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Over 10m malaria cases, death recorded annually

A group, EndMalariaInNigeria has described malaria as the biggest killer disease in Nigeria with over 10 Million cases and 200,000 deaths annually, which amount to about 31.9% of the global Malaria indices.

This was made known in

a statement issued by Francis Nwapa Watch, Convener of #EndMalariaInNigeria on Monday.

The group commended the efforts and interventions being made by various groups, individuals and government agencies over the years towards malaria

elimination in Nigeria.

The group in the statement released ahead of World Malaria Day on Wednesday, themed; 'Time to deliver zero malaria: invest, innovate, implement,' said it is worrisome that the Nigeria Vaccine Development Laboratory which was active for about six

decades, between 1940 and 1991, producing large quantities of vaccines against smallpox, rabies, yellow fever for not only Nigeria, but neighbouring countries like Cameroon, has remained dormant.

The statement said it's important to remind the "Nigerian authority and

policymakers that Malaria has remained a huge public health challenge and the highest killer disease in Nigeria with over 10 million cases and 200,000 deaths annually, this amount to about 31.9% of the global Malaria indices".

It continued, "#EndMalariaInNigeria commends efforts and interventions being made by various groups, individuals and government agencies over the years towards malaria elimination in Nigeria and it is in recognition of this that we have in the last one year advocated a redirection in the methods of intervention from curative to preventive.

"Although the use of IPT, prophylaxis and distribution of ITNs to pregnant women has helped in reducing malaria mortality among pregnant women in some regions of the country when compared to previous records, however, certain factors have limited the effectiveness of these methods. Most rural Nigerian women due to lack of education are still attached to some cultural and religious beliefs that dissuade them from taking these treatments.

"Also, the poor housing system with no ventilation compounded with epileptic

Group

power supply is a discouraging factor for not using distributed insecticide-treated nets (ITNs)

"Recently, Nigeria and Ghana approved the R21/Matrix-M malaria vaccine produced by Oxford University which is an improved version of the RTS,S vaccine that has already been approved by the WHO.

"It is worrisome that the Nigeria Vaccine Development Laboratory that was active for about six decades, between 1940 and 1991, producing large quantities of vaccines against smallpox, rabies, and yellow fever for not only Nigeria, but neighbouring countries like Cameroon, Central Africa and a few other countries in Africa, has remained dormant.

"Though it was closed in 1991 by the federal government which said it wanted to reactivate and upgrade the facility, its resuscitation has remained a mirage. A once-viable laboratory has been abandoned to donor funding.

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Plateau Southern Senatorial District Senator, Prof. Nora Ladi Dadu'ut test riding one of the tricycles presented to the youths of her Senatorial Zone recently in Shendam, Shendam LGA Photo: DANLADI DUK

Buhari warns Nigerians trapped in Sudan against traveling

The President Muhammadu Buhari-led Nigerian government has warned Nigerian nationals who are stranded in Sudan due to the ongoing conflict in the North-East African country not to travel to neighbouring borders without the assistance of the government or any of its agencies.

This was mentioned in a joint press release from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development dated 24th of April, 2023.

According to the

statement, the government and its relevant agencies had been working to ensure the smooth evacuation of all Nigerians trapped in Sudan, adding that undertaking any trip against the government's directives will pose people to danger and risk.

The government, therefore, urged students to remain calm and in constant communication with officials from the Nigerian Embassy in Sudan for instructions and updates.

The statement reads: "The Honourable Ministers, Ministry of

Foreign Affairs and Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development express concern over the dire humanitarian situation in Sudan and empathise with the entire civilian population in the country,

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Ehanire

News

Over 10m malaria cases, death recorded annually

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"Similarly, the Nigeria Institute of Medical Research (NIMR) established under the Enabling Act of 1977 which focuses on scientific areas of research in Biochemistry and Nutrition, Virology Vaccinology, Immunology, Health System and Policy Research, Reproductive, Maternal and Childhood Diseases Research, Clinical Science, Microbiology, Molecular Biology Biotechnology and Public Health, with studies that focus on diseases, has also remained underfunded by government and left to donor funding.

Group

"252 Days after the inauguration of the Dangote-led Nigeria Malaria Elimination Council, nothing significant has been heard of the council inaugurated by President Muhammadu Buhari to mobilize resources towards the fight against malaria. Just as our organization stated when it was inaugurated that it was a 'wild goose chase and a business for the big boys,' we have been vindicated."

It called on the government to invest in primary health care and improve remuneration for

health workers.

"We also call on the government to open and adequately fund research centres in universities across the nation," it said.

"Nigeria can attain a malaria-free status. A country is granted malaria-free certification by WHO when the country proves that it has interrupted indigenous transmission of the disease for at least 3 consecutive years.

If African countries like Lesotho, Mauritius, Algeria, Libya, Egypt, LA Reunion, Seychelles, Tunisia have been declared malaria-free, then Nigeria can put an end to the over 200,000 malaria mortality annually," the statement added.

We don't issue horse whips, sticks -Police

THE Nigeria Police Force has said that the police authorities do not issue horse whips and sticks to officers and therefore asked Nigerians to report any police officer found using horse whips and sticks while on duty.

The Force Public Relations Officer, CSP Olumuyiwa Adejobi, who said this on Tuesday morning on his Twitter handle described the use of horse whip and sticks by some police officers as an act of indiscipline and inappropriate behaviour.

Adejobi questioned where the officers get the horse whip and sticks as

the police authorities only issue arms, batons and other approved accoutrements to officers.

The Force spokesperson said, "We don't condone indiscipline and inappropriate behaviour. I have said severally that when you see policemen dress dirty or shabbily, it's not systemic but personal. If you see policemen with horse whip or stick, it's not normal. Such a policeman is a bad egg.

"Police don't issue a horse whip or stick to any of its personnel, so where did he get it? We issue arms and batons, and



Alkali

other approved accoutrements to our men. We condemn all these bad and unprofessional acts or attitudes.

"How can a policeman be beating someone with a horse whip when we know it's not even proper to flog a child with a horse whip, let alone a grown-up Nigerian? It's inhuman."

Buhari warns Nigerians trapped in Sudan against traveling



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including the Nigerian students, and other members of the Nigerian community caught up in the on-going crisis between the Sudanese Army and the Paramilitary Rapid Support Forces.

"The Honourable Ministers note with concern that some of these students are trying to find their way to contiguous borders of either Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia or Chad on their own.

"In line with the directive of the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Muhammadu Buhari, GCFR, the Humanitarian Sector comprising FMHADMSD, National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons (NCFRMI) is working very closely with the Ministry of

Foreign Affairs and Nigerian Missions in the countries bordering Sudan, as well as with other relevant stakeholders especially the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NIDCOM), Federal Ministry of Health, the Nigerian Armed Forces, National Intelligence Agency (NIA), and International Humanitarian Organizations such as International Organization for Migration (IOM) to immediately evacuate these Students and other affected Nigerian citizens.

"The Ministers, therefore, urge parents to advise their wards that while concerted efforts are being made to evacuate them, the students should endeavour to remain calm and maintain constant communication with officials of the Nigerian Embassy in Sudan for instructions and updates. They can reach the Embassy Officials on the following telephone numbers, +2348035866773, +249961956284, +2348063636862, +249961956274, +2349066663493.

"Furthermore, they are also advised to guard against undertaking the treacherous journey to the borders on their own, in view of the dangers involved.

"On this note, the Honourable Ministers

emphasise that concrete plans are underway, to deploy, very shortly, air transport to evacuate all stranded Nigerian citizens through the identified safe transit areas back home to Nigeria in safety and dignity."

Explore natural capital to finance SDGs -AfDB urges Nigerians

Africa must use all its comparative advantages to mobilise the resources it needs to finance its sustainable development ambitions.

The African Development Bank (AfDB) Group made the call in a statement on its website on Tuesday.

The statement reported the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) as saying that since 2010, Africa's official development assistance declined to its lowest level of 34 billion dollars in 2022.

It said the continent's access to international capital markets remained constrained and costly due to investors' perceptions of high risk.

However, it said the continent was not short of options as it could draw immense potential of natural capital, including fresh water, forests and extensive mineral deposits to attract

investment and accelerate economic growth.

"This is what the Annual Meetings of the AfDB scheduled to take place from May 22 to 26 in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, intend to demonstrate," it stated.

According to the statement, about 30 per cent of global mineral reserves is in Africa, including 60 per cent of world cobalt reserves and 90 per cent of platinum-group metals.

It further said the continent contributed substantially to the world's annual production of six key minerals.

"This includes 80 per cent of platinum, 77 per cent of cobalt, 51 per cent of manganese, 46 per cent of diamonds, 39 per cent of chromium and 22 per cent of gold.

"Africa holds seven per cent of the world's natural gas and oil reserves, has more than 60 per cent of undeveloped arable land, and is home to 13 per cent of the world's population.

"Sixty per cent of its people are under 25 years of age, the youngest population in the world.

"About 75 per cent of African countries have maritime access, offering significant opportunities in the blue economy, which has a global potential of an estimated 1.5 trillion dollars if sustainably managed," it said.

The statement said hundreds of internationally listed junior mining companies over the years had mobilised considerable capital by promoting the value of their exploration or extraction licenses for African deposits on markets.

According to the statement, governments

have often failed to harness this natural potential to mobilise resources.

It further explained that hundreds of millions of people exploited natural capital in an ad hoc manner; for instance, in the charcoal industry, which relied on an economic model of deforestation.

However, it said some countries were effectively taking advantage of natural capital. Morocco, for example, had established huge solar and wind energy plants.

"In 2022, British renewable energy company Xlinks announced the construction of a 3800-kilometre submarine cable to allow the UK to take advantage of this energy.

"Egypt harnesses the Nile River and the Suez Canal in various ways.

"The country also has the Benban solar photovoltaic power plant, inaugurated in 2018, contributing to increasing the renewable energy output to 42 per cent of the total by 2035.

"Benban is expected to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by two million tonnes annually.

"When running at full capacity, it will generate 3.8 terawatt-hours of electricity per year, equivalent to 90 per cent of the electricity produced by Aswan High Dam," it said.

The statement said AfDB's annual meetings would feature discussions of how Africa's natural capital could be an important financing vehicle for the continent's climate change adaptation.

It would also feature mitigation actions, Africa's green growth ambitions, and its private sector investment.

It said the discussions would feature climate change and natural capital experts, African ministers, and Bank governors.

Buhari, Obasanjo, Gowon, others to attend Osinbajo book launch

President Muhammadu Buhari will lead other eminent Nigerian leaders to participate in a virtual launch of a book written by 25 journalists and writers in honour of Vice President Yemi Osinbajo.

The virtual launch will now be held at 5pm on May 1, 2023 and not the earlier advertised date of April 25, 2023.

Entitled: "Osinbajo Strides," the book chronicles the various aspects of the Vice President's life from childhood to career, politics, family life and his service as the nation's most impactful number two citizen.

The Foreword is written by for Head of State, Abudulsalami Abubakar.

President Buhari is the Father of the Day at the event, while former Head of State, General Yakubu Gowon, will chair the book launch.

Other eminent Nigerians expected at the event include former President Olusegun Obasanjo; President-Elect, Bola Ahmed Tinubu; Senate President, Ahmad Lawan; House of Representatives Speaker, Femi Gbajabamila; Vice President-Elect, Kashim Shettima; national chairman, All Progressives Congress (APC), Abdullahi Adamu; Chief Emeka Anyaoku; all State Governors; Senators and House of Representatives members; many captains of industry; and prominent Nigerians.

Famed author, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, will speak on the theme: "Inspiring a New Nigeria."

Twenty five prominent journalists and writers from across the country had come together to write the book: "OSINBAJO STRIDES: Defining Moments of An Innovative Leader," as earlier announced.

They include: Richard Akinola, Azu Ishiekwe, Garba Mohammed, Etim Etim, Donu Kogbara, Sadiq Abdullateef, Fatima Mamman-Daura, James Akpandem, Mustapha Ogunsakin, Dayo Akintobi, Wale Adeduro, Columba Ogah, Haruna Abdullahi, Temilade Okesanjo

and Arukaino Umukoro.

Others are Olaolu Beckley, Jude Zoho, Vitalis Obidiaghaa, Seun Bisuga, Seyi Gesinde, Faith Dafe-Joseph, Muritala Ayinla, Abimbola Olaniyan and Ibrahim Bature.

Jahman Anikulapo served as the Editorial Consultant for the work.

The book is essentially a collection of essays written by journalists, writers and other persons from different walks of life.

It periscopes the Vice President's public service since he was Special Adviser to the Attorney-General of the Federation in 1988 to date.



Overhauling Nigeria's food systems

Proliferation of agro-cargo airports by state government despite non-viability of existing ones have become a source of concern to aviation stakeholders, ADEGWU JOHN, YUSUF BABALOLA writes.

NIGERIA'S food systems which reflect the diverse cultures, ethnic groups, and a rich food heritage are known for their flavor, variety, and the use of local ingredients such as cassava, yams, plantains, spices among others. However, despite the richness of Nigerian food, the country faces several challenges in its food systems that affect its people's nutrition and health.

One of the significant challenges in Nigeria's food system remains food insecurity, which affects over 90 million Nigerians according to the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO). The country's food production system faces several challenges, including a lack of modern farming techniques, inadequate infrastructure, and the impacts of climate change which leads to reduced agricultural yields.

Another challenge is the issue of malnutrition, which affects both children and adults in Nigeria. According to a report by the Global Nutrition Report, one in three Nigerian children under the age of five is stunted due to malnutrition. Malnutrition in adults is also high, with a high prevalence of micronutrient deficiencies such as iron, vitamin A, and iodine.

The food distribution system in Nigeria also presents challenges, with many rural areas lacking adequate



transportation and storage facilities to ensure food reaches the people who need it. This leads to food waste, especially of perishable produce such as fruits and vegetables.

Despite these challenges, there are several efforts put in place by the federal government to improve Nigeria's food systems. For instance, the initiated programmes to increase food

production and distribution such as the Anchor Borrowers' Programme and the National Home Grown School Feeding Programme and additionally, there are ongoing efforts to improve agricultural practices through the use of modern farming techniques, including the adoption of irrigation systems and the use of improved varieties and some climate adapted agricultural practices.

Another promising development is the growth of the agribusiness sector in Nigeria. The sector is increasingly attracting private sector investment, with several companies investing in the production, processing, and distribution of food products in the country. This investment is creating jobs and supporting the growth of the country's economy.

However, according to the FAO, for Nigeria to attain food self-sufficiency, the country's current food systems need to be transformed to help her achieve the Sustainable Development Goals agenda, not only through production technologies but also entrenching sustainable and inclusive food systems in the structure of governance and administration.

This was part of the

conclusions reached by the organisation as contained in the recently released Nigeria Food Security Assessment profile.

The assessment gathered a wide range of food system actors in Nigeria through a consultation process where they shared views on key issues and challenges and analysed potential solutions.

The assessment was part of a joint initiative launched by the European Union (EU), FAO, and the French Research Centre for Agricultural Development, (CIRAD) in collaboration with the Government of Nigeria.

Its purpose was to identify key constraints and entry points for understanding the bottlenecks to sustainable food systems, and to propose innovative policy and investment solutions to make food systems more sustainable and inclusive.

FAO noted that the current food systems are unable to fulfil their purpose of providing nutritious and healthy food for all and contributing to enhanced livelihood opportunities in an environmentally sustainable way.

According to the FAO Nigeria office, gaps such as low yields, post-harvest losses, food safety concerns and climate

change impacts, coupled with weak implementation of relevant policies and legislation, are combining to stagnate the country's agriculture production.

Commenting on the report, FAO country representative in Nigeria and ECOWAS, Fred Kafeero highlighted four key challenges hindering the country from transitioning towards a desirable sustainable food system are highlighted therein.

These include food system vulnerability to internal and global shocks; underdeveloped agrifood value chains; food system vulnerability to climate change and natural resource degradation and poor diet quality and high prevalence of food and nutrition insecurity.

There is no gainsaying that Nigeria's food systems face several challenges that affect the nutrition and health of its people. However, the ongoing efforts to address these challenges and improve the country's food production, distribution, and consumption systems need to be redoubled. These efforts are critical to ensuring that Nigerians have access to nutritious food and can lead healthy and productive lives of its citizens.

Source: Leadership



Abubakar



CBN defends Forex ban on stockfish importation

THE Central Bank of Nigeria, has said that the foreign exchange restriction imposed on importation of stockfish was to resuscitate the domestic fishery industries, conserve foreign exchange (forex), and improve employment generation.

This follows revelations by the Norwegian Seafood Council that stockfish import to Nigeria from Norway declined by 5.9 percent to N3.2 billion in 2022 from N3.4 billion in 2021.

The Council has revealed that 10,740 metric tons of stockfish, comprising both the head and bodies were imported into the country in 2022, behind 14,997 and 13,845 metric tons of mackerel and herrings imported during the same period.

Speaking at the just concluded Norwegian Seafood Seminar held in Lagos, Director of Trade and Exchange Department for the CBN, Dr Ozoemena Nnaji, said that the apex bank had to include stockfish among the 43 items that have been restricted from accessing Forex due to the scarce foreign exchange currently being experienced in the country.

Represented by Mrs. Bukola Adenubi, an official of the apex bank, Nnaji also said that the move was also meant to grow the local fishery capacity of Nigerians with a view to exporting Nigerian aquatic products.

He said: "CBN in an effort to conserve scarce foreign exchange restricted access



Emefiele

to 43 items including stockfish in 2015.

"The aim of the restriction is to conserve forex, resuscitation of domestic industries and improve employment generation. Note that the restriction is not a ban on import but a restriction on access to FX".

Meanwhile, Mr Trond Kostveit, Director Africa, Norwegian Seafood Council, urged the Federal Government to reconsider the removal of stockfish from the list, saying: "We started the process three years ago to see if it is possible to delist stockfish from foreign exchange ban because there are many good arguments why the product should not be on the list.

"The forex ban has made the price of stockfish in local markets quite expensive, especially for consumers.

"The cost of getting forex at

the parallel market is taking a toll on stockfish imports. For consumers, stockfish heads are the only source of proteins.

"It will be very beneficial if we can get access to the official exchange rate and thereby, reduce the cost of the fish for consumers," Kostveit said.

He noted that Norway was not competing with any Nigeria local fish species.

"We understand the ban is made to promote local aquaculture production but the product is not a threat to Nigerian aquaculture.

"When we tried to say that stockfish has become such an important part of the Nigerian diet and it is very important, that we make it cheaper.

"So, we will continue this appeal and hopefully, we can see that soon, it is possible to delist stockfish from the foreign exchange ban," he said.

FROM N3,778.30 per five kilogramme of the Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) in March, last year, the average average retail price rose to N4,610.48 last month.

The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) made this known in its document entitled: "Liquefied Petroleum Gas (Cooking Gas) Price Watch (March 2023)."

It said the product rose by 0.22 per cent from N4,600.57 in February 2023.

The document stated: "The average retail price for refilling a 5kg cylinder of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (Cooking Gas) increased by 0.22 per cent on a month-on-month basis from N4,600.57 recorded in February 2023 to N4,610.48 in March 2023. On a year-on-year basis, this rose by 22.03 per cent from N3,778.30 in March 2022."

NBS noted that on state profile analysis, Kwara recorded the highest average price for refilling a 5kg cylinder of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (Cooking Gas) with N4,962.87, followed by Abuja with N4,940, and Adamawa with N4,915.

It however, said Rivers recorded the lowest price with N4,204.45, followed by Abia and Anambra with

Kerosene price rises by 102.37 per cent
— NBS



Kyari

N4,220.15 and N4,232.75 respectively.

The data added that analysis by zone showed that the North-Central recorded the highest average retail price for refilling a 5kg Cylinder of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (Cooking Gas) with N4,872.20, followed by the North-West with N4,651.93, while the South-East recorded the lowest with N4,441.55.

NBS explained that also, the average retail price for refilling a 12.5kg Cylinder of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (Cooking Gas) increased by 0.09% on a month-on-month basis from N10,253.39 in February 2023 to N10,262.56 in March 2023.

The Bureau said on a year-on-year basis, this rose by 34.72% from N7,617.71 in March 2022.

222.5 million Nigerians use telephones

— NBS

THERE were 222.5 million telephone subscribers in Nigeria as at end of 2022, the

National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) has said.

The 2022 figure showed an increase of 27.1 million subscribers over the 195.5 million subscribers recorded at the end of 2021.

The NBS stated the figures in its Telecoms Data: Active Voice and Internet per State, Porting and Tariff Information report for the last quarter of 2022, released in Abuja on recently.

The report showed that the figure for the last quarter of 2022 represented a 13.87 per cent rise in voice subscriptions on a year-on-year basis.

On a quarter-on-quarter basis, the report showed growth stood at 4.89 per cent.

The NBS also recorded a total of 154.9 million active internet subscribers at the end of 2022 compared to 142 million recorded at the end of 2021.

"This represents a 9.07 per cent increase in active internet subscriptions year-on-year, while on a quarter-on-quarter basis, internet subscription grew by 1.35 per cent," it stated.

On state-by-state analysis,

the report showed that Lagos State had the highest number of active telephone users in 2022 at 26.5 million, followed by Ogun with 13 million users.

Kano State came third with 12.4 million telephone users.

The report showed that Bayelsa had the least number of telephone users at 1.6 million subscribers, followed by Ebonyi and Ekiti with 1.9 million users and two million users, respectively.

It also showed that Lagos State had the highest number of internet users at 18.7 million subscribers, followed by Ogun with 9.2 million subscribers and Kano State with 8.5 million subscribers.

"On the other hand, Bayelsa recorded the least number of 1.1 million internet users, followed by Ebonyi and Ekiti with 1.3 million and 1.5 million subscribers, respectively," it stated.

The NBS report showed that majority of telephone users in Nigeria in 2022 were MTN subscribers.

NAN

Nigeria lost N2.3trn revenue to oil theft - IOC

NIGERIA has lost an opportunity to produce and sell about 65,700,000 barrels of oil in the last one year due to issues bothering on pipeline vandalism and the resultant oil theft.

This translates to about N2.3trn loss in oil revenue if the prevailing exchange rate and average oil price are used.

The Chairman of Shell Companies in Nigeria, Dr Osagie Okubor, said at the just concluded Nigerian International Energy Summit held in Abuja, said the 180,000 barrels per day Trans Niger Pipeline had remained shut for more than one year- March 2022 to March 2023.

The loss from March last year to March this year brings total shut in/loss to about 65,700,000 barrels. Brent crude price averaged about \$83 per barrel from March 2022 to March 2023, meaning the country could have lost as much as N2.3trn to the menace.

The TNP, a Joint Venture operated by SPDC is a major pipeline capable of transporting about 180,000 barrels of crude per day to the Bonny export terminal.

Speaking at the NIES, Okunbor said the TNP remained shut for one year due to the massive crude oil theft on the pipeline.

The pipeline, according to Shell, is part of the gas liquids evacuation infrastructure, critical for continued domestic power generation and liquefied gas exports.

He said, "What keeps me awake today as regards my onshore business in Shell is the fact that we cannot operate a pipeline, and that's what is responsible for the 60 percent capacity. I think today that is almost just how much gas we can supply," he said.

"And this is because one of our key gas infrastructures — the TNP — was shut down for one year; we removed 460 illegal connections on that line. We just reopened that line. Today we are struggling to

catch up with our first programme."

Okunbor said the loss was often viewed as affecting Nigeria's oil production quota to the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries.

He stressed that the situation was also having devastating implications on the supply of gas to the Nigeria Liquefied Natural Gas.

"So, if you ask me what the number one issue has to be for the incoming administration, it has to be the security of oil and gas infrastructure. If you don't fix it, then we have a huge problem on our hands," Okunbor said.

Okunbor advised the incoming administration to prioritised the security of oil infrastructure.

There were reports that the Federal Government was planning to reopen the pipeline last October.

However, talks with the Bodo community in the Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State appear to have



Disappearance of new naira notes and blame game

Despite the currency increase in circulation from N982.09 billion in February to N1.6 trillion at the end of March 2023, the new naira notes introduced by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) have become very scarce, CHIMA NWOKOJI writes.

IT is barely one month after the reintroduction of old currency notes and many Nigerians are asking questions as to why the newly redesigned naira notes are not easily accessible.

Indeed, it is as difficult to get the redesigned naira as the biblical Elephant passing through the eye of a needle. dverto Player

While the CBN blames Nigerians for hoarding available ones, maybe in anticipation of the December 31 deadline, the banking public in turn accuses the apex bank of not supplying enough to banks. The banks themselves are pointing fingers at CBN, saying that the apex banking sector regulator is only targeting cashless economy and do not worry about supplying them with new notes.

The banks' Automated Teller Machines (ATMs), which dispensed new notes at the time the new notes were launched, have returned to old notes disbursement across the counter or through other payment channels.

The bottom line is that nobody wants to be a victim of scarcity again, because it brought not only anguish, but also led to death of businesses and humans.

A member of the Presidential Economic Advisory Council, Bismarck Rewane, said the CBN printed approximately N400 billion new naira notes following the currency redesign programme.

In a report titled: Nigeria Hits A Brick Wall, Rewane said that a shortfall of N2.48 trillion cash exists, leading to near paralysis of commercial activities in the economy.

He said the shortfall represents 90 per cent of the cash in circulation, meaning that only about 10 per cent of the cash needed was printed.

According to Rewane, an economist and Managing Director, Financial Derivatives Company Limited, three of the eight naira denominations – N200, N500 and N1,000 estimated at N2.88 trillion – make up 90 per cent of the total cash in circulation.

A breakdown of the N400 billion new notes printed by the Nigeria Printing and Minting Company showed that about 700 million pieces of new notes are in circulation at present.

This means that the volume of the new notes falls drastically below the 9.75 billion pieces naira notes circulating before naira reforms.

According to CBN sources, in the past, the naira suffered from hoarding by the political class, but now, ordinary citizens are hoarding the new notes.

To provide clarity to yet another round of blame game, the apex bank says it is managing the circulation of the new notes, while releasing more old notes to the commercial banks.

"Over a trillion naira is in circulation and more notes are being released to the banks," a CBN source said.

The Supreme Court had in a landmark ruling on March 3, extended the validity of the old N200, N500 and N1000 notes till December 31, 2023.



A seven-member panel of the court led by John Okoro ruled that the old notes should circulate alongside the new notes until the end of the year.

It took the CBN about two weeks to act on the judgment.

According to a source at the CBN: "People, not only politicians but ordinary Nigerians, are hoarding the new notes because of uncertainties.

"You know December will soon come. That is when all the old notes will cease to be legal tender. So people are stocking the new notes to mitigate uncertainties over the old or new naira notes."

The CBN official advised the "authorities to engage in massive enlightenment and reassurances that the new notes will be available in and after December."

According to the official, that is the reason the CBN is dishing out the old notes so that they become available and citizens can make transactions very easily. That is the current position.

"So, it's not that the CBN is not releasing money at all."

When told that Nigerians want the new notes, the CBN official said "Why are people looking for the new notes if they want to buy goods and services and money is available?

"For now that is not the problem of the citizens.

"Those complaining are looking for the new notes to hoard. That's the implication."

What is happening, the source said, "is that the new notes are not returned to the commercial banks.

"If they can be returning them to the commercial banks, the banks will also give them out to the citizens to use, but it appears that that is not happening.

"For now, the strategy of the CBN is to meet the present exigencies, ameliorate any suffering, make money available, either old or new, so that people can have easy access.

"But the CBN has its own strategy to ease out the old notes before the end of December, so the implication is that there is the likelihood that more new notes will come into circulation."

He said the large denomination notes are very vulnerable to counterfeiting because of the huge profit they make from it.

So there is the possibility that the CBN will print more of the lower denominations in line with its own objective.

Emefiele had in a press conference in Lagos said "CBN is aware of the difficulty faced by Nigerians in accessing the new currency at this initial stage of its issue and circulation, but wishes to plead with all to please show some understanding as everything is being done to correct some of the observed lapses in the implementation of this ambitious programme."

According to him, some bankers have not complied with a directive to only load the new notes on Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs).

Emefiele at the peak of the cash crunch said instead, the banks have

been handing out bundles to individuals who spray them at parties.

Also, when he appeared before the senate, he told them that CBN gave specific directives to the banks to load the new notes into the ATM nationwide to ensure equitable and transparent mechanisms for the distribution of the new notes to all Nigerians.

Many of us have unfortunately seen the new naira, instead of being used for the purpose it's meant, is used in parties, in celebrations.

"Some said, maybe, it's money

from the ATM and I said no, money from the ATMs is already broken. They (the ones spread at parties) are in leaflets.

"What we saw being stamped on people at parties were packages of the new naira notes, which means they (banks) had breached certain aspects of the guidance note we gave to them."

A senior bank executive who spoke on condition of anonymity, said, "The CBN did not print enough new notes and does not want to return the old notes it has collected because it is still driving its cashless policy."



Emefiele

Politics

We're all stakeholders in the journey ahead - Mutfwang

BY PETER TITLE.

The Governor -elect of Plateau State, Barrister Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang has told the people of Mangu Local Government Area that they are all stakeholders in the journey ahead as he pilots the affairs of the state and needs their support if he must succeed.

According to him, he would always count on their advice, assuring them that his doors are wide open for constructive criticism. He stated that anything short of that would be thrown in the trash bin.

He made his position known when the People's Democratic Party (PDP), Executive Council, Christian Association of Nigeria(CAN), JNI, women groups and youths paid him a congratulatory visit at the Jonah Jang Lodge on Monday.

Barr. Mutfwang who was highly elated with the visit told the party heavy weights that,"the success of this government to be sworn in May 29th will be a success to all of you. So we are all stakeholders in the this journey and we must ensure that we do not fail the people.

He lamented that Plateau State was in a state of comatose which needed serious attention saying that they would be taking off governance from below zero level and calls for prayers.

He further told them that he was disappointed with the people's turn out during the election, revealing that the votes he garnered when he contested for chairmanship was far more than the votes he got at the governorship elections because he said there was no aggressive sensitisation.

Barr. Mutfwang who posited that while he was lamenting about low turnout in ManguLGA ,the opposition was accusing PDP of over voting and manipulation which he said was laughable.

The PDP Chairman of Mangu Local Government Area, Mr Ayuba Goje explained that they had come to felicitate with one another saying that Mutfwang's victory at the recent polls was a victory for all of them.

A former Transition Committee Chairman of the local government council, Mr Shuaibu Shikben called for



Mutfwang

cooperation and support from all so that the

Governor -elect would leave the state better than he met it.

Guber candidate calls for active participation in census

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

The All Progressives Congress (APC) gubernatorial candidate, Alhaji Usman Ahmed Ododo has called on the people of the state to come out enmasse and present themselves for capturing and counting during the forthcoming census exercise. Ododo who made the call while addressing Muslims shortly after the Eid prayer in Okene, the headquarters of Kogi Central Senatorial District to mark the end of Ramadan fasting recently, said the exercise would enable the government to plan for the state. The APC standard bearer however, urged traditional leaders, wards head and critical stakeholders to sensitize the people on the need for them to come out en masse for the national

census exercise. "The census which is head count is the only weapon government can use to negotiate good things for the people," he said. While congratulating Muslims ummah for the successful completion of the Ramadan fast, Ododo called on all Kogites to imbibe the lessons of the holy month by extending love to one another irrespective of religion and ethnic differences. "I also encourage us to keep on praying for our leaders at all levels to succeed as representatives of God Almighty among us and to refrain from any act capable of impeding the peace and harmony the people are enjoying today in the state. "As candidate of All Progressive Congress in the November 11, 2023



Ododo

Governor -elect of Plateau State, Barrister Caleb Mutfwang has assured people of the state of his readiness towards building a new Plateau where everyone would have a feel of belonging no matter one's standing in the society.

This, according to him, can be achieved with the support of the people of the state and urged them to unite, work as a team and support his government, saying that there is power in unity which he stressed leads to development.

Barr. Mutfwang disclosed these when the People's Democratic Party (PDP), EXCO from all levels in Jos South, North, East and Barkin Ladi paid him a solidarity visit at the Jonah David Jang Lodge in Rayfield on Monday.

According to the Governor -elect, he was proud of the PDP in the Northern zone because of their resilience during the governorship and state Assembly elections which they stood firm in ensuring that their votes count and also defended it. That action, he said led to the victory of the party in the state.

He commended the PDP in

governorship election in Kogi State, I am assuring you that I will work day and night to build on the existing culture of religious harmony, tolerance and cohesion among the

Media organisations felicitate with Governor-elect

The Management of African Independent Television (AIT), Silverbird Communications Ltd, KT FM, Jos stations, and a group known as "Osun Team", on Saturday paid a solidarity and congratulatory visit on the Governor -elect of Plateau State, Barrister Caleb Mutfwang.

Speaking separately, the leader of the broadcast organisations based in Jos, Mr Tony Iheanacho and who is the Business Manager of Silverbird Communications, intimated the Governor -elect that they were there to congratulate and to rejoice with him on his victory on the recently concluded governorship and state Assembly elections held recently.

According to Iheanacho, the Chairmen and Directors of the organisations also sent their warm felicitations to Barrister Mutfwang and urged him to accord the organisations the necessary support so as to ease information dissemination to the society.

The leader of the team further intimated the Governor-elect of their organisations' readiness to work with the government of Mutfwang if

'We'll build a new Plateau'

BY PETER TITLE

the Northern zone saying despite the might of the ruling party, they were able to weather the storm and promised to reintegrate Jos East into the Jos Master Plans and to build a partnership that would be of benefit to all.

Barr. Mutfwang who said he would be the happiest governor to see people of Jos North shaking hands across borders, lamented that the crisis that had bedeviled the local government area had taken the entire state backward.

The Governor -elect further appealed to the people to stop giving Jos a negative narrative through negative stories being peddled around. He said that he hoped to see a new Plateau where the interest of the state would be above any other interest.

Speaking, the leader of the Jos South delegation, Honourable Dachung Musa Bagos said the visit was to congratulate the Governor -elect and to assure him of their support.

Hon Bagos who is a member

people of the state.

"I also thank our leader, His Excellency Governor Yahaya Bello who has done a lot to ensure that Kogi State remains peaceful," the APC candidate stated.

sworn -in next month and prayed for a better and brighter Plateau in the next eight years under his leadership.

Speaking also, the leader of the Osun Team, Builder. Hon. Jeremiah Satmark while congratulating the Governor -elect prayed for God's guidance throughout his tenure.

Hon Satmark who is the Chairman, People's Democratic Party (PDP), Plateau Central Zone explained that the team is made up of Plateau indigenes who went to study how it was done during the election of Governor Adeleke that brought him to power so as to replicate same in Plateau and thanked God that they achieved it.

According to him, the struggle was not easy and the efforts put in by the group in ensuring that the Governor -elect won the election was fierce and promised to consolidate on the foundation made for a better tomorrow.

Responding, the Governor -elect, Barrister Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang appreciated the broadcast organisations for their efforts in deepening democracy and assured them that he would accord them the necessary support to wax stronger. He added

and a re-elected member of the House of Representatives explained that the people of the local government have promised to move in unison to ensure that the Governor -elect succeeds and shall remain fortified until the end of his tenure as the governor of the state.

The leaders of BarkinLadi led by Hon. Peter Gyendeng in the company of Mrs Sarah Reng Ochekepe, a former Minister of Water Resources, noted that they were highly elated to have Mutfwang as the governor of the state and urged him to look into and solve some mining problems that had rendered their lands useless following the nationalisation of mining companies.

The Jos East delegation who spoke through the Speaker, PLHA, Rt-Hon. Abok Nuhu Ayuba said they were at the lodge to felicitate with the Governor -elect and assured him of their unflinching support.

Alhaji. Aminu Abdullahi, the Chairman PDP, Jos North who led the delegation said the Governor -elect was a messiah sent by God to salvage the state from total collapse and called on people of the state to rally round him in order to take the state out of the woods.

Hon. Esther Dusu, a member of the state House of Assembly for Jos North-West and a member -elect who would take over from her in the assembly, Hon. Danjuma Azi assured Mutfwang of their support.

that "I'm one person that believes in the independence of the media".

He described their organisations as true mirror of the society that provided equal opportunities and platforms to all and sundry and urged them to keep up.

According to Mutfwang, as they set to take-off, they would expect constructive criticisms from all in order to forge ahead.

Barr. Mutfwang equally thanked the "Osun Team" for the support they gave the party which culminated to their victory at the polls saying their efforts did not go in vain.

He lamented that the electoral management in Nigeria has become a nightmare where things were done according to the dictates of the people at the top. But was quick to point out that the team that was sent to Plateau was a special breed that refused to compromise like that of Adamawa State.

He said his government would continue to count on the team for future elections in the state saying the study of the Osun elections was an eye opener and would spur them to put in their best while piloting the affairs of the state.

Politics

Party primaries: Bad omen for Kogi Guber election

There is no doubt that political party primary elections in any democratic setting is the number one certificate with which to be used as indices in projecting expectations for the success or failure of candidates of various parties at the general polls.

PARTY primaries if not well handled in terms of ensuring free, fair and credible exercise could spell doom for a nation or state as the case may be in its dream to excel in the provision of democracy dividends and sound governance.

Aspirants into political positions such as presidential, governorship, national and state assemblies as well as chairmanship and councillorship, see party primary elections as the most important hurdles to cross in realisation of their ambitions.

Also they see it as a do or die affair which instigates them into unhealthy intrigues and plots such as seeking for godfatherism, use of violence, intimidation, vote buying and the rest of the odds and the ugly to have their way in emerging candidates of their respective parties for the general elections.

In this piece, Our Correspondent, tries to examine the just concluded Kogi governorship primaries ahead of the November 11 general polls and it's likely impacts on the entire democratic process in Kogi.

Political watchers believe that elections are preceded by activities of politicians in the areas of campaign, realignment in the political scheme of things, subterfuge and intrigues, among other strategies, to win.

From the onset of the race to the exalted Lugard House, Kogi Governor's Office, Lokoja on April 11 with primary elections, various political party loyalists had begun to plot to ensure that their respective political party remains relevant.

Observers of the game notes that the primaries and the results had left much to be desired by which stakeholders could identify the good and the bad sides of whatever roles they played in the primaries.

Lugard House, Kogi Governor's Office, Lokoja, will be vacant on January 27, 2024 and Gov. Yahaya Bello of the All Progressives Congress (APC) will have completed the eight-year tenure as the state governor. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has done the needful, designing a time table for the race. According to the timetable, there was a deadline of April 17 for all the political parties to produce their respective candidates for the Nov. 11 governorship election.

The exercise was also organised and concluded within just a week by all the interested political parties but not without the good, the bad and the ugly sides.

The political parties that participated were the All Progressive Congress (APC), People's Democratic Party (PDP), Action Alliance (AA), Labour Party (LP), Action Democratic Congress ADC, Young Progressives Party (YPP) New Nigeria People's Party (NNPP) and People's Redemption Party (PRP).

But while the primary election exercises of the AA, NNPP, YPP and PRP went smoothly, peaceful and successful, those of APC, PDP, ADC and LP did not go as expected.

An entrepreneur, Mr Olayinka Braimoh picked AA ticket, a prominent politician, Alhaji Mubarak Musa got that of the NNPP ticket, Dr Abdullah Bayawo sailed through to be the flag bearer of PRP while Dr Samson Omale, an active party member picked the YPP's ticket in the state.

The ADC and LP had parallel primary elections while APC and PDP, on the other hand, had other candidates disagreeing and contesting the results of the primaries, creating a threat to the unity of the members in both parties.



Yakubu

For instance, in PDP, the former deputy governor of the state, Mr Sunday Awoniyi, challenged the emergence of Dino Melaye as candidate of the party and in APC, Alhaji Ahmed Usman-Ododo, the state Auditor-General for Local Government, is opposed by Mr Muritala Yakubu-Ajaka, Mr Sani Ohiere and Sen. Smart Adeyemi, claiming that there was no primary election on April 11.

Worse still is two members of APC have filed a case before an Abuja Federal High Court challenging the emergence of Ododo as candidate of the party for the Nov. 11 governorship election.

Mr Realwan Okpanachi and Yahaya Seidu-Nuhu in an originating summons filed by their counsel, Mr Promise Ogbodu, sued six of the contestants as first to sixth defendants.

They joined the APC and INEC defendants for what they described as violation of the Electoral Act 2022 and the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria

The first to sixth respondents are Abdulkareem Jamiu (Chief of Staff), Jibril Momoh (Account-General), Yakubu Okala (Auditor-General), Asiwaju Idris (Commissioner for Finance), Salami Ozigi (Commissioner for Local

Government and Chieftaincy Affairs) and Ahmed Usman-Ododo (Auditor-General for Local Government Areas).

They prayed the court to declare that the seventh respondent — APC — cannot validly nominate any of the first to sixth respondents as its candidate for the governorship election.

In Labour Party, two factions held separate primaries, producing two candidates.

Shortly before Dr Ayo Olorunfemi-led LP governorship primary election committee could declare the results of the election there were several gun shots that sent everyone at the venue away.

The story is not different in ADC which had produced two candidates — Leke Abejide and Dele Bello-Williams by direct and indirect primaries respectively.

Observers express concern that the agenda of these political parties that have been in controversy in the conduct of party primaries might have been compromised.

However, they advise that public office holders should be determined to discharge their responsibilities effectively irrespective of the prior intrigues and differences in their interests.

According to them, governance requires leaders who are courageous and disciplined to provide solutions to the country's challenges.

All in all, a critic, Prof. Afolabi Aribigbola of Adekunle Ajasin University, Ondo, believes that the obvious expectations of Nigerians is primary elections outcomes that will produce good and credible candidates that will be committed to development.

Strengthening security during elections through private guards

Security is fundamental to virtually all human activities, electoral processes inclusive. Any nation considering development must conceive and implement robust security arrangements, experts say. ISAAC AREGBESOLA writes.

A vibrant security structure is required to not only protect but also nurture nascent democracies such as Nigeria's

It is the duty of the state to secure its citizens and institutions. It created the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps to augment the efforts of the Police.

However, government's security agencies alone cannot do the job; somebody has to fill the gap.

During the just-concluded general election, security agencies did their best to protect politicians, INEC personnel, electoral materials, electorate, rallies and conventions.

However, the violence and skirmishes experienced in some parts of the country during the just-concluded general election underscores the need to bolster the nation's security system

Some of the security challenges witnessed during the elections include violent demonstrations, theft of electoral supplies, targeted attacks on leaders and voters, among others.

Some observers attribute the violence to inadequate public security manpower deployed to the polling units.

Some political analyst say INEC should be held responsible for the violence in line with Section 27 (3) of Electoral Act 2022 Section 27 (3).

That section stipulates that INEC shall be responsible for requesting for the deployment of relevant security personnel necessary for elections or registrations of voters

and shall assign them in a manner determined by the commission in consultation with the relevant security agencies.

They argue that the law did not set particular boundaries on the relevant security personnel except for the Nigerian Armed Forces.

The already enormous task of securing Nigeria with its vast land mass and huge population is usually compounded during election periods where special arrangements have to be made to meet security demands.

To overcome this challenge, Mr Okereke Chinwike, Chief Executive Officer, African Law Foundation (AFRILAW) said it was important to recognise the complementary roles of the private security providers in providing security during elections.

He said that private security companies should be harnessed by the Federal Government in ensuring adequate election security during future elections.

According to him, there is need for an increased cooperation between INEC, the private security operators as well as election policy makers to ensure that their resources are utilized in the future.

"The private security guards can play a critical role in monitoring and reporting incidences; provide security for election stakeholders' office premises, politicians, political parties' events, INEC and other support services that public security agencies carry out.

"Though they have been carrying out some of these services unofficially, right now, we want the policymakers to make it official so that they can complement the public security agencies.

"They should also be given a capacity building training so that they can offer quality and professional services in further elections.

"Some of the roles of private security in election include provision of security in government installations, political party premises and homes of political actors.

"They also complement formal security in crowd control during rallies and other political meetings," he said.

Mr Oyesanya Sanya, Deputy Commandant, NSCDC, agrees that private security providers should be given the opportunity to complement the services the public security agencies during elections

"Private security came into being because of the gap in what United Nations recommended as the standard ratio for policing the citizens, which is one police officer to every 450 citizen.

"Government-funded security agencies cannot do all; these are the gaps the private security guards are filling, which they have been doing in everyday security.

"Using them for election security will assist us in having a well secured

election process," he said.

Dr David Vareba, Coordinator, Access Africa for Right and Development Initiative, said deliberate efforts should be made by all critical election stakeholders to ensure adequate use of private security guards during election.

Vareba, who served as an election observer in Rivers during the 2023 general election, also said that private security guards were not adequately involved in the electoral process.

He urged adequate compensation measures for private security guards deployed to high risk and volatile areas for election-related duties.

Similarly, Vice-President, Association of Licensed Private Security Practitioners of Nigeria (ALPSPN), Clement Anala, said there is need for private security guards to be incorporated into the mainstream security architecture for better synergy among security personnel in the country be they private or public.

"We have a whole lot of private security guards within the scope of the 36 states.

"What we need is capacity building for our personnel and to increase coordination with relevant security stakeholders, including the government, civil society and media to ensure our full participation in future elections," he said.

NANFeatures

IMAGES

MUTFWANG CELEBRATES MOTHER'S DAY AT ST. MONICA'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

Plateau State Governor-elect, Barr. Caleb Mutfwang last Sunday celebrated this years' Mother's Day with Catholic Women Organisation at St. Monica's Catholic Church, Rantya, Jos



Governor-elect, Barr. Mutfwang (left) in a handshake with Very Reverend Father Gabriel Gowok



Parish Priest of St. Monica, Reverend Father Fredrick Wukari praying for mothers during this year's celebration



Cross section of worshipers during the Mass



Director General of Media and Publicity Campaign, PDP, Hon. Yiljap Abraham (middle) with the State PDP chairman, Hon. Chris Hassan (right) and Chief SB Rogo after the Mass

GOVERNOR ELECT HOSTS PDP CAUCUS OF JOS EAST LGA

The Governor-elect, Plateau State, Barr. Caleb Mutfwang recently received in audience PDP Caucus of Jos East LGA, led by Rt. Hon. Abok Nuhu Ayuba at his official residence, JD Jang Lodge, Government House Rayfield, Jos



Barr. Caleb Mutfwang (right) in discussion mood with the Plateau Northern Senatorial District elect, Hon. Dr. Simon Mwadkon Fwet during the visit



Leader of the delegation, Rt. Hon. Abok Nuhu Ayuba (middle) Members-elect for Jos South/Jos East, Hon. Dachung Musa Bagos (left) and that of Jos South State House of Assembly-elect, Hon. Dalyop Fom Gwottson



Cross section of stakeholders at the PDP caucus meeting from Jos East LGA



Members of Rt. Hon. Abok Nuhu Ayuba entourage during the visit

Politics

10th Senate: We need opposition parties to succeed

President of the Senate, Ahmad Lawan has made a strong case for the support of opposition parties for the success of the 10th National Assembly.

SPEAKING with State House Journalists in Abuja recently, Lawan however expressed confidence that the All Progressive Congress (APC), members and senators-elect will respect whatever the party decides on who occupies the office of the 10th Senate President

Lawan noted that the APC with a total of 57 Senators will require 73 to get bills, resolutions and motions passed on the floor of the Senate,

"I don't see anything wrong in the opposition talking to us, or we talking to the opposition to ensure that we're on the same page, because we need opposition to ensure that we get most of our constitutional amendments when the time is right, because we can't have the 73 in the Senate.

"So you need 73 senators at least for you to have any constitutional amendment. So you would need opposition. That's why it is very, very critical, it is very essential that you work with the opposition right from the beginning. Don't ever think the opposition should be pushed away.

"I only believe in the very bipartisan chamber because it is more productive. It is more stable, it's calm, and it gives you the kind of outcome that you will never get with a very rancorous chamber. And I've seen it, we have done it," he said.

Lawan while dismissing a repeat of the 2015 experience where opposition parties took over the National Assembly leadership, assured that, "opposition are not planning to usurp powers because it is presumptuous that the APC will not be a united party, APC is a united party and the opposition party will simply work with the APC majority.

According to him, "There is no way an opposition will decide who should be the senate president who should be the speaker, it is our party and other leaders that will decide which zone or whoever, and the rest of us in the party will key in and of course the opposition would have no option but to support.

"We will respect whatever our leaders eventually come up with and we are praying that we are able to deal with it as decisively as possible, and then keep ourselves united and work together with other parties.



Lawan

"We have been able to work together with other parties in the ninth assembly in a very bipartisan way, smoothly and seamlessly. And I believe that we can repeat that. And it is very, very essential that we have a very United National Assembly. And I'm very confident that we will do that. As the battles for who occupies the office of the 10th Senate President heats up however, outgoing Ebonyi State Governor Dave Umahi, has been adjudged as best candidate for the position.

David Umahi, who has been

Governor of Ebonyi State for the past eight years, will be expected to battle for the coveted position with former Governor of Abia state, Orji Kalu and former Governor of Akwa Ibom State, Godswill Akpabio.

The All Progressives Congress (APC) with the majority of about 57 Senators in the Upper Legislative Chambers is yet to make a definite statement on whether it will zone the position to any particular section of the county or allow for open contest.

The State Commissioner for Information and Orientation, Uchenna Orji noted that Umahi's

experience as Speaker of the State House of Assembly for 8 years and Legislator for 12 years, placed him above other contenders for the office of the Senate President of the 10th National Assembly.

Umahi, who recently won his election to represent Ebonyi South Senatorial Constituency, is counting on his strong cooperation and working relationship with the Legislative Arm of the Ebonyi State government, amongst others

According to him, "Umahi has indebt knowledge of the workings of the Legislature as well as Intergovernmental relations.

"As Deputy Governor, he stooped to conquer and was cracking the hardest kernel of his boss in fervent humility and profound loyalty

"As State Party Chairman, he built the biggest Party office ever built by any democratic government in Africa and as Governor, he made Ebonyi State a reference point in innovative development in Nigeria

"Put sentiments apart and give him a chance as Senate President, you will agree and appreciate that Umahi is a Ranking Leader in capacity, experience, passion for service delivery and he is a rare leadership gem in Africa."

Orji dismissed the use of Ranking in the Senate, a system which recognizes the length of years a candidate spent at the Upper Legislative Chambers, as a factor that determines who occupy the

position.

"They speak of Ranking as if it is a condition precedent for being a Senate President.

"This sentiment has shrunked the thought of legal minds and suppressed the pre-eminence and considerations of the rule of the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria on who qualifies to be elected as Senate President of Nigeria's Senate.

"Under the constitution, the eligibility for being a Senate President is clear. By Section 50 of the Constitution of Nigeria 1999 (as amended) every member of the Senate who has taken oath of membership is eligible to be voted for as Senate President.

"Ranking is not given any iota of pre-eminence. It is expected that in electing a Senate President, emphasis should be on nation building, capability and character to lead the Senate to achieve the aspirations of the Nigerian people.

"The Senate members are known to be distinguished representatives of the people who must emphasize the virtue of mental and moral character (not ranking) as a yardstick for who is to be elected President of the Senate.

"Order 3 of the Senate Standing Orders 2015 as Amended has three categories of people that can be elected as President of the Senate of Nigeria. A first timer is clearly empowered by Order 3 to contest for Senate Presidency alongside ranking members and those who came from the Federal House of Representatives.

"Essentially what determines the pendulum is the mindset of the Party in Majority, in this case the APC, the interest of the majority of the Distinguished Senators and the prominence of power play between the ranking Senators and the first timers.

"Mind you, the first timers are greater in number under the 10th Senate. No rule says that ranking members will determine who is elected as President of the Senate. All the inaugurated Senators have equal voting rights. The Ranking Senators have no extra influence or right of first refusal in who becomes the Senate President.

He declared that Nigerians want a Senate Presidency that will be vibrant, that will balance the national Political equilibrium and Geopolitical tripod, adding that "the South East deserves the fullest consideration in this regard. In zoning considerations, South East is one of the three major parts of the tripod.

"In the history of Nigeria's independence, leadership of this Nation has always stood on the tripod of East, West and North. This is fair and equitable.

"In settling for South East, the Party in power and the Distinguished Senators who are electing the Senate President should look at pedigree not Ranking; they should look at those who have served with proven records of probity and accountability.

"There is no way an opposition will decide who should be the senate president who should be the speaker, it is our party and other leaders that will decide which zone or whoever, and the rest of us in the party will key in and of course the opposition would have no option but to support. We will respect whatever our leaders eventually come up with and we are praying that we are able to deal with it as decisively as possible, and then keep ourselves united and work together with other parties."

News

Lalong mourns former CDI

By PALANG KASMI

PLATEAU State Governor Simon Bako Lalong has in a message Monday commiserated with the family, friends, colleagues and associates of the former Chief of Defense Intelligence (CDI) Major General Sa'id Mohammed.

Governor Lalong who expressed shock over the death of the former Intelligence Chief, who died at the age of 69, described him as a patriotic Nigerian who served the nation with diligence, commitment and loyalty.

"Gen. Sa'id was a man who left indelible footprints in various military formations where he served both in Nigeria and abroad," Lalong said.

He said even in retirement, Gen. Sa'id continued to contribute to national development by deploying his wealth of experience through providing counsel as Nigeria deals with its security



Lalong

challenges.

The governor stated that the deceased also made an impact in Plateau through his entrepreneurship engagements as well as on the game of golf where he

played passionately and participated actively in promoting the sport.

While praying God to grant his soul eternal rest, the Governor asked the family to accept his death as the will of God.

GOVERNOR Bala Mohammed Abdulkadir of Bauchi State has reprimanded Islamic clerics prone to making inciteful remarks to desist from testing the will of government. He pointed out that even he as a governor is not above the government or the law.

Governor Bala sounded this warning recently when Emir of Bauchi, Alhaji Rilwanu Sulaimanu Adamu and other traditional title holders of Bauchi Emirate Council paid him Sallah homage at the Government House Bauchi.

The Governor said he is in consultation with the state Chief Judge and Grand Khadi regarding the appropriate measures on how government can approach cases of incitement, without stifling the fundamental rights of parties involved in such cases. And that those found guilty of breaching the relative peace Bauchi State is enjoying will be dealt with decisively.

He said government can't fold its arms and watch while few individuals or groups try

Stop making inciteful preaching, governor warns clerics

From ABBAS GUNGURA, Bauchi

its will.

He said recent sermons by some preachers have been on national discourse and have projected Bauchi State negatively. The governor promised that Government will address the issue administratively and in accordance with the laws of the land, giving all indicted parties fair hearing.

The governor said the period of electioneering is over now, what is left is governance advise the people of the state to join hands with Government towards the development of the state.

He said Government earmarked two billion Naira for the purchase of fertilizer this year farming season.

He pledged to construct more roads, provide portable water to the 20 local Government Areas and

essential social services needed by the people.

Earlier in his address, Emir of Bauchi, Dr. Rilwanu Sulaimanu Adamu commended Governor Bala on the visible development he brought to the State and further appealed for more of infrastructural development to communities in the suburbs and other underserved settlements within the State.

The Emir then prayed for peace, love and tranquility in Bauchi State and Nigeria. Highlights of the visit was the grand Durba mounted by the Emir, Emirate Council members and hosts of other horse riders, amidst fanfare and pageantry, defying the sweltering heat.

Our reporter in Bauchi reports that the accassion was well organized, peaceful and colourful to the excitement of all that witness the event.

UDUS demands justice over Zuru's attack

From ANENE AIKE, Sokoto

THE Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto (UDUS) based coalition has demanded for justice for the former Vice-Chancellor of the institution, Prof. Abdullahi Zuru over an attack on him in Adamawa

Zuru, an INEC National Commissioner was attacked by some hoodlums on Sunday while on a national assignment during the Adamawa supplementary governorship election.

The coalition, in a statement issued at a news briefing recently in Sokoto described the action as inhuman and senseless.

The statement which was jointly signed by the ASUU, the National Association of Academic Technologist (NAAT), NASU and SSANU, UDUS chapter, respectively said the briefing became imperative following the unfortunate incident.

Prof. Nuraddeen Al-Mustapha, the ASUU chairman while briefing press men said: "The assault on the former vice-chancellor was carried out in a brazen, unashamedly and disdained manner".

He pointed further that the act depicted clear lawlessness and premeditated action by an alleged state-sponsored arsonists of democracy.

And added that the unions in UDUS were shocked to have witnessed what happened to our revered leader even as the full episodes took place at the behest and full glare of the security apparatus that

were, hitherto, meant to protect or provide security to the National Commissioner.

Al-Mustapha emphasized that as unions, they will never accept mistaken identity as an excuse as they were baffled by how the incident led to the emergence of video clips depicting and or showcasing the attack in a viral manner, the union opined.

He added that the video clips were made viral in an attempt to further tarnish the hard-earned reputation of the Don

adding quickly that "it is antithetical to common sense to believe that a whole state government and security agencies would watch in amusement, while an elder statesman was being manhandled in such a brutal manner".

He, however, reiterated that it is on record that Zuru had served the university system by far for over four decades, with an unblemished records of service. The unionist then urged the INEC and the Nigeria Police to launch and follow up a full-scale

investigation on the matter to unravel what went wrong and the necessary steps to be taken.

He pointed out that among other things, "INEC should issue a press statement condemning the attack and must also clear the air on the purported lies spread about the personality of Prof. Zuru, as the union believes and can vouch fully that he has never been found wanting as far as his records and antecedents are concerned.

Stranded students in Khartoum will return soon -Tambuwal

From AIKE ANENE, Sokoto

The Sokoto State Government under the leadership of Governor Aminu Waziri Tambuwal, CFR, Mutawallen Sokoto, has taken

all necessary actions for the safety of Sokoto State students and their subsequent return back home from the crisis devastated Khartoum in Southern Sudan.

In a press release by the Information Commissioner, Alkibu Dalhatu, he said this

followed the trapping of foreign students of different countries including Nigeria but they have taken all necessary actions for the safety of Sokoto State students and their subsequent return back home.

He also stated that Gov. Tambuwal is in constant touch with the Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs over arrangements to secure the

transportation and security cover to evacuate the students to the nearest border as quickly as possible.

The commissioner also said that the State Government wishes to inform all parents of the students that their wards are well protected and in good health and they will soon be at home even as the Sokoto State Scholarship Board is also in hourly contact with the leadership of the state

students both under scholarship and self-sponsored in Sudan.

He said the students numbering about 120 are under the supervision of Nigerian Embassy and an appointed Sokoto State agent in Khartoum. The students will be moved after securing clearance, and making necessary protocols and arrangement any time from now.

Governor pats DG NBC on the back

From ABBAS GUNGURA, Bauchi

Governor Bala Mohammed, of Bauchi State has described the Director General Nigeria Broadcasting Commission (NBC) Alhaji Balarabe Shehu Ilelah as one of the few indigenes of the state that are adequately representing the state and making it proud.

Bala Mohammed gave the commendation when he received the NBC boss on a Sallah homage in Government House, Bauchi.

Senator Bala, said

despite political party differences, Balarabe Shehu Ilelah is maintaining cordial relationship with his administration and supporting all initiatives geared towards the development of the state.

He called on others heading various Ministries, Departments and Agencies at the federal level to emulate the DG for the overall interest of the state and the country as a whole.

On his part, the Director

General NBC who said he was at the Government House to felicitate with the governor on the occasion of Eid-El Fitr celebration maintained that he placed the interest of the state above politics.

He also applauded the governor for the huge investment made in critical aspects of health, education, agriculture and infrastructure in both rural and urban areas.



Tambuwal



Mohammed

News

Customers' complaints to banks increase by 50%

COMPLAINTS received by seven banks in the country over failed transactions jumped to 6.9 million in 2022 from the 4.48 million recorded by the affected in 2021, representing a 54 per cent increase.

Analysis of the financials of Access Bank Holdings Plc, Zenith Bank Plc, Wema Bank Plc, Union Bank of Nigeria Plc, United Bank for Africa Plc, Guaranty Trust Holding Company, and Jaiz Bank Plc, 6.76 million of the complains were resolved, 142,636 were carried over to 2023.

A further breakdown showed Access Holdings Plc had the highest number of customer complaints with 2.82 million, United Bank of Africa Plc, with 1.41 million, and Guaranty Trust Holding Company, with 1.01 million complaints.

Zenith Bank, Wema Bank Plc and Union Bank also received 475,499, 404,179 and 673,709 complaints, respectively. Jaiz Bank Plc, Nigeria's biggest non-interest bank had 118,429 complaints.

Regarding refunds demanded, United Bank for Africa Plc received the highest with N86.34 billion, followed by Access Holdings Plc – N76.37 billion, and Union Bank of Nigeria Plc



Emefiele

with N30.47 billion refund request from customers.

Guaranty Trust Holding Company had N2.16 billion in refund demands, while Zenith Bank Plc and Wema Bank Plc had N17.58 billion and N1.47 billion in refund demands, respectively.

Jaiz Bank Plc had the lowest refund demand, with N863.09 million.

Commenting, President, Bank Customers Association of Nigeria (BCAN), Dr. Uju Ogubunka, highlighted numerous factors that could lead to significant increase in customers complaints in

SEC to apply zero tolerance to financial violations

THE Director General of the Security and Exchange Commission (SEC) Mr. Lamido Yuguda has revealed that the commission will apply zero tolerance to money laundering, terrorism, and proliferation financing violations.

SEC Boss who disclosed this recently, disclosed that for the safety and security of the capital market, and to address the deficiencies in Nigeria's Mutual Evaluation Report (MER), the Commission has

issued new AML/CFT regulations and guidelines.

According to him, the guidelines mandate CMOs to comply with stringent reporting obligations, such as the application of RBS by reporting entities, screening of clients against the United Nations Sanction List before onboarding, and continuous monitoring of clients among others.

Yuguda assured that in protecting investors and creating an enabling environment for fit-and-proper capital market operators to thrive, the

Commission will prioritize its planned increase of on-site inspections and improved collaboration with Trade Groups and other relevant stakeholders.

"We must all ensure that we continue with the implementation of the revised Capital Market Master Plan (CMMP), alongside the implementation of other initiatives. Over the years, we have relied on the support of CAMMIC, Technical Committees, and Working Groups in the implementation of the Master Plan.

"In line with the RCMMP, we will review and align the structure and scope of work of the various technical committees and working groups to ensure seamless implementation of the plan and continue to rely on the stakeholders," he said

While stating that the Year 2022 was a turbulent one that brought with it increased inflationary pressure and consequent increase in interest rates for the global economy, he however expressed optimism that inflationary pressures would be managed in the not-too-distant future.



Yuguda



Cleaning our blocked drains

DRIVING through Jos on the night of Saturday April 22, 2023, after the evening downpour, was an eyesore. Major streets were covered in dirt as a result of the blocking of most drainages with especially pure water sachets thrown about by the citizenry after use. The rains which had not fallen for a long while exposed the need for the people of the city to take the issue of their cleanliness more seriously. It showed that scant efforts are paid to cleanliness which the city was known for.

Agencies tasked with ensuring that the city is kept neat and clean without doubt failed to do their part. They need to be reminded that they have brought shame, sadness and allow diseases to become partners with the people. It is no wonder that in the past few months, some parts of the city were reported to have had outbreaks of cholera and other water borne diseases. Unless we rise to the occasion, the city will be inundated by dirt and illness and would strewn our streets taking the lives of innocent citizens.

Indeed, the sight of waste bins filled and not removed for disposal have become common sights. It is therefore necessary for something quick to be done to redeem the image of the city. Jos used to occupy the number one spot in the cleanliness category compared to other cities, but we have gradually lost that spot to other less endowed states. To reclaim the top spot thus, government and the people need to retune themselves and change their attitudes towards the sanitation of the city. Those tasked to ensure cleanliness must be provided the wherewithal to do their jobs, so as to prevent disease outbreaks. It is common knowledge that prevention is less expensive than cure. So, everything should be done to curb disease outbreaks and maintain a healthy population.

The citizenry on their part must decide to embrace the culture of cleanliness.

They cannot always wait on government which already has its hands filled to clean up their space for them. They must on their own ensure that they dispose of their waste properly. Throwing litters all over the place smacks of a people who are not conscious of managing their environment thus exposing them to all manners of illnesses. The people owe themselves the duty and responsibility of ensuring they live a good life and not waiting for someone to do that on their behalf.

And the 2023 census is here

In a few days, from now, May 3rd to 7th to be precise, the National Population Commission, NPC, will be deploying a lot of its resources to carry out the population and housing

census it has been planning for in the last few years. Before now, a lot of sensitization has been done by the Commission. Various stakeholders were reached to help carry forward the message of the census. It behooves on them to ensure that the message is carried to the needed audience.

It was in line with the above that the Census Publicity Committee for Plateau State, was recently inaugurated and immediately swung into action. The Committee, chaired by the Plateau State Commissioner for Information and Communication, Dan Manjang had a one -day training session at the Nigeria Union of Journalists, Press Centre on Hill Station Junction. At the training, nuances which had to do with the census were taught members of the Committee. This is to enable them correctly inform the public in a language they will understand.

At the training which was declared open by the NPC Commissioner representing Plateau State, Mrs. Cecilia Dapoet, Hon Dan Manjang on behalf of the committee pledged the members' commitment to attend to the assignment with all the seriousness it deserves. He said that the importance of the census is not lost on the members given that no country can plan adequately without knowing the number of people in it. He thus called on members to make suggestions which would enrich the activities of the committee and make the job of the census' officials easy and seamless.

On their part, members of the committee asked questions on areas they needed clarification and sought to know how some of the difficult to reach areas and people would be delt with. On the whole, it was an engaging exercise that helped shape the perspective of members of the committee who are drawn from the media, civil society groups, women and religious body.

“Indeed, the sight of waste bins filled and not removed for disposal have become common sights. It is therefore necessary for something quick to be done to redeem the image of the city. Jos used to occupy the number one spot in the cleanliness category compared to other cities, but we have gradually lost that spot to other less endowed states. To reclaim the top spot thus, government and the people need to retune themselves and change their attitudes towards the sanitation of the city.”

News

Governor-elect inaugurates Transition Committee

BY PETER TITLE

A ten man Transition Committee saddled with the responsibility of smooth take-off of governance on May 29 has been inaugurated by the Governor-elect of Plateau State, Barrister Caleb Mutfwang.

The committee has been charged to be upright and diligent to ensure a smooth transition. This took place at the Eliel Centre, Jos on Tuesday. It is to be headed by Professor Ganyir Lombin. Governor-elect enjoined them to be up and doing to ensure that transition goes as planned.

According to Mutfwang, the committee should liaise with the government's side and receive and collate handing over notes from MDAs as well as plan activities and programmes of events.

Terms of reference according to the Governor-elect include, organising a befitting transition of power and swearing-in of Governor-elect and Deputy, arrange accommodation and transportation for guests and VIPs, draw up VIPs and guests list for the event and communicate them.

Others Barr. Mutfwang reeled out was to construct and decorate a safety pavilion at the Rwang Pam township stadium amongst others.

While accepting the responsibility, the Chairman



Mutfwang

of the Transition Committee, Pof. Lombin thanked the Governor-elect for finding them worthy to serve in that capacity and promised not to disappoint him.

Other members of the committee include, Professor Shedrack Best, Barrister Ibrahim Bawa (SAN), Rt-Hon. Aboke Nuhu Ayuba, Hon. Daniel Kungmi, Hajiya Jamila Shehu Gwandu, Dr. Raymond Juryit, Prof. Stephen Malo, Hon. Davou Mang with Mr Moses Nwan Mni as Secretary.

Meanwhile, the Campaign Council for Atiku and Mutfwang during the

Presidential and Governorship elections have been dissolved. Dissolving the Committee, Barr. Mutfwang commended them for their doggedness and perseverance which led to the victory of PDP.

The Chairman of the campaign council, Hon Letep Dabang said he was proud that Plateau people chose the right leader who will pilot the affairs of the state with the fear of God.

Dabang thanked all those that worked with him that led to PDP's victory and asked for forgiveness if in the course of their campaign they stepped on people's toes.

From
TERESE TUHWA, Makurdi

THE Benue State Governor-elect, Reverend Father Hyacinth Iormem Alia has inaugurated members of his transition committee with a charge on them to be confidential.

Father Alia who gave the charge at the Tinubu/Shetima Campaign Office in Makurdi recently, said it was incumbent on the committee to exercise due diligence, commitment and sincerity of purpose in discharging its duties.

He said the choice of members of the transition committee was arrived at

Benue gov-elect inaugurates transition c'ttee

based on their track record over the years and must work diligently to justify the confidence reposed in them.

Earlier, the Deputy Governor-elect, Barr Samuel Ode told the committee members that they must bring their cogent experience acquired over time to bear on the assignment.

Responding on behalf of members, chairman of the committee and former Head of State Civil Service, Mr. Mike Iordye promised that the committee will uphold confidentiality as its top most

priority while discharging its duties.

While commending the governor-elect for finding them worthy to serve amidst over 4 million indigenes of the state, Mr. Iordye stressed that the committee will work within its terms of reference to justify the confidence reposed in them.

Over twenty people are to serve in the transition committee to ensure seamless transition from the outgoing to the incoming administration in the state.

National Troupe stages first Towns and Gowns performance



By FWENJI GOAR

THE National Troupe of Nigeria yesterday at St John's College, Jos. staged the first in its series of the "Towns and Gowns" drama project, in which the 200 Level students of the Theatre and Film Arts Department of the University of Jos performed

some point in time seeing that a particular need was met and it made me feel good. I will like to say a big thank you to each and every one of you who has been involved in one way or another and pray that this same support will be given to our successors", he prayed.

Responding, the incoming Chairman of the set, Nankus Adams Ngwalang said, "We are grateful to the outgoing chairman, Mr. Fwenji James Goar, for his exceptional leadership and calm demeanor during his tenure. Mr. Goar steered the GOSA '87 ship with an unwavering sense of purpose, backed by his equally loyal lieutenants.

for the Theatre in Education course.

Speaking at the event, the Artistic Director/CEO, Ahmed Mohammed Ahmed said his "take on the performance is that the play is quite valid, especially to the students who are about taking their final exams. Some of them who are not serious are likely to not to make it."

He further stated that their parents spent money to send them to school, so they must ensure they do the right thing, and face their studies.

Talking about the play, he said the lead character was sent to school, but instead of concentrating on her studies like her twin sister did, she embarked on reckless living, even abandoning her studies and partying and clubbing around. That they have to do the right thing at the right time, which would not only make their parents proud, but also ensure they become something in life. They were advised to heed the advice and guidance of their teachers and parents.

The course coordinator, Dr.

Governor -elect makes first appointment

BY PETER TITLE

THE Governor -elect of Plateau State, Barrister Caleb Mutfwang has appointed Mr Moses Nwan Mni and GyangBere as process in the state and Senior Special Assistant (Special Duties) and Special Assistant (Media), respectively.

Until Mr Nwan's appointment, he was a retired Permanent Secretary with the Plateau State

Government.

Mr Bere before his appointment according to a statement made available to **The Nigeria Standard** Tuesday indicated that he was the state correspondent of **The Sun Newspaper** and the Chairman, Correspondence Chapel in the state.

The Governor -elect wished them the best while discharging their duties to the state.

GOSA Set 87 chair, Go'ar takes a bow

BY EZEKIEL DONTINNA

THE two term Executive Council of Set 87 of the Gindiri Old Students Association (GOSA) led by Mr. Fwenji James Go'ar, of **THE NIGERIA STANDARD** newspaper, has taken a bow and a new executive has been elected that would take over them for the next term.

This was contained in a press statement signed by the newly elected Public Relations Officer, Regina Chris-Ogbodo,

and made available to **THE NIGERIA STANDARD** in Jos, Plateau State capital Sunday.

Those elected to take over from the outgoing exco include: Nankus Adams Ngwalang, as Chairman and to be deputised by Nimnan Denden, while the position of Secretary and Assistant Secretary went to Despank Wardem and Halima Ali respectively.

Others include: Augustina Damshak, as

Treasurer, Nanpan Pukat, Financial Secretary, Regina Uren Chris-Ogbodo, as Public Relations Officer (PRO), and Organizing Secretary, Vondul Wuyep, in that order.

Delivering his handing-over remark, the outgoing Chairman, Mr. Fwenji James Go'ar said, "I count it a rare privilege to have served as Chairman of the great GOSA 87 for two terms. I have enjoyed reaching out to members, especially those who were outside the fold and getting them to be involved.

"I have derived satisfaction in mobilizing support for some of our members who needed some form of intervention at

Senator condemns resurgence of terror attacks

From
DORCAS PANKYES, Jos

SENATOR I. D. Gyang has condemned in strong terms the recent resurgence of attacks of bandits on peace loving communities and law abiding citizens of Plateau State with particular reference to Wereng in Riyom LG, Rawuru and Heipang in B/Ladi LG and Murish in Mangu LG.

This was contained in a statement signed by Daniel Dem, Senior Legislative Aide to Senator I. D. Gyang

on Tuesday in Plateau.

Senator Gyang commiserates with the grieving families and communities over the lives claimed by the brutal killings.

He appealed to peace loving citizens to remain committed to the peace process in the state and urges security agencies to do the needful to stop this renewed wave of terror and ensure that all threats to peace are decisively dealt with.



Foreign Commentary

Sudan Crisis; bitter lessons for civil war agitators

For the past five (5) days now, I have taken out time, watching the humanitarian crisis and human suffering going on in Sudan due to the violent conflict that broke out last week. The Crisis caused by forces of two rival generals erupted on April 15, 2023. Maxwell Gowon Writes

AS of Sunday 23rd, April, it was reported that more Sudanese citizens, mostly civilians have lost their lives, with Sudanese neighbouring countries set to establish refugee camps.

It has been established that, people often mistaken the Gold they have with them in their hands for a stone, but come to realized the value when they throw it away.

The same Military that ousted a former democratically elected Sudanese President Omar Al-bashir in 2019 just because of soaring prices of bread and oil, have thrown the entire country into crisis and without any urgent interventions, the situation may lead to civil war.

The two Generals who toppled Omar Al-Bashir government in 2019 are now at each other's throat of who control the central Government in Sudan. The Sudan's Army chief General Abdul Fatah Burhan and the Commander of Rapid Support Forces (RSF), Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo have alliance with one country or the other.

So far, many countries have started the evacuating their citizens from the Sudanese capital, Khartoum with Nigeria trying to do same.

The two generals and their forces are vying for control, and as its often the case, women, children & civilians have suffered the most, with hundreds killed and thousands injured.

The civilians that protested against the government of Omar Al Bashir because of prices of soft commodities, can



Burhan

no longer see the commodities to buy.

A disturbing twit by Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and it goes Rapid Support Forces (RSF), successfully evacuated 41 Italian citizens and embassy staff from Khartoum on Sunday evening. The mission was executed with utmost professionalism and efficiency, ensuring safety and security.

The RSF's swift action is a testament to our commitment to protect citizens in times of crisis....* from the content of the twit above, the leaders of RSF are more concerns and trying to protect the lives of foreign Nationals than that of their own citizens dying everyday as a result of ego and insatiable

human desire for power in an undemocratic manner. It's inhuman that the leaders of RSF does not

care about the human suffering of the Sudanese citizens, rather more concerned towards adhering to the seemingly hypocritical international Laws and treaties, doing everything possible to avoid charges of war crimes against the group.

.....In the words of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, violence never brings permanent peace. It solves no social problem: it merely creates new and more complicated ones. This is another lesson for Nigerians, for those that are beating the drums of war must have a rethink.

The opposition political party Leaders in Nigeria most put an end to their careless and unpatriotic statements and also call their supporters to order.

"I object to violence because, when it appears to do good, the good is only temporary, the evil it does is permanent" Mahatma Gandhi. 21 May, 1925.



Guterres

Foreign News

India's population to surpass China in coming days-UN

UN Population Division has said India is about to surpass China as the world's most populous nation in the coming days.

UN Population Division Director, John Wilmoth, said this at a news conference on Monday at UN headquarters in New York.

Wilmoth said the main driver of this trend was the fertility level in the two nations, noting that together, China and India's collective populations equalled more than one third of the world's eight billion citizens.

"By the end of April, India's population is expected to reach 1,425,775,850 people, with projections indicating further growth for several decades more.

"That's slightly higher than China's global record of 1.4 billion in 2022.

"China's population reached its peak size in 2022 and has begun to decline.

"Projections indicate that the size of the Chinese population could drop below one billion before the end of the century," he said.

With nearly identical levels of fertility in 1971, just under six births per woman, the countries have charted their population path into the 21st century, according to the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA).

By the end of the 1970s, fertility rate in China fell by half, to three births per woman. Meanwhile, it took India more than three decades for its fertility rate to reach that level.

"During the second half of the twentieth century, both countries made concerted efforts to curb rapid population growth through policies that targeted fertility levels.

"These policies, together with investments in human capital and gender equality, contributed to China's plummeting fertility rate in the 1970s and to the more gradual declines that followed in the 1980s and 1990s," DESA said.

By 2022, China had one of the world's lowest fertility rates, which was 1.2 births per woman on average over a lifetime, according to the UN World Population Prospects 2022 report.

In the 1980s, China implemented a so-called "one child policy" that limited families to one child each, which ended in 2016.

At the same time, India's current fertility rate – two births per woman – is just below the replacement threshold of 2.1, the level required for population stabilisation in the long run in the absence of migration, says the UN report.

Between 2023 and 2015, the number of persons aged



Murmu

65 or over is expected to nearly double in China and to more than double in India, he added. "Now is the time to think for the long term and to promote greater solidarity within societies and between generations.

"Central to this long-term planning are efforts to combat climate change," he said.

He added that it was essential that increasing

numbers of people and increasing incomes per capita in China, in India, and throughout the world did not undermine efforts to move towards more sustainable consumption and production.

To mitigate the most severe impacts of climate change, he said all countries must urgently move away from over-dependence on fossil fuel energy.

U.S. President Joe Biden, plans to run for another term in office, he announced on Twitter on Tuesday.

"Every generation has a moment where they have had to stand up for democracy.

"To stand up for their fundamental freedoms. I believe this is ours," Biden tweeted.

"That's why I'm running for reelection as president of the United States. Join us. Let's finish the job."

The tweet came with a three-minute video clip launching his campaign for re-election in 2024.

Biden won the 2020 presidential election against then Republican incumbent Donald Trump.

Biden has been in office since January 2021; he moved into the White House as the oldest president ever.

Biden will be 81 years old at the time of the election in about one and a half years.

At the end of a possible second term, he would be 86.

US President Biden to run for 2nd term



Biden

Ukraine's allies accused Russia of violating UN charter

UKRAINE'S international allies blasted Russia during a United Nations Security Council meeting chaired by Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov that focused on protecting the principles of the UN's charter, which Moscow

itself is accused of violating by invading Ukraine last year.

In a note to UN member states laying out the premise for the meeting on Monday, Russia denounced the "unipolar world order" that took effect after the end of the

Cold War.

Before the meeting, Lavrov said the UN system was "enduring a profound crisis", and accused Western countries, particularly the United States, of being responsible.

"It's not all about Ukraine," he told reporters.

"It's about how international relations will continue to be shaped through the establishment of a sound consensus on the basis of balance of interests or through aggressive and volatile advancement of Washington's hegemony," Lavrov said.

Russia currently holds the monthly rotating presidency of the UN Security Council and organised the meeting as one of the "signature" events of its tenure.

Addressing the meeting, Lavrov warned the world was at a threshold "possibly even more dangerous" than during the Cold War.

"The situation is worsened with the loss of trust in multilateralism," he said. "Let's call a spade a spade. Nobody allowed the Western minority to speak on behalf of all of humankind," he added.

Sitting next to Lavrov during the meeting, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres condemned Russia's invasion of Ukraine as a "violation" of international law and the UN charter.

Video Duration 28 minutes 00 seconds 28:00

What's driving up the global military spending?

The war "is causing massive suffering and devastation to the country and its people, and adding to the global economic dislocation triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic," Guterres said.

Bottom of Form

Bottom of Form

"The multilateral system is under greater strain than at any time since the creation of the United Nations," he said.

"Tensions between major powers are at an historic high. So are the risks of conflict, through misadventure or miscalculation."

A string of Security Council members, including the US, France and the United Kingdom, condemned Russia for its war on Ukraine.

"By organizing this debate Russia is trying to portray itself as a defender of the UN charter and multilateralism. Nothing can be further from the truth. It's cynical," European Union Ambassador Olof Skoog said.

The UK's Ambassador Barbara Woodward said the world has seen "what Russia's idea of multilateralism means for the world" – the trampling of the UN Charter and a war that has brought unimaginable suffering to Ukraine and been "an unmitigated disaster for Russia, too".

Washington's UN ambassador, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, clutched a copy of the UN charter in her hand and stressed the importance of defending its values.

"Our hypocritical convener today, Russia, invaded its neighbour in Ukraine and struck at the heart of the UN charter," Thomas-Greenfield told the meeting.

Russia's actions during the 14-month war show that the invasion of Ukraine was not an isolated incident, she said.

"This does not just concern Ukraine or Europe. It concerns all of us. Because today it's Ukraine, But tomorrow it could be another country, another small nation that is invaded by its larger neighbour."

Ki-moon promises end to violence in Myanmar

FORMER United Nations chief Ban Ki-moon has urged an end to the violence that has rocked Myanmar since the February 2021 coup, and renewed efforts to secure lasting peace and a legitimate government.

Ban, who is part of The Elders advisory group of former world leaders, made his comments in a statement following a visit to the country at the invitation of the military.

"I came to Myanmar to urge the military to adopt an immediate cessation of violence, and start constructive dialogue among all parties concerned," Ban said in a statement on Tuesday, stressing that the National Unity Government (NUG) set up by elected politicians removed in the coup and pro-democracy activists, had to be part of any discussion.

The generals characterise all their opponents as "terrorists".

"My meetings were exploratory. I will do all I can to help the people of Myanmar secure the peace, prosperity and freedom they deserve."

Myanmar was plunged into

crisis when army chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing seized power, detaining elected leader Aung San Suu Kyi just as her National League for Democracy (NLD) was about to start its second term in office after a landslide election victory.

The coup prompted mass protests and a violent military response, which led some to take up arms in a bid to restore democracy.

Ban said he had been invited to Myanmar by the military and met Min Aung

Hlaing in the capital, Naypyidaw, as well as Thein Sein who was president of a quasi-civilian government between 2011 and 2016. The state-run Global New Light of Myanmar in its Tuesday edition described the discussions as cordial.

Ban's statement did not mention any meeting with Aung San Suu Kyi, who has been jailed for at least 33 years after a series of secretive trials in which she was found guilty of corruption and other charges that critics say are politically motivated. He previously met her when he was the UN secretary-general.

During his talks with the military, Ban said he stressed the urgency of making progress on the implementation of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations' (ASEAN) Five-Point Consensus and action on last December's UN Security Council resolution which included calls for an immediate end to violence, and the release of all political prisoners, including Aung San Suu Kyi and civilian President Win Myint.



Ki-moon

Feature

Brain drain: New bill triggers doctors' mass exodus

Amid moves by the United Kingdom to restrict Nigerian doctors and medical personnel from immigrating to the country, a bill for an Act to amend the Medical and Dental Practitioners' Act sponsored by Hon. Ganiyu Johnson may have compounded their woes, KEHINDE OSASONA writes.

BRAIN drain: New bill triggersA recent report has it that 727 medical doctors trained in Nigeria relocated to the UK in six months, between December 2021 and May 2022.

In the same vein, the Director-General of the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS), Kuru, Ayo Omotayo, has said Nigeria has the third highest number of foreign medical doctors working in the United Kingdom after India and Pakistan.

The development has reportedly sent jitters down the spine of Nigerians fearing that the figure may continue to rise if proactive measures were not taken by government and stakeholders to address the situation.

The mass exodus has not only led to brain drain in the health sector across the country, it has also caused distortion in the doctor-patient ratio of 1:5,000 in Nigeria as against the World Health Organisation (WHO) recommendation of 1:600.

Consequently, the situation has prompted the introduction of a Bill for an Act to amend the Medical and Dental Practitioners' Act, Cap. M379, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004, which has passed for a second reading in the House of Representatives.

The amendment bill, which was sponsored by Hon Ganiyu Johnson, has continued to attract widespread reactions from lawmakers, stakeholders, and public commentators.

The bill, among other things, is aimed at mandating any Nigeria-trained medical and dental practitioner to practice in Nigeria for a minimum of five years before being granted full license by the Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria (MDCN).

The move according to the sponsor is to make quality health services available to Nigeria.

E regretted that, "A large number of Nigerian doctors emigrated to seek greener pastures in developed countries, noting that 5,600 of them have migrated to the United Kingdom in the last eight years.

"Now, only one doctor is available to treat 30,000 patients in some southern states, while in the North, it is one doctor to 45,000 patients."

To further buttress the argument, Johnson compared the fees paid in UK and other countries' universities on the one hand, to what is paid in Nigerian universities, concluding that tuition fees in Nigeria's public medical schools were highly subsidised.

The lawmaker noted that the tuition fees payable to study



Ehanire

Medicine in the UK stood between £35,750 and £66,500 annually for four years.

Quoting the National Centre for Education Statistics (NCES), he further noted that to study Medicine in the United States, one had to pay between \$82,000 and \$104,000, adding that in Canada, the tuition fees for Medicine was between 52,000 CAD to 169,000 CAD.

Speaking further Johnson said, "But contrary to all these bogus Medicine tuitions in the aforementioned foreign countries, in Nigeria, the cost of studying Medicine in public institutions ranges from N40,000 to N150,000. Therefore, you will all agree with me that medical and dental education in Nigeria is seriously subsidised."

While subscribing to the provision of the bill, the Minister of Health, Dr. Osagie Ehanire, described the intention as good, stating that it would help curb brain drain in the country.

As a form of protest, stakeholders from the highest quarter, doctors and opinion moulders have since taken up the matter, alleging that the bill would not augur well for the profession and practitioners' in the country.

Johnson, however, maintained that the bill was meant to address issues of welfare of

medical personnel, improved health facilities, maintenance and upgrading of primary healthcare centres in the country.

However, as the backlash generated by the bill continues, a school of thought insists that the bill may infringe on the rights of medical practitioners.

Blueprint Weekend findings indicated that the stance of some of the politicians and pundits were informed by the much craved reforms in the country's health sector.

The Diaspora Medical Associations gave there take in a letter signed by the President, Nigerian Doctors' Forum, South Africa, Dr. Emeka Ugwu; the President, Association of Nigerian Physicians in the Americas, Dr. Chinyere Anyaogu, and the President, Medical Association of Nigerians Across Great Britain, Dr. Chris Agbo, the President, Canadian Association of Nigerian Physicians and Dentists, Dr. Nnamdi Ndubuka, and Dr. Al Amin Dahiru, and the President, Nigerian Medical Association-Germany.

The group of professionals in the letter addressed to the Speaker of the House of Representative, Femi Gbajabiamila, the group of professionals said the bill was counterproductive and would not achieve its intended goal.

Disturbing doctor ratio to patient

Last year, the President, Nigeria Medical Association (NMA), Ojinmah Uche, gave his take while speaking on how brain drain has affected sustainable child and family health service delivery in the country at a policy dialogue on Nigeria's health sector organised by the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS), in collaboration with the Partnership for Advancing Child and Family Health at Scale project of the Development Research and Projects Centre (dRPC), in Abuja.

Uche told stakeholders that it gave a horrifying ratio of approximately 1 doctor to 10,000 patients ratio.

"Only one doctor is incredibly available to treat 30,000 patients in some states in the South; while states in the North are as worse as one doctor to 45,000 patients. In some rural areas, patients have to travel more than 30 kilometers from their abodes to get medical attention where available, thus Nigeria making access to healthcare a rarity," he said.

Ojinmah further stated that based on the World Health Organisation (WHO) established minimum threshold, a country needs a mix of 23 doctors, nurses and midwives per 10,000 population to deliver essential maternal and child health services.

He blamed the brain drain on poor funding of the health sector, stressful medical education, non-existent house job slots, and difficulty in gaining employment, poor remuneration, unnecessary and unhealthy inter-professional rivalry, insecurity, among others as reasons.

Although mass migration under the guise of seeking greener pastures abroad was not alien to practitioners and Nigerians alike, recent developments have become so bad that stakeholders are now signalling red alert.

In 2015 for instance, reports indicated that 233 Nigerian doctors moved to the UK; in 2016 the number increased to 279; in 2017 the figure was 475; in 2018; the figure rose to 852, in 2019 it jumped to 1,347; in 2020, the figure was 833 and in 2021 was put at 932.

Similarly, the Nigerian Medical Association (NMA) also reported that the country had a ratio of one doctor to between 4,000 and 5,000 patients, as against the WHO recommendation of one doctor for 600 patients."

In the same vein, a Non-

Governmental Organisation (NGO), Project Pink Blue, expressed fear recently that Nigeria would have a shortage of 50,120 doctors and 137,859 nurses by 2030 due to the mass emigration.

Going forward

Major operators and advocates of healthcare reform had long been demanding a legislation that would ensure the vast majority receive coverage. For them, the Law would address critical shortages in the healthcare workforce.

Buttressing the points, the Convener, Healthcare Transformation Coalition (HTC), Dr Jide Idris, urged medical professionals to contribute to policy making that will address brain drain and other lingering issues in the health sector.

Idris, a former Commissioner for Health in Lagos state, made the call at a programme organised by HTC under the auspices of the Lagos State Health Service Commission, to address brain drain in Nigeria.

At the programme, Idris said: "We initiated this event to listen to our young professionals in the medical line why they are not happy and also want to leave the country and practice elsewhere.

"There are many causes to the challenge and a major part of it revolves around management of human capacity.

"This is an election period and a good opportunity for us to contribute to policy making by ensuring that we put the right leader in place to formulate good policies that will move the sector forward. Health is everybody's business and just for the government alone," he said.

He added that there was the need to train more healthcare personnel and have health financing grants to fill the gap created by those who have left and also improve their welfare.

Also speaking on the issue, the Commissioner for Health, Lagos state, Prof. Akin Abayomi, made case for a rapid exit replacement strategy should be in place to address brain drain.

"Brain drain is not something that is new, it has existed for many decades and it has affected all professional cadres of the country.

"Nigeria is a natural exporter of human capital and this is because we don't produce planes, equipment and the likes.

"We must make more healthcare professionals to address this issue and our institutions must pay attention to the selection process of medical students," he said.

EVER'S WORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Relationship

Reinforcing strong family identity

THE first winter break of my freshman year of college was one I'll always remember. I was so excited to come home from school and hang out with all my friends for the first time in months.

My parents had other plans. They booked an epic family vacation, one they were so excited to take my sister and me on. I acted like a spoiled brat, pouting that I couldn't experience the break the way I wanted. In hindsight, my mom knew that while my friendships were important, reinforcing our strong family identity was something I needed even more.

I am grateful for the small things my parents did that helped create a strong family and I always knew I'd aim for the same with my own. Family life looks different for me than I thought it would. I went through a divorce several years ago and now both my ex-husband and I are remarried to other people. Fortunately, these things that create healthy, strong families can be accomplished no matter what your family looks like.

1. Modeling What your kids see you do as they grow up is what you'll likely see them do when they've grown up. What do your children see modeled in your character? Do they see honesty and integrity in action? Do they have healthy examples of conflict-resolution skills? Do

you appreciate and promote their uniqueness?

Do you model and encourage a healthy experience and expression of emotions? The greatest gift you can give your child is who you are. The lifestyle our children see us model daily is much more powerful than what we tell them. Both are important. But there must be congruity between the talk and the walk. What your kids see you do as they grow up is what you'll likely see them do when they've grown up.

2. Time Most children spell love with a T, an I, an M, and an E. That's right. TIME is how most children spell love. Healthy parents don't find time—they make time. Why is it so difficult? We're all busy with demands and pressures.

In the midst of this busyness, our children can easily seem like an interruption. It is unrealistic for us to always drop everything and cater to our kids' demands. But we need to remember that children don't have the same sense of time that we do. How can we "make time?" One way is to set aside special times for them. Acknowledge them when they get up in the morning or when they get home from school or another event. Set aside quantity time at certain times during the week.

3. Nourishing Love Learn how to say "I love you" in more than one way. Cherishing is the



easy part. When you cherish something, it means you value and care about it. It is important to you. However, you may not express it. That's where nourishing comes in. Nourishing involves going beyond the attitude to the action. Quality nourishment involves stopping, looking, listening, and studying that special person.

4. An Encouraging Environment. A n encouraging environment is one in which we spend more

time building and encouraging our loved ones than we do scolding and correcting them. It's one in which we honor them by speaking respectfully to them. An encouraging environment is one where our emphasis is on catching those we love doing good rather than catching them making mistakes. We invest more energy in praising them for being successful than in criticizing and castigating them for falling short of our expectations.

5. Healthy Anger What do you think of when you hear the word anger? Is all anger bad? Can this unwelcome and potentially destructive emotion be considered a gift rather than a time bomb? A healthy home is where people express anger in HEALTHY ways. The surprising truth is that when a person understands anger and learns how to express it in healthy ways, it can be an ally and actually lead to increased trust, greater intimacy, and stronger relationships. While we may have minimal control over when we experience anger, we have almost total control over how we choose to express that anger.

6. Quality Communication A characteristic of a strong family is that the members talk more to each other, convey feelings that they understand

what is being said to them, keep communication channels open, show more sensitivity to each other's feelings, and realize the importance of nonverbal aspects of communication. Since good communication doesn't just happen, smart families set aside a regular time each week for focused communication.

7. Conflict as a Pathway to Intimacy Most of us haven't learned the value of conflict. We misunderstand its potential and may interpret it as an attack. Conflict is the process we go through and the price we pay for intimacy. When we avoid healthy conflict, we avoid growth. The next time conflict stares you in the face, try these three simple steps.

First, make your primary goal to understand the other person. Take a few minutes to acknowledge, discuss and define the conflict and then listen..

Second, ask yourself, "What is MY contribution to the problem?" Most of us find it easier to identify the other person's contribution to the problem, how he or she needs to change, and what he or she could do differently without acknowledging that we need to change, too. Third, commit yourself to understanding what the issue looks like through the other person's eyes.

Source: *Lifestyles.com*



EVERYBODY'S WORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Parenting

What level of discipline should you give a child?

By **PALANG KEMBO**

THE rate of maltreatment and wickedness meted on domestic servants and children in the hands of their guardians these days is a cause for concern.

A trending report by Vanguard of how an 11 year-old girl was allegedly tortured to death in Jos, Plateau State by her guardian is worrisome and brings to question the level of discipline parents or guardians are supposed to give their children.

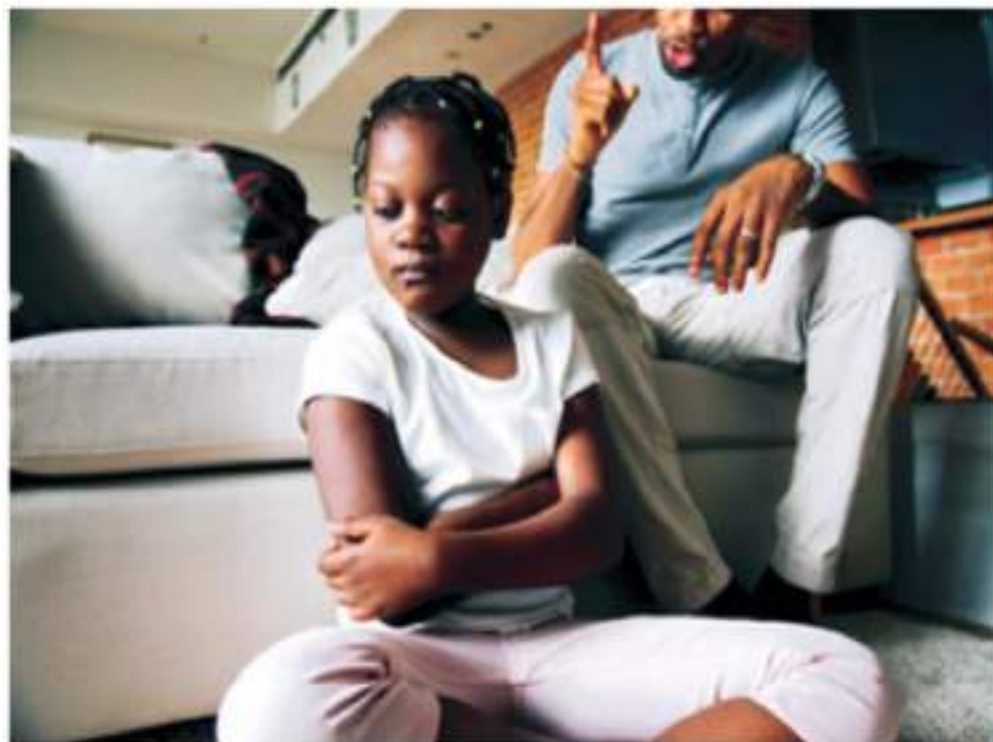
The 11 years old girl, identified as Margaret Joshua died as a result of alleged physical abuse by her guardian, Mrs. Nneamaka Nwachuku, a Microbiologist who works with one of the Research Institutes in Vom, Jos South local government area of Plateau State.

The victim is from Kebbi State and was fleeing from insecurity in her community before some supposed helper brought her to Jos to serve in the Nwachukwu's home.

The alleged abuser, a mother of two who did not enrol the victim in any school in the over one year that the girl had spent with them, rather indulged in the daily beating of the girl until she finally died as the result of the assault.

It was gathered that after a recent beating, the girl was forced to sit in a container with hot water which burnt her buttocks and she died in the hospital on Monday.

The sad incident attracted the Plateau State Coordinator of the National Human Rights Commission, Mrs. Grace Pam whose office is following up on the



case. She told Vanguard that based on the number of scars and wounds on her body, her guardians must have subjected her to a series of torture during the period that she stayed with the family.

Pam while narrating the incident said "Our attention was called to the situation on Monday by a staff in the hospital who said that an 11-year-old girl was seriously beaten and injured by her guardian, Mrs. Nneamaka Nwachuku in Vom. The girl had scars and burns on her body. We were told that she was taken to Mandela

hospital in Kaduna Vom before she was referred to come to Jos.

"When some of our staff met with Mrs. Nwachuku at the Police Station in Vom where she was detained, she confessed she has been beating her and claimed the girl used to masturbate so she was punishing her so she could stop. She claimed she did not know what used to come over her because she felt bad anytime she beats the child."

Speaking on the burns on the victim's buttocks, the guardian claimed: "she fell into hot water and ran out of the house after the incident for almost 24hrs."

Nwachukwu would assault the girl as the Police had earlier warned them against maltreating the girl and asked them to return the girl to her parents. The supposed guardians have not met the girl's parents who are in Kebbi State but are said to have been speaking with them on phone.

However, the case has been transferred from the Police Station in Kaduna to the Police Headquarters in Jos as investigations continue.

Stakeholders human rights groups, and the law should take its course in seeking justice for the late Margaret to serve as deterrent for guardians who turn monsters and abuse children under their care who are either relations or domestic servants.

Parents and guardians should know when to set the boundaries and be aware that abuse is different from discipline. There is no excuse for creating fatal and life

It was however gathered that someone saw the traumatised girl on the street and took her to the Police station at Kaduna Vom, the girl



Police took the girl to the hospital before calling the attention of her guardian as Mrs. Pam expressed worry that, "no action was taken to take care of the girl in her condition for about 24hrs until someone saw her and took her to the Police station".

It was also gathered that this was not the first time the the

threatening injuries in a child in the guise of punishment.

Guidelines for the protection of the rights of the child including a right to education, housing, good livelihood, access to good parenting that is free from abuse must be paramount in the country although most States are yet to pass the Act into Law.



Editorial

Adamawa polls imbroglio and elections in Nigeria

General elections in Nigeria are moments citizens of the country look forward to as it gives them an opportunity to decide who governs them it all available political offices. Because the people's choices are most paramount, Abraham Lincoln defines it as "Government of the people and for the people". Nigeria regarded as giant of Africa recently went through this rigorous democratic process that will ushered in new sets of leaders for the next four years. The elections have come and gone but with bitter lessons to learn.

Recently, the media was a washed with the ugly incident of the disappearance of the Adamawa Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC) Hudus Yunusa Ari without a trace. The man is allegedly currently on the run after he was suspended for illegally usurping the powers of the Collation Officer and subsequently declared Aisha Binani of the All Progressives Congress the winner of the governorship election in Adamawa State while collation was still ongoing.

Speaking on Yunusa Ari's disappearance, the Independent National Electoral Commission's National Commissioner for Information and Voter Education, Festus Okoye explained that the electoral body was unaware of the suspended REC's whereabouts. He added that the commission immediately after the Adamawa incident had written him but had not received any response.

We are of the opinion that since the REC has been declared wanted, it behooves on the Nigeria Police to take prompt action on this matter. It is also apt that INEC has said it would allow the Police to find the missing commissioner though it lacks the power to declare him wanted.

As Nigerians keenly await the outcome of the investigations, the Police should not betray the confidence of the masses but should ensure that thorough investigation is carried out in partnership with other sister agencies to achieve meaningful results.

Though the Adamawa State political imbroglio is a sad development in the annals of our nation's history, the REC's rogue misbehavior amounts to impunity and must be penalized. It is, however, very disturbing that this illegality was alleged to have been committed in the presence of some law enforcement officers.

Going forward, proper attention must be given to the recruitment of persons for electoral duties. Such persons must be disciplined to uphold the oath they have taken to avoid partisanship and or shameful behavioral conduct. This time around, all hands must be on deck towards ensuring that subsequent elections does not go the Adamawa way.

Thus, Nigerians need to be selfless, more educated on the laws guiding electoral processes and not to be distracted to avoid mistakes as such which ridicules the integrity of our country before the comity of nations. In this regard, all stakeholders must ensure that our democracy is jealously guarded to portray our relevance among comity of nations.

Journalism is a profession that deals with coveting analyzing and disseminating information to the public. This means it is a profession with strong social responsibility that is why journalists are required to follow the highest ethical standard in the discharge of their duties.

This is to allow the public to understand what goes on around them as well

Enable them to also contribute their growth in shaping the society towards development peace and progress, unfortunately, quacks have filtered with the profession just by way of cutting out a living not minding what is involved.

Most often, the ethics of journalism have been thrown to the dogs by those individual who parade themselves as journalists who are always seen social gatherings and official function chasing high and profile individual soliciting for interview or patronage which often and with personal demands or monetary reward.

This habit stains the name of the profession and even the name of those engaged in caring on their legitimate duties as reporters or press men generally.

I therefore wish to call on the Nigerian Union of journalists NUJ Plateau State Chapter which is the umbrella body of that practicing journalist profession, to securitize those

Government should boost scrap metal business in Jos

THOSE who engaged in scrap buying business see it as an occupation that can be turned into a money spinner. Scrap metals in the local term is also called east. Here in Jos North the state capital, there are scrap dealers who are involved in the business of scrap metal buying especially anything from metals such as cast, copper, brass, aluminum and other scrap materials with branches all over the state.

The business apart from providing reasonable earnings for both the young and old in the community is one form of business that has been able to take criminals off the streets especially those who desire to make genuine living out of their sweat and are prepared to hustle for their livelihood.

practicing profession in order to rid the profession of "bad eggs" that are spooling the good image of the profession.

Journalism shapes world, and it would be ignorance on the part of the practioners to to give way, to these there ethncal this conduct to ruin it important role it is playing in the society.

Therefore it is my desire that this noble profession be allowed to flourish without any form of interference so

that societal growth and development can be enhanced.

Parents should be role models of society.

By MUA'ZU ADAM HUDU is a student from Federal Polytechnic Bauchi

Society nowadays is fast basing gauds in respect to the decline in moral rules ether to in displine or negligence on the part of some parents entire how lake languished their roles in imparting positive values within their family circles.

The negative tendencies being witnessed across the

Police curb cult activities in Jenta Apata

PERMIT me space in your daily newspaper to express

society demonstrates the fact that young people are growing without the necessary guidance and certain behaviors that are not desirable in a progressive society are how propping in the society despite the rich cultural and traditional values including the ones inherent in our teachings either in the Christian or Islamic faiths.

It is on record that crime such as arms robbery, banditry kidnapping terrorist and even prostitution have become associated with young Nigerians who ought to

be in school or should be seen to be involved in doing something worthwhile or learning how to make a decent living from the proctizal point of view are being allowed to stay away into evil act.

Therefore youths should by how inculcate the spirit of using their God given skills to add value to themselves and the society rather than becoming liabilities to society.

By Abdul Azeez Abubakar
From Federal Polytechnic
Bauchi

my views on the state of Jenta Apata cult activities which is increasing daily in the area.

I want to express my grievances on the rate at which reports of robbery and kidnapping have been the order of the day in the community.

It is now a daily occurrence to find people attacked by cultists mostly at day time and night.

They have succeeded in making life very tensed and miserable for people in that environment.

These cultists disturb shops owners in the environment by breaking their shops at night. They attack individuals in their respective homes and rob them of their phones and other valuables.

It is impossible to send young boys and girls on an errand as they too can be

victims of the attacks.

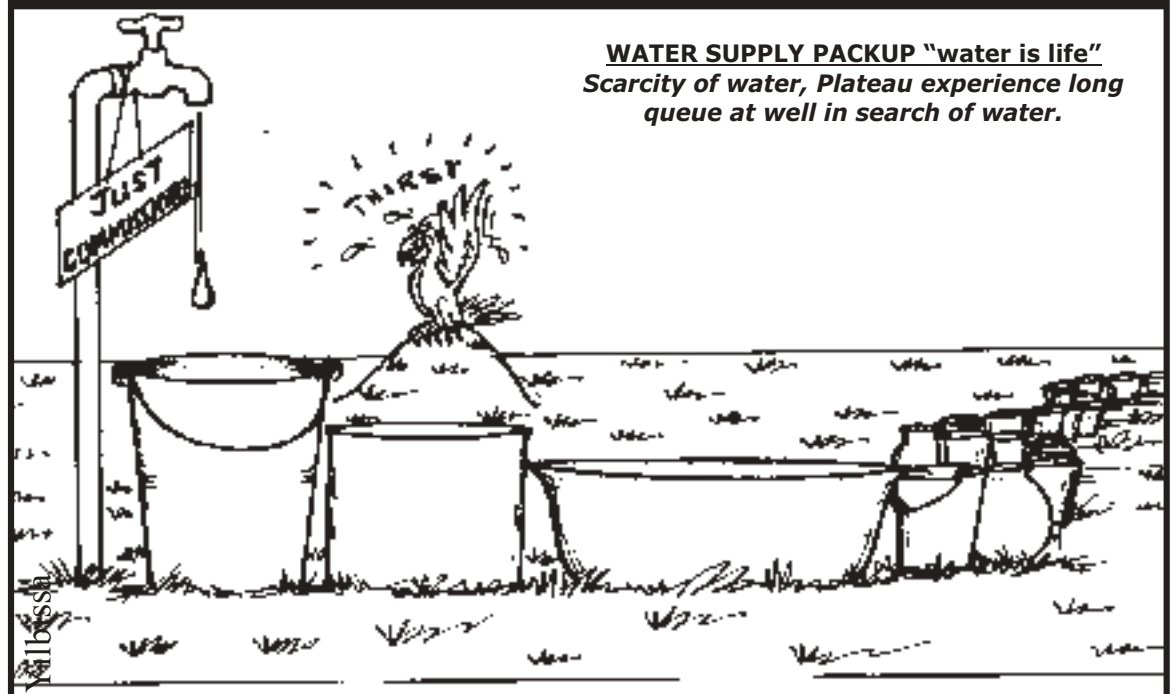
I wish to kindly appeal to the Plateau State Government and the Nigeria Police to intensify patrol around Jenta Apata ward in order to check the evil activities of these cultists terrorizing the people and making residents to live in fear in their respective homes.

The police or the vigilante should also use their authority to identify the perpetrators so that such menace can be brought to an end and justice served as soon as possible.

I wish to also appeal to the Plateau State Government to please hear the peoples cry and provide them with enough security to guard them and start daily patrois around Jenta Apata area day and night.

John Luka, Jos North.

WATER SUPPLY PACKUP "water is life"
Scarcity of water, Plateau experience long queue at well in search of water.



Opinion

As the rainy season beckons...

By
ADEWALE KUPOLUYI

ACROSS the country, many states have been experiencing rains in the last few days. It is for this reason that a closer attention should be paid to personal hygiene. It is on this note that health officers and environmental activists have always stressed the need for such safe practices. Sanitarians have enjoined Nigerians on the need to take cognisance of their water source and look for means of having potable water. They have called on people with boreholes and well waters to engage in periodic tests, saying that whatever that is given to nature is what nature gives back. The Deputy Director, Water and Environmental Sanitary Department, Abeokuta South Local Government Area of Ogun State, Sanitarian Atinuke Daini, said over two billion people were living without access to safe water.

Sanitarian Daini urged Nigerians to preserve water in order to save millions of lives, noting that they should ensure proper sanitation of the little water they have around, saying that when they preserve water, they preserve life, and when they conserve it, they are saving a lot of lives. In the same vein, a Chief Environmental

Health Officer, Sanitarian Afolabi Taiwo, said Nigerians should look for the means of purifying and making their waters awesome and safe for consumption, noting that water is a basic need of life. "Water has no enemy, water is the basic need of life, Nigerians should not wait for government to do all things for them", he maintained. An Assistant Chief Environmental Health Officer, Sanitarian Tokunbo Oladehin, has enjoined Nigerians to save, preserve, conserve and keep water for the good of all.

"Nigerians should save water so that water can save them, preserve water so that water can preserve them, conserve water for water to conserve them", he said. On his part, Sanitarian Saburi Ogunsolu, has stressed the importance of environmental sanitation, urging the government to stem the tide of indiscriminate dumping of refuse in the country. He maintained that waste must be generated where life exists, but that whenever the generated waste is not effectively managed, it may lead to

indiscriminate dumping of waste. "Government at all levels have been providing the enabling environment, policy formulation and evaluation, but we need adequate cooperation from the service providers and members of the public for the policy formulated to make indiscriminate waste disposal to be effective", he added.

Sanitarian Ogunsolu, who is the immediate past National Vice President, Environmental Health Officers' Association of Nigeria, Southwest, said the Ogun State government had formulated an effective and relevant policy to address the issue of waste management while calling on the people to embrace the content of the policy. "As we have an increasing population, all arrangements should be made with adequate sanitary facilities to cope with the ever-increasing population; and we must integrate schemes and programmes that will accommodate our development as a nation, and also to consistently enlighten our people not to obey sanitary rules and regulations based on fear", he stressed. He also urged Nigerians to effectively consider what would be the medical cost, if their health is overstretched and broken, noting that all hands must be on deck to ensure that the environment is not only clean, but that healthy living should be the watchword, as the rainy season is fast approaching.

Meanwhile, some environmental practitioners have called on the people to desist from bush burning. According to them, wild fires do not just start spontaneously, but that somebody must have kindled the fire,

saying such a practice has many disadvantages than the advantages. Mr. Oluseye Ogunlami, said there are various kinds of ecosystems in the soil that would be affected negatively by bush burning, and that no agriculturist, from the scientific point of view, would encourage the practice of bush burning. He said Nigerians should be careful of bush burning, especially during the dry season and urged the people, saying they should do their part in ensuring a peaceful dry season period. "If you must burn bush at all, you must be extra-conscious during the harmattan period and get all the necessary measures on ground to curtail it or wait until the harmattan subsides", he added.

He further charged the government to increase funding to fire stations and equip them with facilities and equipment to enhance service delivery, as "It is always better to prevent than to manage fire when it starts", he stressed. Meanwhile, a Chief Agricultural Officer, Mr. James Ojo, has identified the dangers of bush burning and prevention. He admonished the government to create more fire stations across the country and locate them in strategic places for quick response. "When we talking about organic farming, we don't need to burn, we allow the weeds to decay and form manure for the soil", he stated further. In a nutshell, what we need to do for a safe environment can be summarised into three key points; having access to potable water, avoiding indiscriminate drilling of boreholes, shun wild fires and indiscriminate bush burning, even though the rainy

"Government at all levels have been providing the enabling environment, policy formulation and evaluation, but we need adequate cooperation from the service providers and members of the public for the policy formulated to make indiscriminate waste disposal to be effective", he added."

ARE you one of those that talks often, and hardly listens? Of a truth, you are doing yourself the greatest disservice. This is because one of the most powerful arsenals any articulate mind can use to disarm anyone is silence. It is also one of the most powerful forces on planet earth. If used very well, silence can be a game changer. It plays any role you want it to play for you; negative or positive. As a result, if you wish to be profoundly productive and be more calculating in your endeavors, you must imbibe the innovative power of silence.

As many that have understood the power of silence have used this resourceful element of time life for productive ventures. Some have made the best use of it in the early hours of the mornings, which is when they plan their day as it is the time they get the most and best of messages. They pray, meditate and exercise when most people are sleeping.

Did you know that destruction is loud, while creation is silent? That's how powerful silence works, and if you consider great achievers on earth or anyone else who has been able to achieve true success, you will realise that when they were building their craft, they didn't announce their project, neither did nobody hear about their work. The work announced

The innovative power of silence

By HENRY UKAZU

itself when they finished it. That's why it's always good to work hard in silence and allow your success to make the noise.

Silence works in magical ways. From my personal experience, relating with great minds, I discovered that they have mastered the art of using silence to send their desired and intended messages. Sometimes, they respond, sometimes, they don't. Either way, they are communicating.

Silence can however, be misunderstood. Did you know that someone can say yes to your request just to get you out of their line of concentration? You may be thinking you have won, but in reality, you have lost because either you weren't patient enough or you were bothering them too much. This is mainly applicable when a mentee or stranger needs assistance from a mentor or benefactor.

That's why I have always counseled my friends, mentees and anyone who cares to listen, whenever you don't understand any statement, communication or question, get clarity as opposed to acting based on your understanding. If possible, remain silent when you can't read in between the lines. You can also seek the counsel of an elder or someone

you hold in high esteem to assist with advice. Trust me, there's no harm in asking. When you ask, it puts you in a good light as opposed to keeping quiet and making mistakes due to your ignorance or assumption. I always counsel my friends, mentees and those who care to listen. In doubt, do not act.

Just like science, silence is an art. If you want to succeed in life, you must pay attention to little details, and this entails listening. Paying attention to details is a great trait of highly successful people. They know that a single step can make them derail, and a single step-action can be the turning point of their life. That's why they don't take anything for granted.

If you want to meet anyone, and you don't have access to them, the first thing you should do is to study them very well from your corner. This entails studying their works, reading their books, listening to their tapes, watching their videos, reading their articles, observing their association and paying attention to the events they attend. All this might give you an idea of who they are. It is quite unfortunate many people don't care to listen to understand, they are merely concerned about understanding or their own side of the story.

They fail to realise that sometimes

in life, wisdom entails that not all rights must be claimed. Sometimes, you play the fool to get what you want. This is because you can lose an argument to win a friend. Again, not all truth has to be spoken always even though it's always good to say the truth. You must know the right time to speak by looking at the emotional intelligence of the person or recipients of the message. All these entail listening because you have read the body language of the people.

Let's talk briefly about the importance of listening. The number one importance of silence is the fact that it gives you clarity in life. When your mind is clouded, it will be hard for you to reason well. You're mental, psychological, and emotional mindset will be affected, when this happens, your level of productivity will reduce. On a personal level, in recent times, I have begun to adopt the power of silence by listening more and speaking less; observing more and showing less, and applying the principle of the less is more?

Silence helps you to make better decisions. Silence makes you a better listener. Great leaders ensure that they listen to everyone before they speak, and by doing so, they make an informed decision. Do you know you have two ears and one tongue for a reason? Yes, because your two ears

are to listen more, and the one tongue to speak less. Even the tongue is caged and barricaded with a lock which is your teeth and a giant gate which is your lips. Still the tongue finds its way to air its opinion, and that is when necessary.

Silence helps you to concentrate well by paying attention, especially when you are in a noisy environment. Silence helps the mind to be creative, it gives better memory and ultimately relieves stress.

In conclusion, before you speak, listen to yourself, before you write, read it out, before you make a choice, meditate on it and most importantly, before you take any major decision, pray, and consult resourceful minds. In all these, you'll experience the positive effect of silence.

Ukazu writes from New York. He works with the New York City Department of Correction as the Legal Coordinator. He's a Human Capacity and Mindset coach. He is also a public speaker, youth advocate and creative writer. He's the author of the acclaimed book Design Your Destiny – Actualizing Your Birthright to Success. He can be reached info@gloemi.com

Feature

Drug abuse :Who's to blame?

The rate of drug abuse, particularly among the youth, has continued to rise to an alarmingly worrisome level, TOPE SUNDAY writes.

THE United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), in one of its reports, indicated that drug use was responsible for the death of almost half a million people in 2019, while drug use disorders resulted in the loss of 18 million others.

Similarly, a national drug use survey in 2018 also revealed that Nigeria had about 14.3 million drug users, of which close to 3 million suffer from drug use disorder.

This figure represented a 14.4 per cent prevalence rate in Nigeria, which is about three times the global average prevalence rate of 5 per cent.

Also, the UNODC in its 2021 World Drug Report projected that by 2030 the number of people using drugs around the world would rise by 11 per cent.

In the same vein, about 275 million people used drugs worldwide in the previous year, while over 36 million people suffered from drug use disorders, according to the 2021 World Drug Report, released by the UNODC.

NDLEA statistics

On its part, the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) has said that 40 per cent of Nigerian youths, between 18 and 35 years, were deeply involved in the abuse of drugs.

According to NDLEA, Chief Superintendent of Narcotics, Mrs. Atinuke Aduloju, who gave the figure two years ago in Lagos, said the statistic was worrisome and showed that the problem had reached an epidemic level in the country.

She added that the rate at which youths were becoming addicted to illicit drugs had reached an alarming state, adding that the prevalence of drug abuse in Nigeria and the negative impact on public health and safety necessitate that all hands must be on deck to curtail the challenge in the country.

It's pandemonium

Drug abuse, a pandemonium Okene

For the Provost, National Defence College, Centre for Strategic Research and Studies, Professor Adam Ahmed Okene, illicit drug use in Nigeria was pandemonium.

Speaking on the rising cases of illicit drug use in Nigeria he said that it was worse than HIV and Coronavirus.

Okene, who spoke in Abuja, said Nigeria as a nation should stand firm to tackle the menace, just as the provost called for drug tests for all public officeholders in the country.

He said: "The rising case of illicit drug use, has made it become pandemonium. It is now worse than HIV, and worse than Coronavirus, and it is now worse than any serious crime. With rising cases of drug abuse, Nigeria has been consumed."

"Some political appointees and elected persons when they behave will know clearly that they are high on drugs and the same thing



applies to some technocrats and some security personnel. So, it is widespread.

"Not just that every person that is holding power including the military, and security people are tested before they are given a very serious responsibility because leaders have a way of influencing followers. If they are known to misuse drugs, the tendency is that those that are behind them will also be involved."

"So, that is why I believe strongly that no one should be given any serious responsibility until the person is tested for drugs."

He called on those that are responsible for drug legislation and administration of anti-drug use to be more proactive in tackling the incidences of drug abuse in the country.

"The bulk of the crime that is committed in this country can be traced to drug abuse or misuse of drugs, be it political, criminal, security even at home, social, economic, all can be linked to drug abuse. I think in the beginning, we never took the fight against drug abuse seriously in this country."

"Yes, during the military, there were draconian laws which fortunately some people had even called such laws should be returned where drug pushers were killed. But then after that, we went through a period where everything goes as far as the drug is concerned in this country," Okene said.

Lagos case study

A study titled, "Crime and adolescent drug use in Lagos, Nigeria," published in Sociology International Journal, also stated: "Besides crime and drug use being major public health challenges, the group that is most vulnerable to drug abuse is that which could

most objectively be regarded as the drivers of Lagos' economy in the foreseeable future."

"It is along this line that public policy has to compel the investment of appropriate intellect, social resources and a range of other resources to rescue these at risk population from being consumed by the deadly social conditions to which drug abuse have the capacity to expose them."

"While this study may not be sufficient to make generalisable predictions on the nexus between adolescents, drug abuse and criminality, it does point to a significant decisive pattern in drug consuming habit of adolescents in Lagos."

"The socioeconomic and political location of Lagos makes it not well protected from the challenges of drug and drug abuse. As a result, its youth must be provided jobs and relaxation resources that could lower their frustration such that the patronage of drugs as temporary means of escape from disappointing realities would no longer be attractive and irresistible."

"Consequently, this paper calls for further research to adequately understand the impact of drug use in Lagos particularly and Nigeria in general. Although the use of drugs is not entirely new in Lagos, its current prevalence does not only raise some public health, social welfare and law enforcement concerns to policy makers and executors, it now bothers the household and causes health threatening fright to residents."

The study made several recommendations to reduce

adolescents' drug abuse induced trauma in society. It suggested that indigenous child socialisation that emphasises the concept of 'omoluabi,' meaning gentleman, should be reintroduced, strongly articulated and put into use.

The researchers said Law in Lagos should discourage indiscriminate drug economy and its patronage, and government should embrace community-based drug abuse control and behaviour monitoring of adolescents.

According to the study, public policy should empower social workers to partner with parents, teachers and workers at religious places in the socialisation of adolescents to embrace lives that do not tolerate drug abuse so as to ensure public safety and future sanity of Nigerian youths.

Identifying root causes as panacea

On his part, an Islamic Cleric, Sheikh Muhammadu Nuhu Khalid, also known as the Digital Imam, linked drug abuse to criminality, said the root causes of drug abuse should be identified to tackle the menace.

"Criminality is all about deviant behaviour and many reasons are showing that criminality is possibly unconscionable by the subsequent abuse of substances and drugs that is why you will have a very close relationship between criminality and brokenness."

"And insecurities are all about anxiety lack of confidence and lack of peace of mind and atmosphere. We're not only to identify substance abusers but identify the root cause of that behaviour and also to create a guide on when that will be definitely a levelling gradual

process and fill in the mind of a human being," he said.

... Poverty reduction too

In an interview with the media, a Consultant Pharmacist, Dr. Lolu Ojo, said poverty reduction was an essential part of the strategy to tackle drug problems in Nigeria. Lack of gainful employment often make young men, especially those engaged in menial jobs, take solace in drugs and for extra power," he said.

According to him, public awareness programmes and advocacy programmes must be intensified to highlight the dangers of drug abuse.

"Traditional and religious institutions must be involved. A community 'No-drug Vanguard' must be put in place to assist government efforts in this regard."

"Education is also key. Our public education system, today, is nothing but a travesty of its glorious past. The long years of neglect have turned our public primary, secondary and even tertiary institutions into drug havens. We must resuscitate the system and make them vibrant and true citadel of learning."

"The youths must be actively engaged in sports, entertainment and other vocations that will occupy their time, energy, and inquisitiveness."

"The distribution system must be sanitised to reduce the ease of access to drugs. Today, drugs are available anywhere and everywhere, mostly under the control of untrained hands."

"We must be creative in our actions to implement the demand and supply reduction strategies," he added.

News

2 Chibok girls escape from Sambisa

TWO of the abducted Chibok schoolgirls have escaped from their captors.

Sources told Daily Trust that the girls escaped from Sambisa forest, on Sunday, as a result of intense military operations.

A security source said the escapees were identified as Hauwa Mutah and Esther Markus.

"One is from Chibok and the other one from Dzilang village," he said.

This has reduced the number of Chibok schoolgirls in captivity from 98 to 96.

Penultimate week, the head of the Intelligence Unit of the Joint Military Task Force, Operation Hadinkai, Colonel Obinna Ezuipke, gave the number of the remaining Chibok girls in captivity as 98.



Alkali

In his breakdown, Ezuipke said, "Out of the 276 abducted Chibok girls, 57 girls escaped in 2014 while 107 girls were released in 2018. Three girls were

recovered in 2019, two in 2021 and 9 were rescued in 2022, bringing the total of 178 girls out of captivity and 98 remaining in Boko Haram captivity."

THE National Population Commission (NPC) has reassured the public of the safety of its server and data as they prepare for the 2023 Population and Housing Census.

Dr Isiaka Yahaya, Director, Public Affairs Department (PAD) said this in a statement issued in Abuja on Monday.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that a staff of the Commission and Comptroller of Chanchaga LGA, Niger State, Mr Sanusi Maigida had earlier claimed that the NPC server was hacked.

Maigida had cited this development as the reason for the postponement of the LGA-level training of the Supervisors and Enumerators for the 2023 Population and Housing Census.

Yahaya, who reaffirmed the commitment of the commission to a credible and acceptable census, said that its server was not hacked.

The public affairs department boss described as false and misleading, the

Population commission assures Nigerians of server, data safety

information on hacking of the commission's server.

"We wish to assure the public that the security of the data for the 2023 Population and Housing Census is absolutely guaranteed."

"The commission is committed to upholding the highest standards of data protection and maintaining the trust placed in us by the Nigerian population," he said.

Yahaya explained that the Commission's Chairman, Alhaji Nasir Kwarra's visit to the United Nations was to attend the 56th Session of the United Nations Commission on Population and Development was to the benefit of the country.

He said the chairman also presented Nigeria's statement on 'Population and Development' at the global event and has since returned to the country ahead of the secure and successful 2023 Census exercise.

preparations for the first digital Census in Nigeria.

"Over the years, it has been the standard practice for the Chairman of the Commission to attend the annual event on Population and Development in line with the mandate of NPC as the coordinating agency on population matters in Nigeria."

"Consequently, the public is advised to disregard the false statement trending online about the hacking of the commission's server and the subsequent travel of the NPC Chairman to restore the purported hacked server," he said.

He assured of the commission's determination to continue to update the populace on developments regarding the 2023 Population and Housing Census as events unfold. Yahaya solicited for Nigerians' support to ensure a secure and successful 2023 Census exercise.

Global partners strategise to vaccinate of children, restore immunisation

THE global partners, an NGO, announced a new effort: "The Big Catch-up", to vaccinate millions of children and restore immunisation progress lost during the COVID-19 pandemic.

It said in a statement on Monday that the pandemic saw essential immunisation levels decrease in over 100 countries, leading to rising outbreaks of measles, diphtheria, polio and yellow fever.

It said that the "Big Catch-up" was an extended effort to lift vaccination levels among children to at least pre-pandemic levels and endeavours to exceed.

"Led by a broad range of national and global health partners, the Big Catch-up also aims to ensure stronger primary health care services for essential immunisation in the future."

In a speech, Dr Tedros Ghebreyesus, Director-General, World Health Organisation, said millions of children and adolescents, particularly in lower-income countries, have missed out on life-

saving vaccinations, while outbreaks of these deadly diseases have risen. Ghebreyesus said on Monday that the organisation was supporting dozens of countries to restore immunisation and other essential health services.

"Catching up is a top priority. No child should die of a vaccine-preventable disease," he said.

Also, UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell said that routine vaccines were typically a child's first entry into their health system.

According to her, children who missed out on their early vaccines are at added risk of being cut out of health care in the long run.

"The longer we wait to reach and vaccinate these children, the more vulnerable they become and the greater the risk of more deadly disease outbreaks."

"Countries, global partners and local communities must come together to strengthen services, build trust and save lives," she said.

Dr Seth Berkley, Chief Executive Officer, Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, said the partners could not allow a legacy of the pandemic to be the undoing of many years' work, protecting more and more children from deadly, preventable diseases.

"Global health partners, working with governments and communities, must do everything we can to protect the life of every child," Berkley said.

Dr Chris Elias, President of Global Development at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, said vaccines

were a public health triumph.

"The incredible progress that has been made towards ending polio and reducing the incidence of infectious diseases is the direct result of thousands of dedicated global partners and local health workers who have worked to immunise millions of children."

"We must double down to reach all children with the vaccines they need to live healthier lives and ensure that future generations live free of preventable diseases like polio," Elias said.



Dapoet

Army chief's wife fetes soldiers' spouses

THE President, Nigerian Army Officers' Wives Association (NAOWA), Mrs Salamatu Yahaya, on Monday interacted with wives of soldiers under the aegis of the Nigerian Army Soldiers' Wives Association (NASWA) to mark the Eid-el-fitr celebration.

Mrs Yahaya said the occasion had provided the opportunity to have interaction with the women, to identify areas of intervention and support them.

She said the meeting was convened in the spirit of Easter and Sallah seasons to be able to eat and interact together.

Wife of the army chief said that NAOWA had continued to support and empower barracks women and youths with skills and starter packs to make them to be self-reliant.

"I know some of you have one or two things that you want me to hear. The one we can help you, we will help and the one we can take your complaint forward, we will."

"So we are going to eat, we are going to enjoy ourselves and we are going to talk to ourselves," she

said.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the soldiers' wives raised a number of requests and issues that bothered on their wellbeing, accommodation

Aisha Buhari thanks Nigerian women, diplomatic corps

THE First Lady, Aisha Buhari, has expressed gratitude to Nigerian women, members of the diplomatic community and partners for support and cooperation she received as a mother of the nation.

Mrs Buhari said this on Monday when she hosted members of the diplomatic community and some Nigerian women to commemorate the end of the 2023 Ramadan period in Abuja.

She also used the occasion to appreciate development partners, wives of governors and service chiefs for their support of the success of her Aisha Buhari Foundation.

"It is your valuable contributions that have made our transitional journey easier, smoother and more productive; I thank Almighty Allah for the success."

"Notably in the areas of humanitarian assistance, healthcare, education,

and welfare."

In her response, Mrs Yahaya promised that NAOWA would continue to do its best in the area of empowerment of women

Aisha Buhari thanks Nigerian women, diplomatic corps

women and youth empowerment and the successes achieved in these areas are monumental.

"My foundation, the Aisha Buhari Foundation and Future Assured are grateful, while I count on your goodwill."

"I assure you that the love, confidence and trust you invested in me and my foundation will continuously impact the lives of many Nigerians," she said.

While commending members of the diplomatic corps for the cordial working relationship accorded her in the last eight years, the first lady urged them to extend the same to the incoming administration.

"It is my pleasure to express my heartfelt gratitude to all for the excellent relationship that both my family and I enjoyed with you during the last eight years."

"Your cooperation, support

and youths."

She urged them to continue to instill high level of discipline in their children to be able to become better citizens.

and prayers during this period have added value to the success of my journey."

"Finally, I would like to conclude by soliciting your cooperation, support and prayers to help the incoming administration in securing the future of our nation," she said.

Various speakers took turns to express their appreciation to the First Lady for her steadfastness towards supporting the course of women and children in Nigeria.

Mrs Buhari will cease to be Nigeria's First Lady as from 29 May when her husband, Muhammadu Buhari, will leave office as President after a two-term tenure of eight years.

The incoming First Lady, Remi Tinubu, arrived in the country on Monday with her husband, the President-elect, Bola Tinubu, after about a month's vacation abroad.



Ehanire

Features

Child labour shifts to beer parlours/restaurants

Recently, NAPTIP announced that it was taking the battle against child labour and trafficking to relaxation centres, beer parlours and restaurants where trafficking syndicates operate these days. ELEOJO IDACHABA in this report examines the initiative.

IN Nigeria today, it is no longer news that the future of children, especially teenagers, is endangered. This time, it's not because of known ailment or any infirmity; not even on account of war or the raging insecurity and banditry, but largely because the society has chosen to take undue advantage of this class of people because of the prevailing economic situation in the country.

This reporter's investigations have shown that these days, it is a common sight in many relaxation centres, restaurants and beer parlours to find under-age children doing unimaginable odd jobs just to eke out a living either for themselves or their benefactors.

It has assumed a worrisome dimension such that the prevailing commentary is that these future leaders of the country are under a psychological threat compared with other countries where the future of children and youths occupy a centre stage in their development plans.

Unconfirmed report also indicates that despite the looming, but highly publicised dangers associated with trafficking of children, the trend has continued unabated.

It has been discovered that in most cases, these unsuspecting teenagers are lured into working in beer parlours/restaurants where the traffickers deceive them into unrealistic fantastic missions abroad.

The fight

In the light of this, therefore, the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) has declared that it would henceforth begin to clamp down on restaurants and beer parlours that engage children as workers or that indulge in child-labour related offences leading to prostitution and trafficking.

NAPTIP's head of Lagos Command, Comfort Agboko, said the agency would beam its searchlight on restaurants and beer parlours to get such employers of child labour as she disclosed that it was wrong to engage children below 12 years as domestic workers.

"This agency through its enlightenment programme had many times stressed



that it was wrong to engage children as workers. Any parent that willingly gives his or her child out to such employers is as guilty.

"Anyone found guilty of employing such a child is liable to seven years imprisonment. The Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act 2015 which sets up NAPTIP prohibits all forms of slavery and slavery-like activities," she said.

As an alternative to the popular excuse of the prevailing poverty as reasons for giving out children to work, Agboko encouraged parents to rather strive hard in order to give their children quality education instead of using them as money-making machines.

According to her, some of the children engaged in such unwholesome jobs are often being abused by men and in most cases ended up being trafficked by unknown persons.

Parents to blame

It has been found out that the girl-child is the most endangered. The reasons are not far-fetched as parents of such teenage/under-aged girls give their consent for their child to leave for obvious locations.

A concerned parent, Mrs. Henrietta Jacob, noted that parents in most cases are the reasons their under aged children are found in unexpected places.

She said, "I have followed a

group interested in children welfare to identify vulnerable children in compromising locations around the FCT. After interacting with some of those children, especially the young ladies, we realised that their parents intentionally pushed them out in search of greener pastures. Only in few cases are there instances where some children left home on their own. A great number of them are from Benue, Edo, Imo, Delta, Kaduna, Nasarawa and Plateau states. Whatever is the reason for this? NAPTIP needs to do more by ensuring that there are punishments for erring parents. Check out the profile of young girls and boys often deported back to the country, they are usually from those states I mentioned."

Denial of basic rights

There is no doubt that in this country the lot of children, especially girl-child, in many parts of the country is nothing to write home about. From the North to the South, its either they are victims of forced marriages or are used as sex slaves. In many cases, they are victims of forced labour who were denied education. This is the opinion of Mrs. Adaora Eze, a child rights advocate.

"Some of those children you see selling in beer parlours are among those denied basic child rights.

The argument used to be that whenever schools are closed due to strike, children stray into any place to eke out a living, but even when schools sessions are on, you still find them in unimaginable places mostly in the evening. This makes them most vulnerable to so many things like trafficking and prostitution for the girl-child. The boys are introduced into unwholesome behaviours like the present unbridled quest for wealth leading to yahoo and money ritual.

"I cannot agree less with NAPTIP on the need to take the fight to the battle ground. We need to take back our children from the vagaries of society. There cannot be any excuse about the disintegration of moral standards for our children. To those individuals involved in these unwholesome practices, I want them to know that whatever goes round would come around one day," she told Blueprint Weekend.

Africa as epicentre of child labour

According to Timi Olubiyi, an entrepreneur and business management expert, it is unfortunately a common sight in Nigeria and indeed many developing nations to use kids as labourers or expose them to indecent activities such as traffic hawking, street-trading, housemaids and other domestic services.

Olubiyi said, a growing number of them engage in street begging and some are seen in hazardous work or illicit activities such as prostitution and trafficking. More than one in five children in Africa is employed as child labourers. In fact, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) data indicated that Africa is the region most affected by underage labour and home to almost half of the world's child labourers, with about 72 million children.

"Therefore it is safe to say that Africa has the highest incidence of child labour in the world. In the Nigerian context, child labour is the employment of children under the age of 18 in a manner that restricts or prevents them from basic education and development.

"According to estimates determined by the International Labor Organisation (ILO), the number of child workers in Nigeria is around 15 million; however, from context observation, this figure appears underestimated even though is the highest recorded rate of child labour in West Africa," he said.

He noted further that though the root cause of child labour can be traced to poverty, he however said that Covid-19 pandemic increased economic insecurity, disrupted supply chains and slowed down many family incomes.

He said, "The unethical use of child labour is an issue that has been prevalent and is on the rise in the country. So, in a nutshell, school closures in some parts of the country and income losses which have deepened poverty and limited social services.

"In many cases, children are forced into one form of labour or the other increasingly. Agreeably, in recent times we have seen a rapid rural-urban migration of children, mostly teenagers from disadvantaged families and background particularly from unsafe villages to cities in search of economic opportunities that often do not exist."

Without any doubt, child labourers are the worst paid and the most exploited in labour activities; yet it is more prevalent among children of the illiterates. Consequently, more efforts need to go into education and giving more enlightenment to parents, guardians and employers of labour to understand that the law on forced labour and slavery is not on their side; rather, on the side of the exploited. In months and years to come, when the books of records are opened, culprits may not escape punishment.

Why Nigerians should be united



By PALANG KASMI

THE just concluded 2023 general elections in the country has come and gone although there are still some States that have pending inconclusive cases, even after the April 15 re-run.

But the memories of the kind of dirty politics that played out, mainly based on ethnicity, religion, and other parochial divisions and sentiments during the elections is so repulsive and embarrassing.

This type of political play has left mistrust, suspicion, anger, bitterness, divisions among the Nigerian people. Infact some people are not even in speaking terms with each other because a particular ethnic group or religion won the elections while the other lost, and this kind of scenario is not only a dangerous trend but a "time bomb" awaiting to explode.

During the elections, apart from libellous and slanderous publications that flew around, the Social Media was awash with sharing and posting of videos that

conveyed attacks, name calling, allegations, innuendos, and all forms of write ups aimed at discrediting the image of the aspirants, either from religious or ethnic angles and perspectives.

These actions, spearheaded by politicians, the elites and key political actors, sometimes using their followers has caused the country to be polarised and divided more than it was in the past, and it brings to mind historical memories of this kind of bloody and dirty politics that negatively affected the first and second republic.

In fact, here on the Plateau, almost all the parties especially the All progressives Congress, The Peoples Democratic Party, and the Labour Party had at one point or the other come out to debunk false press releases and messages in circulation that had been sent out to the public to discredit their candidates, and sadly, some of the messages were linked to religious or ethnic sentiments or even lies peddled for political gains.

But this must not be so. The kind of divisiveness that this elections has caused, all in a bid for political actors to hold on to power is not healthy for a developing nation like Nigeria, which has over 250 ethnic groups to contend with, two major religions, including a crumbling economy that cannot really sustain the nation.

Many scholars have argued that our diversity should be our strength, and if harnessed properly can even be a great force for development.

According to a popular quote by Condolissa Rice "The essence of America - that which really unites us - is not ethnicity, or nationalism, or religion, - it is an idea - and what an idea it is: That you can come from humble circumstances and do great things".

The incoming government both at the Federal and state levels have a lot of work to do in order to build the bridges of ethnic and religious division that has affected citizens as a result of the unhealthy kind of politics that was played in the just concluded elections 2023.

We are Nigerians first, before any other identity, and that should be a step to be deliberately taken by winners of all elections, from the state and national Houses of Assembly, to the Governorship and presidential seats.

I wish I can see a situation where the winners can in a bid to unite this great polarisation level include members of the opposition for appointments in their cabinet. This is what Nigeria needs now.

If this is not done, the rulership and followership will face challenges that can hinder the smooth running and development of country.

The elites, religious leaders, and all stakeholders need to guard their utterances. They should tow the path of unity and oneness of the nation because once the country plunges into religious or ethnic conflict, there will be no political space to rule. The Rwandan, example is enough for the wise.

In a recent inaugural Lecture



series delivered by Vice President Yemi Osinbajo for Executive Course 45 at the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS) Kuru, on Monday April 17, 2023, he drew the attention of Nigerians to how ethnic profiling and religious bigotry has eaten deep into the fabrics of Nigeria and Nigerians, influencing elections and causing a setback to the nations growth.

His paper titled "Creating a Homeland for All: Nation Building in a Diverse Democracy" noted that as long as there is no conscious attempt, through policies to make nationality more important than ethnic, religious affiliations as was done in Rwanda, then the problem of ethnicity and religion will continue to affect Nigeria's development.

"Nigeria can harness its ethnic diversity for development. Prejudice, stereotypes and bias are natural tendencies of human beings due to the environment, and level of social exposure people have on other tribes but they are not facts. Also note that elections, are divisible and democratic competition is intensified when the contenders are from different ethnic divides" he noted in the paper.

He also pointed "In the last 2023 elections, ethnic divisions,

religious profiling played even within people from the same denomination".

He said he is hopeful that there can be a Nigeria where you can just say your nationality, name, where you live, as your identity. "It is a matter of conscious decision and making Nigeria to become what we want it to be" he said at the forum hoping that the elites and political class who have continually manipulated religion, and ethnicity will work to change the narrative.

However the outcome of the paper recommended that there is great work to be done, and if Nigerian elites and politicians can come together just like the elites of Tanzania, Singapore and Rwanda came together to bring out policies for unity, peaceful coexistence. Only then will the sad narrative of how Nigeria is greatly polarised by religious and ethnic differences will be changed.

As Caleb Plant puts it "I'm just hoping throughout my career that I can help eliminate what people can and can't be because of what they look like or their religion or ethnicity".



BY KENNETH DARENG

Most average Nigerian electorates including the political actors either because of their narrow views about democracy simply think democracy is just about holding elections.

The general perspective therefore is that, the political landscape must be seen to be kept busy planning and managing the process of every election circle ditto; the Primaries leading to the emergence of candidates by all registered political parties who would be standard bearers in elections whether in the National, state or Local Government levels.

It is during such exercises that the role of the electoral umpire The Independent National Electoral and that of State's Independent Electoral Commissions and that of the Judiciary are clearly defined based on the nation's constitutional provisions or the

Nigeria's democracy: Going beyond elections

Electoral Act.

Going by the common view of democracy which in the usual sing song which is, Government of the people, by the people and for the people, is not even reckoned with because, the mindset is geared towards just electing people into political offices based on certain regional, sectional, ethnic or religious interests set in before and after each electoral process.

Then the issue of equity and fairness begins to tilt towards individual or group interests in who gets what in the distribution of political appointments and in most cases how to settle the so-called political godfathers and mothers as well as loyalists who played one key role or the other. And before one would say; "Aai or nay" it becomes a different ball game where there is the popular saying, if not satisfied.... Go to court" While this kind of posture in some cases pushes some to begin to plan for the next election from Day-one in office and then the circle continues.

Beyond these, democracy by its definition ought to result in good outcomes, safety, security and welfare of the citizens, in ensuring affordable and good healthcare, quality education, economic progress, socio-cultural development and all of that. But very often the reverse is the case as we are witnessing in

the country where our political elites continue to take the will of the people for granted. And as soon as elections are over, some elected or appointed officials begin to see themselves not as public servants that are accountable to the people but as Lords of the Manor who will always turn the same people that put them in those positions as their slaves.

Since the advent of the Third Republic in 1999, the Nigerian electorate have continued to witness the same pattern of mis-governance due to the absence of patriotic leaders and the failure of the authorities to satisfy the basic yearnings and aspirations of its citizens in terms of democratic dividends.

Perhaps, these failures and complete disconnect from the masses further contradicts the kind of democracy we seem to be practicing. Then it is sad that elected or appointed public officials appropriate for themselves humongous emoluments and life time pensions even beyond what the National Salaries and Wages Commission prescribes for their offices and positions.

Then how can we as a nation strengthen and build our institutions like the police, the Judiciary to serve justice by discharging the rule of law without fear or favor, and how do

we going forward as a nation remove corruption from the state of satanic plundering in government institutions like NNPC, the Customs, Ports, Ministries, Departments and Agencies. How do we make EFCC and ICPC respond to the need to curb those excesses our public officials both low and the mighty.

After elections, the system is expected to be on auto-gear where every part of the system should function efficiently and professionally, By this it means our leaders must exhibit a servant oriented leadership where good governance is a priority especially from the stand point of those who are either in the Executive, Legislature and the Judicial arms must not only be upright in the discharge of their duties, they must be seen to be lovers of own country and above all guided by good conscience.

It is not surprising that bad governance leads to ugly situations such as when authorities lack the will to implement people oriented policies, or where our Security system appeared to have been overwhelmed by a small guerrilla bands or bandits or where poverty, disease with a growing tribe of unemployed youths roaming in the streets, all these by any means rubbish our quest

to attain any meaningful democratic value.

It is time for us as a people to take a step further from just electing, selecting or parading people in the name of elections, we must as a nation begin to borrow good examples from other democratic climes where elections are pathways to achieving societal wellbeing that also guarantees equal rights and weights in electing their representatives in government, and gives the citizens right to demand for accountability.

The aftermath of every election should chart a new cause for progress rather than a period of conflict resolution. It also signals a process of engagement with the citizens and feeling their pulse and creating the necessary mechanisms for promoting law and order and preaching the language of national rebirth and moral rejuvenation in order to form an organized society.

Above all, now is the period to begin to harmonize our democratic principles with those values that can enable Nigerians have a new nation that can open new vistas for the present and future generations by connecting all its components for the purpose of making a quantum leap in the commity of democratic nations of the world.

By **BULUS GAMBO**

LAST week was full of resentment, anguish and excruciating pains for the family of the late Paul Ishaya Nyamlong following the impulsive death of their promising daughter, Miss Mariam Paul Dakyen. The auspicious young lady died after battling to overcome a lethal ailment but courageously stood against all odds to the end.

Though the scriptures in Eccl 3:1 explains that "to everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heavens, a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to pluck up that which is planted", the death of a loved one always leaves behind a huge vacuum which can never be filled.

Death therefore is one mystery of life which our God Almighty has refused to disclosed its embodiment to the living. Thus, while all mortals desire to go to heaven, many do not want to accept the reality of the fact that all living humans if Christ tarries most taste death before getting to paradise.

Nevertheless, the death of any gifted young man or woman is fundamentally so painful because of the obvious fact that such a person must have died with wonderful dreams which perhaps would have better the lot of humanity on earth. This further encapsulates the adage which says "the most riches place on earth is the graveyard where many souls had died with their premature dreams not coming to fruition, solutions to many earthly puzzles and formulas which would have unraveled many prosperous strategies anticipated to redefine our collective path to greatness not becoming a reality.

Though yours sincerely never had the chance of meeting the late Mariam Dakyen when she was alive, I was opportune to have heard a lot about her through her elder brother, Hosea, Shitnan Nyamlong. When I was the News Editor of the Nigeria Standard group of newspapers, Nyamlong was a reporter I supervised. The truth is that working with him was never a dull moment, Nyamlong was a man entirely full of courage and great resilience despite several challenges confronting him.

This was a man who had lost both parents when he needed them most and a few years back also lost his dear wife during child birth. Though enveloped with these traumatizing and unpleasant misfortunes of life, Hosea continued to struggle in his efforts to put a smile on what was left of his brothers and sisters. In the midst of these basket load of troubles, he never allowed himself to be either depressed and not give out his best in his anticipated obligations.

I still recalled with great nostalgia one fateful day he resurfaced in our office after he went unofficially missing for two days. I became so furious owing to the fact that he was the only one who could fill a gap already created on my desk. After confronting him headlong on the matter, Hosea reluctantly opened up to me saying, "Oga, my sister

has been down and I have always been there to motivate her. Sometimes when her pains becomes so unbearable, I stay back to motivate and comfort her. My sister believes in God and always desires to see me around her when situations becomes quite tough for her."

That day, Hosea took me through the excruciating journey of his deceased sister's epileptic health status which left me wondering how he has been coping in the midst of this turmoil of life. Knowing too well that this same Hosea who had lost both

due to his training as our church Sunday school teacher. I have severally been told that many men of God and church workers tend to shallow their bitterness and sorrow not to discourage fragile members and certainly his own intrigues may not be far-fetched.

On the 16th April 2023 however, Mariam Paul Dakyen was called back home to eternity to be freed from the outrageous troubles of this fragile world. Born into the family of the late Paul Ishaya Nyamlong on 15th December 1983, the deceased eventually



Mariam Dakyen: To everything, there is a season



Late Mariam

parents to the cold hands of death, a couple of years back also lost his loving wife who was an expectant mother send shivers down my spine. All though these horrible experiences, Hosea remained dogged and efficiently productive in our office even as many never know he was taking care of his ailing sister at home. To cap it all, Hosea hardly shares his trouble with people may be

commenced her primary education at the Federal Polytechnic Staff School in Bauchi State in 1987 but was transferred from the school to Ekan Primary School Chewl-Nap at Nassarawa Gwong of Jos North and later concluded her primary education at the New Karu LGEA in 1996.

Upon completion of primary education, Mariam proceed to Government Secondary School

Ampang West in Mangu Local Government Area where she obtained her West African Senior School Certificate in 2002.

Thereafter, the deceased proceeded to the Federal College of Education Pankshin where she studied English/French at NCE level between 2004 and 2007. In her quest to further her education, Mariam gained admission into the University of

Jos to study French in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Department of French. She eventually graduated with a B.A. Hounors in 2020.

On completion of her study, she was employed by the Plateau State Universal Basic Education Board, (SUSBEB) and posted to Kor village in Pankshin Local Government Area of the state on the 30th October 2009 as Senior Assistant Education Officer 1 and rose through the ranks.

The late Mariam Dakyen accepted Christ as her Lord and Saviour and was baptized on the 7th December 2002 at the Church of Christ in Nations, COCIN, LCC Vel in Pankshin LGA and was an active church member still her eventual demise. As is the case with many others who have departed this sinful earth to be with Christ, when such a reality happens, the popular comforting song that comes to our mind for us privileged to be amongst the living is "Rock of ages, Cleft for me, Let me hide myself in Thee. Let the water and the blood, from thy riven side which flowed, be of sin the double cure, save me from its guilt and power." Though the death of any in Christ is a huge gain, the pains and anguish of losing a loved one remains in the hearts of surviving relations for decades to come.

In his sermon at the funeral service, Associate Pastor of COCIN Nassarawa Gwong, Rev. Hassan Musa admonished believers in the lord to always be prepared for death which comes usually unannounced. Taking his text from the book of Mathew 25:1-12, the clergy who is the Divisional Police Officer, (DPO) of Nassarawa Gwong in Jos North Local Government Area of Plateau State also advised Christians not to toy with their salvation as everyone will tender an account of all he or she has done before our creator.

Speaking on the theme, "We must live a prepared life, Rev. Hassan reemphasized that it is appointed for man to die once then judgement will follow.

In his tribute, her brother, Hosea Nyamlong noted that "if there is any length that I can go to bring you back to life, I won't hesitate to go, if there is anything I can pray to keep you alive, I won't delay. I can't question God, for God Almighty knows the best. Rest in peace with the Lord till we come to meet and part no more." Certainly, the deceased will be missed not only that she died in her prime but the trustworthy life she lived.

"Though yours sincerely never had the chance of meeting the late Mariam Dakyen when she was alive, I was opportune to have heard a lot about her through her elder brother, Hosea, Shitnan Nyamlong. When I was the News Editor of the Nigeria Standard group of newspapers, Nyamlong was a reporter I supervised. The truth is that working with him was never a dull moment, Nyamlong was a man entirely full of courage and great resilience despite several challenges confronting him. This was a man who had lost both parents when he needed them most and a few years back also lost his dear wife during child birth. Though enveloped with these traumatizing and unpleasant misfortunes of life, Hosea continued to struggle in his efforts to put a smile on what was left of his brothers and sisters. In the midst of these basket load of troubles, he never allowed himself to be either depressed and not give out his best in his anticipated obligations. I still recalled with great nostalgia one fateful day he resurfaced in our office after he went unofficially missing for two days. I became so furious owing to the fact that he was the only one who could fill a gap already created on my desk. After confronting him headlong on the matter, Hosea reluctantly opened up to me saying, "Oga, my sister has been down and I have always been there to motivate her. Sometimes when her pains becomes so unbearable, I stay back to motivate and comfort her. My sister believes in God and always desires to see me around her when situations becomes quite tough for her."

IMAGES

NATIONAL TROUPE, UNIJOS TFA STAGE TOWNS AND GOWNS

The National Troupe of Nigeria (NTN) in conjunction with the University of Jos (Unijos) Theatre and Film Arts, under Theatre Education (TFA 207): Towns-And-Gowns for Secondary School at the St. John’s College, Jos yesterday



Artistic Director/CEO, National Troupe of Nigeria, Ahmed Mohammed Ahmed (right) being welcomed to the occasion by the Senior Lecturer, Department of Theatre and Film Arts, UniJos, Dr. Festus Idoko



The Nigeria Standard Newspapers online Editor, Mr. Fwenji Goar (right) discussing with the Artistic Director/CEO, Ahmed Mohammed Ahmed (left)



National Troupe of Nigeria, CEO, Ahmed Mohammed Ahmed (left) interaction with students of St. John’s College, Jos



Ahmed Mohammed Ahmed, Chief Executive Officer, NTN, Ahmed Mohammed Ahmed (left) answering questions from newsmen



Cross section of students keenly watching the performances



Theatre and Film Arts Students of University of Jos performing to the admiration of St. John’s College Students



NTN Boss, Ahmed Mohammed Ahmed (right) putting heads together with the Senior Lecturer, Dr. Festus Idoko (middle) and his Principal Confidential Secretary, Jane Ladi Ocheuje (left)



Students of the Theatre and Film Arts appreciating the audience after their performance

PHOTOS: DANLADI DUK

Odd World

'My kids don't wear shoes, don't judge me'

WHEN it comes to raising her two children, Alex Tucker is the first to admit her techniques are far from conventional. The 25-year-old and her boyfriend Paul have been criticised for many of their decisions about bringing up Berkley, two, and Freya, one.

The couple don't use prams or high chairs, and won't let the two children wear shoes. They've also decided not to teach them how to swim, even though they live by the water.

However, the couple claim their controversial choices fit in with their rural lives and urge people not to judge their lifestyle.

Alex's children don't go to day-care and she instead takes them to work with her. Sometimes the couple even sack off going to work to look after the little ones.

The rural mum refuses to teach her children to swim, despite living on the waterfront, and they both roam around their land barefoot.

Alex shared her rules online, and has since received plenty of criticism from other parents, with one commenting that social services should be called.

Despite the backlash, she's defended her position by claiming shoes distort feet shape and prams and high chairs are not essential to their way of living.

Defending her choice not to give them swimming lessons, she said they would encourage her water-fearful kids to get into dangerous water to swim.

Alex, who works in the fishing industry with her boyfriend Paul, and lives on the Hawkesbury river in New South Wales, said: "I'm not bothered by people who don't agree with my 'controversial' rules. Mothers are criticised no matter what they do, and especially online.

"I'm opening the conversation for everyone to start thinking outside the box before straight up criticising someone's parenting when they don't know how different someone's lifestyle can be. I'm not preaching 'my ways' - this isn't a 'how to' manual. This is what works for our family."

They spend a lot of time on the water - but neither of the children can swim

Mum goes on pricey tropical holiday alone to teach her kids 'vital lesson'

Passenger slammed for jumping queue at airport - but he thinks he's in the right

Mum blasted for letting young son play in the garden at 'unacceptable' time

People think 350-year-old painting is 'proof' time travel is real after spotting iPhone

The kids even roam barefoot across the beach, on pavements and even go shoeless when the family embark on 8km hikes.

Even though some parents may question

the choice, the mum insists going without shoes is better for her kids.

She said it "shocked her" that so many people saw it as a big issue, as she claimed it's "pretty normal" not to wear shoes in Australia.

Alex continued: "Even then, if you are from a coastal town like us, it's normal to not wear shoes at the shops, and working on boats, it's also common to not wear shoes.

"Shoes serve purpose, like if the ground is too hot or too cold, or if snakes and wildlife is a valid threat, or if something hurts to walk on."

She said when you don't wear shoes it can cause your feet to toughen, which enables you to learn how to walk on rough surfaces.

The mum said it's just a part of the family's "way of life."

Alex's boyfriend Paul owns a fishing business and Alex, who has experience working as a fisherman and commercial captain, often helps on the boat when he's in need of extra crew members.

The couple often take their kids along to work, with Paul having them by himself if Alex is needed to help on another boat.

If the weather conditions are too bad for the children to join Paul on the boat, and Alex is busy, the dad will miss his day of work entirely rather than send their kids to day-care.

Alex said: "We are a rural family working in primary production - I am a stay at home mother out of necessity, like most rural mothers.

"I'm needed at home for more than childcare and housework - we are the people at the frontline of feeding the nation.

"If it is not a desirable day for them to come to work, one parent stays home, that's rural life."

One of the main rules that has concerned other parents is said to be the decision to not teach the kids how to swim.

Some parents have deemed this as "dangerous", but Alex has said there is a strong difference between water safety and swimming.

Alex said: "Swimming lessons was a difficult one to decide on, but I came to the conclusion that a toddler probably couldn't swim out of the river on their own.

"In the river here, currents and submerged objects are a huge factor for drownings, and while they have a healthy fear of the water, I won't encourage them to enter it by doing swimming lessons.

"We play by the river a lot, and when a toy falls in, they freak out and come ask me to get it."

She also said she doesn't know if she would call her methods "rules", as the mum claims they are just doing what works best for them as a family.

Culled from The Mirror



Nigerians, there is need for 'church-shift'

ONE distinguished and quick-witted legal luminary I have continued to respect with all candor of persistence is none other than Prof. Dakas Clement Dakas, a former Attorney General and Commissioner of Justice, Plateau State and Senior Advocate of Nigeria, (SAN). Prof. Dakas, a former Dean, Faculty of Law at the prestigious University of Jos and also the fourth Professor of Law from the entire northern region of Nigeria has over the years unrelentingly become a pragmatic reservoir of knowledge. Intuitively, this scholar has continued to dazzle his contemporaries including others who care to listen to him about a more result-oriented shift in dynamism in the act of governance presently needed to save our nation from nose-diving into oblivion and total collapse.

Though some of his matter-of-fact recipe seems not logically achievable and crazily out of the box, it is becoming more evident that if prospective leaders of this nation do not take the bull by the horn and galvanize our collective thoughts devoid of any sort of sentiments; Nigeria would in no distance time find itself on a runway to total disintegration, chaos and anarchy. Let me however reemphasize for fear of perhaps misquoting Prof Dakas out of context that it is not in his character to proliferate any incisive notion that Nigeria can only achieve any such transformation through violent revolution. The erudite scholar however believes that Nigeria can attain greatness only based on a complete mind renewal by both the elites and the governed.

Just recently, I was privileged to be amongst quite a pocket few people who took him on how best we can intellectually remodel our thoughts and go against this traditional tide of doing business as usual and change our diminishing status. After a fruitful practicable enlightenment lecture on that fateful day, the scholar also suggested we read a book authored by Pastor Sunday Adelaja titled "Church Shift" which I reluctantly accepted. Unfortunately, my hands became full during the week and I could not search out for the book until a friend of mine eventually posted me a soft copy online.

The book, Church Shift is all about a struggle by a strong hearted Nigerian Pastor, Sunday Adelaja who found himself in faraway Ukraine but doggedly changed the ugly narratives of the country for the better. Before this great revival, the citizens of the country had psychological been hypnotized becoming mentally subservient to the caprices and intrigues of their leaders' political misrule. In a country which was proliferating unending tenets of socialist ideological philosophy and highly against civil disobedience; the citizens of the nation were victims of corruption, nepotism and other acts of personal aggrandizement.

The coming of the pastor who mobilized citizens of the country to stand their ground against the obvious subsequently affected a great change as it propelled about 125,000 members of the church to begin to see the act of governance from a different perspective. Rather than perceiving their political leaders as lords; the citizens began to take their fate in their own hands comprehending the apparent that they had the power to hold their leaders to account.

Consequently, before the ongoing Russian invasion, the nation was emerging to become one of the must focused nations in contemporary Europe. It was a nation

midwifed through civil disobedience against unabated injustice, oppression, nepotism, corruption and administrative ingenuity to become a more promising nation of the decade.

As I continued reading this book page after page, the present tragic, unpalatable and disturbing traumatic status of Nigeria kept on preoccupying my mind. To be honest, Nigeria has lost its bearing and it's only by the grace of God that things have not fallen apart. At the moment, there is no Nigerian citizen in his or her right senses who can testify that he or she is not feeling a pinch of this unending humanly created hardship and or catastrophe.

Evidently, both the poor and the rich are not happy over most recent developments. Most of the citizens are not happy as the fabric of our nation's economy is in shambles. If for nothing else, the reoccurrence of recession on the polity has devastated many families and rendered many vulnerable citizens hopeless.

Our universities have been in total shutdown for several months now making our children vulnerable to many social vices. Many of our idle children have been wept way into unbelievable crimes causing more havoc and calamity. Our economic collapse has left us at the mercy of several unimaginable and unpalatable situations. The issue of insecurity overwhelming this nation has forced us not to sleep with our eyes closed for a second.

More perturbing is the fact that with all the abundant economic and human resource which this country is blessed with; Nigeria has regrettably found itself in this pitiful situation. We as a people have become a laughing stock amongst the comity of nations for no fault of the ordinary man. Many innocent citizens are languishing in abject poverty and or want as the gap between the rich and the poor has continued to widen beyond comprehension.

A great number of our children have been killed in humanly created conflicts and unexplainable circumstances. By now, I am more than convinced that many Nigerians are tired of being slaves in their motherland. Yet, in the midst of these calamities, it seems that we are still far from recuperating and or gaining our grounds.

Just as Pastor Sunday Adelaja puts it, it will only take a people who know that power is in their hands to fundamentally effect a change for the better. These kind of people must put their lives at risk to ensure that the needful is done.

Without mincing words, many of us weary of all these happenings must begin to talk to our conscience. We must come to the reality of the fact that the people of this country must be liberated from the shackles of deception and erroneous thoughts of becoming spellbound that this nation is only for the elitists, the wealthy and the mighty.

The truth is that we must take a stand as a people in making our leaders accept the reality of the fact that power belongs to the ordinary man on the street. It is only by doing so that can we create a more convenient atmosphere for our nation to thrive. Even though we have suffered a lot in the past few years; we can still turn things around for the better in the interest of our future generations if we are willing to do so. Basically, we can create another euphoria of a church shift in Nigeria if and when we are determined to do so.

Feature

Archaeology's role towards cultural awareness in schools

By IKOKU NKECHI STELLA

IN the contemporary Nigerian Society, archaeology and its function have not been properly understood. It is not even clear to our educational planners, teachers and pupils what archaeology really entails. Perhaps the reasons are that large percentage of Nigeria are still uninformed about archaeology, its objective, methodology, let alone becoming involved. For over four decades, archaeological education in Nigeria has been confined to university education curricula with little or no attention paid to teaching the subject at primary and secondary school levels.

The present pre-tertiary curriculum contains virtually no local pre-history except that of the colonial government. This explain why a larger percentage of the people are not aware of archaeology and its activities. In fact, only a few universities in Nigeria such as University of Ibadan, University of Nigeria Nsukka, University of Jos and Ahmadu Bello University, where archaeology is taught as a course or as an adjunct in Department of History. It is also noteworthy to say that a number of students who enroll yearly for the course in our higher institution of learning are comparatively few compared to other disciplines. This is not to say that archaeology does not have a mass appeal and appropriation nor do we say that the subject is difficult to comprehend.

However, one can say that the late introduction of the subject in Nigeria couple with its non-inclusion in the post-primary education and the traditional view which sees archaeology merely as a specialist of the pre-historic past with little or no business in contemporary history and politics as, to a large extent, being a hurdle between the awareness of archaeology and its activities.

Archaeology is the study of past cultures and human activity through the recovery and analysis of material culture. The archaeological record consists of artifacts, architecture, biofacts or ecofacts, sites, and cultural landscapes. It concentrates on tracing human origins and developments through time and space and exposes man's achievement in the technological, economic, socio and cultural fields. In achieving this discovery, it relies mainly on unbiased evidences left by past societies, and these evidences are mostly material, not attached to any group of people or individual, give objective and undistorted situations about people who made use and discarded them. Archaeology can be considered both a social science and a branch of the humanities.

It is usually considered an independent academic discipline, but may also be classified as part of anthropology, history or geography. Archaeology can be a subsidiary activity within Cultural resources management (CRM), which is also called Cultural heritage management (CHM).



Archaeologists are interested in how people of the past lived, worked, traded with others, moved across the landscape, and what they believed. Archaeologists use artifacts and features to learn how people lived in specific times and places. They want to know what these people's daily lives were like, how they were governed, how they interacted with each other, and what they believed and valued. This is because understanding the past may help us better understand our own society and that of other cultures.

Cultural heritages are to be celebrated and reckoned with, for these are the ancestral gifts from the fore-bears. Identifying with cultural heritages is not alien to Africa. However, the germane question is what role can archaeology play in promoting cultural awareness in Nigerian schools? Archaeology is the only field of study that covers all times periods and all geographic regions inhabited by humans. With the introduction of archaeology into Nigeria school system, much cultural awareness will be created. It will help us understand big topics like ancient

religions, early trade routes, and the lives of enslaved people. Archaeology informs us about individuals, families, and communities that might otherwise remain invisible in the historical record. Through the fields brought into light by the Archaeologists, the students would be able to see how human-cultural system have interchanged relationship with their natural environment which helps to explain the observed

patterning in material culture. At the same time, it offers the pupils / students the opportunity to see the trances of uniformity in culture in Nigeria. For instance, while the finds from Diama may be different from those from Iwo-Eleru indicating different historical awareness and makes it easier to live together in amity without sacrificing our unique qualities.

Archaeology offers a unique perspective on human history

and culture that has contributed greatly to our understanding of both the ancient and the recent past. Archaeology helps us understand not only where and when people lived on the earth, but also why and how they have lived, examining the changes and causes of changes that have occurred in human cultures over time, seeking patterns and explanations of patterns to explain everything from how and when people first came to inhabit a place, to the origins of agriculture and complex societies. Unlike history, which relies primarily upon written records and documents to interpret great lives and events, archaeology allows us to delve far back into the time before written languages existed and to glimpse the lives of everyday people through analysis of things they made and left behind.

Using archaeological finds, for example the rich discoveries at Igbo Ukwu, Ife and Benin, it is possible to educate the students on the roots of social inequalities of today and what could be done to arrest the widening gap between the rich and the poor. In this way, archaeology can be said to be using the past to serve the present and the future. If archaeology as a discipline can achieve these objectives in Nigeria, it would have done its duty as a discipline of study.

Furthermore, cultural heritage of Nigeria and archaeology can help educate the public to disabuse its mind from the idea that Nigeria has no cultural heritage and by exhibiting cultural remains of the different ethnic groups within the Country, a sense of respect can be developed which will further enhance self-belongings.

In conclusion, having seen the role of archaeology in creating cultural awareness, it can be deduced that archaeology is the only field of study that covers all times, periods and all geographic regions inhabited by humans. As such, the present primary / secondary curricula can be enhanced through the use of archaeological resources to educate the public, this will help to rebuild respect for traditional knowledge and sustenance of cultural value.

IKOKU NKECHI STELLA is a Chief Museum Education Officer, National Commission for Museums and Monuments, Abuja.





Osinbajo's visit to Plateau for NIPSS inaugural Lecture

LAST week, on April 17, 2023, Vice President Yemi Osinbajo came to Plateau to deliver an inaugural lecture series to Senior Executive Course (SEC) 45 of the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS) Kuru.

He was received at the Yakubu Gowon Airport by the state Governor, Simon Bako Lalong, and top government Officials, after which the team headed straight to NIPSS for the event.

After a long session of introductions which saw participants of SEC 45 introduce themselves and their sponsors to the highest prestigious policy think-tank institution, there was also series of good will messages.

Then, it was the turn of the VP to present his lecture titled "Creating a Homeland for All: Nation Building in a Diverse Democracy". As he touched the Microphone and observed protocols, he paused a little when he reached the turn of the Director General (DG) of NIPSS, Prof. Ayo Omotayo. Then he heaved a sigh and said "Thank God I did not have to reduce the length of the Mic" and the audience chorused with laughter.

The VP then humorously continued saying that after facing many years of height-intimidation and bullying while working with the President, Mohammadu Buhari, he was glad that the President finally got his match, and that happened when he had the chance to introduce the NIPSS DG Omotayo to the President, when he was first appointed to head the institution. I was glad the President also met someone who intimidated him with his height, VP Osinbajo said, and his statement attracted more laughter from the audience.

In a similar fashion, when The NIPSS DG Omotayo too rose to speak and give his welcome address, he also humorously spoke about the need for a legislation in the country's parliament to protect people as tall as he is, who always suffer and have to keep increasing the Microphone or bend to speak at public functions because it is usually too short for him to use to speak. His comments also attracted laughter from the crowd.

The lecture challenged the 97 SEC 45 participants to recommend to Nigerian elites and politicians to deliberately legalise policies that will stop the high level of ethnicity, ethnic profiling, and religious bigotry that has eaten deep into the fabrics of Nigerians and the System.

The paper called for use of the Rwandan and Singaporean example to kick out ethnic, and religious divisions that has set the country backwards in attaining its development level.

This is not the first time he is visiting the institution to deliver such highly intellectual lectures that drive the participants to policy making directions. After delivering the lecture, VP Osinbajo who is an accomplished Lawyer, Teacher, Administrator, and founder Orderly Society Trust responded to numerous questions and answers from the study groups.

A particular question of interest emerged from a Participant who asked how the elites of

Tanzania, Singapore and Rwanda came together to bring out policies for unity, peaceful coexistence, and how can the Nigerian elites do same.

The Master of Ceremony (MC) aptly answered "You are elites, all of you in the present course are the elites, likewise all of us here I believe, and we can spur the change", he attracted an applause from the audience.

As he responded to the questions, Osinbajo also agreed with the view and said the MC Rear Admiral Adetope is right. "We are the elites. We have elites here in NIPSS from diverse backgrounds across the country, studying together but whatever you come up with, you need the political elites or class to implement such policies", Osinbajo said as he advised that "We need to allow people who live in communities to develop the communities by contesting for elections and the indigene settler clause should be removed from the constitution".

"We must prioritise out unity and make it impossible for people to disunite us, especially with our diversity".

One of the participants shared his experience in Rwanda. He said when he visited the former war-torn country that has now become one of the most peaceful and less polarised countries in Africa, he kept asking the drivers of the taxi's that drove him, "What is your tribe?",

but all the responses he got from them was uniform as they said "I'm a Rwandan". He said he got only one different response where he was told "It is an offense to say you are a Tutsi in this country".

Earlier in his goodwill message, governor Lalong said the good governance lecture is a well conceived idea, while the theme is apt because it will guide the nation to understand how good policies affect good governance.

He said in his 8-year leadership of Plateau State since assumption of office in 2015, his administration has brought out great policies that are development driven and of great benefit to the state.

Lalong said President Buhari has equally built great policies that the country has benefitted from and adding that there are high expectations on the President-elect Asiwaju Bola Tinubu to deliver the laudable policies he has promised Nigerians which are enshrined in his manifesto "Renewed Hope".

The governor who is passionate about the game of golf also told the participants and NIPSS as a body that he has fulfilled his promise to them by establishing a golf course, to help them unwind, stressing further that he is happy the golf course had attracted a new member in the person of the DG, even as he prayed for more executive members of the institution to join other participants and golf enthusiasts in the highly relaxing game.

The Governor told the SEC 45 participants that when his government exits in May 29, he will have more time to be joining them to play the game.



News

Lalong, Faleke thank supporters as APC dissolves PCC

By PALANG KASMI

FOLLOWING its victory in the February 25 general elections, the All Progressives Congress (APC) has dissolved its Presidential Campaign Council (PCC).

The PCC headed by Plateau Governor Simon Bako Lalong was inaugurated last year October to work for the success of the party's presidential flagbearer, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu and his running mate, Kashim Shettima in the 2023 general elections.

The dissolution was contained in a statement, jointly signed by the Director General of the APC PCC, Governor Simon Bako Lalong and the Secretary of the council, James Abiodun Faleke.

The party on behalf of the chairman of the Presidential Campaign Council, President Muhammadu Buhari; the President-elect, Bola Tinubu and other leaders, thanked all council members, leaders and supporters for working assiduously for the resounding victory of the President-elect, Asiwaju Bola Tinubu, said the joint statement.

It read: "Since the campaign council began in September 2022, we have witnessed an unprecedented, relentless, and engaging mobilisation of our members nationwide and in the diaspora towards



Lalong

securing the majority popular votes for the Tinubu/Shettima presidential ticket".

"The journey has been a worthy one with our hard-won victory. The credit goes to all our members particularly, the leaders and members of the various campaign directorates".

"We would like to express our deepest appreciation to President Muhammadu Buhari (GCFR), for his unwavering support and leadership throughout the campaign. We could not have achieved this level of success without his single-mindedness, commitment, and forthrightness".

"However, we have concluded that it is in the best interest of the campaign and its stakeholders for us to dissolve our council with

immediate effect".

"This has become necessary to retune us towards the May 29, 2023, inauguration of the President-elect Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu's administration".

"The process of transitioning into a new era of a Renewed Hope is underway and all our energies and activities must reflect the principles underlying this process.

"We hope that you will all continue to stay involved in Nigeria's political process and to advocate for issues that you believe in. Our democracy is stronger when we all participate in the political process with patriotism.

"We would like to take this opportunity to thank you once again for your support, dedication, and hard work", said the statement.

Shettima, Lalong, others welcome Tinubu from vacation

By PALANG KASMI

STANDARD newspapers reported.

He however arrived back to the country on Monday evening, April 24, 2023 in a private jet at exactly 4.30 pm, accompanied by his wife, Senator Oluremi Tinubu, and son, Seyi.

Other key party leaders and members that welcomed the President-elect were members of the APC National Working Committee (NWC), Senate President Ahmed Lawan, House of Representatives Speaker Femi Gbajamila and members of the National Assembly.

Also at the airport for the rousing welcome were newly

dissolved members of the APC PCC, including governors, former governors, serving and former top government officials.

Tinubu expressed his happiness to return home and told the crowd that he has rested well, is refreshed and ready to face the task ahead.

On his rumoured ill-health, he said "Forget about what the rumour mill may have told you. I'm strong, very strong".

He also assured Nigerians that he has been planning and consulting to put a strong team on ground as he resumes office on May 29.



Emire of Bauchi Dr Rilwan Sulaiman Adamu right plays Sallah homage to Gov. Bala Mohammed at Government House Bauchi.

Sports



What's going on with Tottenham?

By **SIMON STONE**

TOTTENHAM'S worst Premier League defeat since 2013 has triggered more anger among fans about the state of their club.

Chairman Daniel Levy is getting the brunt of the blame; the humiliation of Tottenham being 5-0 down against Newcastle after just 21 minutes being seen as the culmination of a string of disastrous decisions dating back to the decision to sack Mauricio Pochettino in November 2019 - less than six months after Spurs had played in the Champions League final.

There is a demand from some for interim boss Cristian Stellini - left in charge following Antonio Conte's departure last month - to leave, which would potentially put Ryan Mason back in charge for the final six games of the season.

This is a big call. Theoretically, Tottenham still have a chance of finishing in a Champions League place, although realistically, after the shambles at St James' Park, few expect that to become a reality.

However, while they remain fifth, Aston Villa, Liverpool and Brighton are all snapping at their heels in the battle for European qualification.

After this weekend's FA Cup semi-finals, seventh place will earn a Europa Conference League place, while fifth and sixth will go into the Europa League. The last time Tottenham fans had no European football to look forward to was 2009-10.

The major issue is who now provides Levy with football expertise to assist in the decision-making process.

Remarkably, Tottenham now find themselves without a manager for either their men's or women's team. Their managing director of football, Fabio Paratici, resigned last week after he lost his appeal against his worldwide football ban, imposed after Juventus, where he was sporting director and managing director, were found guilty of false accounting.

Paratici's 30-month ban was initially imposed by the Italian authorities in January. It was not extended worldwide by Fifa until March, although it was always likely to happen.

Yet Tottenham claimed Paratici's change of status came completely out of the blue and they had no knowledge it was going to happen.

It was made worse by the fact that 24 hours previously, the Italian had been put forward as

the public face of the club, speaking extensively to the club's own website about Conte's exit in which he declared Tottenham were "focused and looking forward" to the remainder of the campaign.

It is understood there has been no contact from Tottenham with Pochettino, who would be welcomed back with open arms by the majority of supporters.

Levy's best managerial appointments - Martin Jol, Harry Redknapp and Pochettino - have been somewhat under the radar. The stellar names, Jose Mourinho and Conte being the two most recent examples, have not gone well.

In the aftermath of Mourinho's dismissal, less than a week before Tottenham lost to Manchester City in the Carabao Cup final, Levy spoke about returning to the club's "DNA".

That, presumably, centres around free-flowing, attacking football that delivers excitement. The two managerial appointments since then are Conte and, before that, Nuno Espirito Santo, the former Wolves boss who was chosen after a protracted search when candidates were considered and discarded, in Gennaro Gattuso's case, after not enough due

diligence had been done on his background.

The names being mentioned now include Julian Nagelsmann, recently sacked by Bayern Munich and who has pulled out of the running to replace Graham Potter at Chelsea, and Luis Enrique, who left the Spain job after last year's World Cup and has not managed at club level since 2017.

There is also Brendan Rodgers, who left Leicester earlier this month after an awful season, and Potter, who some think was out of his depth at Chelsea, while others view the former Brighton boss as failing at an impossible job. Potter's replacement at the Amex, Roberto de Zerbi, also has his admirers.

Eleven months ago, Tottenham's owners agreed a £150m "capital increase" for the club.

This was viewed as a pot of money that Conte could use to turn a squad that had just sneaked into the Champions League into contenders.

Money was spent, yes, but few would argue it has been spent wisely. Brazilian forward Richarlison was signed for £60m but has failed to consistently perform at the highest level,

while £25m midfielder Yves Bissouma impressed at Brighton but has been inconsistent for Spurs. Argentina defender Cristian Romero has been better but his impetuosity is a liability at times.

There are numerous players in the Tottenham squad that are not up to the standard the club demands but how many could attract the transfer fee to fund a squad rebuilding programme?

Son Heung-min's contract runs to 2025 but the South Korean's form this season has been very poor by his usual high standards. He even said he felt "responsible" for Conte's departure "because I haven't helped the club all that much".

And that, inevitably, brings us to Harry Kane.

The England skipper is about to enter the final year of his present deal. Numerous clubs, including Manchester United, would be interested if Levy finally relented and let the 29-year-old leave.

But, given the negativity that already exists around the club, is that something Levy could even contemplate?

The problems at Tottenham are easy to identify. Finding solutions is far more difficult.

Tottenham

Sports

Mikel urges Peseiro to call-up EFL best player

FORMER Chelsea and Super Eagles midfielder John Mikel Obi has made a bold call for in-form Middlesbrough striker Chuba Akpom to be given a chance with the national team.

According to **Soccernet Nigeria**, the former Arsenal forward, eligible to represent Nigeria and England, has been in sensational form this season, scoring 28 goals to top the goal-scorers chart in the English Championship.

Obi, surprised that Akpom has not earned an international call-up, believes that the Super Eagles' head coach, Jose Peseiro, should invite the striker to the team ahead of the upcoming international window in June when Nigeria will face Sierra Leone.

In an interview with OWNGOAL Nigeria (as per Daily Post), Mikel Obi said, "It's a straightforward choice if you ask me. You are doing it for your team, then you at least get an invitation (national team)."

"28 goals and not a chance yet with Nigeria then you have to ask the coach why the top-scorer in the championship is not yet in his team. Even England I believe will have a look at him with the way he is going."

Obi, who believes that inviting in-form Akpom will be a motivation to others, also



Obi

stated that rewarding players doing well at their respective teams sends a message to others to work hard.

However, Peseiro has enough options in attack with Victor Osimhen, Terem Moffi, Ademola Lookman, Kelechi Iheanacho, and Paul Onuachu on his list for the last international window.

The Portuguese manager had earlier stated that he did not have enough confidence in Akpom but added that the

national team is open to everybody.

With the European season set to be over by the next international window, it remains to be seen if Nigeria will heed Obi's call and hand the former Arsenal striker a chance.

Akpom, who has expressed his desire to represent Nigeria, was named the EFL Championship Player of the Season on Sunday night, adding more weight to Obi's call.

Swiatek beats Sabalenka, as Alcaraz sees off Tsitsipas

IGA Swiatek and Carlos Alcaraz won in straight sets to retain their titles in Stuttgart and Barcelona respectively.

BBC SPORT said that, the Polish world number one Iga Swiatek beat world number two Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus 6-3 6-4 in a repeat of last year's final.

In Spain, Alcaraz breezed past Stefanos Tsitsipas of Greece 6-3 6-4 to win the tournament without dropping a set.

It was a third title of the season for the 19-year-old Spaniard, following wins in Buenos Aires and Indian Wells.

Both Swiatek and Alcaraz have been suffering from injury in recent weeks but have returned to fitness and form as

they build up to the French Open at Roland Garros next month, where the Pole will be defending her title.

Swiatek was playing her first tournament since recovering from a rib injury that forced her to miss the Billie Jean King Cup qualifiers and Miami Open.

She is the first player to win back-to-back Stuttgart titles since Angelique Kerber in 2015 and 2016, with Sabalenka suffering her third successive defeat in the final.

It was the first time a women's world number one had faced the number two on clay since Serena Williams beat Maria Sharapova in the 2013 French Open final.

Alcaraz, meanwhile,

appeared so show no ill-effects from the hand and back problems that forced him to miss the Monte Carlo Masters last week.

With 14-time French Open champion Rafael Nadal out since January with a hip injury and world number one Novak Djokovic struggling with an elbow problem, Alcaraz will be among the key contenders when the tournament in Paris begins on 28 May.

In the men's doubles final in Barcelona, Great Britain's Neal Skupski and Dutch partner Wesley Koolhof were beaten by Argentine pair Maximo and Andres.

Gonzalez and Molteni won 4-6 7-6 (10-8) 10-4 to claim their

NIGERIA'S U-17 team has been sighted arriving at Algeria's international airport ahead of their U-17 Africa Cup Of Nations 2023 campaign.

Soccernet Nigeria said that, the Nigeria Football Federation's social media page posted a video of the Golden Eaglets pulling their luggage on a cart as they arrived in the nation as they pursue their third AFCON title.

The tournament's Group B is seeded to include South Africa, Zambia, Morocco, and Ndaka Ugbade's lads. However, he has decided on naming twenty-six players for the tournament following a rigorous period of training and friendly matches at the NFF/FIFA Goal Project's Abuja headquarters.

The Eaglets participated in 12 friendlies, winning 11 of them, drawing one, and scoring an astounding total of 66 goals while also giving up 14 goals.

Then, on Sunday night, he marched his strongest legs to Constantine, Algeria, to start the tournament's last-minute preparations.

On Sunday at the Stade Mohamed Hamlaoui, the U-17 team will face Zambia in their first game before moving on to

NPFL: Sunshine Stars keep Super Six hopes alive

SUNSHINE Stars FC of Akure on Sunday won their Group B Match Day 15 fixture in the 2022/2023 Nigeria Professional Football League (NPFL) by beating Lobi Stars of Makurdi 1-0.

Tribune Online said that,

the match played at the Ondo course for the Super Six. This State Sports Complex in Akure game has brought us back to saw forward David Onovo contention.

heading home from a corner-kick in the 23rd minute. "We still have four more games to go, three away and one at home. We believe all efforts by the home team to seriously in the dream for the increase the tally were Super Six and we shall give frustrated by the visitors in the everything to make sure we fiercely-contested encounter. are there.

Sunshine Stars had drawn 1-1 with Wikki Tourists FC in leading our group and for them Bauchi on match day 10, and to top the table for weeks is not Doma United in Akure on match a joke. They are a very strong day 11, before their last draw side and they understand how to play the game.

They, however, still have a "We are happy that we were game at hand against Rivers able to win against them. United on match day 12 and Today's game is quite different had lost match day 14 away to from the last matches.

Abia Warriors. "It means we are improving the team's Head Coach, Edith and we will continue to Agoye, during a post-match improve," Agoye said.

interview, said the pursuit of a Lobi Stars' Chief Coach, Super Six ticket was still on Muhammed Babaganaru, said course with the victory. it was a good outing for his Agoye, who described the team, especially with his encounter with Lobi as a players showing good difficult one, said it felt good to character.

win the match. "We are still on course as far "It was not an easy match for as the Super Six is concerned. us in all aspects. This is our first "Our position is not bad on win in the second round of the the log. We will keep on league. It's a very good one, in working hard," Babaganaru that the players put everything said.

into the game to get the Sunshine Stars are fifth on maximum points. the log with 21 points from 14 "The most important thing is matches, while Lobi Stars have the three points and we are 26 points from 15 matches to happy with it. We are still on lead the log.

Dusan Lajovic won the Srpska Open with a three-set win over world number six Andrey Rublev.

The Serb world number 70, who beat Novak Djokovic in the quarter-finals, won 6-3 4-6 6-4 to claim just his second career title.

"Honestly it was probably the toughest match I have had in the past six months. I felt drained," said the 32-year-old, whose first title was the Croatia Open in 2019.

"The last time I was in a final was four years ago and I have been through a lot since then, lots of ups and downs.

"But on the other side I still believed in myself, even though I did not have the best last year. This victory means a lot."

Eaglets land Algeria ahead of U-17 AFCON campaign

face South Africa and Morocco will earn a spot in the African team's roster for the FIFA U17 World Cup finals later this year.

The top four teams in Algeria



The FIFA U-17 World Cup has been won by the Golden Eaglets five times



Iga Swiatek is a three-time Grand Slam champion while Carlos Alcaraz won his first Grand Slam title at the 2022 US Open



Sunshine Stars

Sports



Dangote

Dangote set to acquire French Football Club Valenciennes FC

Valenciennes FC, a French football club, founded in 1913, is reportedly close to being acquired by Africa's richest man, Aliko Dangote. According to sources monitored by THEWILL, the Nigerian billionaire is expected to initially purchase the 60% stake held by the Eddy Zdziech family and could later take full control of the club. The deal would mark Dangote's first foray into European football ownership, after

failed attempts to acquire Arsenal in the past. Valenciennes FC has spent 40 seasons in Ligue 1 and 36 seasons in Ligue 2 but has never won the first division. The club has, however, won Ligue 2 twice and the Championnat National and the Championnat de France amateur in 2005 and 1998, respectively. Notable former players of the club include Cameroon's Roger Milla, Argentina's Jorge Burruchaga, and France's Jean-Pierre Papin.

Currently, Valenciennes are 15th in the Ligue 2 table, with six games left in the season, and would be hoping to retain their Ligue 2 status. An acquisition by Dangote could potentially take the club to the next level. The financial injection that will follow can see them signing top players and rejuvenating the team. However, the primary focus would be on maintaining their current position in the league.

Billionaire Mmobuosi Super Cup Tournament announced with record-breaking prizes

Billionaire and football enthusiast, Dozy Mmobuosi, is shaking up the Nigerian Premier Football League (NPFL) with an expanded football tournament.

The tournament will be called the Dozy Mmobuosi Super Cup Football Tournament and will feature 12 top teams from the league. The total prize pool for the event is a record-breaking N1.2 billion, with the winning

team taking home N1 billion and the runners-up receiving N200 million.

THEWILL recalls that the Dozy Mmobuosi Foundation organised an inaugural preseason Super Cup for the NPFL, which involved Shooting Stars, Enugu Rangers, Enyimba and the newly promoted Bendel Insurance. Shooting Stars took home the unprecedented N100m prize money for the

competition. Mmobuosi's aim is to increase the level of football in Nigeria by allowing teams to invest more resources in players, facilities, and infrastructure. This, in turn, will attract top talent to the league, and enhance the overall standard of football in the country. The Dozy Mmobuosi Foundation, in partnership with the NPFL, will organise the Mmobuosi's influence in

In a groundbreaking development for African eSports, Lagos has been chosen as the host city for the first official EASPORTS FIFA23 championship on the continent.

The offline invitational gaming event will see 32 players from across Nigeria and neighbouring West African countries battle it out for the grand prize on May 13. Abimbola Ilo, Managing Director of Integral, the organisers of the championship, expressed his excitement about the opportunity to bring such an incredible gaming experience to Nigeria. "We have seen the

Lagos to host first EASPORTS FIFA23 championship

massive growth of gaming of esports on the in Africa and the FIFA23 continent. With esports title in particular," he said. becoming increasingly popular across Africa, this event is expected to draw a lot of attention from gamers and football fans alike. The knock-out tournament before the main event will only add to the excitement with the potential to attract and inspire a new generation of gamers to eSports in Nigeria and on the continent as a whole.

Jabeur withdraws from Madrid Open putting Garros appearance in doubt

Ons Jabeur has been forced to withdraw from the Madrid Open due to a calf injury, which deals a big blow to her preparations for the upcoming Roland Garros. The Tunisian tennis star disclosed the news on social media, stating that medical exams revealed a



Jabeur

small tear in her calf and she needs more time to recover. This comes after she had to pull out of her WTA Stuttgart semi-final against Iga Swiatek over the weekend due to the same injury. Jabeur expressed her disappointment at not being able to defend her title this year, opt for a tournament at the WTA 250 level or announce that I won't be able to compete and defend my title this year. I puts her participation in everyone and the tournament a great event and look forward to coming back next year." Jabeur added.

struggled with injuries this year, having missed both the Qatar Open and Dubai Tennis Championships with a health issue that required minor surgery. Jabeur's only remaining opportunity to prepare for the French Open is the Italian Open, which starts on May 8. She could also defend her title this year, opt for a tournament at the WTA 250 level or announce that I won't be able to compete and defend my title this year. I puts her participation in everyone and the tournament a great event and look forward to coming back next year." Jabeur added.





Quest



writer

DR. YUSUF ABDULLAHI YUSUF

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

Role of Muslim trader before, 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, commands, 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 businessmen 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)

In similar vein, Rufa'ata Bn Rafi' 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. (Tirmidhy, 1210).

Second: Keeping away from suspicions.

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", (Tirmidhy, 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 name, and he said: "O business people, selling is attended by idle talk and swearing, so mix it with charity". (Abu Dawood, 3326)

To be continued next week