTINNA

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

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

Addressing journalists at the conference hall of the Plateau State Primary Health Care Board Jos, the state Commissioner Of Health, Dr. Nimkong Lar Ndam, said, "the World Health Day is held every year on the 17 April and it marks the anniversary of the founding of World Health Organisation (WHO) in 1948".

"This year's celebration focuses on " Health For All" while also celebrating 75 years of its formation. There has been a lot of progress in protecting people from diseases including smallpox eradication, reducing the incidence of polio by 99%, saving millions of lives through childhood immunization, decline in maternal mortality, responding to various disaster and health events and improving health well-being for millions more.

"These 75 years shows that it is possible for us to come together for a common purpose. As a government, we will continue to take action to protect, support and expand the health workforce as a strategic priority. Investments, education, skills and decent jobs for health need has been prioritized to meet the rapidly growing demand for upgrade of various tertiary health schools in the state aimed at reducing the shortage in health workforce by 2030", he assured.

Ndam, disclosed that in a deliberate attempt to ensure health for all which is the universal health coverage, the Plateau State Government under the leadership of Governor Simon BakoLalong, established the Health Insurance Scheme (PLASCHEMA) to reduce the catastrophic out of pocket health expenditure.

According to him, "It has also established the Drugs Hospital Equipment Management Agency to ensure availability of quality and affordable drugs and strengthening the Primary HealthCare System which is the closest healthcare system to the majority of people living in the state".

The occasion climaxed with the cutting of the 75th Anniversary cake by the commissioner and other key partners, group photographs



Lalong

and a glorious match past to the Secretariat Junction Jos. There were free medical

check-ups and treatment for people who witnessed the occasion.

Foundation trains Islamic aid groups on traffic control

From ABBAS GUNGURA, Bauchi

ABAUCHI-based non-governmental organisation, known as Wunti Al-Khair Foundation has trained members of joint Islamic Aid organizations (security volunteers) on basic and technical skills on crowd and traffic management, emergency response to ensure orderliness and free-flow of traffic during the Eid-el fitr celebration in Bauchi State.

A well known philanthropist and patriotic indigene of Bauchi Local Government Area, Alhaji Bala Wunti shouldered the volunteers' two-day training that was held at the Bauchi Central Mosque Jama'atuNasril Islam (JNI) Conference Hall which ended Sunday.

Speaking at the closing ceremony of the training, the Director National Aid Group of Jama'atuNasril Islam (JNI) Alh. Bala Ibrahim Sani, recalled that the foundation chairman has for years been shouldering such Islamic promotional activities by giving volunteers the desired knowledge to carry out the rewarding duties.

He explained that the training is the fifth of its kind being sponsored by BalaWunti. "We lack words to express our gratitude to the founder of the foundation other than pray for bountiful rewards from Allah".

Sani who is also the Lifidin Bauchi, disclosed that the foundation trained 150 Islamic Aids members who can also step it down to other volunteers towards making the forthcoming Ei-del Fitr celebration smooth, orderly and accident-free.

Lifidin Bauchi noted with delight that the trained volunteers would complement the efforts of corps of the Federal Road

Safety Commission (FRSC), the Red Cross operatives and other sister/voluntary organisations for a peaceful Ei-del fitr celebration.

He also spoke of the need for the foundation's leader to further assist with the provision of some ambulance vehicles for needful medical services during such voluntary activities.

The foundation chairman, Alh. BalaWunti said that the training of the 'Yan Agaji is geared towards easing the conduct and celebration of Ei-del fitr by the Muslims Ummah slated for next week.

Wunti, who is the Group General Manager, National

NGSG earmarks N478m to end insecurity

From MATHEW JWANTU, Minna

As part of efforts to curtail the high security challenges in Niger State, the state government has earmarked N478,956,614.44, out of the N238,924,457,782.47 estimated 2023 budget to strengthen the state internal security.

Hon. Commissioner/Deputy Chairman, Niger State Planning Commission, Malam ZakariAbubakar made the disclosure at a press briefing held at Government House, Minna Niger State recently, saying security is paramount.

Hon. Zakari explained that the money was meant to purchase security gadgets for vigilante corps, installation of CCTV surveillance system around Minna, mitigation and response in 25 LGAs and other security activities across the state.

The 2023 proposed budget is aimed at consolidating the achievements of this

THOUSANDS of Shiites faithful last Friday matched through the major streets of Bauchi metropolis and staged a peaceful demonstration against the Israelites expansionist tendencies in the Middle-East.

The demonstration started from the Ajiya Adamu Friday Mosque in the heart of Bauchi metropolis, spanning various streets in the city chanting supportive songs for the Palestinians and condemning the Israelites policy of oppression against Muslims.

The peaceful demonstration was led by one Malam Ahmed Yusuf Yashi following the call by the Iranian Islamic leader, Ayyatullahi Imam Ebrahim Raisi for the Shiite disciples to use last Friday of the Ramadan month as remembrance day for the occupation of Palestinians in the Middle-East by the Israelites.

Malam Ahmed Yashi drew the attention of the Muslims Ummah globally to understand that Palestinians issue is not about the struggle for their emancipation from the domination by Israelites,

Shiites faithful stage peaceful protest

From ABBAS GUNGURA, Bauchi



Mohammed

but the Israelites expansionist tendencies in the Middle-East.

He stressed the need for all encompassing global Muslims

support to curb the negative tendencies of the Israelites against the Ummah generally.

Yashi stated, "The Al-Aqsa Mosque in the Middle-East is the third most significant Islamic Mosque in the world now under the occupation of Israel, hence it becomes very imperative to retrieve it back to the Muslim Ummah".

He explained that the Shi'ates sect set aside last Friday of the Ramadan month to commemorate the oppression of the weak globally especially the Palestinians of the Middle-East by the Israelites.

Malam Yashi pointed out that the struggle is not for the Palestinians alone, but for the entire global Muslims against the Israelites planned occupation of the Middle-East to include countries like Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, among others, as demonstrated in the year 1967.

"The Israelites have the tendency to occupy the entire Middle-East originally of the Muslims domain under the project code-named 'Bigger Israel'. And that apart from the above listed countries, Madinais included. They arguably say was confiscated from them by Prophet Muhammad (SAW)".

Yashi therefore stressed the need for the Muslims Ummah globally to be on their salvation toes as, according to him, the issue at stake is not specifically for the Palestinians alone, but the entire Muslims Ummah globally irrespective of sect differentiation.

"Our call on this last Friday of the Ramadan month as commemoration day is for each and every Islamic sect to come out in condemnation of the Israelites expansionist tendencies in the Middle-East".

Bauchi Shi'ates disciples also urged for global Muslims Ummah unalloyed support for the Palestinians being oppressed by the Israelites, saying, 'By God's grace victory is on Palestinians side'.

Petroleum Investment Management Services (NAPIMS), said the exercise was informed by the foundation's determination to ensure that the thousands of Muslim faithful going to various Eid Grounds are properly guided and protected.

KabiruGarbaAminu, who represented BalaWunti at the occasion, opined that the training among the various religious associations would promote cooperation and better understanding in undertaking religious activities or exercises.

Also speaking at the

occasion, an Islamic cleric, Sheikh Bala Isa expressed delight with the contributions of BalaWunti towards the promotion and propagation of the religion of Islam in the state, as well as his philanthropic gesture to humanity such as building of mosques in Bauchi metropolis and helping the needy in the society.

Our correspondent who covered the occasion reports that at the end of the programme, the participants went home with bags of rice and clothing materials as Ramadan gift.

administration in the past seven years and laying a solid foundation for the next administration.

The Hon. Commissioner while breaking down the 2023 proposed budget of consolidation and transition said the budget is estimated at N238,924,457,782.47, which according to him comprises N91,044,745,351.31 (38.11%) and N147,879,712,431.16 (61.89%) recurrent and capital estimates respectively.

"The budget is aimed at completion of projects that are at advanced stages of completion. It focuses on: Security, agriculture, infrastructural development, education, health, water, sanitation and people with special needs", he explained.

On revenue, Zakari said the year 2023 proposed budget is underpinned by the Medium Term Fiscal Framework (MTEF); Economic Fiscal Update and Fiscal Strategy Paper (EFU-FSP) 2023-25 which is the

three year plan that normally provides for annual plans/budgets.

The total estimated revenue of N238,924,457,782.47 according to him, was derived from the following revenue sources: Statutory Allocation (SA), Value Added Tax (VAT), Internally Generated Revenue, Capital Receipt (CR).

"Other revenue include refunds - N61,094,737,097.00 (25.57%) estimated as Statutory Allocation (SA) was arrived at using the following indices: Inflation 17.16%, GDP - 3.75%, Oil Production Benchmark (MBPD) 1.60, NGN: USD exchange rate 435.57".

The Hon. Commissioner put the breakdown of other revenue estimates as follows: VAT = N35,616,260,802.00 (14.91%), IGR = N22,519,483 (9.43%), Capital Receipt = N115,436,249.753.47 (48.31%). Others include refunds N4,257,726,144.00 (1.78%).

Foreign Commentary

Shadow of Saddam's dictatorship in Iraq

The political elite continues to use Saddam Hussein's repressive tactics in dealing with dissent and opposition.
ALFADHEL AHMAD writes.

TWENTY years have passed since the US-led invasion of Iraq toppled Saddam Hussein's dictatorship. The political class that assumed power in Iraq on a promise to do away with the Baathist regime's authoritarianism and uphold democratic values has failed to deliver.

In fact, it has used the same oppressive tactics deployed by Saddam to protect the ethno-sectarian power-sharing system, known as "muhasasa ta'ifia", which was established after 2003 and protects its narrow political and economic interests.

The biggest challenge to this system came in 2019 when Iraqis took to the streets en masse to demand political and economic change reflecting the promises they were given in the 2000s. The response from the political class was merciless. It has unleashed a deadly wave of violence and, under the current government, has sought to use all legal and legislative means to further entrench its repressive grip on power and quash dissent.

The US-led invasion of Iraq was premised on the idea that deposing Saddam would allow democracy to flourish and human and civil rights to be upheld. Yet even the 2005 constitution, written by exiled Iraqi politicians and foreign allies who made these promises, contains vague wording, which allows for the easy abuse of civil rights.

For example, it says freedom of expression is guaranteed but only if it does not infringe on "morality" or "public order". This, of course, has allowed the arbitrary and indiscriminate use of this provision to muzzle the Iraqi media and government critics.

The silencing of critical voices along with the deployment of political violence has allowed the Iraqi political elite to rule as it pleases and enrich itself on the backs of the Iraqi people.

But changing one oppressor for another is not something the Iraqi people have been willing to accept. As early as 2011 when the whole of the Middle East was in upheaval, trying to do away with dictatorships and oppression, Iraqis took to the streets against their new rulers' failure to provide basic services and a reasonable standard of living.

In the following years, protests continued as the political and economic situation in the country worsened.

In October 2019, years of built-up anger erupted into mass protests across central and



[Iraqi President Rashid](#)

southern Iraq. Hundreds of thousands of people demonstrated for weeks on end, demanding not just a dignified life but also an overhaul of the country's failed political system. The protests also brought to the fore the issues of freedom of speech and human rights, raising awareness of their critical importance.

Despite deadly violence unleashed against the protests by state and non-state actors, demonstrations persisted. The nationwide solidarity they received delivered a major blow to the political elite, which thrives on sowing division and maintaining a culture of fear. It also led in 2021 to an electoral defeat of the parties that incited the violence against the protesters.

The political forces that were punished by Iraqi voters in the last parliamentary elections for their corruption and participation in the crackdown on the 2019 protests came back with a vengeance last year.

They formed a coalition known as the Shia Coordination Framework, (SCF) and after the withdrawal of Shia leader Muqtada al-Sadr's bloc from parliament, which had won the largest number of votes, they

were able to exploit certain constitutional provisions to gain power.

The SCF allied with Sunni parties and the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) to form the State Administration Coalition and control the parliament. Since then, the group has launched what can only be described as a "counterrevolution" against important gains made after the October 2019 protests.

The SCF-led government has restricted the space for free speech and criticism. Articles 225-227 of the Penal Code, which were frequently used by the Baathist regime, have been used to target civil rights activists simply for expressing their opinions on social or in traditional media. They contain vague and broad language that allows Iraqi authorities to prosecute anyone who "insults the government", "military forces" or "semi-official agencies" and sentence them to up to seven years in prison.

One notable example of how these articles have recently been misused is the case of activist Haider al-Zaidi. He was sentenced in December to three years in prison for a tweet

criticising Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the late head of the Popular Mobilization Forces, who was assassinated in a US drone strike in January 2020 along with Qassem Soleimani, head of the Quds Force in Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corp.

In March, political analyst Mohammed Na'naa' was arrested for criticising Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani, while journalist Qudus al-Samaraie was sentenced to one year in prison for defamation after a senior military officer filed a lawsuit against her. These are just a few examples of a growing number of silenced public figures who dare criticise the political elite and the status quo.

In addition, the Ministry of the Interior has also established a committee to punish anyone who posts "indecent content" online under Article 403 of the Penal Code, which relates to another vague term – "public morals". As a result of this article, individuals may be sentenced to up to two years in prison for violating a standard that is determined solely by the ministry's subjective view of morality.

In February, more than 10

people were arrested based on Article 403, including social media influencers such as Aboud Skaiba, who was later released after a public outcry, and Assal Hossam, who was handed a two-year prison sentence.

The Supreme Judicial Council, a supposedly independent legal body, has recently come out in support of the interior ministry's recent push to prosecute individuals for "insulting state institutions".

One of the most significant gains the 2019 protests managed to achieve was the adoption of a new electoral law. It enabled the new political forces to organise and challenge the status quo, and as a result, about 30 candidates representing these groups entered parliament.

The political elite saw this as a threat to its monopoly on power. After forming a new government, the SCF pushed for amendments to the electoral law, bringing back a method of calculating electoral votes that favours the parties of the established political class. There was so much opposition to this reform that the parliament had to vote on it overnight and security forces removed lawmakers who were protesting against it.

In empowering the dominant ethno-sectarian parties, the amended law solidifies the current failed political system and undermines Iraq's democratic path. It also goes against the shared national identity, which the 2019 protests rallied behind.

Although it has been 20 years since the end of Saddam's regime, the path to democracy in Iraq remains elusive. Yet it is very much worth fighting for. Although they have suffered many setbacks and face a formidable enemy – a political class that clings to power by any means – Iraqis must keep up their struggle. The 2019 protests and the gains that were achieved – albeit short-lived – have shown the way.

The Iraqi people must continue to push for civil rights, such as freedom of speech, fair elections and accountability and must keep these issues in the public eye to serve as a deterrent to those who seek to establish a new dictatorship. Even if progress is slow or meets with resistance, Iraqis should not lose hope. Change is possible and inevitable. And this time, it will not be exiled Iraqi politicians and their foreign allies leading it, but young Iraqis and civil society activists.

Source: Jazeera

Foreign News



US President Joe Biden meets with Egypt's Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt on November 11, 2022

Egypt agrees on Ukraine arms supply

EGYPT was planning to manufacture rockets for Russia but then suspended that effort and decided to supply ammunition to Ukraine after talks with United States officials, The Washington Post has reported, citing leaked intelligence documents.

The Post had reported last week that Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi secretly planned to produce 40,000 rockets for Russia. But in a new report on Thursday – based on leaked Pentagon files that had been circulating online – the newspaper said Cairo suspended that push in early March.

The Washington Post said Egypt also approved the sale of artillery ammunition to the US "for transfer to Ukraine", calling the shift an "apparent diplomatic win" for President Joe Biden's administration.

Egypt, which enjoys warm ties with Russia despite being a close US ally, has previously denied plans to produce rockets for Russian forces, stressing that it is pursuing a policy of "noninvolvement" in Russia's war in Ukraine.

Last week, US authorities arrested an Air Force National Guard member, accusing him of posting online secret documents meant for top Pentagon officials.

The files, which first appeared on the social media website Discord, included details of Western military support to Ukraine, information about Russia's war effort and intelligence collected from allied states.

US officials have not denied the validity of the documents, acknowledging that they "present a very serious risk to national security" and appear to be real, though in some cases altered.

Al Jazeera has not seen the documents concerning Egypt.

The Biden administration has been trying to rally allies to Ukraine's aid, warning countries across the world against assisting Russia's war efforts or violating Washington's sanctions against Moscow.

Last week, White House national security spokesperson John Kirby said

the US has seen "no indication that Egypt is providing lethal weaponry capabilities to Russia", stressing that Cairo remains a "significant security partner" in the region.

Several US officials have visited Egypt this year, including Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, who met with el-Sisi in March.

"He [Austin] provided updates on Russia's unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine, its global economic consequences, and the threat that this conflict poses to the rules-based international order," the Pentagon said after the meeting.

With more than \$1bn in annual aid, Egypt is one of the top recipients of US military assistance in the world.

But Biden has been facing pressure from progressives and rights advocates to place conditions on US aid to Egypt

to push el-Sisi's government to improve its human rights record.

Although the US Department of State held onto a small part of the aid to Egypt last year, it still approved a \$2.5bn arms deal with the country despite rights concerns.

Biden had vowed to centre human rights in US foreign policy early in his White House tenure.

Signalling a break from his predecessor, Donald Trump, Biden – as a candidate – declared "no more blank cheques" for el-Sisi, who came to power in a 2013 military coup that overthrew President Mohamed Morsi.

Still, since Biden took office, his administration has regularly praised the Egyptian government, including for its efforts to act as a mediator between Israel and Palestinian groups.

"Egypt has helped play a useful role in terms of some of the negotiations that have been going on in the region," Kirby said last week.

Israel, Palestinians: Between hope and reality

JERUSALEM is a holy city of true believers. The atmosphere here crackles loudest when the faithful celebrate their religious holidays, especially in the walled Old City where the Christian, Jewish and Islamic holy sites are minutes away from each other.

Religion has a significance and power here that is hard to exaggerate. That is because it is about more than just faith. In Jerusalem it is linked inextricably with Palestinian and Israeli nationalism. Religion, politics and identity feed off each other. The rivals venerate the sanctity of Jerusalem and claim it as their capital.

This month Ramadan, Passover and Easter have fallen at the same time. They have also coincided with accelerating danger and despair.

Two years ago, heavy-handed policing by Israel of Palestinians during Ramadan was one of the sparks for a short and deadly war in and around Gaza between the Israelis and Hamas, the Palestinian group whose name is an acronym for Islamic Resistance Movement.

It looked as if it might happen again this month when Israeli security forces broke into the al-

Aqsa Mosque, where Muslims believe the prophet Mohammed ascended to heaven. Police used brutal tactics to eject Palestinians who had locked themselves into a prayer hall.

Video of heavily armed police beating Palestinians caused outrage across the Middle East and beyond, including in the Arab states that have normalised relations with Israel. A volley of rockets came into Israel from Lebanon, most likely from Palestinian groups, causing the most dangerous moment on the heavily armed border since the Lebanese militia Hezbollah fought Israel to a standstill in 2006.

In the days since that raid on al-Aqsa all sides have pulled back from the brink of another explosive confrontation, but the reasons why they reached that point still exist.

It has been more than 10 years since a meaningful attempt was made to get Palestinians and Israelis to discuss the future, together or apart. Long periods of uneasy calm persuaded Israeli leaders, especially the long-serving prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, that the conflict could be managed, not settled. Two years of growing

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin has visited Moscow-controlled parts of Ukraine's southern Kherson region, the Kremlin says.

It says he attended a meeting to hear reports from military commanders.

Mr Putin also reportedly visited Ukraine's Luhansk region. Russia claims to have annexed both regions, but does not fully control either.

The BBC has verified that Mr Putin visited Kherson's coastal Henichensk area – but it is still unclear when.

Mr Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov said the visit took place on 17 April. However, footage initially posted on the Kremlin's website contradicts this statement.

In the clip released by Mr Putin's press office, the Russian president can be clearly heard saying that the Easter holiday is "coming up".

Orthodox Easter was celebrated in Russia on 16 April, the day before the date claimed by Mr Peskov.

The video on the Kremlin website has since been edited, with Mr Putin's words "coming up" removed.

Such trips by the Russian leader are rare, although he made a surprise visit to the city of Mariupol in March.

Mr Putin told the military meeting in Kherson that, while he did not want to distract them from their duties, "it is important for me to hear your opinion on how the situation is developing, to listen to you, to exchange information".

Russian troops retreated from the city of Kherson late last year, losing the only regional capital it had managed to capture since Moscow invaded Ukraine in February 2022.

However, some of the region remains under Russian control.

In a separate development, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Tuesday visited the frontline town of Avdiivka in the Donetsk region.

His office published a video

... As Putin visits occupied Kherson

where Mr Zelensky is seen handing awards to soldiers, who have for months been defending the town from Russian attacks.

Responding to reports of Mr Putin's visits, Mykhailo Podolyak, an adviser to Mr Zelensky's office, tweeted that the Russian leader was touring "the occupied and ruined territories" of Ukraine "to enjoy the crimes of his minions for the last time".

"Putin's degradation is impressive," he said.

In the video released by the Kremlin of the trip to Ukraine, Mr Putin is seen stepping out of a helicopter in a field before he is greeted by a man, thought to be military commander Col Gen Oleg Makarevich.

He is then filmed speaking in a control room, sat between Col Gen Makarevich and the head of Russia's airborne forces, Col Gen Mikhail Teplinsky.

Col Gen Teplinsky returned to the front line after allegedly being removed in January, American military experts and British intelligence have reported.

"Teplinsky is likely one of the few senior Russian generals widely respected by the rank-and-file," the UK Ministry of Defence wrote on social media on Sunday.

"His recent turbulent career suggests intense tensions

between factions within the Russian General Staff about Russia's military approach in Ukraine."

Later in the video, Mr Putin presents what is reported to be a copy of an icon he says belonged to "one of the most decorated defence ministers of the Russian Army in the 19th Century".

We see a road sign reading "see you later in the Kherson region" next to a hotel that has been verified by the BBC as being in the Kherson region. There are then aerial shots taken over a coastal village in the same area.

Afterwards, Mr Putin is seen getting out of a helicopter once again and is then shown in different clothes being taken into a bunker and speaking with Col Gen Alexander Lapin, chief of staff of Russia's ground forces.

The Kremlin says Mr Putin visited the Vostok headquarters, which belongs to Russia's National Guard, in occupied Luhansk.

It has also said that Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu and Chief of the General Staff Valery Gerasimov did not accompany the president on the trip as it was a "big risk" for Russia's top commanders to be in one place so close to the front lines.



Vladimir Putin with Col Gen Mikhail Teplinsky (left) and Col Gen Oleg Makarevich (right)

hope and reality

here.

My drive was an unscientific project during an unseasonable storm that was battering the West Bank with wind sheeting rain. Pockets of thick fog along the road could not obscure the latest advances in Israel's massive and single-minded project to settle Jews on land Palestinians want for a state. I could just as easily have seen the same kind of evidence if I had driven north or east from Jerusalem rather than south.

In the years since first I travelled between Jerusalem and Hebron, the journey and the land either side of it has been transformed. Early in the 1990s it was a country road. A few Jewish settlements were noticeably spilling down from the hills, especially south of Bethlehem, the first Palestinian town the road passes as it leaves Jerusalem. But most of the land along the road was open fields that had been terraced and cultivated by generations of Palestinian farmers. Some of them used to travel to work riding on donkeys that plodded along the verges of the road.

Farmers still grow crops, but their fields have been reduced

and sliced up by a huge expansion of settlements. Swathes of Palestinian land have been confiscated to widen and straighten the road, and to connect it to an ever-growing network of bypasses linking settlements with each other and Jerusalem. Cuttings for the new roads have been gouged out of the hills. This week the Jerusalem-Hebron road was jammed with traffic. Many of the cars had Israeli number plates, reflecting the big increase in the Jewish population in the area's settlements.

As the rain lashed down, about a dozen saturated Israeli soldiers in full combat gear were milling around their jeeps on yet another military operation in the occupation of the West Bank that has so far lasted 56 years, with no sign of ending. They were close to the Israeli army watchtower that looms over the entrance to Beit Ummar, a small Palestinian town whose inhabitants mostly rely on agriculture to make a living. Beit Ummar, like many other towns and villages on the West Bank, has lost a lot of land to settlements and roads. The occupation, and the desire to resist it, have generated repeated violence over the years.

Feature

National grid collapse, one too many

The National electricity grid has collapsed again, throwing the country in to total blackout the fifth time in 2022, the grid broke down on Sunday 12, June around 6:49 pm leading to shutdown of the outgoing electricity feeders of some distribution companies. You recalled Nigeria's power grid collapsed twice in March and twice in April this year, making the power generation on the system to fluctuate due to various concerns such as gas constraint, water management challenges, gas pipeline vandalism, among others. TIMOTHY JOSEPH, writes.

THE power outages prevented people from meeting routine businesses and household needs, resulting in huge economic and social cost.

"We regret to inform you that the power outage being experience in our franchise is due to system collapse of the national grid. The collapse of the national grid occurred at about 18:47 pm in the evening hence the loss of supply on all our outgoing feeders," Kaduna Electricity announced on Sunday evening. "Power supply shall be restored as soon as the national grid is powered back", the statement added.

Eko Electricity in its own statement said, " we regret to inform you of the ongoing system collapse on the national grid. This has affected our entire network and has impacted our ability to deliver optimum service". In its own statement, Abuja Electricity said, " The current power outage is due to system Failure collapse from the national grid, the system collapsed at about 6.49 pm today ,12 June, 2022 causing the outage currently being experience we appeal for your understanding as all stakeholders are working hard to restore normal supply. "

While Head, corporate communications, Enugu Electricity Distribution Company (EECD), Emeka Ezech, said the grid collapse has thrown five states under the Discos franchise area in to total blackout. Also "The management of Jos Electricity Distribution Company (JED), wishes to inform the general public that the current outage being experience is as a result of system collapse", Head corporate communications, Friday Elijah said.

Some experts have advocated for decentralized transmission system like that of the united states' in order to end the preponderance of grid collapse in the country. Others believe Nigeria should continue with the centralized grid system like that of the United Kingdom. Reports revealed that the U.S multiple system is divided into many parts comprising of eastern and western grid system, and other grid systems that are all synchronized. The country consist of 120,000 miles (190 km) of lines operated by 500 companies. Nigeria, like U.K, its former colonial master has a 330 kilovolt and 132 kilovolt transmission lines and substations spanning over 20,000 km of transmission lines, according to the Transmission Company of Nigeria, TCN.

Supporting the decentralization of the national grid in the long run, national



president of Nigeria Institute of Power Engineer (NIPE), Engr. Israel Abraham, said the transmission system should be decentralized across regions and that Discos should be expanded from the current 11 units to 37, serving each State and the FCT to address the prevalent system of collapses. Others suggested that there is need for grid monitoring tools as the federal government through the Ministry's statement admitted the lack of them, especially the supervisory control and Data

Acquisition System (SCADA) to quickly isolate Nationwide outages. The various advocates for the decentralization of electricity system in Nigeria might not be far from reach if anything is to go by what President Buhari said recently, in an interview with Bloomberg News. According to the President the federal government has commenced the decentralization of the national grid to address the challenges of power supply across the country. He stated that "government had earmarked \$550 million for the provision of 20,000 standalone solar system (SHs) and solar Hybrid mini-grid in at least 250 locations across the country.

(Available statistics from the independent system operator (ISO), a section of the Transmission Company of Nigeria, TCN, shows that in nine years (from 2013 to 2022), the national grid system has

recorded 115 system collapses. This was the period when the power sector utilities have been privatized. Random picks shows that there were 42 of such collapses in just a year (2010) and over 10 events every year until 2020.

Further analysis however indicate that the system or grid collapsed has declined in the last few years as only four collapses occurred in 2020, while two were recorded in 2021, being the lowest so far. However, three have been recorded already in less than a year, between March and June this year, mostly as a result of poor gas to Gencos, in the first instance while the second collapse was traced to the vandalism of power transmission tower in Benin, Edo state, and the third in Oku Iboku in Akwa Ibom State.

The Electricity sector is causing more problems for investors in this economy, already, they have enough problems they have been contending with, such as forex, logistics, credit and insecurity issues. If on top of all that we are faced with energy crisis, then this might be the worst time to experience system collapse because it is simply unbearable. This is even more critical for businesses that are energy intensive, mostly those in production, IT, Telecoms and banks, it's a major issue for the economy and the welfare of Nigerians.

Consumers must not be made

to bear for the inefficiency of the Discos, consumers must be compensated for loss of electricity over the decline in power services as there is a contract due to the service base tariff, which means that consumers should pay only for what they get. With all the contractual failure by the power sector value chain to give powers to Nigerian consumers, there is still no compensation to consumers for poor services. Customers are being illegally migrated from Band C and Band D to Band A and B and B Nationwide, even with the failure to deliver on the contract/service based tariff, Customers are mechanically configured and shortchange.

According to my findings, no customer of electricity distribution companies (Discos) had been getting 22/16 hours of electricity and steady 10 hours attached to each of the tariff bands. All the considerations and key indicators have failed roundly due to gas constraints, grid constraints, vandalism of gas to power infrastructure and vandalism of critical electricity grid value chain infrastructure, among others. In the face of all these, customers billing classifications are illegally being jerked up.

A World Bank sponsored report in 2021 showed that 85 million Nigerians are not connected to the grid, and that Nigeria losses about \$29 billion annually due to

erratic power supply. This is a significant amount of money which could be used to improve the economy and enhance living conditions of Nigerians. At the moment, the national transmission grid is owned and managed by government through the TCN. Government needs to invest in modern technology for surveillance and monitoring of the grid and to safeguard it against vandalism. Government and the power operators, residents and security operatives should deepen synergy to intercept vandals before they execute their acts.

The transmission company of Nigeria can upgrade and increase transformer capacity which will reduce the issue of load rejections, the Nigeria lawmakers had earlier supported the constitutional amendment bill to allow state governments to generate and transmit their own electricity, this will present an opportunity to investors and industries to participate in the Nigerian energy market. Also the states or businesses can transmit excess supply to the national grid, modern smart grid would allow data to flow between consumers and electricity retailers, this will enable grid operators to match electricity supply with demand, understand consumer behavior and plan grid expansion.

Timothy Joseph is of the Ministry of Information and Communication

THE NIGERIA STANDARD

With *Henrietta Gonzuk*

Health

Simple ways to detox your liver

THE liver may not be the CEO of the body, but it is still sitting in one of the corner offices. For an organ that measures just two to four inches and weighs two to three pounds, the liver has two titles (organ, gland) and more than 500 roles to carry out on a day-to-day basis.

As the second largest organ (after the skin), the liver has some weighty responsibilities that can't be delegated. The liver is also the only organ that can lose up to 75 percent of its mass and still regrow back to full size! While most people are aware that over-use of alcohol can cause damage to the liver, this is far from the only way the liver sustains damage.

When the liver becomes damaged or compromised, it can't do its job of detoxifying the body as well. When this occurs, the liver needs help. These simple ways to detox your liver can help your liver get back on its feet, so to speak, so it can do its job to keep you healthy. Remember, if you are under a doctor's care for the management of any health issues or are taking any required medications, always talk with your doctor before changing your daily diet or health routine.

Drink more water. Simple liver detox remedies can often seem, well, simplistic. But here, the simple truth is that water helps the liver move toxins through its own cellular systems and speed them on their way out of your body. But not just any water will do to have the full detoxifying benefit. Drink filtered tap water at room temperature at specific intervals of the day (aka., upon awakening, in between meals, early evening; not while eating and not too much 2 hours before bed).

Add a tiny pinch of salt and the spice turmeric to your water in order to accelerate its effectiveness. A good general rule of thumb is to aim for 4 liters of water per day. Stay away from carbonated water or water in plastic beverage containers. Sweat, sweat, sweat. Depending on where you live, you may be able to accomplish this simply by walking outside! But this isn't the optimal method to use sweat as a liver detox.



Sweat induced by exercise has its own detoxifying benefits, pushing couch potato toxins up out of their comfy seats and moving them out of the body along with the sweat. Hot yoga, a nice jog, HIT workouts, or a sauna session are great ways to sweat out toxins. Just make sure to wipe away sweat as soon as possible with a toxin in order to prevent reabsorption of toxin back into body, and take a cool shower right after sweating. Don't skimp on the zzzs.

Science is finally starting to understand why human beings need at least eight hours of rest time every night where they are just being still. Sleep is detoxifying! Sleep is a vital component of regulating metabolism as well as targeting brain and neurological toxins and moving them out of the liver. Sleep shuts off non-essential physical functions so the body can redirect its energy resources towards processing, healing, restoring, and detoxifying.

The lymphatic system is the body system that works alongside the liver while you are asleep to send toxins packing while also restoring cognitive, physical, and behavior functions which improved mood, focus, and endurance.

Choose anti-inflammatory foods. Certain foods are naturally supportive of optimal liver function. Learning about these foods and adding them into a regular daily rotation can help support the liver in doing its best work. As a side bonus, eating foods with natural anti-inflammatory benefits can lessen the risk for fatty liver disease, a disease that basically means the liver has taken on an undue amount of fat.

Over time and with continued damage, fatty liver disease can turn into cirrhosis, a condition that produces permanent scars and prevents liver regeneration. The good news here is, a liver-healthy diet is also a diet that will naturally promote weight loss or weight maintenance, improved energy



levels, better sleep and a more youthful appearance. Foods with natural inflammation-repelling properties include all foods grown above ground such as green vegetables, beans, grains, and mushrooms. These plant-based foods do direct photosynthesis rich in water, oxygen, and nutrients which are cells depend on to maintain all its function. The exception would be GMO crops wheat, corn, soy, alfalfa, canola and items sprayed heavily with the dangerous pesticide Roundup (i.e., dairy products, eggs, poultry, red meat, pork, fish, sweet potatoes, potatoes, beets, sugar cane, coffee, nuts) since they are extremely damaging for the liver with any level of consumption. Reduce or remove toxins from your daily routine.

This tends to be the part of the liver cleanse routine no one is too enthusiastic about. Yet the simple truth is that the more toxins introduced into the body system equals the more toxins the liver then has to move back out again. Increasing the burden on the liver is never a good recipe for a successful liver detox! Reducing or eliminating all animal protein,

alcohol, sugar, wheat, corn, soy, tobacco, processed foods, caffeine, and nuts will give your liver a much-needed break to do some long-overdue house cleaning.

Give the digestive system some helpers. The more effective your digestive system is at eliminating toxins, the less work it will then pass along to the liver. One of the best helpers a digestive system can ever get is probiotics. These tiny beneficial bacteria get right to work shifting the balance of power in the gut from harmful bacteria back towards healthy flora and fauna. Probiotics are readily available in fermented foods like small beans cooked over 3 days, sauerkraut, kimchi, and pickles.

Consume in small amounts once during the day. Fermented items such as kombucha, miso, and kefir should be rarely consumed since they can easily overload the liver function especially when it is already damaged.

Many people initially feel hesitant or resistant to attempt a liver detox because the whole process just sounds unfamiliar and perhaps complicated. But as these six tips show, it is actually quite easy to help the liver detox!

Source: Medicalnews.com



THE NIGERIA STANDARD'S WORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Relationship

Consider these questions before throwing in the towel

By
ANGELA THOMPSON

RELATIONSHIPS are tough, and marriages probably even more so because if you decide a relationship isn't working and that it's best to end it, then although it's not a pleasant experience, it's generally easier to walk away from in terms of the practical aspects such as not needing to speak to an attorney from McCarthy Law PLC.

However, just as some people perhaps rush their way down the aisle when deciding to get married, many more rush their way to the lawyers to sign divorce papers when perhaps there are other things they could have tried before throwing in the towel.

Sometimes a marriage just isn't working and if that's the case then letting it go may be the best thing for all involved, but to help you decide what the right option is for you, then we've put this post together with some things that you might want to consider before throwing in the towel on your marriage so that you can perhaps avoid making a decision in the moment that you may not be able to go back on and will regret later down the road.

Are there still feelings involved?

It's quite unusual for a divorce to come about because someone fell out of love - that's not to say it doesn't happen, but it's rare. Love certainly changes throughout a relationship, but if anything it becomes stronger and deeper, and less like the lust that's typical of the early days. When thinking of getting

divorced, it's important to try and remember the reasons you got married and see if those feelings are still there and if perhaps something like speaking with a marriage counselor to see if maybe the issues you're dealing with can be overcome through some healthy communication and understanding. It would be truly unfortunate if you threw a marriage away when there's still feelings involved that could be fixed. However, sometimes even when there are feelings this isn't a reason to stay in a marriage, and sometimes it's important to look beyond the feelings you have and be able to know that it's time to walk away from something that's just not healthy or working out.

What was the dynamic of your marriage?

Is your marriage one that you feel like you're both equals or does it feel more like you're expected to take care of your spouse without getting much in return. If your marriage is one in which one party is doing all the giving while the other just takes all the time, then this is not something that will work unless the dynamic changes. This wouldn't work for any relationship - whether professional or personal, but it most certainly won't work in a marriage, and if this isn't going to change anytime soon, then it's probably best to think about going your separate ways.

Do you want a divorce or a reaction?



Every marriage has arguments and sometimes what when we're in the middle of an argument we can find ourselves saying things to get a reaction. This often stems from a feeling of not being heard and needing to show that we're right or show the other person what they could be losing by not giving in. Although it can be difficult to see this behavior pattern in the moment, it's important to not throw words like divorce around just to get a reaction if you don't really mean it because it can and does have consequences that you may regret.

Are you basing this on emotion or careful consideration?

Just like getting married is a big choice that has to be carefully considered, so is getting a divorce, and often we do things based on an emotional reaction to the situation rather than taking time to really carefully consider if this is what we truly want or not. Before

making such a huge decision it's important to take the time away from the heat of the emotion involved and really look at it from a calm and logical perspective.

What's motivating this decision?

Have you been thinking about divorce for a long time because you just feel like things aren't getting better in

on children, but if you know the steps to take to help them through it and deal with it in a healthy way, then it really doesn't have to be a traumatic experience for them to get through.

Have you thought about the future communication?

When going through a divorce, even if it was a mutual choice,



your marriage or is this something that's perhaps coming from a feeling of frustration. Whilst there's no right or wrong answer when it comes to divorce and only you can know what the right decision is for you, it's important to really look at the reasons behind your decision so you can determine if this is something you really want or think is the best choice.

Have you considered the full picture?

When considering whether or not to put an end to your marriage, there may be other aspects to consider. Sometimes there are other people to consider, such as children. Although staying in an unhappy marriage is never something you should do because you think it's better for children, they should also be considered when making your decision because divorce can and does have an impact

people's egos sometimes tend to take over the logical side of their brains, and this is something that can last for years after the event. If you have children together, then it's highly possible that you're going to need to maintain some kind of contact or communication with your spouse in the future, so if you're seriously considering going for divorce, then you need to be prepared to put aside any personal issues and behave in a mature and adult way when communicating with them when it relates to your children in the future.

Of course this can be difficult depending on the reasons for the divorce, but even if you feel like you can't stand the person you used to be married to, it's important to remember that your child loves them and that they should never be put in a position where they feel like they have to show loyalty to one parent more than the other.



IMAGES

PROF. OSINBAJO DELIVERS LECTURE

Nigeria's Vice President, Prof. Yemi Osinbajo on Monday delivered lecture titled, "Creating Homeland for All: Nation Building in a Diverse Democracy is part of Policy Making and Good Governance lecture series initiated by the National Instituted for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS) Kuru, Jos for the SEC 45 participants



Nigeria's Vice President, Prof. Yemi Osinbajo, SAN, Governor Simon Bako Lalong, CON, his Deputy, Prof. Sonni Gwanle Tyoden and others at the opening of the lecture



Commander, Operation Safe Haven, Major General Ali Ibrahim and GOC 3 Armoured Division with other invited dignitaries



Nigeria Labour Congress, Plateau State Chairman, Comrade Manji Eugene with his Vice, Comrade Sunday Akinfolarin



Director General of NIPSS, Prof. Ayo Omotayo (left) presenting souvenir to the Guest Lecturer, Prof. Yemi Osinbajo, SAN while Governor Lalong applauds



Cross section of Plateau State government officials at the lecture



His Majesty, Da Jacob Gyang Buba, CFR, Gbong Gwom Jos with others at the maiden lecture



Cross section Senior Executive Course 45, 2023, NIPSS listening to the lecture by Prof. Osinbajo



Nigeria's Vice President, Prof. Yemi Osinbajo, SAN delivering the public lecture

PHOTOS: DANLADI DUK

Odd World

People in stitches after pregnancy announcement

A woman has opened up about how she broke her pregnancy news to her best friend while simultaneously asking her to be godmother, through an adorable gift that left her friend feeling emotional.

It can be a nerve-racking moment - revealing to your best mate that you're pregnant.

But one woman proved just how important female friendship is after sharing a heartwarming video of her presenting a gift to her female friend on Galentine's Day.

The celebration traditionally takes place the day before Valentine's Day - and one woman used the day to announce her pregnancy while asking her to be godmother to her unborn child.

Hilariously, a waitress in the restaurant got the wrong end of the stick after coming over - leaving people in hysterics at her comment.

TikTok user Alexys - who goes by the username dyslexya - shared a clip of her best friend opening up her gifts, which included a cute box of chocolate with a cat picture on it.

Reaching into the gift bag once again, the friend pulled out a black cup wrapped in pink tissue paper. She initially looked stunned, reading a message that followers couldn't see.

Then she finally opens up the lid, revealing a positive pregnancy test inside.

It was at this moment that the waitress came over, getting

completely the wrong end of the stick and - to their great amusement - asking if it was "something kinky".

All the while, the friend appears to be nearly speechless with joy and surprise, tearing up as Alexys captured the moment on camera.

In the comments section, Alexys - a boudoir photographer - explained that the cup bore the words, "Spooky Godmother" in purple glitter.

The emotional clip has been liked more than 1.4 million times and left people feeling very emotional at the sweet clip.

One follower added: "What a sweet best friend!!!" while another approvingly commented: "And this is why she's the godmum".



'Leaders with ideas not in power'

ONE of the most respected erudite scholars of recent times, Prof. Patrice Emery Lumumba was once quoted as saying, "The tragedy with Africa is that those with ideas are not in power, while those in power have no ideas. When the people have a chance, they still vote for those with no ideas." For many who have followed with keen interest the silhouette criticisms offered by this scholar, it is daunting on us that some African states are far off the track of progress and or systematic integration. Therefore, much needs to be done in terms of implementing strategic polices of good governance to salvage our nation states from plummeting into anarchy, chaos and or total collapse.

During several of his lamentations, Prof. Lumumba always apportioned blames on our leaders who due to acts of administrative ingenuity contributed to the socio-economic and political retardation of this continent. Evidently, the continuous clinching to power of these visionless and corrupt leaders in Africa have but only succeeded in turning back the hands of time.

Some of these leaders who got the opportunity of leading their nations on the platter of gold have regrettably not been able to justify such opportunities. Between the early 1960's to late 70's, successive military takeover of governments across the continent saw the growing number of military dictators which led to the emergence of stooges and evil men of thoughts brutally engaging many democratic oppositionists leading to the death of hundreds of thousands. Few lucky ones were however able to escape into exile after knowing too well that their lives were in danger.

Most of these despots including the late Idi Amin of Uganda, Mubutu Sese Seko, Charles Talyor, Muammar Qadhafi including Joseph Kony, the Ugandan warlord, all never gave a thought about the nation's collective wellbeing.

In fact, Kony was one of the tyrannical warlords who disrupted, dehumanized and terrorized the people of the continent through his brutal leadership style. No doubt, his atrocities left a deep-seated hatred and ethnic divide amongst the citizenry.

Interestingly, Nigeria also experienced such acts of brutality when the military held sway. While several innocent citizens of this country were unjustifiably jailed and or killed, others who escaped these despotic regimes went on exile to save their lives.

In most recent years however, the transition of most of these African nations into democratic nation states have further entrenched democratic governance with great expectations. Many scholars had however hoped at initial stage that the democratization of African nation states would create fundamental stability and add value to the people of the continent. Thus, the coming of democracy to most nations of the continent after so much struggle and sacrifice was initially regarded a great relief to pro-autonomy and visionary scholars.

While democratic establishments in

some countries have led to the actualization of concrete pillars revamping basic institutional structures for greater prospects, some unfortunate nation states have equally been left aloft at the mercy of their corrupt and visionless leaders. Today, many of such emerging leaders based on greed and acts of personal aggrandizement have looted resources meant for the betterment of their citizens. Consequently, while their citizens continue to wallow in dehumanizing abject poverty, they have only concentrated on buying expensive castles abroad and participating neck-deep into more acts of economic sabotage.

In Nigeria, I have taken more time to scrutinize the long list of our leaders who have governed this nation for decades but not made the desired impact. In the midst of both economic and human resources Nigeria is blessed with; more than half of the nation's population is today living far below poverty line. Aside the biting difficulties of unemployment, insecurity and economic uncertainty, our educational sector is in total muddle. Just within a month, our national grid failed us twice sending strong signals that all is not well with our power sector.

Aside the rampaging activities of terrorists that have refused to allow us have a sound sleep; hardly a day passes by without any of us being told of one act of kidnapping and or armed robbery in this country. These unpleasant phenomena are completely overwhelming us because of the simple fact that we are yet to put our act together. To say the least, many have attested to the obvious fact that the citizens of this country have not allowed God to bless us with good leaders.

When our founding fathers were struggling to liberate this nation from the claws of colonial subjugation, they dreamed of a nation which after them would navigate itself and become a giant of Africa. Many of these past leaders of ours never anticipated for once that after they had gone, this country would be left fumbling in such an woeful and disgusting manner today.

After Nigeria's independence, the tales of this nation state has frighteningly continued to create an atmosphere of uncertainty as well as bash the hopes and aspirations of many. Today, Nigeria has become a nation state which requires all our prayers for it to overcome these difficult contemporary challenges. Some of these problems bedeviling us as a people were however unfortunately created by us.

Even as many citizens are yet to comprehend where the leaders of the country went wrong for us to deserve these unending calamities, some of them buried under the rubbles of a near failed state do know that only the citizenry can open a new chapter when the needful is done. Therefore, all we need to do to change Nigeria's disgusting narrative is to vote leaders with visions and intellectual capacity. Though it may take a long time to bring the nation back on track, with sincere commitments, sacrifice and total disregard to religious and regional sentiments, we can navigate the nation out of its present predicament for the better.

View Point

Negotiating multifaceted identities for national development in Nigeria

Apart from saying your name, if you were asked, "who are you?" What would be your answer? Would it be about your tribe (e.g. "I am Zaar, Igbo, Fulani"), religion (e.g. "I am a Christian, Muslim, Traditionalist"), region ("I am a Northerner, Southerner, Middle-Belter"), profession ("I am a teacher, nurse, politician"), social status ("I am a king, a governor, a leader"), or nationality ("I am a Nigerian")? As simple as this question may sound, therein lies the root cause of most cases of terrorism, ethno-religious conflicts, favoritism, and nepotism in Nigeria. DOGARA ISHAYA MANOMI, writes.

THIS is a question of social identity. Social identity or group identity simply refers to how you define who you are in relation to your membership of a particular group and the value (e.g. self-esteem, sense of belonging) and emotion (e.g. happiness, hope, comfort) you derive from belonging to that group (Tafjel, 1978). For example, if you are asked, "who are you?" and you say, "I am a Christian," or "I am a Muslim," or "I am Zaar by tribe," you are stating your social identity as opposed to individual identity which would be mainly your name, your gender, or anything peculiar to you alone. Being a communal culture mainly, social identity normally overrides personal identity. This is why a sense of honor and shame (social) rather than guilt and innocence (personal) are the major determinants of people's actions, attitudes, and assessment of right or wrong. It accounts for why people feel less guilty if they can get away with corruption without being caught. Depending on the situation and place, we answer the social identity question "who are you (we)?" differently, since we belong to different social groups. But if you were to re-arrange these multiple social identities, which one would be first and which one would be last?

IS THERE A "NIGERIAN NATIONAL IDENTITY?"

Is there such a thing as "Nigerian National Identity?" An average Nigerian, in my estimation, has at least five significant multifaceted yet intertwined (but unequal) identities that play out more in communal or societal life, and which have significant impact on national solidarity, peace, and development. Those five multifaceted identities include: clan identity (e.g. Nghasiti and Morass among the Zaar people of Tafawa Balewa, Bauchi state), tribal identity (e.g. Ngas, Alago, Ibibio), religious identity (e.g. Christian, Muslim), regional identity (e.g. Northerner, Southerner, Middle-Belter), and national identity (e.g. Nigerian). However, two of these identities seem to be more prominent and salient to many, if not majority, of Nigerians, namely, religious and tribal identities. A simple indicator to this fact is that, most cases of terrorism and violent conflicts in Nigeria are religious and/or ethnic motivated. For example, the case of Boko Haram and the violent conflicts between Fulani herdsmen and farming tribes like the Tiv, Berom, etc. trope

Hence, it is accountable to argue that terrorism and ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria are primarily a function of "negative solidarity" that results from a sense of ethnic and religious social identity at the expense of national identity. In such a case, people regard their religious, sectorial, or ethnic identity as the most salient



identity which deserves their absolute loyalty at all costs. As a result, any perceived disrespect or threat to that social group from outsiders is treated with extreme force, leading to terrorism and ethno-religious conflicts.

NEGOTIATING A TAPESTRY OF IDENTITIES: SALIENCE AND TROPE OF NATIONAL IDENTITY

For a multi-religious, multi-cultural, and secular nation (as Nigeria self-identifies constitutionally) to foster peaceful co-existence, national solidarity, and national development, it is time we renegotiate and promote a national identity above any other identity, at least in public domains. The good news is, promoting national identity in public domains above any other sense of social identity does not diminish the value of other social identities that we hold dearly. Instead, it places them in their rightful contexts, where they will find utmost expression without negatively affecting "the other" nor disrupting peace and stability. Promoting national identity as the salient social identity would imply conscious efforts in making national symbols more conspicuous and religious and cultural symbol less conspicuous in public spheres. While both Christians and Muslims in Nigeria are actively trying to outdo each other in public visibility, evident in the way churches and Mosques are situated in strategic locations in cities and towns, worship in public spaces are promoted, and church worship and Sallah programs are done using loud speakers that compete to outloud others, it is time to pause and ask ourselves: have our competing religious

externalities contributed more to mutual understanding or rivalry, mutual trust or distrust, peaceful co-existence or conflicts? The answer seems obvious, right? The more religious and ethnic-conscious Nigeria becomes, the more we experience religious extremism and ethnic bigotry that promote violence in forms of terrorism and ethno-religious conflicts. This calls for a renegotiation of our sense of identity.

WAY FORWARD: DEVELOPING A MORAL VISION FOR "THE NIGERIAN IDENTITY"

From my stay, study, and interactions with people in different developed countries (Germany, UK, USA, Belgium, among others), I have observed that a sense of national identity has been entrenched in their thought-pattern such that majority of the citizens regard their national identity as their salient identity, and every other sense of social identity contributes or functions in the service of national identity. National identity is unmistakably the only umbrella identity that can promote peace, cross-body solidarity, and national development.

NATIONAL CARDINAL VIRTUES? A CASE FOR A VIRTUE-ORIENTED NIGERIAN IDENTITY

Developing a national identity, however, requires articulating national "cardinal virtues." To develop national cardinal virtues, we can glean wisdom from ancient Greek philosophers (e.g. Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics) who articulated four cardinal virtues that would summarize all other virtues: wisdom, courage, self-control, justice. These virtues were considered necessary for human flourishing. Those

cardinal virtues provided the moral compass that would guide every unit of society to contribute to peaceful co-existence. The Greek cardinal virtues, however, need to be contextualized to address the peculiarities and quandaries of the Nigerian state.

In view of the current multifaceted and competing identities and the state of terrorism and ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria, what virtues do you think should be our "national cardinal virtues" that can find expression in each religion and ethnicity? In my opinion, the following should be our "Nigerian cardinal virtues": tolerance, peace, justice, self-control. The National Orientation Agency and relevant governmental and non-governmental organizations can champion the course of a virtue-oriented national identity and engage in public awareness campaign. Parents and teachers are to complement the effort by integrating and inculcating these virtues in children at home and in school. Religious leaders are to preach and teach it to their congregations. Musicians, media personalities, artists, film makers and actors, etc. to integrate these virtues and a vision of national identity in their acts, and so on. In this way, we can imagine and emerge an overarching Nigerian national identity that trumps any "negative solidarity" (E. Durkheim) and fosters peace, patriotism, national solidarity, and development. In this way, Nigerians will learn to be more in solidarity with virtue and their nation than with any other sense of identity. For example, if any office holder acts unjustly in giving most political appointments to people from his tribe, religion, or region at the

expense of the "federal character," his own people will not stand in solidarity with him, but with the virtue of justice, and would also lend their voices in protesting and calling him to distribute political appointments justly, in the interest of national peace and development. This may sound like some utopian imagination, but it is possible. Rwanda is a good example of a nation that (a)rose from the ashes of a deadly ethnic-identity-motivated genocide and promoted national identity above all other identities, which has resulted in sustainable national peace, stability, solidarity, and development. Nigeria can do the same.

CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, it is time to stop taking pride (and actually be ashamed) in being described as one of "the most religious countries in the world," if our religious identity marker does not promote peace and development. Instead, it is time to renegotiate the multifaceted identities and their resultant "negative solidarity," leading to a "Nigerian national identity," which is to be encapsulated in a "national cardinal virtues" of tolerance, peace, justice, and self-control, which will promote human flourishing. In this way, we can truly imagine and emerge a Nigeria of our dream, such that, when you are asked "who are you?" you would be proud to say, first, "I am a Nigerian," or better still, "I am Nigeria" (without relegating your religious and ethnic identities), because a nation is its people, and the people are the nation!

Rev. Dogara Ishaya Manomi, PhD. Lecturer, Theological College of Northern Nigeria (TCNN).



Sunset at noon as Airforce DOPRI Maigida is laid to rest

THIS sad development attracted people from within and outside the state, who converged at St. Stephens Catholic Church Nyak Akikamai, Shendam Local Government Area, to pay their last respect to Late Air Commodore Martin Wapkerem Maigida.

The Late Airforce Officer was until his demise on April 3, 2023 the Director of Press and Information (DOPRI) Nigerian Airforce, and also a nephew to the Plateau Governor, Simon Bako Lalong.

The presence of Airforce officers clad in their ceremonial attires, performing different funeral songs, March pasts and displays was an eminent emotional display of their loss.

The governor who was accompanied to the funeral by his wife Regina, including many top government functionaries, the Chief of Air Staff, Air Marshall Oladayo Amao, other top military officers within and outside the state, class mates of the deceased, members of the traditional council, and well wishers was sad by the loss, especially after burying his father last year.

Governor Lalong, while speaking during the funeral Mass expressed sadness over the demise of his nephew whom he described as a young and hardworking personality.

He said the death of the young Maigida at 49 had deprived Plateau State and indeed Nigeria of a fine Military Officer who had just started advancing to bigger leadership positions, but said everyone must submit to the will of God.

He extolled the virtues of the deceased adding that the family will miss his great contributions, but are comforted by the worth legacies he left behind.

Chief of the Air Staff represented by Air Vice Marshal Paul Masiyer described the deceased as a fine officer who dedicated his life to service of the Nigerian Airforce, while heart-touching tributes also flowed from the deceased classmates, the church and the traditional Institution who all described Air Commodore Maigidi as a gentle and kind hearted fellow.

But earlier, on Thursday April 13, 2023, a wake keep mass was also held to honour the late Airforce Spokesman at St. Gabriel's Catholic Church NAF Base Jos.

The Commander Airforce Base Jos, Air Commodore Gapkwet said he received with shock news of the death of Wapkerem, who was his predecessor in the Airforce Base.

He assured the widow of the deceased that the family will not be abandoned by the Nigerian Airforce.

Towards his sunset, Maigida had assumed the command of 551 Nigerian Airforce Station Jos in 2022 ascending to the post of the 18th DOPRI in early 2023. He was also before his demise the Director Civil Military Operations, Nigerian Airforce Abuja and member of the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations.

He is survived by his wife Dr. Niavel, 3 children, and relatives. He was interred at his family compound in his hometown at Nyak, Ajikamai.



News

DG, NYSC promises prioritizing members activities

THE Director General National Youth Service Corps; Brigadier General YD Ahmed has stated that members will continue to receive priority and dominance in the activities of the scheme under his administration.



Adamu

From JIDAUNA YANUNG Abuja

his administration.

The Director General gave the assurance while receiving the management team to Capital Express Assurance Limited at NYSC National Directorate Headquarters Maitama, recently in Abuja.

Brigadier General Ahmed, in a statement issued by the NYSC Director of Press and Public Relations, Eddy Megwa, applauded CEAL for being consistent in carrying out its statutory responsibilities in line with the Memorandum of Understanding it signed with NYSC. It stated that there is need for the two organizations to be taking time to jointly assess the implementation of the accord from time to time, in order to identify and address gray areas.

He further said that NYSC will never relent in meeting its obligations in the partnership, and called on CEAL to equally sustain the tempo at which it promptly responds to issues pertaining to insurances cover for corps members.

In her remarks, the Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer of

Capital Express Assurance Limited, Mrs. OdukaleAdebola disclosed that the company has for quite some time been responsible for providing insurance services to corps members. She said the company which has existed for over 30 years has always lived up to expectation by paying benefits to families of corps members who pay the

supreme sacrifice and providing succor to those who suffer permanent disabilities through the programme in the course of the service year through the programme, "Corps Welfare Insurance Scheme"

She added that CEAL does intervene in executing special projects for NYSC as part of its

corporate social responsibility. "Recently, we constructed and furnished a vocational centre at NYSC Permanent Orientation Camp, Keffi, NasarawaState. Prior to that we had provided technological devices in support of NYSC's digitization process," she said.

Killings: Don't drag Plateau to dark days - Lalong

By PALANG KASMI

PLATEAU State Governor, Simon Bako Lalong has asked security agencies to fish out those behind renewed attacks in parts of Mangu and Bokkos Local Government Areas (LGAs) which have led to loss of lives and properties.

He also lamented that the attacks are attempts to reintroduce crisis and bring the state back to the dark days it experienced in the past, which was largely contained by his administration.

Lalong made the call in a

statement Monday.

The governor condemned the attacks which took place in Murish, Kumbum District, Jwak Mai Tumbi in Mangu, and Marish in Bokkos LGA. He added that the swift intervention of security agencies ensured that the situation did not escalate.

"I want all those behind the attacks fished out and brought to justice without delay".

"The attacks are another attempt to reintroduce the

era of violence and crises which have been largely contained due to government's huge investment in security, peace building and reconciliation", he said.

While commiserating with those who lost their lives and properties, the governor directed the Peace Building Agency and the State Emergency Management Agency to immediately reach out to the victims with support.

Sports

Wikki calls for sanctions review



Wikki Tourists

WIKKI Tourists Football Club (FC) of Bauchi has appealed to the Interim Management Committee (IMC) to review the sanctions against the club over the 2022/2023 Nigeria Professional Football League (NPFL) between the club and Bayelsa United FC.

Sporting Tribune reports that the Match Day 13 fixtures between Wikki Tourists FC and Bayelsa United at Abubakar Tafawa Balewa Stadium (ATBS), Bauchi, on April 9, was marred by fans' hooliganism. The IMC in its ruling after a review of the match incident, imposed a three-point deduction, goals deduction, ₦2.5 million fine against Wikki Tourists, in addition to having the stadium closed to all NPFL matches.

Reacting, Mr. Balarabe Douglas, the Chairman of Wikki Tourists FC, made the appeal in an interview over the weekend in Bauchi.

He said the IMC accused Wikki management of not providing adequate security, throwing objects in the field, and assaulting match officials of the match between visiting Bayelsa United and Wikki FC.

"The management provides adequate security for the match in the stadium with over 40 police personnel, Man O'War, and WAI brigade physically on ground.

"There wasn't any object throwing of such nature, we noticed at the end of the match some angry fans started throwing sachets and plastic bottles of water at Wikki players to show their displeasure over the poor performances of the players and it abruptly stopped.

"Similarly, none of the match officials, visiting team, and players were targeted or assaulted during the match," he said.

Douglas added that they

admitted that the match was put on hold for a moment when the aggrieved players of Wikki FC were protesting peacefully to the match officials for the cancellation of their earned second goal pursuant to the decision of ARI.

"The aggrieved players return for the continuation of the match after a polite explanation by the officials on the reason for cancellation.

"With these explanations, the IMC should reason and review the sanctions because the decision reached by the club is not only harsh but worrisome," he said.

Meanwhile, the chairman said the club is yet to formally receive the resignation of the club's Technical Adviser, Abdullahi Adamu.

Douglas insisted that he and members of the club's board only saw the resignation letter on social media like other Nigerians.

SUPER Eagles coach Jose Peseiro was on a working visit to Belgium this past week and observed at close quarters at least five Nigeria-eligible players, allnigeriasoccer.com reports.

Peseiro's first port of call was the Ghelamco Arena, where he watched the striker on everyone's lips at the moment, Gift Orban.

The KAA Gent star was close to netting his fifteenth of the season since his transfer to Belgium, but his sensational overhead kick struck the woodwork in a Europa Conference League match against Premier League opponents West Ham United.

It is confirmed that a top staff of the Nigeria Football Federation informed Orban that Peseiro was going to be at the stadium to watch him before he took to the pitch against West Ham United, contrary to fabricated reports in the local media that the 20-year-old was blacklisted by the NFF after he failed to show up for last month's U23 internationals versus Guinea.

The following day, Friday, Peseiro took in the match between Standard Liege and Sporting Charleroi and he would be disappointed not to run the rule over one-time Flying Eagles central defender, Valentine Ozornwafor, who remained rooted to the bench for the entirety of the game.

However, the Portuguese would have been impressed with the performance of

Peseiro runs rule over five Belgian-based players



Peseiro

former Manchester United and Manchester City schoolboy Noah Ohio, who netted his seventh of the season after thirteen minutes.

On Saturday, Peseiro was at Het Kuipje for the Jupiler Pro League game between KVC Westerlo and Club Brugge, and feasted his eyes on Raphael Onyedika and Antonio Nusa in the goalless affair.

Ohio and Nusa are provisionally cap-tied to the Dutch and Norwegian national team respectively.

Finally, the Super Eagles manager was at the Stade Joseph Marien yesterday for the Jupiler Pro League match

between Royale Union Saint-Gilloise and RFC Seraing.

Victor Boniface is a player of interest to Peseiro, considering that the Nigerian Federation confirmed that the Royale Union Saint-Gilloise attacker was named in the Super Eagles' provisional squad for last month's 2023 Africa Cup of Nations qualifying matches against Guinea-Bissau.

With an eye on the upcoming Europa League quarterfinal match against Bayer Leverkusen, Royale Union Saint-Gilloise manager Karel Geraerts decided to rotate his squad and it meant Boniface was in action for only three minutes.

"Osimhen will not solve all Napoli's problems"

INTER Milan legend Beppe Bergomi believes that the absence of Kim Min-Jae and Zambo Anguissa could affect Napoli despite the return of



Osimhen

Super Eagles striker Victor Osimhen.

Newsnow said that, Osimhen sustained an injury while on international duty with Nigeria in March. Because of the setback, he missed the Partenopeans' first three games after the resumption of club football.

In his absence, Napoli lost two games and won one. Two of those losses were against AC Milan. Napoli lost 4-0 to the Rossoneri in the Serie A. Then they succumbed to a 1-0 in the first leg of their UEFA Champions League quarterfinal clash.

However, Osimhen returned on Sunday in Napoli's 0-0 draw against Hellas Verona. The Nigerian striker played 20 minutes in the game, and he almost scored but for the woodwork.

The 24-year-old point man is expected to lead the line for Napoli when they welcome AC Milan to the Diego Maradona for the second leg of their tie. However, Luciano Spalletti would be without two of his most influential players. Kim Min-Jae and Zambo Anguissa

are suspended for the tie, and Spalletti would have to find alternatives.

"Napoli is well structured regardless of the center forward," Bergomi said per *Napoli Magazine*.

"Definitely, having Osimhen gives you a sense of security, but you can't think that it will solve all your problems.

"Napoli have two very important absences with Milan because they lack the two most physical players. Physicality has always been a problem for Napoli, this year they tried to make up for it, but in the past, they suffered.

"Milan are a team that takes you a lot from a physical point of view, on the individual duel and marking."

The tie is a tricky one for the Partenopeans. They defeated AC Milan earlier in the season, but they have lost the last two meetings.

Osimhen adds a lot of bite to the attack, and his link-up with Kvaratskhelia has been superb this season. That could eventually come into play.

However, Napoli would have to keep it tight at the back if they want to qualify for the next round.

NPFL roundup: Enyimba seal away win

THE Nigerian Professional Football League (NPFL) saw nine matches played on April 16th, with a mixture of draws and wins across the board.

Newsnow said that, Kwara United hosted Enyimba at the Kwara State Stadium, with Enyimba emerging as victors with a 2-1 win. The game was fiercely contested, but Enyimba's resilience proved too much for Kwara United as Chijioke's brace drowned Kadiri's first half penalty for the hosts.

At the Awka City Stadium, Rangers played out a thrilling

2-2 draw against Niger Tornadoes. A second half double from Idris helped the visitors claw back to earn a draw after falling behind twice before halftime. The game was an end-to-end affair, with both teams displaying attacking prowess.

Remo Stars also played out a draw at home against Bendel Insurance, with the game ending 1-1. Nwachukwu's fine 21st minute strike cancelled out Mawuena's opener for Remo to ensure the Benin Arsenal

continued their unbeaten run.

El Kanemi played host to 3SC at the El Kanemi Sports Complex, with both teams failing to find the back of the net as the game ended in a goalless draw.

In another closely contested match, two late goals from Adejoh Ojonugwa helped Abia Warriors emerge as victors against Sunshine Stars with a 2-1 win. The game was a tight affair, with both teams giving it their all.

Plateau United hosted Akwa United at the New Jos

Stadium, with the home team securing a narrow 1-0 win thanks to Mustapha's 36th-minute penalty. It was a hard-fought victory for Plateau United, who held on to the lead till the final whistle.

Bayelsa United secured a comfortable 3-0 win over Lobi Stars at the Samson Siasia Stadium. The home team dominated the game, with Lobi Stars struggling to create any clear-cut chances.

Doma United also secured a 2-0 win over Wikki Tourist at the Gombe Township Stadium. It was a comprehensive victory for Doma United, who dominated the game from start to finish.

The final match of the day between and Rivers United and Dakkada match was paused due to weather conditions and would be completed on Monday morning. The reigning champions led the visitors at the time of suspension.

Overall, it was an exciting day of football in the NPFL, with several closely contested matches and some impressive performances from the home teams.



Enyimba

Sports

Which was the most exciting Premier League race?

IT is time for another Match of the Day Top 10 - and this week Gary Lineker, Alan Shearer and Micah Richards will be debating the best title races in Premier League history.

There has been plenty of late-season drama, excitement, delight and heartbreak.

Here are their choices. See what you think, and then pick the order you would rank them in.

Pep Guardiola's Manchester City were on 95 points, and Jurgen Klopp's Liverpool on 94, as they went into the 2018-19 finale. On the last day, City travelled to Brighton and the Reds hosted Wolves.

City had won 13 games in a row - including a vital late-season victory over Leicester secured by Vincent Kompany long-range winner - while Liverpool were unbeaten in 16 games since losing at Etihad Stadium on 3 January.

A Sadio Mane double earned Klopp's team a 2-0 win, but City recovered from going a goal down at Brighton to win 4-1 and secure the title.

The top two's combined final total of 195 points was the highest ever in an English top-flight season - three points for a win having been introduced in 1981. Runners-up Liverpool's tally of 97 points was, at the time, the third-highest in Premier League history.

This was arguably the greatest underdog title triumph in English football history. Leicester, 5,000-1 outsiders at the start of the season as Claudio Ranieri took charge as manager, held off all challengers to win the league for the first time.

With Jamie Vardy scoring in a record 11 consecutive matches, the Foxes were the surprise leaders at Christmas and they followed this up with excellent results early in the new year, including included away wins over Tottenham and Manchester City.

A last-gasp defeat at Arsenal in February threatened to bring the dream to an end - but Leicester did not lose another match all season as the Gunners and Tottenham, their closest challengers, both wilted.

Six wins - all with clean sheets - in a run of seven matches followed; with Spurs dropping points in draws with West Bromwich Albion and Liverpool, Leicester began May needing to win at Manchester United to clinch the title.

They drew 1-1 but it mattered little as the title was sealed the following day as Spurs let a 2-0 lead slip to draw 2-2 at Chelsea. Cue manic celebrations from the Leicester players, who had gathered at Vardy's house to watch the match.

Having finished seventh in 2012-13, Liverpool were not expected to challenge but 31 goals from Luis Suarez put them in contention to claim their first title in 24 years.

The Reds embarked on a 16-game unbeaten run that featured an 11-match winning streak, including a 3-2 victory over Manchester City that put the Reds top with four games to play. However, the title race was to feature another twist as Chelsea headed north to Anfield.

Steven Gerrard's infamous slip allowed Demba Ba to score the first goal in a 2-0 home defeat. Then came a remarkable capitulation at Crystal Palace, where Liverpool squandered a 3-0 lead in the final 11 minutes.

Two days later, City beat Aston Villa 4-0 to go two points clear at the top, before Manuel Pellegrini's men clinched the title with a 2-0 triumph at home to West Ham on the final day. Liverpool would have to wait another six years to lift the Premier League trophy.

Manchester City, last champions in 1968, were expected to mount a serious challenge as the 2011-12 campaign dawned, having spent £35m on striker Sergio Aguero in a bid to improve on the previous season's third-place finish.

And at Christmas, Roberto Mancini's side looked well on course, winning 14 of their first 17 games - including a 6-1 thrashing of neighbours Manchester United at Old Trafford - while losing just one.

Then came a spring wobble - a run of one win in five matches, with defeats at



Sergio Aguero, Didier Drogba and Wayne Rooney have all won the Premier League title in dramatic circumstances with Manchester City, Chelsea and Manchester United respectively

Swansea and Arsenal, left them eight points behind United with six games to play.

"Roberto, is it over now, do you think?" asked Match of the Day's Steve Wilson after the defeat at Emirates Stadium on 8 April.

"No," Mancini said. "It's never finished until you have the points to go on the top."

He was right. Three days later, United lost at Wigan. Then they drew 4-4 at home to Everton, having been 4-2 up. Then, in a crucial match at the end of April, they were beaten 1-0 at Etihad Stadium - as Vincent Kompany's header handed the initiative back to City.

On the final day, City needed a win at home to struggling QPR to become champions. Simple? Not a bit of it.

Mancini's side, 1-0 up at half-time, trailed 2-1 by the 66th minute. With United winning 1-0 at Sunderland, the title was heading to Old Trafford - and it still was even as Edin Dzeko equalised for City with one minute and 14 seconds of stoppage time played.

Three minutes and 20 seconds into stoppage time, with play finished at Stadium of Light, Sergio Aguero took on Mario Balotelli's pass and lashed in a City winner. A 44-year title wait was over.

United were aiming for a fourth consecutive title but had lost Cristiano Ronaldo and Carlos Tevez in the summer. Chelsea, meanwhile, had new boss Carlo Ancelotti at the helm.

A back-and-forth title race swung decisively in Chelsea's favour after a 2-1 victory over United at Old Trafford in April. Going into the final day, Chelsea held a one-point advantage and only needed to beat Wigan at Stamford Bridge to lift the trophy. They did in emphatic fashion, running out 8-0 winners.

United cruised to victory over Stoke at Old Trafford, but there was never any doubt the Blues would claim their first title since 2006 once Nicolas Anelka had given them a sixth-minute lead. A Didier Drogba hat-trick secured him the Golden Boot and further goals from Anelka, Frank Lampard, Salomon Kalou and Ashley Cole provided a fitting finale to an outstanding campaign for Chelsea.

Having been at the summit for much of the season, Arsenal's challenge faded following a horror injury to striker Eduardo in a 2-2 draw away to Birmingham City in February. That was the start of a run of one win from eight matches, including a 2-1 defeat by

United that effectively ended their title hopes.

United, inspired by a Ballon d'Or-winning season from 31-goal Cristiano Ronaldo, looked well-placed to retain the title. Yet Chelsea would just not go away. Having sacked Jose Mourinho after a poor start, they rallied under caretaker boss Avram Grant to stage an unlikely title challenge off the back of an 18-game unbeaten run.

A 2-1 win against United at Stamford Bridge, courtesy of a Michael Ballack double, blew the title race wide open. Only goal difference separated United from Chelsea before the final weekend. However, United made light work of Wigan to secure a 17th league title, running out 2-0 winners.

The Red Devils went on to pip the Blues to Champions League glory 10 days later, winning on penalties after a 1-1 draw in Moscow.

In the summer of 1998, Manchester United looked to reclaim the Premier League title from Arsenal by adding Jesper Blomqvist, Jaap Stam and Aston Villa striker Dwight Yorke to their squad. At Chelsea, player-manager Gianluca Vialli brought Marcel Desailly to Chelsea after he starred in France's 1998 World Cup triumph.

After losing at Coventry on the opening day, Chelsea went 21 matches unbeaten and led the league at halfway. Dennis Bergkamp's goal ended that run as Arsenal beat Vialli's side 1-0 in January; the Blues' challenge was effectively ended by a run of three consecutive draws in April.

United, meanwhile, had recovered from a wobbly first half of the campaign. After a home defeat by Middlesbrough on 19 December, they would not lose another match all season.

As they entered the season's final lap, Alex Ferguson's players were chasing a historic Treble. They finished with three matches for three trophies - a home game against Tottenham for the Premier League title, a Wembley meeting with Newcastle for the FA Cup, and a trip to Barcelona to take on Bayern Munich in the Champions League final.

United, going into the final day with a one-point league lead over Arsenal, looked well set. But then Les Ferdinand gave Tottenham an unlikely first-half lead at Old Trafford - a goal that did their north London rivals a favour.

Ferguson's side fought back - goals from David Beckham and Andy Cole either side of half-time rendered the Gunners' 1-0 win over Aston Villa irrelevant.

It was the start of a huge 11 days for United. Newcastle were beaten. So too, dramatically, were Bayern. In June that year, Ferguson was made a knight.

Arsenal secured their first Premier League title and also won the FA Cup to complete the double. In his first full season as Gunners manager, Arsene Wenger guided them to their first top-flight league crown since 1991.

The title charge seemed unlikely at Christmas, but a run of 45 points from a possible 51 between 26 December and 3 May - an 18-game unbeaten streak - made them champions.

The title was wrapped up with two games to spare after a 4-0 win over Everton at Highbury, with captain Tony Adams memorably striding through to thump in the fourth, although Arsenal only ended up one point ahead of Manchester United, after finishing with two defeats.

Arsenal's 1-0 win at Old Trafford in March, courtesy of a late Marc Overmars goal, was perhaps the key moment in the title race as Manchester United failed to win the Premier League for only the second time since the competition's inception.

The season began with Alan Hansen proclaiming on Match of the Day that "you can't win anything with kids" as a United side that started with four players aged under 21 lost 3-1 at Aston Villa. United had made no major summer signings, had sold the experienced Paul Ince, Mark Hughes and Andrei Kanchelskis, and started the campaign without Eric Cantona. Yet by May, United were celebrating their third title of the Premier League era.

You can't win anything with kids - Hansen

Kevin Keegan's Newcastle United, know as 'The Entertainers' for their free-scoring football, led the league by 12 points with 15 games to go. But United, galvanised by Cantona's return from an eight-month ban for attacking a fan - ate away at that lead. Cantona scored in a 1-0 win at St James' Park on 4 March, and then climbed to the top as Keegan's side lost four times in six matches.

It came after a 1-0 win at Leeds. Keegan was angered by comments from Alex Ferguson that had questioned how committed Leeds would be. The Manchester United manager was also unhappy about the timing of Newcastle's upcoming league trip to Nottingham Forest, less than a week before Keegan was to take a team there for their captain Stuart Pearce's testimonial.

"When you do that with footballers, like he said about Leeds... and when

you do things like that about a man like Stuart Pearce... I've kept really quiet, but I'll tell you something, he went down in my estimation when he said that," a visibly angry Keegan, finger jabbing, said in a live interview with Sky Sports. "We have not resorted to that."

"But I'll tell you... you can tell him now, he'll be watching it... we're still fighting for this title, and he's got to go to Middlesbrough and get something. And I'll tell you, honestly, I would love it if we beat them. Love it."

Newcastle, though, could only draw at Forest three days later. It meant United held a two-point lead as they travelled to Middlesbrough on the final day.

David May sent the Red Devils on their way with an early goal, with Andy Cole and Ryan Giggs sealing a 3-0 win as Newcastle's campaign ended in a disappointing 1-1 draw with Tottenham. The Magpies spent 212 days at the summit, the most in Premier League history for a side not crowned as champions.

Blackburn's transformation into the best team in the country under chairman Jack Walker was completed in 1994-95 when they beat Manchester United to the title by one point. It was Rovers' first since 1914 - but it so nearly did not happen.

Kenny Dalglish's side were frontrunners for most of the season, inspired by the strike pairing of Alan Shearer and Chris Sutton. They notched 49 league goals between them - including 34 for Shearer on his way to the first of his three successive Golden Boot awards).

United, meanwhile, were weakened by the loss of Eric Cantona to suspension for the rest of the season after a flying kick at a fan during a match at Crystal Palace in January.

Going into the final round of matches, Blackburn were two points clear but faced Liverpool at Anfield in their final game, while Ferguson's side were at West Ham.

Rovers led through a Shearer goal at halfway - but then John Barnes equalised, before Jamie Redknapp's free-kick, with more than three minutes of injury time played, consigned Dalglish's side to a 2-1 defeat.

In the away end, Blackburn's fans looked shocked, with hands on heads. Dalglish watched on, expressionless.

Yet within seconds, they were all beaming. News had filtered though that United, despite a glut of second-half chances, had only managed a 1-1 draw. Blackburn were champions.

Source: BBC SPORT

Sports



Plateau United players

NPFL: Plateau United edge Akwa United

PLATEAU United Football Club of Jos on Sunday beat visiting Akwa United of Uyo 1-0 in a 2022/2023 Nigeria Professional Football League match at the New Zaria Road Stadium.

The News Agency of Nigeria reports that the Match Day 14 encounter of the NPFL was decided in the 39th minute.

That was when Mustapha Ibrahim scored a goal from a penalty kick.

Ayeni said: "A penalty kick was awarded to the hosts and they made good use of it. "But we will go back home and re-strategise. "After the first half, we realised that their strength was in the midfield and I told the players to cut their attack through the midfield. "I told them we can get our goals through the counter-attack. "They tried that, but it didn't work out. "We are going to work ahead of our next home game, which is crucial for us so that we can get the three maximum points to sustain our position on the table."

Plateau United's Chief Coach, Maurice Longmiap, on his part told newsmen his players were full of anxiety while they played the match. Longmiap said it was difficult to display good football when a player was anxious and his players could therefore not convert their goal scoring chances.

He said: "They were told that we needed the three points with many goals and I think that made them to be anxious. "Akwa United are a good team that cannot be written off by anyone and they gave a good account of themselves."

All results Bayelsa United 3-0 Lobi Stars Remo Stars 1-1 Bendel Insurance Plateau United 1-0 Akwa United Doma United 2-0 Wikki Tourists El-Kanemi Warriors 0-0 Shooting Stars Rivers United 1-0 Dakkada FC (suspended)

Kwara United 1-2 Enyimba International FC Abia Warriors 2-1 Sunshine Stars

Played on Saturday: Nasarawa United 1-1 Gombe United.

THE 2023 athletics season is already looking good on the horizon, with some breathtaking performances from some of the Nigerian superstars.

This weekend at Oklahoma Throws Series in Ramona, Chioma Onyekwere delivered a stunning performance in the women's discus throw, achieving a massive personal best (PB) of 64.96m.

Record shattered Aside from winning the event with her massive throw, Onyekwere also broke the 16-year-old African record set by South Africa's Elizna Naudé with her massive winning throw.

It is equally heartwarming to note that Onyekwere met and surpassed the World Championship qualification standard with her latest feat even though she already has a wildcard to Budapest with her status as an African champion.

Onyekwere's trajectory this season has been consistently upward, her opening throw two weeks ago measured 55.88m, and her subsequent improvement to 60.79m last weekend.

Her new PB surpasses her previous mark of 63.30m by more than a meter and a half.

Having enjoyed the best of outings in 2022, where she won gold at the African Championships in Mauritius

Rangers International 2-2 Niger Tornadoes

Played on Saturday: Nasarawa United 1-1 Gombe United.

and at the 2022 Commonwealth Games; becoming the first Nigerian woman in history to do so, there is optimism that 2023 will be even better for the America-based athlete who is also an engineer.

Tobi Express Elsewhere, Tobiloba Amusan competed in her first 100m hurdles race of 2023 at the Tom Jones Invitational in Florida also at the weekend.

AMID the sense of disbelief and frustration that Arsenal had snatched a second successive draw from the jaws of victory at West Ham, Granit Xhaka was on hand to add a dose of pragmatism. "If something is not going well, it is easy to show the finger to someone else," he said of their faltering title push. "We took this challenge up until now and nobody was thinking about this before the season. Let's refresh everything now."

The path towards an extraordinary achievement has narrowed considerably and the annoyance for Mikel Arteta will be that it did not have to be this way. There was a moment not long before they let West Ham back into proceedings when the silence around the London Stadium verged on eerie: Arsenal were passing their way towards a victory of consummate ease and, in hindsight, perhaps they were lulled by the occasion's near-total lack of edge. Neither their hosts nor those in the stands were evincing genuine belief that the afternoon might turn on its head.

What happened next was



Onyekwere

Supporters of Crown Football Club of Ogbomosho are to stay away from the Soun Township Stadium, Ogbomosho, home ground of the club for their next three home matches in the Nigeria National League (NNL).

This follows their unruly behavior and violent conducts during the match day five (5) fixture in Southern Conference B2 tie with visiting Ijebu United which ended 1-1 on Saturday.

Crown are also to pay N2million (N2,000,000.00) for the ungovernable conduct of their fans.

The disruptive behavior of Crown FC supporters allegedly, led to the match

NNL slams N2million fine on Crown FC

commissioner rescheduling the match next day. The breach by the supporters was against articles 16:2,4 and 14.1 of the governing rules of NNL.

In a summary jurisdiction, NNL therefore ruled that: Crown shall strictly, play without their fans in their next three home matches.

Pay the sum of N1, 000,000.00 (One Million Naira) for the missiles thrown unto the pitch of play by its supporters.

Another N1, 000,000.00 (One Million Naira), for deliberate acts of intimidation

and harassment of match officials by their supporters.

Crown FC trail Ijebu United in 3rd place in group B2, Sporting Lagos, Ijebu United and Crown have the same 8points but Ijebu is in 2nd place following goals scored, while sporting Lagos are in pole position with a superior +2 goals at the end of the NNL first stanza.

Crown has been given a 48 hours ultimatum to appeal to the summary jurisdiction reeled out.

Bendel Insurance close in on NPFL unbeaten record

BENDEL Insurance is only four games away from equaling the longest unbeaten record in the Nigeria Premier Football League.

The Benin Arsenal's are yet to taste defeat after 14 games in the NPFL this season.

Akwa United, who won the

NPFL title in the 2020/21 season, holds the record for the longest unbeaten streak (18) in the Nigerian top-flight.

Insurance have won seven and drawn seven games this season.

Monday Odigie's side will look to equal the record by avoiding

defeat in the remaining four games in the regular season.

They could then go on to set a new record in the NPFL Super Six.

Insurance will host basement club, El-Kanemi Warriors at the Samuel Ogbemudia Stadium, Benin City, on Sunday.

Onyekwere shatters 16-year African record, Amusan impresses

She secured a second-place finish with a time of 12.59 seconds.

Nia Ali narrowly won the race with a 12.53s performance.

Amusan began her journey by winning her heat in 12.74s, outpacing Devynne Charlton,

who later claimed third place in the final with a time of 12.64s.

Amusan was back on the track just hours later to set a new personal best in the women's 100m sprint, clocking an impressive 11.10s.

'Title race is far from over for Arsenal'



Granit Xhaka denied there is a problem with Arsenal's mentality after four points were dropped in two games.

another lesson that Arsenal have not earned the right to decide when they can cruise. Second-guessing what is going through a player's mind can be a lazy form of analysis but it was hard not to conclude a measure of complacency had set in.

West Ham are not Liverpool and their ground is hardly Anfield: perhaps Arsenal would be able to declare early and conserve energy as they had in a cakewalk at Fulham five weeks previously.

sufficiently to draw a couple.

Arsenal again squandered a two-goal lead during their latest setback against West Ham. Photograph: Jane Stokes/ProSports/Shutterstock

None of that changes the fact Arsenal's two slip-ups have been avoidable; nor does it alter the suspicion there was a mental hangover in east London from the previous week's spiralling.

Arteta did not make such huge strides with this squad in order to throw in the towel by mid-April: as Xhaka suggested, this is the time to reset and work out how best to exploit a still commanding position over the final seven games.

The fact Southampton are their next opponents, visiting the Emirates Stadium on Friday, should mean a few cobwebs are blown away before the pivotal trip to City in nine days' time. Arsenal are desperate to return William Saliba to action at the Etihad Stadium and anyone watching Rob Holding, who can defend a penalty box with the best of them but struggles badly when pulled around in the channels, attempting to handle Michail Antonio would understand why.

Saliba also offers a technical security Arsenal have lacked in his absence and the same goes for Oleksandr Zinchenko, who missed the West Ham game as a precaution. While Kieran Tierney would walk into most Premier League lineups, he is manifestly far less comfortable than the Ukrainian in drifting inside to help make the play.

If Saliba and Zinchenko are fully fit, Arsenal have a chance next week. But that sentence points to a lack of squad depth, certainly in comparison with that enjoyed by City. They paid for that last year when throwing away a Champions League spot: this time around they have strengthened their bench but perhaps not to the extent required of champions.

"It is not about the mentality: for sure, it is not," Xhaka said. In the bigger picture he is probably right. Arsenal remain top of the Premier League and with the title in their hands. It has been a phenomenal achievement to outpace Manchester City to this point and perhaps the more important observation should be that, such is the dominance of Pep Guardiola's side, any title race nowadays needs two almost perfect contenders. In a truly healthy league there should be little hand-wringing when a contender that has won 23 matches out of 31 drops its level



TRUTH EXALTS A NATION

FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1972

WEDNESDAY, April 19, 2023

www.nigeriastandarddailynewspaper@yahoo.com

Quest



writer

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FRAGMENT

"Trading is one of the best worldly works in which people get their livelihoods to cater for themselves, their families and dependents, and also to serve their communities, and what distinguishes the Muslim trader from others is his adherence to the core values of his religion, and his constant trust in his Lord, Allahu Subhanahu Wa-Ta'ala."

Dr. Yusuf Abdullahi Yusuf

Ideal role of Muslim trader before and during Ramadan

ALL thanks and adorations are due to Allah, the Most-High, the Sustainer and Cherisher of the universe. May His bounties and blessings be upon His noble Prophet, Muhammad *Sallallahu 'alaihi Wa- Sallam*, his households, companions and all that followed his footprints till the day of Resurrection.

Mr. Chairman Sir, invited guests, dignitaries, and members of the general public present here, permit me to join other well-wishers in congratulating the Muslim Ummah for witnessing yet another blessed month of Ramadan.

It indeed gives me pleasure to be here today, not because I am the best, or the best person that can do justice to this topic, but rather to contribute the very little I have in the struggle of re-defining and re-awakening the Muslims, traders, businessmen and women.

Mr. Chairman Sir, the topic chosen for today's presentation is timely, taking into consideration the numerous challenges we faced as individuals and communities in the way we conduct ourselves, before, during and after Ramadan. The role and duties or the expectations of a Muslim trader should not be overemphasized. We all agree, as individuals and communities that, in some quotas today, all is not well in terms of the proper way of handling or managing our businesses.

Mr. Chairman Sir, it is my firm belief that, as Muslims and followers of the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad SAW we will get it right, now and forever, when we submit totally to the teachings of Allahu *Subhanahu Wa-Ta'ala*, and align ourselves with the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad *Sallallahu 'alaihi Wa- Sallam*, we will overcome these challenges and have a brighter future. This paper shall look at Islam and Trade, Ethics and Characteristics of a Muslim Trader.

Ethics and Characteristics of a Muslim trader

Trust, is the first quality of a



Muslim trader, rather, it is more important than financial wealth (cash). His trustworthiness shall earn him moral immunity and an unshakable balance in his life. An adage says: "He who fulfills the trust, shares with people their money".

What is the benefit of a trader who lacks trust, even if he has a lot of money, as long as whoever deals with him is not safe from treachery or betrayal? And what about his faith and religion: when he prays in a place that does not belong to him, or performs ablution with water that he does not own, or sleeps while the oppressed is busy complaining about him to Allah, the Almighty? Said the Most High:

And those who are faithful to their trusts and their covenant

(Q 70, 32) Trading is one of the best worldly works in which people get their livelihoods to cater for themselves, their families and dependents, and also to serve their communities, and what distinguishes the Muslim trader from others is his adherence to the core values of his religion, and his constant trust in his Lord, Allahu *Subhanahu Wa-Ta'ala*.

Therefore, it was imperative for every Muslim trader in this time to know the morals, commandments, and prohibitions that are related to his business. This is due to the spread of taboos, and the large number of suspicions that plague most transactions, that made some traders and women to deviate from the pure teaching of Allahu *Subhanahu Wa-Ta'ala*, and His noble Prophet,

Muhammad *Sallallahu 'alaihi Wa- Sallam*.

One of the first things that a Muslim trader is reminded of in this regard is that his trade (business) should not distract him from remembering Allah, the Almighty, nor from prayer, nor from reciting the Holy Qur'an, nor from fulfilling Allah's right to his money (alms giving). Allahu *Subhanahu Wa-Ta'ala* has praised His faithful servants whose trade does not distract them. Said the Most High:

Men whom neither merchandise nor selling diverts from the remembrance of Allah and the keeping up of prayer and the giving of poor-rate; they fear a day in which the hearts and eyes shall turn about. (al-Nur, 37)

And he cautioned those that are being carried away by their businesses to remember Allah and His teachings in their business premises, said the Exalted:

O you who believe! let not your wealth, or your children, divert you from the remembrance of Allah; and whoever does that, these are the losers. (al-Munafiqun, 9)

He is the one who asks and investigates not to enter into an unlawful and forbidden transaction, whatever it is, and does not eat the money of the people with falsehood, and has fully submitted himself to the commandments of his Allah, while He addressed him and says:

And do not swallow up your property among yourselves by false means, neither seek to gain access thereby to the judges, so that you may swallow up a part of the property of men wrongfully while you know. (al-Baqarah, 188).

Some of the Characteristics of

a Muslim Trader includes:

First: Honesty and trustworthiness. The Prophet of Islam, may the peace of Allah be upon him, said:

"The honest and trustworthy trader is with the prophets, the truthful ones, and the martyrs". (Narrated by Tirmidhi)

Abu Sa'eed bin Abdulla narrated that Prophet Muhammad *Sallallahu 'alaihi Wa- Sallam* went out to pray, he saw people trading, and he said: "O our traders". So they responded to the Messenger of Allah, raised their necks and looked at him, he said: "On the day of Resurrection, (merchants (traders, men and women) will be resurrected as ungodly, except for those who fear Allah, righteous, and are truthful. (Tirmidhi, 1210).

Second: Keeping away from

On the authority of Abu Muhammad, al-Hassan Bn Ali Bn Abi Talib, May Allah be pleased with them, said: "Leave what makes you doubt for what does not make you doubt, for truthfulness is reassurance, and falsehood is distrust", (Tirmidhi, 2442)

Third: Giving more alms, and not being satisfied with the obligatory.

On the authority of Qais bin Abi Ghazra, he said: during the Prophet's time, we were called brokers, so the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, passed by us and called us by a better

To be continued next week