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Sunday Standard



TRUTH EXALTS A NATION

FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1972

VOL. 13 NO. 798

SUNDAY, May 7, 2023

N250

e-mail:nigeriastandarddailynewspaper@yahoo.com



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Nigerians are currently living in constant fear of the unknown sequel to renewed senseless attacks callously unleashed on innocent rural communities. This reemerging unfortunate development has sent shivers down the spines of many of such victims and most rural populace in these affected communities of the state. As it is, many vulnerable citizens are gradually losing hope that the government which is saddled with the responsibility of protecting their lives and property are not living up to their expectations. EZEKIEL DONTINNA writes.



**King
Charles:
Monarch
in a
changing
time**

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Sudan crisis: Nigeria citizens' evacuation scuffle

SINCE April 15th, 2023, Sudan has been embroiled in a needless turmoil. This is as a result of how the conspicuous mêlée for the soul of the country has stood between the two protuberant security chiefs, the Army Chief, General Abdul Fatah Burhan and the Commander of the Rapid Support Forces, (RSF), Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo.

RECALL that the two generals ousted the Omar Al-Bashir's government in 2019 but had struggled to find common grounds to govern without anything concrete to show for it.

THINGS ultimately turned-out shoddier after the government indicated interest to integrate members of the Rapid Support Group into the nation's security body. While the Army Chief, General Burhan saw it as a measure to gain supremacy, the commander of the Rapid Support Force, General Dagalo on the other hand saw it as a ploy to overwhelm his security outfit and render it pragmatically subservient.

EXPRESSING his concern, the Secretary General of the United Nations, Antonio Guterres told reporters in Kenya that the fighting in Sudan needs to stop now, before more people die and the conflict becomes a regional one. Sad enough, the fighting in the country has resulted in the death of over 436 civilians and 2,175 others injured.

IT is in the midst of this ill-fated catastrophe that many countries like Britain, United States, France, Germany, Italy, Russia, Sweden and Egypt amongst others have continued to evacuate their citizens back home to safety. Just like other countries of the world, Nigeria also evacuated its citizens after it became apparent that the war is yet to abate.

AS soon as efforts commenced however, some Nigerians started accusing officials of the nation's embassy of discrimination against the South East ethnic group. In a viral video, a group of Igbo ethnic stock allegedly claimed that the Nigerian authorities evacuated stranded Nigerians in the war torn Sudan by state of origin and eventually left the Igbos behind.

THEIR Spokesman in the viral video who spoke in Igbo further claimed that they were asked to come down from the buses that conveyed other ethnic groups, an allegation subsequently debunked by authorities back home. First and foremost, however, we wish to condemn in totality the unnecessary fighting in Sudan which has claimed several lives since it started weeks back. More so, it has become glaring that the fighting in Sudan is necessitated by selfish reasons and fallacious misadventure to the detriment of its citizenry.

HOWEVER, Nigeria's government must be commended for always evacuating its citizens whenever the need arises around the countries of the world. These gestures have in most recent times indicated the value the present President Mohammad Buhari's administration places on the lives of its citizens in diaspora.

THOUGH this is the first time the issue of discrimination during such evacuations is springing up, these allegations call for thorough investigations by authority concerned. It should also be noted that anything short of this will lead to the polarization of this nation along ethnic lines which would be very detrimental to our corporate existence as an indivisible country. Beyond this, Nigerians must be cautioned against uttering unguarded statements without providing basic facts as this would not auger well for our collective interest as a nation.

Ekweremadu sentenced to 10 years imprisonment in UK

Former Nigerian Deputy Senate President, Senator Ike Ekweremadu, has been sentenced to nine years and eight months in prison in the United Kingdom for being what the judge described as, the "driving force" in a plot to harvest a kidney for his sick daughter from a young Nigerian boy he had

trafficked to London in March, 2022.

Ekweremadu, together with his wife, Beatrice, aged 56, and Dr Obinna Obeta, aged 51, were found guilty by an Old Bailey jury in March. It was the first organ trafficking conviction under the Modern Slavery Act of the United Kingdom.

The court found them guilty of conspiring to bring a 21-year-old Lagos street trader to London's Royal Free Hospital, Renal Department, as a potential kidney donor for Ekweremadu's daughter Sonia, who had been battling kidney problems.

Justice Jeremy Johnson, while sentencing the three Nigerians, said they all played a part in a "despicable trade", adding: "The harvesting of human organs is a form of slavery. It treats human beings and their bodies as commodities to be bought and sold."

The judge noted that Ike Ekweremadu was a member of the Nigerian Senate when it outlawed organ trafficking.

Referring to the allegation of bribing a medical secretary at the Royal Free, Justice Johnson said: "You were involved in the corruption of a member of hospital staff." He said Ekweremadu must serve two-thirds of his sentence in prison and the remainder released under licence.

Nigeria's Senate and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) had urged the judge to show clemency to Ekweremadu. But the court was adamant.

Beatrice Ekweremadu, the senator's wife, was sentenced to four years and six months, with half of the jail term to be spent in custody. Dr. Obeta, who "helped organise the organ harvesting plot after receiving a kidney transplant at the Royal Free in July 2021 from another Nigerian, got a higher jail sentence — 10 years — two-thirds of which must be served in prison.

The attempted transplant by the Ekweremadus was foiled by the hospital in March 2022 after it was discovered when the male victim, referred to as C in the court (because the identity of victims of modern slavery is protected) reported to the police in May, 2022, fearing for his life.

In his remarks, the prosecutor, Hugh Davies KC, said: "Kidney donation for reward is a substantial, internationally prohibited commercial industry that exploits economically vulnerable individuals."

Meanwhile, speaking to the BBC's Simi Joloaso, Ekweremadu's daughter, Sonia, said she was in shock when the police in the UK came to arrest her and her parents: "My brother and sisters were at home when the doorbell rang. We thought it was our parents but it was rather the police that showed up. My first reaction was shock."



Ekweremadu and wife

'Declare national emergency on violence against healthcare workers'

THE World Medical Association (WMA) President, Dr. Osahon Enabulele, has called on the Federal Government and managers of health institutions in Nigeria to declare an emergency on the rising tide of violence against healthcare workers in Nigeria.

The WMA President made the call while delivering a Guest Lecture at the opening ceremony of the 63rd Annual General Conference and Delegates Meeting of the Nigerian Medical Association (NMA) held recently at the Catholic Event Centre, Jalingo, Taraba State.

In his lecture titled, 'Violence Against Healthcare Workers in Nigeria: The Way Forward', the WMA president decried the rising cases of violence against healthcare workers in Nigeria, which he put at a prevalence of 10-60 per cent compared to the global prevalence of 8-38 per cent.

Enabulele expressed great worry that despite the tremendous efforts being made by physicians and other health professionals to deliver health care services to the people, they were still being violently assaulted in their workplaces, particularly in the emergency care units, primary care clinics, wards and psychiatric units of hospitals in Nigeria.

While identifying verbal abuse, physical assault and kidnapping as common forms of violence against healthcare workers, he affirmed that the perpetrators of violence against healthcare workers were mostly the relatives of patients, patients themselves, co-workers and kidnappers.

While expressing dismay at the absence of a violence prevention protocol in most healthcare facilities in Nigeria, the WMA President identified issues of long waiting time, increased workload and inadequate supply of equipment, poor communication and negative attitude by some health workers, patient's history of violent behaviour and dissatisfaction with the care given as some of

the factors responsible for the rising cases of violence against healthcare workers.

In his recommendations on how to stem the tide of violence in the health sector, Enabulele called on the government at all levels to declare it as an emergency and adopt a zero-tolerance policy on violence in the health sector.

While calling on governments to move speedily towards the attainment of Universal Health Coverage, he charged them to address the Social Determinants of Health and resolve all existing health inequities. He equally called on governments to improve the funding of the health system as well as their investments in the well being, security, safety and working conditions of physicians and other health professionals.


He implored governments, law enforcement agencies, health institutions and health professional associations like the NMA to always ensure that every case of violence against a healthcare worker is prosecuted to its logical conclusion.

He urged the managers of health institutions to improve the security architecture in their health facilities, develop violence prevention protocols, enhance patient experience and build the capacity of their health personnel, amongst other suggested measures.


Declaring the conference open, Governor Darius Dickson Ishaku thanked the NMA for hosting the conference in Taraba State. He informed participants of his government's efforts to advance healthcare delivery in the state.

While urging physicians and other healthcare workers to remain faithful to their duties, he commended them for their contributions to healthcare delivery and national development.

In his welcome address, the President of NMA, Dr. Uche Ojinmah, welcomed participants and invited guests to the opening ceremony and expressed delight at its hosting by the Taraba State branch of the association.



With
**Katdapba
Y. Gobum
On Sunday**



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"All the bills are ones that can engender development as well as provide jobs for hundreds of thousands of young people in Nigeria. If reducing employment is anything to go by, Rt Hon Yusuf Adamu Gagdi has become a recurring decimal in most families having taken off their children and given them jobs in as many organizations as have been possible. This is not to forget the numerous empowerment schemes tailored towards helping people in various fields that could set beneficiaries on the path of profitability and sustenance".

IT is no longer news that Rt Hon Yusuf Adamu Gagdi, House Committee Chairman on Navy has joined the fray to become the Speaker, House of Representatives for the 10th Assembly. He joins the race with several other aspirants to slug it out for the position in June 2023 when the House will be inaugurated.

Since he was re-elected for a second term to represent Pankshin/Kanke/Kanam Federal Constituency during the February 25, 2023 National Assembly election; after which his constituents gave him the nod to go for the coveted office, he has left no one in doubt of his intentions.

It could be recalled that as soon as campaigns were rounded for the elections, the confidence that exuded from his camp was palpable, no wonder, the election that was being awaited was seen as fait accompli. Everything fell into place, as he convincingly won the contest; thus assuring his constituents that it was proper to pursue other higher interests.

It will be recalled that when Gagdi debuted in 2019, into the national parliament, he 'quickly got involved in the internal politics at the time, aligned with the "progressives" camp and eventually became the chairman of Navy Committee, a committee ordinarily would not be given to a first timer. He did not disappoint the House; neither did he fail on the home front, as he gave a good account of his capability while he served'.

As soon as the consultations started, it was common knowledge that, he was one whose political adroitness would come to play in several ways. First, he needed the buy-in of a number of stakeholders both in the All Progressives Congress (APC), and in the other parties whose members were going to the National Assembly. The latest consultative visit was on Friday, May 5, 2023 to Governor Mohammed Badaru Abubakar of Jigawa State, where he had gone to share with him his thoughts about the aspiration for the speakership.

His visit to the President on April 30, 2023 was another master stroke and a show of a rounded approach to reaching out to all those who matter. If anything, it was a display of the people's representative's determination to achieve his goal.

The manner with which he undertook to visit state governors and other party leaders in states was instructive of a politician whose capacity at selling his candidature and how he has been able bring quality into the advocacy can be described as simply awesome in many respects.

Such approach shows the finest stuff with which he is imbued with over the years running; and it will be long as there are no signs of slowing down soon. As a result of

Speakership: The soaring notches of Gagdi



Gagdi

his capacity to seek views and meet with personalities that matter either alone or in group, those he has met are indeed in awe of the tremendous quality of his commitment to the Nigerian project. Above all, he strongly brings to the struggle the ever present quality of commitment and industry associated with patriotic Nigerian youth.

It is what is now counting in his favour; for which he has already received accolades and several recommendations from the high and low in most parts of Nigeria. We have maintained, and it is not for fun, he is a history maker. For his industry and commitment and even more, he is the first legislator in the history of democracy in Nigeria to have had six of his private bills assented to by Mr. President.

All the bills are ones that can engender development as well as provide jobs for hundreds of thousands of young people in Nigeria. If reducing employment is anything to go by, Rt Hon Yusuf Adamu Gagdi has become a recurring decimal in most families having taken off their children and given them jobs in as many organizations as have been possible. This is not to forget the numerous empowerment schemes tailored towards helping people in various fields that could set beneficiaries on the path of profitability and sustenance.

Already, Rt Hon Yusuf Adamu Gagdi has made a promise: I want to be a Speaker for the Nigerian people. I don't want to be a regional Speaker. God willing I will be a Speaker for the Nigerian people irrespective of tribe, religion. I will be saying that my primary responsibility is to add value to the people of the country.

'The qualities that I will expect from the next Speaker are capacity, sincerity, honesty and commitment. I want to see a just Speaker, one that will protect the interest of the people of all the geopolitical formations in Nigeria irrespective of population and what have you'.

Such capacity and credibility can only be exhibited by one who knows his onions and is ready to give more of such service to the nation for a long time to come. It can be safely said that one of the reasons he got the nod for his second term is the amount of work he did for Pankshin/Kanke/Kanam Federal Constituency. It can be argued that no other representative has exhibited commitment in the provision of quality service as he has done in the last four years. Again, that in itself is another record being set by him for giving a good account of his capacity.

Throughout the length and breadth of the communities that make the federal constituency, a compendium of what is been executed are, without doubt eye-popping as they convey in detail the quality of representation they have been given by the man who, today is the top contender of the office of Speaker.

Having been close to the power block in the House in the last four years; for which he has given a good account of that relationship. It is safe to conclude that the ropes are familiar to him and would serve him well should he be given the levers of power by his colleagues in about 40 days to come. As things stand, Gagdi stands on the threshold as the next good thing to happen, despite mounting pressures by the Fred Agbedi's Greater Majority, which is insisting on contesting the positions of Speaker and Deputy Speaker by

opposition parties.

Realizing his reach, groups, individuals and civil society organizations have spoken variously why Gagdi is suitable for the position. There are also several groups or caucuses which have emerged in the House since the general elections were concluded in February 2023 daily consulting to arrive at satisfying all the sensibilities of the moment; which seek to unite all parts of the country together.

Interestingly, some of his colleagues have spoken widely about his capacity for the position. David Umar who will represent Kachia/Kagarko in Kaduna State in the 10th Assembly understands the trajectory of the man who is gunning to become Nigeria's number four citizen. Umar was quoted as saying: Nigeria's young people represented the present and future Nigeria, but noted that the demographics of political leadership in the country do not represent this reality.

He asked further: What is the part of the youth in the political leadership calculation? Where is the place of the youth in our democracy? Is it only as legislative and media aides?'

The answer is made available by Hon David Umar almost immediately in favour of the top contender: Experience is not about years spent in parliament without results; it is about having the knowledge of how to use your office to better the lives of Nigerians as Gagdi has done'.

But above all, it is being argued that there are some lawmakers who were more experienced than Gagdi in parliamentary business, because he was going for his second term was not tenable. It is on record that he has surpassed those lawmakers in legislative functions in just four years of representation. What better evidence could there be other than the enormous capacity he has displayed with abundant results to boot in the House?

Gagdi's intentions if he wins the race are well documented in a note he aptly titled: One Nation, Forward Together, he offers copiously what he wants to achieve: For the tenth National Assembly, beyond considerations and bills, motions and resolutions, our highest obligation will be to provide the arena necessary for the impassioned yet civil debates and constructive engagements required to answer this fundamental question'. That, 'for us in Nigeria, the great unresolved question that continues to unsettle our republic that stands in the way of us reaching for the stars, is this-what does it mean to be a Nigerian?'

As recent as April 28, 2023, while inviting critical stakeholders and supporters to official campaign launch for the office of Speaker of the House of

Representatives which was held yesterday at the Congress Hall, Transcorp Hilton, Abuja, Gagdi had stated: 'The legislature has a strategic role in ensuring the success of our democracy. If we live up to this responsibility, we will retain the faith and confidence of Nigerian people in the democratic project, and we will have their support to embark on critical, long overdue reforms to the politics, governance and structure of our country. In this election as Speaker, I believe that my personal and political history, legislative experience, and achievements in office put me in good stead to meet and exceed the Nigerian people's high expectations for this 10th House of Representatives.'

With the array of guests at the May 6, 2023 (yesterday's event), which had Prince Dapo Abiodun, Governor of Ogun State as special guest, it is instructive to state that a statement was made. The manifesto he presented speaks against the backdrop of a man who is well prepared to lead his colleagues during one of the most challenging periods of the country's political history. Certainly as it has been stated, if 'we must have a leadership that recognizes the importance of the moment'; such will 'rise to the occasion as it demands'.

Even though the North Central zone has not yet been officially given the nod to produce the Speaker, however, the point has been canvassed: It is the only zone which had tasted the speakership position for just three months (October to December 1983). The fact that the All Progressives Congress was yet to be decided is not enough to stop aspirants from gaining the support of the members and indeed of Nigerians.

The North Central zone is indeed an asset in more ways than one for the ruling party. In the last eight years, the states have produced governors twice; and therefore nothing can be any better than to compensate the zone with a plum office as that of the Speaker of the House of Representatives. Should it be zoned to North Central zone, the two major members that would slug it out are Ahmed Idris Wase and Yusuf Adamu Gagdi, who are both from Plateau State.

The names of the other gladiators have received mention variously. One thing is certain; for which he wants Nigerians to know: The tenth House of Representatives can be the engine room of innovation and transformative governance. It can be a legislature that reflects the best possibilities of nationhood, a place where men and women who believe in the worthy cause of Nigeria can, with character and courage, wisdom and humility confront our most significant national challenges'.



The Nigerian worker

THEY say he/she is the engine room of governance. The person that runs the machinery. But the remuneration is not commensurate to his/her sweat.

"My day begins as early as 4:00 am and ends as late as 11:00 pm. To beat the heavy traffic in Lagos, I have to leave home by 5:00 am to arrive my office before 7:30 am. This means I eat most of my meals out. It makes no sense to eat as early as 4 or around 5:00 am.

"The first thing I do when I arrive office is to order for moi moi or beans. By 1:00 pm, I order for lunch. And on my way home in the bus, I sometimes eat something light from hawkers along the way. I close by 4:30pm but reach home most times as late as 8:00pm. What can I possibly cook at that hour? So, I either take tea or just take my bath and go to sleep. At the end of the month, I collect my living wage. I call it that because I use it to settle debt and collect new ones, putting aside just enough for transportation and feeding." That is the lifestyle of most workers in Lagos.

About 6 years ago, we were in Lagos. Due to the flood that made most roads inaccessible, we arrived Lagos around 2:00 am. For security reasons, we were advised to remain inside the bus in the park until it was dawn. To my greatest surprise, as the hour clocked 4:00 am, traffic was becoming busy. People were moving around as if it was 8:00 am.

We took courage, and walked the little distance to get a bus. It beat my imagination when I noticed a mother with her son of about 8 or 9 years already dressed in school uniform, walking briskly hand in hand and talking excitedly. My sister who was a regular visitor to Lagos told me that the mother may be on her way to her shop where the 2 of them would take their breakfast. Around 6:30am, her son's school bus would come for him and also drop him off from school at the shop. If he has a lesson teacher, it is in the shop that he would be taught and he would do his homework there too. And due to traffic, they would likely arrive home around 8pm, most likely, eating food on their way back home too. Life of a working parent.

Mary is one of the people that suffered before she was gainfully employed. She said at first, she wanted to do everything right, so she never qualified. It was either she was too old or she didn't have the experience. If not for her friends who advised her to reduce her age, she would

still be in the Labour Market.

So many people fall under this category. For some reasons, most companies are looking for workers within the age range of 25 and 30 years. With at least 5 years of experience. If they are not engaged, where would they get the experience from? Thanks to such conditions, Nigeria today has so many liars in the system who have falsified their years to fit into the system.

In most LGCs, most offices are often empty during farming season. Who will blame the workers since in some states, the third tier of government staff are only paid half their salaries. "If I don't farm, I will steal", a local government staff told me when I accused him of truancy. He is a senior staff whose salary is just about #34,000.

We have seen and heard of government officials who import women from Ethiopia just to engage in sexual immorality. Can you imagine how much was spent on them? Transportation, hotel, feeding, shopping, payment for service rendered (and for operating outside their country). They spend money with reckless abundance but will not channel it to the right place. They forget God's word: Ill gotten money does not pay.

Unfortunately, some of these people do nothing but sign here and there. They use the machinery of governance-civil servants to think for them, write for them, formulate policies for them, lie for them, front for them and even take the punch for them. They see no reason to increase their emoluments because they see them as means to an end, second class citizens.

Worst still is the case of those who die in the line of duty. Some of the widows have had to look elsewhere for help because some vultures who think they won't die, have refused to pay them their husband's entitlement. One of them said after years of waiting, she had to succumb when she was told to forfeit a chunk of her husband's entitlement if she wanted them to pay the money. How hard is the heart of some people?

Please, the Nigerian worker deserves a better deal. Reduce the cost of governance, make political offices unattractive by reducing their allowances and use the money to better the lives of workers.

"We have seen and heard of government officials who import women from Ethiopia just to engage in sexual immorality. Can you imagine how much was spent on them? Transportation, hotel, feeding, shopping, payment for service rendered (and for operating outside their country). They spend money with reckless abundance but will not channel it to the right place. They forget God's word: Ill gotten money does not pay. Unfortunately, some of these people do nothing but sign here and there. They use the machinery of governance-civil servants to think for them, write for them, formulate policies for them, lie for them, front for them and even take the punch for them. They see no reason to increase their emoluments because they see them as means to an end, second class citizens".

NEWS

Company to commence organic fertilizer production

From **TERESE TUHWA, Makurdi**

A Makurdi based Chinese owned agro allied company, Pure Biotech company Limited that is into production of ethanol used by pharmaceutical companies and alcoholic beverages says it will soon commence production of organic fertilizer.

Corporate Communication and Public Relations Manager of the company, Mr. Stephen Numbeve who made this known to journalists in Makurdi during a press briefing recently, said following improvement on their plant as a result of an accidental discharge of untreated effluent with sludge from the company into River Benue which led to the sealing off of the company for two weeks, the plant was well positioned for maximum productivity.

According to Numbeve, the company has acquired land for the establishment of a school with modern learning facilities, adding that the company has also sunk additional two boreholes in addition to the one earlier sunk in the area as part of its corporate social responsibility.

While dispelling the rumour that the company was owned by Governor Samuel Ortom, the Corporate Communication and Public Relations Manager maintained that the company has a vision to become a leading environmental friendly company in Benue State and North Central Nigeria.

He said the plant has completed environmental impact assessment (EIA) process duly approved and are awaiting EIS certification by Federal Ministry of Environment.

Mr. Numbeve added that the company has procured and installed a state of the art effluent treatment plant worth over #7.5 billion with a view to pre-treating, recycling and re-using by products to avoid waste.

Fielding questions from news men about losses that the company incurred during its two weeks shutdown, he said the company incurred unquantifiable losses amounting to millions of naira.

He said there was a functional Effluent



Bello

Treatment Plant (ETP) already installed but management was not given an opportunity to conduct the NESREA team round the plant during its visit for an on the spot assessment, a

development that led to the two weeks sealing off of the company.

It will be recalled that NESREA had sealed the company for a period of two weeks for not meeting safety

PSIRS generates #7,000,000,000 in 3 months

BY **EZEKIEL DONTINNA**

PLATEAU State Internally Generated Revenue Service (PSIRS), has, through its renewed strategies to meet target for the year, generated over 7 billion Naira (#7,000,000,000) in just three months for the state.

The Executive Chairman of the board, Mr. Arlat Dashe, disclosed this recently at the quarterly press briefing organised by the board at the conference hall of the Revenue House in Jos, the Plateau State capital.

The chairman said there was a shortfall from over twenty billion naira (#20 billion) revenue generated in 2021 to sixteen billion naira (#16b) last year due to some challenges beyond their control, forcing the Service to generate this low against the twenty billion Naira (#20b) target for the year 2022.

He said, "the seven billion Naira (#7b) realised from January to March this year was partly as a result of the arrears collected for the month of December 2022 and the renewed strategies by staff of the Service to meet the over twenty-six billion Naira (#26b) target for this year.

"It was for this reason that we have embarked on training and retraining of our staff who are ever ready to learn new tax policies and we are optimistic that we will realize the #26b target of the year with more strategy and awareness to the citizens of the state on the importance of paying tax.

"We are all working

toward ensuring that all revenues are collected in the state by deploying new technology with the Plateau Business Unions and other stakeholders to ensure tax payers pay their tax comfortably through their unions based on their income", Arlat stated.

The Chairman, however, appealed to the journalists in the state to be critical stakeholders as tax ambassadors in assisting the service in creating awareness among the citizens on the need to pay tax because Plateau State has a lot of potentials that were yet to be harnessed and utilized.

He commended Governor Simon Bako Lalong for the support given to the service even when much was not realised in 2022 due to challenges being faced, but promised to ensure the shortfall would be recovered optimally.

There were questions and answers session and the Chairman responded satisfactorily.



Dashe

POLITICS

Re-examine ethnicity scourge, zoning - Kwande

By EZEKIEL DONTINNA

NIGERIA'S 1st Republic Ambassador, Ambr. Yahaya Kwande, has called on the present Nigeria's political class in the country to re-examine the problem of ethnic differences and elect competent leaders who have national and not individualistic interests for us to forge ahead.

He made the call recently while on a live programme, "Tuesday Live" of the Nigeria Television Authority (NTA) baring his mind on some national issues on the topic: "Politics Without Bitterness." He was a guest with elder statesmen like Alh. Tanko Yakase and Oba Samuel Olukemi Falaye.

The Ambassador said, "I want to call on Nigerians especially the political class to throw away their differences and re-examine this problem of ethnic sentiments and elect leaders who are selfless for us to forge ahead as a people and as a country.

"This categorisation of ethnic groups (Hausa/Fulani, Igbo and Yoruba) as the major tribes in Nigeria must be re-examined. Who told you that it is only the Hausa/Fulanis that are in the North? Who also told you that only the Igbo speaking people live in the land and so also the Yorubas?

"We have other tribes in all the three political language extractions and should be considered as such to address



Kwande

this ethnic sentiment when zoning the seat of a President so that we will have equal representation and not to be restricted to the three major tribes", he enthused.

Kwande added that there were competent and selfless individuals in all the 6 geopolitical zones who are not greedy and have national interest that could move Nigeria to greatness, but pundits would not allow it. That was why Nigeria could not achieve politics without bitterness.

On his part, elder statesman, Alh. Tanko Yakase, said, Nigerians should de-

politics and concentrate on national interest and not individual interest or one day, we would not have a country called Nigeria again. This is because the politicians have commercialized politics and it has become a moneymaking venture.

Also, former presidential candidate in 1999 general elections, Chief (Oba) Samuel Olukemi Falaye, called for the restructuring of presidential system of government. He is suggesting a situation where senators would be visitors at meetings so that political positions in Nigeria would be less attractive.

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

PRINCE Shaibu Abubakar Audu, one of the aspirants of the All Progressives Congress in the direct primary election held in Kogi State on April 14, 2023, has withdrawn the lawsuit he instituted against the party and the winner of the primary, Usman Ododo.

Audu, son of late former Governor Abubakar Audu, said his decision to withdraw the case was in the interest of the party.

He spoke on recently when he paid a courtesy visit on Governor Yahaya Bello. He said this just as the immediate past Executive Director of the Rural Electrification Agency and governorship aspirant on the platform of the APC, Sanusi Ohiare, also declared "unalloyed support" for Ododo recently.

The duo had initially protested the outcome of the primaries along with Senator Smart Adeyemi, but with their full support for the candidate currently, they might have indicated that Adeyemi is on his own.

Audu pledged his support for the success of Ododo, the party's candidate, in the forthcoming elections, saying that his supporters would also work for his victory.

He commended Governor Yahaya Bello for his ingenuity and leadership in galvanising the party structure for unprecedented success in Kogi State and assured the

Embittered aspirant withdraws suit against APC flagbearer



Adamu

governor that their collective efforts would guarantee Ododo's victory.

Governor Bello, in turn, commended Shaibu Audu for his sportsmanship and emphasized that the APC in Kogi State had always been united, which had been the reason for the party's electoral success in the state. He added that his administration had gained the trust of Kogi residents, adding that there would be no need to switch allegiance.

The governor urged Shaibu and other former aspirants to come together with the party's leadership and support its candidate for a successful outcome in the next elections.

During his brief remarks, the APC gubernatorial candidate, Ododo Ahmed Usman, expressed his confidence in the party's unity.

He acknowledged the solid foundation laid by the current administration, which was built on unity across ethnic

and religious lines, while assuring that his administration, when elected, would be all-inclusive. The immediate past Executive Director of the Rural Electrification Agency and governorship aspirant on the platform of the All Progressives Congress, Dr Sanusi Ohiare, declared his "unalloyed support" for the governorship candidate when Ododo paid a consultative visit to his father, Sen. Mohammed Ohiare in Abuja recently.

"For us, politics is not a do or die affair. Alh. Ododo has won the primary and I will give him my full support. My dad was one of the founding fathers of the APC. We won't do anything to jeopardize the chances of our own party," Ohiare said.

On his part, Senator Mohammed Ohiare assured the candidate of his support in the November 11 governorship poll, calling on all members of the party to give Ododo the needed support to emerge victorious.

Anti-party: Gombe APC expels lawmaker

From, WILLIE ATTAH, Gombe

THE All Progressive Congress in Gombe State has again expelled its senator, Bulus K Amos, representing Gombe South, from the party over gross misconduct against the party during the last general elections.

The party had last week handed down same expulsion notice to its senator representing Gombe Central and a two term former Governor of the State, Muhammad Danjuma Goje, over same offense of anti-party.

Chairman of the party in Senator BK Amos' ward in Balanga LGA, Mohammed Kaka said the ward executives, after deliberations and investigations, have therefore found him guilty for gross misconduct against the party during the last general elections and therefore expelled him completely out of the APC.

Mr. Kaka along with his ward executives, while addressing journalists in Bamam, said Senator BK Amos was called and suspended after explaining the allegations against him. He said the senator was also called earlier to come and defend himself over the anti-party activities leveled

against him but he failed to turn up. "This is the reason for our meeting today 2nd April, 2023 where we resolved to expel him from the party because he is not with us," they explained.

Also on hand to endorse the expulsion were the local government party executives led by its chairman, Ali Kachalla who added that Senator BK Amos failed to deliver all the seven polling units in front of his house including that of his unit during the presidential election and he never turned up.

"The other time he came, he said no one can expel him from the party, this is a big mistake because even the President is not above the law of the party", Mr Kachalla stated.

In a similar issue, the House of Representatives member for Yamaltu-Deba Federal Constituency, Gombe State, Inusa Ahmed Abubakar was also slammed the expulsion notice for gross misconduct against the party during the last general elections.

Chairman, Lubo/Diffa/Kinafa ward, Yamaltu-Deba Federal Constituency, Gombe State, Maina Ahmadu while briefing Journalists said, the Rep member betrayed the party by asking voters not to vote APC from top to

bottom during the last general elections.

"We called him some days ago and he confirmed to us that he did antiparty which is against the party. This is the reason why we called for this meeting to tell the world that he has been expelled from the party", Maina Ahmadu stated.

Endorsing the action of the Ward party executives' decision the Yamaltu-Deba

'180 minority members-elect' coalition to produce Speaker

AHEAD of the inauguration of the 10th National Assembly in June, some "180 members-elect" from opposition parties have formed a coalition to elect the next Speaker and the Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives.

The parties are: the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA), Social Democratic Party (SDP), Labour Party (LP), New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP), the African Democratic Congress (ADC) and the Young Peoples Party (YPP).

In a communique issued after their meeting held at Transcorp Hilton Hotel in Abuja on May 2, 2023, the "minority caucus" vowed to end eight-year "misrule" of

Local Government APC Chairman, Aliyu Samaila, said "instead of Inusa Ahmed Abubakar to come and defend himself after the allegations were levelled against him, he contracted a lawyer and our party is not concerned about any lawyer. We're just returning to him what he did to the party and that is to expell him".

the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC).

The communique was signed by the conveners including Fred Agbedi (PDP), Abdulmumin Jibrin (NNPP), Gaza Gbewi (SDP), Dennis Agbo (LP), Idris Salman (ADC), Agbodike Pascal (APGA), Chinwe Nnabuiife (YPP), amongst others.

They resolved as follows: "To contest the office of Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the 10th House of Representative of the National Assembly, that we have resolved to set up an eleven-man Committee to scout for a credible and acceptable candidate that would vie for those offices, and then actively seek the unification of Nigerians along ethno-religious lines. "The Greater Majority with more than 180 elected

members (being over 50% of the elected member) will remain one indivisible coalition during the 10th National Assembly, with the interest of the country as its driving force.

"That the greater Majority of the 10th National Assembly will be continually guided by the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, with the collective interest of Nigerians being its major concern.

"To assure Nigerians not to lose hope due to the country's current unpleasant situation, including the disunity plaguing the nation, which is the direct consequence of APC's misrule and that the Greater majority of the incoming 10th National assembly will remedy these problems as a matter of priority.

"The Great majority will continue to unify the coalition of opposition parties so that it can be an effective check on the ruling party in order to safeguard the rule of law.

In the just-concluded elections, the APC secured over 170 of the 360 seats in the green chamber, the highest by any party. The PDP came second with over 100 seats, LP with over 35 seats, the NNPP with about 20.

Many APC lawmakers have since indicated interest to emerge the next Speaker of the House. They include Benjamin Kalu, Ahmed Wase, Alhassan Ado-Dogwuwa, Yusuf Gagdi, Aliyu Betara, Tajudeen Abbas, Abdurraheem Olawuyi, Sani Jaji, Princess Onuoha, amongst others.

However, the APC has not made its decision on zoning for the leadership of the 10th National Assembly known.

SUNDAY POLITICS

The grand political betrayal in Gombe

Political language is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable. When George Orwell made that wisecrack, he could not have had Nigeria's modern-day politicians in mind, because the sage came and left before this country came into existence. Political language can be categorised into both body language and verbal communication, and so, political betrayal can be situated by Nigerian politicians who turn around to bite the fingers that once brought political godsons to stardom. [GARBA MUHAMMED](#) writes.

IT is no longer news that Nigeria's political landscape is replete with stories of political mentees who fell out with their mentors simply because they decided it was time to usurp the thrones that made them. It is more the norm now than the exception. This immorality can be traced to Nigeria's Second Republic when intrigues, backstabbing and crude betrayal played out in the election that brought the late President Shehu Usman Aliyu Shagari.

In Kwara state, betrayal reportedly played out between father and son. It reared its ugly monstrous head in Kano between Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso and his erstwhile deputy outgoing Governor Abdullahi Umar Ganduje. Kwankwaso seems to hold on to that political culture as he fought tooth and nail to install Abba Kabiru Yusuf who will succeed Ganduje on May 29, 2023. The fallout from the Kwankwaso-Ganduje brawl is what currently puts Kano state on the burner. Kano is very hot to the touch now. Though Kwara state is peaceful now, but it looks like Saraki is being forced to go on compulsory political holiday or retirement. There are lessons to be learnt in these whole macabre.

However, none of the betrayals, especially since 1999, can compare with the crude betrayal of Senator Danjuma Goje ongoing in Gombe state. It was 2003 when Goje had just ousted Abubakar Habu Hashidu's All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) to become the second elected governor of Gombe state on the platform of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). Among his first appointees was one unknown political quantity Inuwa Yahaya who served as his commissioner for finance for seven of Goje's eight years tenure.

In 2011, Inuwa Yahaya contested against Hassan Dankwambo for the PDP ticket and lost. Of all those who contested that primary election, only Inuwa Yahaya and Bayero Nafada challenged Danjuma Goje. For Nafada, it was understandable, but tongues wagged as Inuwa Yahaya had the temerity to challenge Goje given that Goje lifted Inuwa Yahaya from political obscurity, dusted and built him to political stardom.

This is despite the fact that virtually every Nigerian knows the story of Dankwambo's exploits as accountant general of the federation, specifically how he came top of President Olusegun Obasanjo's assessment of prospective candidates for the office before landing the job. It would have been foolhardy to overlook a shining star such as Dankwambo for anyone else and I'm sure that's why the PDP in



Yahaya

Gombe settled for him.

Despite these early signs, however, Goje let bygone be bygone and brought Inuwa Yahaya to APC in 2015. As a serving senator and founding member of the APC in the state, Goje, as the leader of the APC in the state, gave Inuwa Yahaya the APC platform to actualise his governorship ambition.

Goje went ahead to manage the post-primary election fallouts to ensure all aspirants rallied round Inuwa Yahaya for the rallies that took them to all 114 electoral wards in all the 11 local government areas of the state. Inuwa lost and Dankwambo became the only incumbent to survive the Buhari tsunami that swept across Northern Nigeria. Without making it too obvious, Dankwambo's reelection in the face of the Buhari waves more than confirms that Goje's 2011 choice of Dankwambo was right.

In 2019, with Dankwambo rounding off his constitutionally permitted two terms, Goje again fronted for Inuwa Yahaya to be governor despite stiff opposition from other deserving contestants who wanted the governorship seat. Again, Goje managed the fallouts and, this time, made sure Inuwa Yahaya and the APC coasted to victory across the entire the state. Inuwa Yahaya became governor.

It is said if you cannot build, don't destroy. For Inuwa Yahaya, he is not to build Goje, because Goje built him. So, what was

doable for Inuwa Yahaya was for him to just face governance squarely if he cannot show appreciation to Goje. Now as governor, it didn't take long for Inuwa Yahaya to mount his deification rostrum. Without holding back, Inuwa Yahaya decided it was time to mess up with the one who made him king.

Things came to a head when in 2021, the yan Kallare thugs (a scourge battled to the end by Dankwambo) allegedly attempted to prevent Goje from entering Gombe. In the ensuing melee, seven innocent people reportedly died and others were fatally injured. Shortly after, Inuwa Yahaya dislodged and dislocated fellow political godsons in his administration loyal to Goje.

Inuwa Yahaya succeeded in creating many political enemies for his master. Among such political godsons turned political foe Goje nurtured since 2015 from scratch to the green chambers of the National Assembly is Hon. Usman Bello Kumo. Kumo went as far as to challenge Goje in the senate contest under the PDP, but after he lost woefully and embarrassingly, he apologised to Goje and begged for forgiveness. As a tradition, he again holds political arms against him after securing his seat back in the House of Representatives.

Inuwa Yahaya allegedly hatched another plan to malign Goje again, but kissed the dust.



Goje

Recently, a plot was orchestrated by the band of Goje's political opponents, sadly those he mentored – to expel Goje from the APC, a party he passionately built and led to win at all levels in the state in 2019 and where he is now standing as the only senator re-elected on its podium.

It may surprise those who undermine and underestimate Goje's political forte, he won his re-election without campaigning or even visiting the state to avoid a repeat of the November 5, 2021, horrible and unfortunate incident where he was attacked by political thugs intent to stop him from entering the state.

It naturally hurts. This is a state where he was part of those who relentlessly secured its statehood from the then Bauchi state in 1996 during the military administration of General Sani Abacha. As the second civilian governor of the state, it was during his eight years of administration that the state really wore its desired face of a sovereign state – he built roads in all nooks and crannies, hospitals, a befitting stadium, Gombe State University, the airport that even those fighting him are now enjoying, central mosque, the CAN centre, and lots more.

It's also silly, absurd, and illogical to accuse Goje, the lone APC representative and leader in the state, of engaging in anti-party activities let alone expelling him. He won his units, wards,

local government area and constituency during the February 25 election, it could have been right and justifiable to accuse those who lost at all levels including their immediate polling units of compromising the party's successful outing during the presidential and national assembly election, in spite of the fact that Inuwa was the North-east zonal campaign coordinator, it was evident that APC woefully lost to the opposition PDP.

As it stands, out of five House of Representatives members-elect, APC got only one, and out of the three senators, the party got one which is Senator Goje. And now the party is expelling him under Governor Inuwa's watch. Which is more anti-party, Goje's or Governor Yahya's, who is chasing away virtually all APC powerful blocs in the state?

It's ridiculous to suspend serving senator, member, and expel the lone senator re-elected under the party and suspend hundreds of his loyalists and pretend you're doing good for the party. What is more disturbing is making it a tradition in Gombe to backstab the person who helped you. Goje deserves not this and we're certainly setting a bad precedence. It is a betrayal like no other.

Maybe Yahaya should look in the direction of Bukola Saraki and Kano to see if there is a lesson to learn in betrayal.

Muhammed writes from Abuja

SUNDAY POLITICS

Nigerians want more from new leaders

Bola Ahmed Tinubu's inauguration coincides with that of 26 governors whom the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) declared winners of the just-concluded elections in their respective states. More so, INEC has come under intense criticism over various irregularities as aggrieved candidates head to court. As the post-election battles continue, ordinary Nigerians cannot remain transfixed forever, TUNDE AJIA writes.

THOUGH disappointed by the outcome, they are moving on fast. More importantly, they have compelling demands for their new leaders. Infrastructure! Having groveled under poor infrastructure for decades, citizens are growing less tolerant of poor governance.

Whereas stomach infrastructure the use of gifts and promises of food to win voters' support, swayed a sizeable portion of the electorate years ago, such a strategy could backfire if applied in the wrong places today. But there is more to worry about.

There are low-hanging fruits to boost citizens' confidence and garner buy-in from the populace.

Bola Ahmed Tinubu, the incoming president now faces a litany of challenges in a polarised country whose youths have lost trust in the government, institutions such as INEC and security agencies. Nigeria's ailing economy, perennial strikes by academic unions and the looming discontinuance of fuel subsidy in June will give his presidency a rough start.

Pundits argue that the removal of fuel subsidy may see Nigerians paying N750 for one litre of petrol, a 305% increase from the usual N185 pump price. The Nigerian government has promised that removing the petrol subsidy will save N250 billion monthly and N3 trillion annually. However, it must justify these savings by channeling them into rapid infrastructure development, visible to over 200 million Nigerians.

Infrastructure development is critical for economic growth, social development and improved living standards. While Nigeria has made some progress over the years, it is lightyears behind the expectations of her people. Below are five critical areas the new government could uphold over the next four years:

1. Transportation

Moving 200 million people from one place to another is a priority,



Tinibu

especially when the nation's productivity depends on mobility. The new leadership must focus on transport infrastructure; the construction of new and rehabilitation of decaying roads, rails, bridges, airports and ports will facilitate trade and commerce, creating job opportunities and stimulating economic growth.

For instance, during the Obasanjo administration, his government embarked on a massive road construction project nationwide, which helped to open up rural areas, improve transportation and stimulate economic activities. Similarly, the Buhari administration launched a heavy campaign on railroads, stabilising the Abuja-Kaduna, Itakpe-Warri, Lagos-Ibadan, Abuja Metro, Lagos Blue Rail and the Kano-Maradi lines. It also

completed several road projects, including the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway and the Second Niger Bridge, which are expected to stimulate economic growth.

The nation's new leaders must consolidate these gains and ensure proper maintenance to address the pockets of infrastructure decay nationwide. But simply building transport infrastructure will not suffice. The question of security still looms large after the terrorist attack of March 2022 on a train travelling from the capital city Abuja to Kaduna, Nigeria's northwest.

2. Power

Speaking at the Africa CEO Forum in March 2017, the President of the African Development Bank, Akinwumi Adesina, said, "To stay in power, African leaders need to give

power. Africa is tired of being in the dark!" Access to electricity is critical for Nigeria's economic growth and development. But more than six decades after independence, it cannot guarantee power supply for its citizens. This is not due to a lack of effort; it is due to an inadequate and unsustainable effort.

For example, the Yar'Adua administration launched the National Integrated Power Project (NIPP) to address the country's power deficit. The project involved the construction of several power plants across the country, which helped to improve access to electricity. With its oil, gas, hydro and solar resources, Nigeria can generate 12,000 MW of electricity from its existing infrastructure. However, it only generates around 4,000 MW, which is inadequate for 200 million people. This has to change.

3. Water and Sanitation

Earlier this year it was widely reported that 922 cholera cases have been recorded in Nigeria and 32 patients succumbed to the disease in Q1 2023. This is a glaring reminder that Nigeria is yet to get its healthcare, water and sanitation right. The new government at all levels would need to surely deliver sustainable water and sanitation infrastructure. Access to clean water and sanitary facilities is critical to quality of living. While past administrations have inched towards this goal, more must be done. Building water and sanitation facilities is only a surface treatment. The real work

must begin with massive reorientation at the grassroots.

4. Healthcare

Healthcare is a corollary to the third point above. Improved healthcare infrastructure will lead to better national productivity. Nigeria needs more inclusiveness in this area. The then Obasanjo administration launched the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) to avail subsidised healthcare for all. The scheme involved the construction of several healthcare facilities nationwide, which helped to improve access to healthcare services. But the obstacles Nigerians face today have evolved.

The elephant in the room is the massive exodus of qualified doctors and nurses from Nigeria to other countries. The black giant now trains medical practitioners only to lose them to climes that take workers' welfare seriously. In this case, building state-of-the-art health facilities will be useless without the brains to operate them. Therefore, the new administration must focus on the welfare of health workers. A motivated workforce will do "wonders" for Nigeria's health sector.

5. Education

In 2022, Nigerian universities resumed after an eight-month strike over poor lecturers' welfare. Industrial actions are not new. What is new is the catastrophic consequences such standstills inflict on the economy.

University workers' strikes have been a perennial challenge for every administration since 1988. It reveals a deep-seated reluctance to address the issue head-on. Although President-Elect Tinubu has promised to end strikes for good, it is still unclear how he plans to mend decades of distrust between university unions and the government. Nevertheless, a lasting truce that'll prevent strikes for four straight years will be a considerable achievement.

In conclusion, Nigeria is a reservoir of successes and compounded challenges. Therefore, expecting a set of leaders to wipe these challenges within four years will be unfair to them. Nevertheless, there are low-hanging fruits to boost citizens' confidence and garner buy-in from the populace. Focusing on transport, power, sanitation, healthcare and education infrastructure will yield economic growth, social development and improve the living standards for Nigerians.

Ajia is a project development consultant with a particular interest in megaprojects and infrastructure finance in Africa. He is a Doctoral Researcher at the Cranfield School of Management, UK.

"Pundits argue that the removal of fuel subsidy may see Nigerians paying N750 for one litre of petrol, a 305% increase from the usual N185 pump price. The Nigerian government has promised that removing the petrol subsidy will save N250 billion monthly and N3 trillion annually. However, it must justify these savings by channeling them into rapid infrastructure development, visible to over 200 million Nigerians. Infrastructure development is critical for economic growth, social development and improved living standards. While Nigeria has made some progress over the years, it is light years behind the expectations of her people."



Ministry of Information & Communication, Plateau State

Happy Birthday to Captain of the Rescue Team @ 60



THE Commissioner, Ministry of Information and Communication, **Hon. Dan Manjang** on behalf of management and staff of Ministry wish to facilitate with **His Excellency, Rt. Hon. (Dr.) Simon Bako Lalong, KSGG** and Chairman, Northern States Governor's Forum as you celebrates your 60th birthday.

Your Excellency Sir, on this special occasion of your birthday. We pray that you will continue to work for the consolidation of the peace process which was very dear to your heart.

Your humility and grace with which you exercise the enormous authority of state as Executive Governor are lesson for us all on the virtuous concept of servant-leadership.

You deserve our prayers, support and cooperation always, even as we look towards the future with justified optimism and guaranteed assuredness. We are also united in supplication to God for good health and the wisdom of Solomon as you continue to serve humanity.

Happy birthday sir.

Signed:
Hon. Dan Manjang
Commissioner.

THE race for who holds sway at the tenth National Assembly is gathering momentum as campaigns and lobbying from interested senators all over the various geopolitical zones of the country is now at its peak. From reports gathered, the tenth NASS comprising the Senate and House of Representatives is to be inaugurated by June 2023. As expected, serious consultations are going on between the aspirants, party stalwarts and stakeholders to help actualize these dreams.

As of last week, those vying for the position of senate presidency included the incumbent, Sen. Ahmad Lawan, the Senate Chief Whip, Sen. Orji Uzor Kalu, Sen. Godswill Akpabio, Sen. Sani Musa, Sen. Jibrin Barau, Deputy Senate Leader, Sen. Abdul Yengi, Sen. Abdul-Aziz Yari, Sen. Ali Ndume and Sen. Osita Izunaso. There are also Gov. David Umahi of Ebonyi State and former Gov. Adams Oshiomwole of Edo State. These two are both first timers whose names have come up as being interested in the job. However, analysts say that for David Umahi and Adams Oshiomwole to succeed as senate president, the ranking situation must be jettisoned.

Section 4 of the 1999 Constitution (as amended), provides for a bi-cameral legislature as follows: "The legislative powers of the Federal Republic of Nigeria shall be vested in a National Assembly for the Federation, which shall consist of a Senate and a House of Representatives". Also, the Senate Standing Order 3 Rule 2 of the Senate Standing Orders 2022 as amended stipulates that the nomination of presiding officers and the appointments of principal officers and other officers of the senate shall be by the ranking of senators. In determining ranks therefore, the following order shall apply: "Senators returning based on the number of times elected; senators who had been members of the House of Representatives; and senators elected as senators for the first time".

Clearly, the ruling All Progressive Party (APC) has a big

role to play in the emergence of the next senate president having won 54 seats as against the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) which has 27 seats. The Labour Party (LP) has 6 while the other parties have lesser number of seats. Interestingly, many Nigerians have come out to sound a warning that the APC must avoid another muslim-muslim leader for the senate while others are of the opinion that competence and experience should form the basis of (s)election and not religion.



Battle for tenth NASS leadership



Kalu



Akpabio

Another matter that is taking center stage is the issue of zoning. The south-east has been at the forefront of the campaign for the senate presidency with the Senate Chief Whip, Orji Kalu and David Umahi insisting that the position must be zoned to the region. Meanwhile, there are those who say that since Senator Osita Izunaso is returning to the senate and will be the longest serving senator from the south-east, he should be considered as the most deserving for the position. Other school of thought have made a case for Senator

Godswill Akpabio from the south-south for the position. They posit that the region has not had a shot at the senate presidency for a while now, unlike the south-east which has produced more senate presidents.

For the speakership position, no fewer than ten persons have indicated interest. As it stands in the positioning of things, the president elect is from the south-west while his vice is from the north-east. Going by any zoning arrangements, the remaining regions are supposed to juggle for the positions in the national

assembly. Do not also forget the calls to balance the issue of religion, being that both the president elect and the vice president elect are muslims.

In the House of Representatives, APC seems to be in trouble as other opposition parties have decided to form an alliance in order to upstage its candidates. The group known as '10th Assembly: Greater majority', comprises of members from the PDP, LP and other parties. They incidentally have a combined total of about 163 seats while the APC has 162. Of course, the main strategy of the group is to use their numerical strength against the ruling party. Again, keen political watchers going by these happenings are afraid that there might be a repeat of what took place in 2015 where Bukola Saraki and Yakubu Dogara emerged as senate president and speaker, House of Reps. against the wish of the ruling party.

Some of the aspirants are said to be strong contenders who have publicly declared their intentions, while others are yet to openly make their interest known but are secretly lobbying and campaigning. Representative Yusuf Gagdi is one of those who has shown keen interest in becoming speaker. He officially made this known by flagging off his campaign on April 25th. The lawmaker who represents Pankshin/Kanke/Kanam federal constituency of Plateau State was also a former deputy speaker of the Plateau State House of Assembly. Gagdi has several bills to his kitty and is currently the

House Committee Chairman on Navy.

On the issue of zoning, the lawmaker has this to say, "I'm from the north-central and the region deserves to be speaker if you are zoning it to Northern Nigeria. It's only north-central that has not produced speaker in the past years. North-west has done four times, the names are there. The north-central too has contributed to the APC. The six governors in the north-central as it is, all of them are APC except Plateau State. So, by the special grace of God, north-central has done its best to the APC and if the party zones to the north-central, you will see more robust commitment from my side in ensuring that I become speaker of the tenth assembly".

Representative Mariam Onuoha is undoubtedly one of the few female lawmakers making waves at the lower chamber due to her immense contributions on motions and has sponsored quite a number of bills. She is the Chairman House Committee on Disabilities and Special Needs. A very sensitive committee one may say. Princess Onuoha as she's fondly called represents Okigwe North/Onuimo/Isiala Mbano federal constituency of Imo State and first became a member of the parliament in 2020. On why she wants to be speaker of the House, she said, "I am also in the race for the speaker of the House of Representatives knowing that a presiding officer position would help to address the lingering gender deficit at the National Assembly. I absolutely stand a strong chance now. It is becoming more difficult to win elections in Nigeria and worse for women.

"If a woman at this point is not appointed into presiding speaker or deputy, our political existence might just be coming to extinction. We do not just need a voice as presiding officer or member of the House but a strong voice as a presiding officer. Having a woman as a presiding officer at the House of Representatives would go a long way to augment the perennial gender deficit in the House of Representatives".

One cannot but agree that more women are needed, especially at the helm of affairs. As easy as it may seem, there are those who say that the emergence of a woman as speaker is going to be a tough one and a hard nut to crack this time around. Who then becomes speaker? As the saying goes, who the cap fits let him wear it.



Wase



Gagdi

SUNDAY MAGAZINE



Buhari



Lalong



Usman

Renewed attacks: Plateau communities devastated

Nigerians are currently living in constant fear of the unknown sequel to renewed senseless attacks callously unleashed on innocent rural communities. This re-emerging unfortunate development has sent shivers down the spine of many of such victims and most rural populace in these affected communities of the state. As it is, many vulnerable citizens are gradually losing confidence in the government who is responsible for protecting their lives and property. EZEKIEL DONTINNA writes.

IN the past eight years, Nigerians have suffered one form of attack or the other and there seems to be no respite at all. Today, it has become quite glaring that no day or week passes without reports of kidnapping, banditry and suspected Fulani militia attacks on farmers in our communities.

The unanswered question that craves for government's answer is the so-called claims of protecting lives and property of its citizens, which in this part of our world is getting confusing by the day because of the spade of renewed attacks.

However, this has grossly affected every aspect of our development as a country and Nigerians' hope in leadership of our dear country is decreasing. Great minds like Archbishop Mathew Kukah, the famous Catholic Bishop of Sokoto Diocese, has continued to lament the overwhelming effects of insecurity on the education sector in Nigeria. While giving a keynote address during the Parents Summit of the 2023 Education Week in Edo State, he said. "The havoc caused by bandits, terrorists and other tormentors of Nigeria's security is coming from the forces of darkness and

all Nigerians must be resilient to crush these forces perpetuating insecurity across the country..

"As we can see, our country is now being ravaged and threatened by the forces of darkness, those who have said no to humanity and those who have said no to education, whether they manifest themselves in the murderous and destructive excesses of Boko Haram or banditry," he said.

This is one out of many right-thinking Nigerians who has raised alarm through journals, radio/television programmes and letters, drawing the attention of those in authority to these rising inhuman acts perpetrated by these agents of darkness in the North-East, Northwest, North Central and

Southwest with impunity. If truly those in authority want to put a stop to this continued carnage on poor Nigerian farmers, which "pundits" accused them of sponsoring, people like Kuka should be supported to achieve that.

It would be recalled that, the United Nations Children's Fund, UNICEF, had in April last year disclosed that 11,536 schools in Nigeria had been closed due to insecurity. The Chibok, Dapchi, Kankara stories and other nationwide cases of abductions have remained a reference to the state of insecurity in Nigeria. But we are now witnessing another renewed form of attacks on food security now that the rains are around the corner.

It will interest you to know that,

the series of renewed attacks on communities in Plateau State these days by these suspected Fulani militia is a pointer to the fact that farmers may not be safe to freely go to their farms this farming season. Similar reports came from Southern Kaduna, Zamfara, Benue, Nasarawa, Taraba, Adamawa and a host of other which states could be viewed as a deliberate display of back up to the attackers. Moreso that we have only three weeks to the end of this administration.

However, just like a sleeping dog that suddenly wakes up, Nigerians were again awash with reports of a co-ordinated attacks on some communities in three local government areas of Plateau State by suspected Fulani militia killing five (5)

innocent people, after series of peace treaties signed between farmers and herders through the Plateau State Peace Building Agency (PPBA).

This, without delay, took the youths to streets in the early hours of last Wednesday, protesting the killings of these innocent people, barricading highway around Farin-Lamba-Jos-Abuja road. Two weeks before this most recent incident, similar resurgence occurred in communities of Jos North, Jos South, Mangu, Bokkos, Barkin Ladi and Riyom Local Government Areas respectively.

In an interview with **LightBearer** newspaper, the Senator-Elect of Plateau Southern District, Hon. Simon Mwadkon, said these attacks were aimed at land-grabbing and ethnic displacement which was part of an agenda to Islamise the state. "They have seized several communities and turned them to no-go areas for the original natives.

Mwadkon, who is the current member representing Riyom and Barkin Ladi Local Government Constituency in the House of Representatives, disclosed that, the latest instance was on April 24, 2023

The unanswered question that craves for government's answer is the so-called claims of protecting lives and property of its citizens, which in this part of our world is getting confusing by the day because of the spade of renewed attacks. However, this has grossly affected every aspect of our development as a country and Nigerians hope in leadership of our dear country is decreasing.

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NEWS

Gombe commended for release of basic healthcare funds

Willie Attah, Gombe

THE Gombe State Accountability Mechanism (GOSAM), has released the state's Health Budget Scorecard which indicated a commendable improvement particularly in the timely release of funds for basic health care services.

The scorecard sought to evaluate key budget performance indicators for transparency and timeliness of budget releases, citizens and civil society participation and resource allocation for basic health care services in six out of the eleven local government areas of the state in the last six months.

The Chairman of GOSAM, Mr. Alhassan Yahya, said the outcome was encouraging and commended the state government and agencies under the state Ministry of Health. He also commended GoHealth and the state Primary Healthcare

Development Agency over the feat achieved.

He explained that the exercise was conducted without any interference from the state government, adding that the indicators were in the areas of receiving quarterly funding from the Primary Health Care Board, annual budget and whether the facilities received captured payment on or before the 5th of the month.

Other indicators are the supervisory roles by the state Primary Health Care Development Agency and the Gombe State Contributory Health Care Management Agency (GoHealth) in the last quarter as well as the 24 hour service provision in the facilities among others.

Mr Yahya said during the collation of data, Local Government PHC coordinators and focal persons handling the Basic Healthcare Provision Fund in the facilities visited were engaged. It was also able to

track whether the funds released by the government were being used by the end users.

He hoped that the programme would be scaled up to cover more vulnerable people particularly, women and children to enjoy the benefits of the programme.

"At the end of the day, we were able to identify that the end users were benefiting from the funds," Mr. Yahya said, but however called on the government to continue with the timely release of funds for the vulnerable to continue to access services, more training for the focal persons handling Basic Healthcare Funds so that they can master the use of computers and data effectively.

In his remarks, the Gombe State Commissioner of Health, Dr. Habu Dahiru, said the concept of the Accountability Framework was adopted to assess and know how the government was performing and afterwards reward and sanction where necessary.

Dr. Daniru however, pledged

that the government would do more to ensure more visitation of facilities where low visitation was recorded, while the issue of computer appreciation and functionality would be improved upon. The control rooms for complaints would also be improved upon.

"I do know it's all about computer appreciation because all complaints are sent online and referrals are also sent online. So, if the facilities that are offering basic healthcare have computer appreciation, they will be able to refer, they will also be able to send complaints through the same process. So, we will also improve on the number of meetings at the technical working group," said Dr. Dahiru.

The Programme Office of Lisdell, a partner organisation on the programme, Mr. Ayobamidele Ademuyiwa Adamilola, also expressed satisfaction with the process.

HYPPEDEC begins construction of water channels

HYDROELECTRIC Power Producing Areas Development Commission (HYPPEDEC), has commenced construction of water channels in Koto-karfe, Kogi State, as part of its intervention programme to avert flooding. The first phase of the intervention project was borne out of the meeting held between HYPPEDEC, Kogi Ministries of Environment and that of Works as well as the benefitting community to assist in the control of water off roads and prevention of other properties from being flooded now that rain has started. The Managing Director of HYPPEDEC, Arch. Abubakar Sadiq Yelwa while speaking with journalists at the project site in Koto-karfe recently, disclosed that the contract for the job was awarded at the cost of N220 million. Yelwa also told journalists that the contractor handing the work was given eight weeks within which to complete the project according to the contract specifications. "The construction of water channels, culverts and drainages is part of HYPPEDEC intervention to control splash of water through the constructed channels. "The measure no doubt will as well go a long way in mitigation of flooding devastation," the MD assured. The Ohimege-Igu of Koto-karfe, His Royal Majesty, Abdurasaq Isah Koto during the inspection at the project site, had commended HYPPEDEC for its timely intervention to rescue his people in the event of another flooding this year. According to the royal father "Our fear now that rain has started early is the possibility of another round of being flooded. "Last year my people suffered untold hardship as a result of flooding. HYPPEDEC

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

intervention in this direction is a welcome development. With this intervention, it will go a long way in reducing our fears"

He assured the contractor of the safety of the construction equipments and

pleaded for the job to be delivered within the time frame. Earlier, Kogi Commissioners for Environment and that of Works, Victor Omofaye and Engr. Agbo Samson, had reiterated the commitment of Governor Yahaya Bello's administration in ensuring control of ecological

disaster in the state through prompt payment of its counterpart funding to the World Bank. They pledged to complement HYPPEDEC's desire for quality execution of the project through effective supervision

JNPSNC extends by 4 days ultimatum to government

BY EZEKIEL DONTINNA

PLATEAU State Chapter of the Joint National Public Service Negotiation Council (JNPSNC), has extended by four (4) additional days, the ultimatum earlier given to the state government to address some of the pressing issues before it or be forced to embark on an indefinite strike action, after the expiration of the 7 days earlier given. The state Chairman of JNPSNC, Comrade Titus Malau, disclosed this Thursday while addressing journalists at a press briefing organised by the council at the JNC State Secretariat in Jos, the state capital ahead of the expiration of the ultimatum proposed on May 3, 2023.

He said, "In line with the 7 days ultimatum which expired on May 3, 2023, the leadership of the Joint Council had made frantic efforts to avert any industrial upheavals by meeting with government to reach an amicable resolution on two occasions, May 3 and 4, 2023 but were unable to address the vexed issues.

"However, at our last sitting with the representative of government, the government appealed to us to grant them an extension of two (2) weeks within which our demands would be met. The leadership of the Joint Council met and considered the extension of four (4) days starting from May Friday 5 to Wednesday 10, 2023 to enable government address

these pressing issues. "Failure of which, we will be left with no option than to embark on an indefinite strike action in order to press home our demands. We therefore, call on all workers to be patient as we remain resolute, while we await government's quick response within the stipulated time", the chairman stated. Malau prayed that it was their desire to see this government considering their demands to help offset all liabilities before leaving. He pointed out that "You

are aware that His Excellency has, on several occasions pledged that he will not leave any salary arrears. "We are still holding on to his words while we have to go into these excesses possibly for us to know if he is aware that such salaries have not been paid. Yes, January salary was paid, but we are still expecting February salary because two subventions were paid by Federal Government. And one of the components of subvention has salaries inclusive", he disclosed.



Lalong



Gbajabiamila, other lawmakers beg U.K over Ekweremadu

The House of Representatives has forwarded an appeal to the United Kingdom for clemency for former Deputy Senate President, Ike Ekweremadu, who will be sentenced on May 5 on charges of organ harvesting.

Buhari approves exclusion of finance ministry's investment firm from TSA

President Muhammadu Buhari has approved the partial exclusion of the Ministry of Finance Incorporated (MOFI) from the Treasury Single Account (TSA). Read more Umahi visits Buhari, urges APC to consider South-East for Senate president

The Ebonyi State Governor, David Umahi, on Tuesday, urged the All Progressives Congress (APC) to consider the South-East ahead of other zones in the choice of Senate President for the 19th National Assembly.

Sudan: FG confirms Nigerians ready to depart Egypt

The Nigeria in Diaspora Commission (NIDCOM) said on Tuesday the country's embassy in Egypt has successfully moved evacuees across the border from Sudan.

NLC directs Imo workers to 'withdraw services'

The Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) has directed workers in Imo State to withdraw their services. Read more

Read Also: Top 10 stories from across Nigerian Newspapers, Sunday, 30th of April, 2023

NGX: Investors lose N65.8bn amid sell-off in Trancorp, Gereg

The equity capitalization in the Nigerian capital market crashed to N28.46 trillion at the close of trading on Tuesday. Read more

MTN Nigeria faces N1.48bn lawsuits over electrocution, others

MTN Nigeria is battling with several lawsuits that have amounted to legal claims of over N1.48 billion, the company's first quarter (Q1) financial result for 2023 disclosed.

Police arrests OPC member over death of peacemaker in Ondo

Police operatives in Ondo on Tuesday arrested a member of the Oodua Peoples Congress (OPC), Rafiu Akinwale, over the death of one Prince Adesoji Adesida in the state.

Lagos arraigns BRT driver who collided with train for manslaughter

The Lagos State Government, on Tuesday, arraigned Osinbajo Oluwaseun, the driver of the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), who collided with a moving train, for manslaughter before an Ikeja High Court.

Messi suspended by PSG over Saudi trip

Lionel Messi has been suspended by Paris St-Germain for two weeks after travelling to Saudi Arabia without the club's permission this week

SUNDAY FEATURE

King Charles: Monarch in a changing time

On Saturday 6th May 2023, history was made. The world bears witness to the coronation of King Charles III, the new monarchy of England. In a colourful ceremony that had all marks of significance, profound tradition, and tapestry of royalty, the King was ornamented with the symbols of authority. He was radiant, debonair and resplendent in his costumes. Etched in the ancient British tradition, the ceremony was with pomp and pageantry. King Charles III walked through the door his forebears had traversed. Oboli Augustine, writes.

NOT until 1953 was the secret of the ceremony seen when the late Queen Elizabeth II, then 27 years of age was crowned, following the sudden demise of her father. Seven decades later Charles III has ascended the throne of his forebears.

Attendance at the ceremony was epic, as both the well-heeled and the ordinary folks were there to partake in the historic moment. Numerous world leaders and heads of state graced the occasion. Watching the King greet the crowd was captivating and sublime.

Undoubtedly, the most celebrated monarchy in recorded history, the British monarch has been around for over seven hundred years through storming weather and sauntering on. But with the weight of modernity bearing down on the monarchical system, it remains to be seen how much the monarch could hold on. Yet right moves and fundamental internal changes within could still endear the monarchy to a declining number of admirers, to enable the house of Windsor last much longer.

Queen Elizabeth II, perhaps the longest-reigning monarch in living memory died on September 8 at Balmoral estate Scotland, after a glorious life and reign that spanned seventy years. Her death created the vacancy that Charles III, her first son and heir apparent filled yesterday. By this act, King Charles inherited the throne as well as all the rights and responsibilities that come with it.

Though the British monarch is constitutional, recognizing the monarch as the head of state while the elected legislature wields the actual power and duties of government. By and large, the monarch plays a symbolic role intended to provide an unbroken link to the past and a sense of national pride and unity among a country's populace. But how will Charles III navigate the monarchy in the modern era and makes it still relevant in the age of the internet and curious Generation Z that are not as pliant or enamors of the monarchy as their ancestors?

Charles III is coming to the throne with a load of baggage. Because of the failure of his first marriage to Diana and the fact that he married a divorcee, he had cheated on Diana, it was even speculated that he may not ascend the throne. For a very long time, the story in the social space was that he has made himself unworthy of the crown and will step aside for his son William. Fortunately, he has realized the role history has cut out for him. He has shown equanimity and carried himself with dignity to compensate for his waywardness and dalliances.

With the King Consul, Camilla, by his side, Charles has given enough reason and done much within a short space of time to reassure faith in him as a man destined to lead the British monarch in the 21st century. Since the death of his mother, he has steered the ship of the monarch out of the murky waters of politics and shown sagacity in the



handling of state matters. He also proved that he has the grit and soundness of judgment in a whole lot of issues. If the last nine months are anything to go by, then Charles III is in the right terrain.

Whereas the Mother reigned largely in an era of world war II, the cold war, the economic crisis, and the civil war in continental Europe, King Charles's era will be unique and more demanding. The world has changed so significantly and the issues of conflicts are not abating. The byzantine complexity of things these days is next to nothing seen of old. British society has radically changed in shape and form from the imperial British empire, and the monarch as the head of state of many nations. That is no longer the case nowadays. One must also take notice of the shifting non-homogenous population of Britain. Close to 20% of its population today are of an ethnic minority. Rishi Kunak, the current prime minister of England is of Indian extraction and Hindu faith, mayor of London Mohammed Khan has Pakistani ancestry and is a Muslim. The changes are coming fast and furious, and the monarchy has to evolve to keep pace with the times to remain relevant.

One of the cardinal roles of the monarch is to defend the faith, today most British citizens are nonreligious or non-Christians, which is a sharp contrast to the situation in 1973. And then, the enthusiasm for the monarch is waning fast among the growing population of youths. Consistently, they have queried

the usefulness of the monarchy in the modern world and disapprove of the taxpayer's money spent to sustain the system. But has the monarch outlived its usefulness? Perhaps, some of the issues that will shape Charles III's reign.

The imperativeness of a lean monarchy is critical for the survival of the monarch moving forward and King Charles has always alluded to this but whether he was only mouthing it or being serious about it, only time will tell. He has his task cut out for him. The new King should work seriously at trimming the size of the monarchy to reassure the doubting Thomases that he meant business.

On the issue of the tax burden to maintain the royalty of the royals on the British populace, King Charles should realize timeously that some of the expenditures are incurred in maintaining the gilded palaces that litter all over the United Kingdom, while many Brits are homeless. Some hard decisions need to be taken about the palaces, some of which are visited just once a year or not at all. Yes, the King should also mind the gap between the monarchy and the people. The widening divide is part of the resentment against the monarch.

The King should work extremely hard to reunite the royalties, particularly settling the beef between two blood brothers, William and Harry, because it has the potential to derail the monarch and bring it into obloquy. In the same vein, much more than lip service should be paid to encouraging and building racial

integration in the royal household. Just before the Queen's passing, the monarchy was accused of racism in the widely publicized interview Harry and Megan had with Oprah Wilfrey. It is instructive that King Charles should help the royals to come clean on that and move on more positively.

Largely, apolitical in its disposition, the monarch should leverage that neutral hue to engage in shuttle diplomacy to address conflicts among members of the Commonwealth nations (the last vestige of colonialism) by so doing the body would be strengthened as a united front with one strong voice in the comity of nations.

Perhaps, it could not be denied that the future of the monarch rests with the youths, who are poised to redefine its shape, form, and continued relevance. The new King should as a matter of urgency engage studiously with them. He should strive to know their concerns and trepidations, show sympathy, and lend his powerful voice to their cause. He should learn their language, and engage them in their social media playfield where they would be educated and sensitized on the role and relevance of the monarchy in the modern era. These measures will engender renewed faith in the monarchy and provide a pathway for its prolonged survivability.

We wish the new King long life and a peaceful reign. We also hope and pray that his reign will bring joy and happiness to the people. Long live the King!

SUNDAY FEATURE

How removal of artifact affects its cultural significance

By AHANONU LINUS

AN Artifact is object of cultural and historical importance or interest, used by generations past and produced through diverse or different means depending on its origin or cultural base, significance, use, or reason for production. It must be dated back to a hundred years or more.

Artifacts are our patrimony and therefore are considered priceless; they are the link between the past and the future. In many African societies today, some of these objects have been discarded, never to be remembered especially those that served religious and worship importance. This is basically because our traditional mode of worship has been largely overtaken by more recent Christianity and Islamic religions not undermining others like freemason, Hinduism, Buddhism, etc.

All of these have put a strain on the way deified objects of worship of traditional and cultural importance have lost their values in our today's society.

Some of these objects found their ways out of African soil through thefts, raids, colonialism, punitive expeditions, outright sales etc. by those who consider them not too important and those who switched from one worship mode to another, into the waiting hands of the one who know their worths and are ready to receive them.

Unfortunately, some of the stories behind these very important objects of worth were re-written in foreign lands with no ready back-up texts; but not taking away the wholistic value placed on it by their founding bases notwithstanding.

The National Commission for Museums and Monuments, with its mandate to research, collect, conserve, interpret, and exhibit our tangible and intangible heritage of man and his environment, brought to bear the multi-dimensional use of these patrimonies giving it a total and all-encompassing view.

This grasp and understanding of the Museum of the far-reaching uses and goals which are achievable through the medium of artifacts has given the movement of objects from its cultural base to the Museum a total change of view point especially as it concerns the traditional users and owners.

It has put in time and humongous resources to research on, both Archeological and Ethnographic objects, giving the generation now an understanding of the past and the ingenuity of our ancestors (the producers of these artefacts).

The Museum professionals carrying out their duties do not negate the original purposes for which these artefacts were made and have beautifully, enshrouded them in a lot of royal magnificence.

This therefore, has put these artefacts in better standing in custody



of the Museums than they actually would have been without being housed in one.

Instances are of some of these artefacts like the Ikenga, Mumuye, Offor, Iyalode, etc. All of these and thousands of others found in the Museums all over the country, have been preserved for decades and as long as they have been in the custody of the Museum; with verifiable texts gotten from thorough research by Museum professionals and have lasted the test of time for professionalism in preservation.

They have also been exhibited to the public who hitherto may never have heard about them even coming from the same geographical location where the object was acquired but for the Museum's initiative of bringing it to public view visa-vis its importance then and now.

Therefore, the removal of an object from its cultural base to the Museum, rather than erode or negate its

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They have also been exhibited to the public who hitherto may never have heard about them even coming from the same geographical location where the object was acquired but for the Museum's initiative of bringing it to public view visa-vis its importance then and now. Therefore, the removal of an object from its cultural base to the Museum, rather than erode or negate its cultural significance, gives the object an upper standing as to be understood more by the diverse public and internalized for better use in an ever-changing society where it would never have been known; but can now be used for education, research, job creation and even entertainment.
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cultural significance, gives the object an upper standing as to be understood more by the diverse public and internalized for better use in an ever-changing society where it would never have been known; but can now be used for education, research, job creation and even entertainment.

Within or outside our shores, artefacts that their ways into the Museum through bequest, loan, purchase, excavation, seizure or any other means are best taken care of and have better documented evidence and link to its base, adding value to its purpose and better still, bringing to limelight its origin even if its root is extinct.

The pros of housing artefacts in the Museum cannot be over-emphasized compared to its being domiciled at its origin juxtaposed on its importance and representation.

AHANONU LINUS is the Head of Antiquity Protection Unit, Abuja

LET us imagine our fate as a black people in Africa if the Great Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe did not have the courage to think and create a movement to end colonialism and earn us our independence. His greatness will echo until the end of time. How many politicians are Zikist? How many of them know, understand and practice the socio-politico-economic philosophy of the Great Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe?

According to the Semantic Scholar, speaking of the Great Sir Abubakar Tafawa: "This paper examined the framework of Nigeria's foreign policy from the perspective of Tafawa Balewa's vision. This is driven by Balewa's profundity of philosophical thought in the enunciation of the organizing principles of Nigeria's foreign policy and their flagging appeal and relevance through time. The analytical research method was employed for the study which revealed that Plato's theory of the philosopher-king has been a major source of intellectual inspiration to contemporary political systems that seeks to promote good governance. The paper also unearthed that Balewa deployed his vast epistemological arsenal of public policy and governance strategy in the construction of the fundamental pillars and objectives of Nigerian foreign policy in such a manner that they have stood the test of time thus earning him the title of the philosopher-king of Nigerian foreign policy. The paper also uncovered that Balewa's inclination to political conservatism and conservative foreign policy owes their social-biographical provenance to the traditional conservative Hausa-Muslim values. The paper equally found that Balewa's foreign policy was criticized for being pro-west and pro-capitalist in spite of its professing of a non-alignment policy. The study concludes that Nigerian foreign policy as enunciated by the Balewa administration will continue to twirl in scope and intensity. The paper recommends approaches and strategies of Nigerian foreign policy that would reflect the demands of contemporary times".

According to Independent Newspaper of July 18th 2020, speaking of the socio-economic and political philosophy and movement of the Great Sir Ahmadu Bello in an article titled "Gamjism: The Political Thought Of Late Sir Ahmadu Bello": Gamjism as a political thought and welfarist ideology of Late Sir Ahmadu Bello the Sarduna of Sokoto and premier of Northern Nigeria, is Predicated on the Motto of the Government of Northern Nigeria: work and worship, peace and progress, religious tolerance, equality and self-sufficiency in food and agricultural products. Sir Ahmadu Bello's political thought and social engineering involves the following: short cut, crash programme towards socio-economic development of the people of Northern Nigeria. There is therefore, that felt the need to build a political ideology around Gamjism. A new insight or new development paradigm into a selfless, people-oriented government theory a la Sir Ahmadu Bello: GAULISM of General De Gaulle of France of the 1950s-1970". It goes on to say:

A personality who is God fearing whose style of government is predicated on honesty of purpose and Godliness. Gamjism is an evangelistic missionerism of good governance. He preaches the epistle of tolerance, reconciliation and fair

play. Gamjism is the flair for reconciliation of Godliness in governance. It is predicated on the fact that for there to be good governance, the fear of God must be the pillar. There can't be good governance without good leadership and good followership. Gamjism believes that a country without good leadership will not only lead to chaos, but to economic and social bankruptcy. The tenet of Gamjism political engineering depends on the wonderfulness and commitment of the people, the desire to imbibe the spirit of give and take, fair play, justices and respect of the rule of law. Gamjism urges

Nigerian politicians: Leaving a legacy



Zik

us to set aside all our differences and work together as one people and one family for the attainment of a greater good for a greater number of our people, to dream a strong, stable and prosperous society. To share with one another our common desire for the future of our country, and like Martin Luther King; hand-in-hand, we may successfully accomplish our crucial journey towards nation rendezvous with our destiny as leader of the African and Black peoples of the world and to restore the black man dignity and interest. Government must not only preach godliness but must implement the tenet of work and worship.

Rowan and Littlefield summarize the book "The political philosophy of Chief Obafemi Awolowo, written by Olayiwola Abegunrin as follows: Chief Awolowo and his political parties, first the Action Group (AG) 1951-1966 and later the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) 1978-1983, acted in various Nigerian political settings. Chief Awolowo was a principled man, who by a Spartan self-discipline and understanding of himself, his accomplishments, failures and successes, was a fearless leader. He has set an example of leadership for a new generation of Nigerian politicians. He was not only a brilliant politician, but a highly cerebral thinker, statesman, dedicated manager, brilliant political economist, a Social Democrat, and a committed federalist. From all accounts, Chief Awolowo knew the worst and the best, laughter and sorrow, vilification and veneration, tribulations and triumphs, poverty and prosperity, failures, and successes in life".

We have had the rear privilege of taking a peak into the past and learning from the great men of yore who selflessly worked



for their people. They moved their people and movements were created, The Zikist, the Awoist, the Gamjist. How many of our new politicians have political ideologies, philosophies, principles and convictions to restore Nigeria and move Nigeria into its full potential. How many are learned and educated men, able to formulate and implement robust policies that can change he lives of Nigerians for the better.

These great men were faced with human frailties and temptations, but they were able to rise above that in their philosophies; that defined their leadership styles. Consequently, they left legacies, philosophic and practical socio-politico-economic movements. They are dead, but their legacies and principles live on. Anytime their children call, their followers run to their sides. Their children are well catered for and yet they were not political thieves. We respect their children because of what their fathers, grand fathers and great grandfathers did for Nigeria and for how they respect their fathers' legacies by their good behaviour.

How many of our new politicians know our great leaders and their philosophies and how many would like to live on after their death through their legacies, long after their tenure is over? What is a good name worth in the face of a million mansions infested by lizards, long after a man dies? What is his worth in human terms when he steals from the poor to become filthy rich only to be forgotten or communized? How many are inspired by his leadership style, his philosophy, and his legacy? How many study his footsteps?

How many of our new politicians study great leaders? How many invest in biographies and autobiographies of our great leaders? As a matter of fact, how many prepare for the task at hand by studying political history of our great leaders in Nigeria and great leaders of the world?

Nigeria has in our recent history, been saddled with the defeatist and dishonourable philosophy of "belleyism". the philosophy of "chop-I-chop", the philosophy of "nah-we-we". We have

found ourselves contending with full-faced mediocrity who frontally and arrogantly confront us right back without shame, in their super-starched agwadas and babanrigas, greedily and shamelessly smelling of our stolen money. These are some of our politicians. Some, not all. Amongst the current crop, we have some gamjists, some awoist and some zikists.

How long are we going to clamour for real change and renaissance without investigating the minds of our future leaders to be? The task at hand is to ensure that our new politicians have great philosophies of their own. Otherwise, we will have no choice but to pressure them into aligning with the great leaders of our yesterday. How can men with no education, no direction and no conviction be in the saddle of our collective and various political destinies while we expect real change? It is not enough to promise us light and water. It is never too late to be an Awoist, a Ziskist or a Gamjist. It is never too late to borrow a leaf from the great leaders who made their country great. It is in having great philosophies that our great leaders of yesterday created real change and philosophical movements. How many of our politicians are schooled in the art and style of leadership and creating enduring legacies? Nigeria is a great country. We should raise the bar for all our politicians and measure them with the measures crafted by our founding fathers and other great leaders of the world. There is a realm that is higher and sweeter than ill-gotten wealth. It is called honour and greatness. These two can also fetch a man great wealth in cash and in kind.

I believe that within the new crop of politicians, we will find socio-politico-economic philosophers and thinkers. I pray they will spread their beliefs and change the corrupt for good. I believe they can bring real change and leave great legacies through well thought out philosophies. Men and women in leadership, who stand for nothing will fall for anything and we shall fall along with them. It is time for a renaissance, it is time for a reawakening. It is time for our politicians to craft great philosophies and foundations for their leadership styles or align with our founding fathers, so that they can leave a good legacy for their children and our children and children's children, who will venerate and adore them, the same way we venerate and adore our founding fathers for the legacies they have bestowed on our great nation, Nigeria. Long live the living legacies of our fondly remembered Great Leaders, long live the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

TODAY I will like to outline and discuss five distinct areas that the salvation of Jesus applies to in the life of a believer. First, Jesus is our saviour from sin; secondly Jesus is our saviour from sickness, disease and infirmities of the flesh and body. Thirdly, Jesus is our saviour from poverty want and lack. Fourth, Jesus is our saviour from destruction, danger, evil and harm. And then finally, Jesus is our saviour from every curse of life.

In Luke 2:11, when the angel met the shepherds, it is important to note exactly what he said to them: For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. Note that the angel designated Jesus as Saviour and Christ at His birth. The word Christ means the anointed one, so the good news is that when you become committed to Christ and confess Him as your Saviour and Lord, you automatically share together in that anointing.

Again, Christ means the anointed one and the anointing He carries is the power of God that destroys yokes and lifts burdens. It is by the anointing that His saving ministry functions in your life. The genius of God is that the moment you become connected to Christ you also share in that anointing. This is what we are going to begin to discover as we explore these five broad areas of Jesus' salvation.

First thing to note is that every believer needs the anointing of God's Spirit in their lives. Just because you are born again does not mean that Satan is on recess. You have to recognise that the believer's superior advantage in this life is the anointing. Ones you know that and also acknowledge that when you came into Christ, you also came into His anointing, the next thing you need to know is how to function in that anointing.

Know that, to function in His anointing, you must learn to stay in fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ. It is only in the place of fellowship that the anointing can be deployed to answer every circumstance and every situation in your life.

There is no need for you to be afraid concerning anything in life. The anointing on Jesus that you partake of when you come into Christ is more than enough to answer any vice of the devil. The anointing is

enough to guide, lead, instruct, protect, preserve and provide you with all you will ever need in to overcome in this life.

The anointing is your life – That is what the Bibles actually says in the book of Col. 3:4, When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. It

child that his future wife, Mary will carry saying: And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

Now when sin is dealt with, the power of the devil is effectively neutralized. This is a very important point to note.



Why Jesus came?



says Christ is our life; this anointing is our life and it is so important for us to understand this. The anointing has been given to you as an inheritance. The anointing has been given to you to partake in the divine nature.

The fact is that Christianity is not just a religious experience but a union with the anointing and with Christ who is the possessor of the anointing. The anointing is not something that just makes you shout or fall down or cry; those may be some distinct manifestations of the anointing but the anointing actually functions in every area of your life to give you the solutions that you most desperately need and desire.

Now, from the list of 5 distinct areas in which the anointing of Jesus Christ works in our lives, the is salvation from sin. What the anointing upon the Lord Jesus came to achieve first and foremost is to save all mankind from their sins. No human being can deliver man from sin. In Matthew 1:21, we see the angel telling Joseph about the

So no man can deliver himself from sin. Deliverance from sin is a God domain. Only God can do that; only God can change a man's nature; only God can assure a man a place in eternity.

Jesus is God manifested in flesh to first and foremost, deal with our sin problem and grant us deliverance from the nature of sin and then from the acts of sin. Secondly, Jesus came to deliver us from sickness disease infirmities of the flesh and body. When Jesus took our sin he took our sicknesses and diseases as well. Matthew 8:17 said. That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses. Jesus did that on the cross. When Jesus took our sin in his own body on the cross, He took our diseases as well

The third area that the anointing deals with is the area of poverty, want and lack. What a joy to know that when Jesus took our sin He broke the power of poverty and lack and

that there is provision and allocation in what He did for us on the cross to deliver us from the life of poverty and want forever.

Fourthly, Jesus delivered us from general destruction in life. He delivered us from accidents, premature death or whatever you want to call it. Jesus has delivered us from banditry, kidnapping - anything under the category of destruction, know that He died to deliver us from that and that anointing upon Him can preserve us in this life from all these things.

The fifth is that Jesus came to deliver us from every curse in life. Whatever the curse is; whatever the empowerment to fail is, Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.

Galatians 3: 13&14 says, Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might

receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Psalms 103:1-5 captures beautifully these 5 general areas where we have been redeemed from by the power of God and where the saving ministry of Jesus kicks in.

Psalms 103:1-5 reads, 1A Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. 2Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: 3Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; 4Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies; 5Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.

Glory to God! These are the five basic areas, the five general areas that Jesus' salvation works in in the believer's life. Note also that these general areas actually cover all conceivable areas of your life or the life of any human being in world. Praise the Lord!

INTERNATIONAL

'King Charles inaugurated when Empire is gone'

The differences in the coronations of King Charles and his mother highlight the changing role of Britain's monarchy.
GOURI SHARMA writes.

ON Saturday, May 6, Britain's King Charles III will be crowned, eight months after he ascended to the throne, following the death of his mother, Queen Elizabeth II, last September.

Officiated by the archbishop of Canterbury, the highest Church of England cleric in the country, the ceremony was held at Westminster Abbey in London, the setting for every coronation since 1066.

The coronation saw the 74-year-old crowned with a solid gold crown made in 1661 in front of 2,200 invited guests from across the political, royal and celebrity worlds.

Among them saw his eldest son Prince William and his wife Catherine, while his second son Prince Harry, who recently fell out with the rest of the family, flew in for the event from the United States without his wife Meghan Markle.

It is still not clear what role Prince Andrew, recently stripped of royal duties amid his links to a sex abuse scandal, will play.

The guest list also includes British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, French President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and Ursula von der Leyen, the president of the European Commission, plus a number of other royal families, including Prince Albert II and Princess Charlene of Monaco.

Charles's coronation comes 70 years after the coronation of his mother, then aged 25, who was crowned in a grand ceremony on June 2, 1953.

The 39th monarch's coronation ceremony at Westminster Abbey was steeped in religious pomp, symbolism and tradition as millions watched watch Queen Elizabeth II recite an oath, was anointed with holy oil and adorned with riches, robes and royal regalia as she was crowned Queen of the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, known at the time as Ceylon.

King Charles III greets well-wishers at Brandenburg Gate in Berlin.

Saturday's ceremony appears to be a less grand affair, with a shortened ceremony from about three hours to an hour and a reduced attendee list.

Ed Owens, a historian, royal commentator and author of *The Family Firm: Monarchy, Mass Media and the British Public, 1932-53*,



Charles

said: "In 1953, there was a genuine sense of enthusiasm, optimism and hope that signalled a new start for Britain in the aftermath of the Second World War. The coronation was presented as the party that was going to kick start a new period."

"There has been so much time between the two coronations and the tone of this correlation is about justification as to why it should go ahead, in particular to a younger audience, and explaining the religious symbolism to a nation that's no longer a Christian majority."

Edward Kissi, an associate professor in the Department of African Studies at the University of South Florida, said that a comparison can be seen between

the grandness of the national and global fanfare in 1953 compared with a more tepid pre-event atmosphere now.

"Context is important here," he said. "Queen Elizabeth was crowned at the endpoint of the British Empire, and the waning days of Britain's global influence. King Charles will be inaugurated at a time when the Empire is gone, and the Commonwealth that replaced it is uncertain about its attachment to and reverence for Britain and its soon-to-be-coronated monarch."

A key difference is the number of people due to attend. In 1953, the guest list boasted more than 8,000 people and 129 nations and territories were represented, including General George Marshall, the former US secretary of state, and the prime ministers of India and Pakistan, Jawaharlal Nehru and Mohammad Ali Bogra.

Comparatively, attending the king's coronation on behalf of India will be Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar while President Joe Biden's wife Jill Biden will be the highest-ranking US official.

Khadiza Naufa Fatin, an independent researcher and editor with the *Heritage Times* based in Guwahati in the northeast Indian state of Assam, told said that the differences in the events reveal much about the new world order.

"The event in 1953 was very close to the aftermath of World War II and the consequential independence of several colonies," she said.

"At that time, former colonies and their leaders still felt relatively closer in terms of the memory of an empire that once ruled them. As new nation-states were forming, they hadn't yet distanced themselves from the monarchical system and a monarch was seen as a necessary symbol to hold the state together. People therefore

looked towards Queen Elizabeth II for hope and peace in the economic and political turmoil," Naufa Fatin added.

"The very different contexts surrounding the relationship between the British monarchy and the parts of the world that were once part of its empire colour the contrasts between 1953 and 2023," said Matthew Smith, professor of history and director of the Centre for the Study of the Legacies of British Slavery at the University College London (UCL).

"In those seven decades, there have been profound achievements in the project of decolonisation that have resulted in complex systems of nationalism in Africa, the Caribbean, Asia, and even in Britain itself, which today looks demographically very different from what it did in 1953. What this has meant is that the receptivity to the King's coronation will include a rather interesting illustration of how much we have progressed," he said.

British colonialism on display with coronation "crown jewels"

Amid some of the wider shifts within decolonisation discussions around goods and artefacts taken from former colonies, the monarchy announced earlier this year that the disputed Kohinoor diamond, or a replica of it, will for the first time not feature in a coronation ceremony.

"There is today a much stronger public consciousness about how Britain made its wealth and the narratives of exploitation through slavery and colonialism are more widely known and acknowledged," Professor Smith said.

"The Church of England, private institutions and families have in the past three years issued very public apologies for their roles in slavery and African enslavement. These developments are not lost on the crown," he added.

"I would like to imagine that the king himself, as he considers his reign, must appreciate how the horrors of the past cannot go unremarked, unacknowledged or without repair and gestures such as the adjustments to the queen consort's crown may be but one small indication of that," Smith said.

"Currently, the monarchy in Britain seems more like a relic of the past. So in some ways, people see this event as a tradition rather than a political necessity," said Naufa Fatin.

"Even domestically, people of Britain have never felt more distant from the royal family than now. They can't relate to the existence of a household that is holding onto the stories of its past glories to stay relevant politically. The British royal family is no longer what it used to be but rather one of the royal families across the globe. Earlier, in the anglophone world, their power was a default that we all understood but it is now changing," she added.

The 1953 coronation was the first British coronation to be fully televised in the UK, with a reported 27 million domestic viewers, and the second key world event to be broadcast internationally on television, following the inauguration of US President Dwight Eisenhower a few months earlier.

Analysts say that despite the changes and controversies, the coronation looks set to be an international media spectacle.

"In an age of social media, thousands more, even millions, can 'attend' the coronation from a distance, and indirectly by watching their television sets," said Professor Kissi.

"The coronation is a media spectacle of the 21st century that will outclass that of 1953."

Source: Al Jazeera



Queen Elizabeth II

INTERNATIONAL

South Africans seek return star of Africa

SOME South Africans are calling for the United Kingdom to return the world's largest diamond, known as the Star of Africa, which is set in the royal sceptre that King Charles III used at his coronation on Saturday.

The diamond, which weighs 530 carats, was discovered in South Africa in 1905 and presented to the British monarchy two years later by the colonial government in the country, which was then under British rule.

Now amid a global conversation about returning artwork and artefacts that were pillaged during colonial times, some South Africans are calling for the diamond to be brought back.

"The diamond needs to come to South Africa. It needs to be a sign of our pride, our heritage and our culture," said Mthusi Kamanga, a lawyer and activist in Johannesburg who has promoted an online petition, which has gathered about 8,000 signatures, for the diamond to be returned.

"I think generally the African people are starting to realise that to decolonise is not just to let people have certain freedoms, but it's also to take back what has been expropriated from us."

Officially known as Cullinan I, the diamond in the sceptre was cut from the Cullinan diamond, a 3,100-carat stone that was mined near Pretoria.

A smaller diamond cut from the same stone, known as Cullinan II, is set in the Imperial State Crown which is worn by British monarchs on ceremonial occasions. Along with the sceptre, it is kept with the other crown jewels in the Tower of London.

A replica of the whole Cullinan diamond, which is about the size of a man's fist, is displayed at the Cape Town Diamond Museum.



Kamaphosa:

"I believe it should be brought back home because, at the end of the day, they took it from us while they were oppressing us," said Johannesburg resident Mohamed Abdullahi.

"All proceeds of colonialism, slave trade and imperialism are illegitimate transactions," Everisto Benyera, associate professor of African Politics at the University of South Africa in Pretoria, told Al Jazeera. "As such, whether the British monarch purchased the Cullinan diamond at a nominal fee, or whether it was gifted to them by the Transvaal government, does not negate the fact that this transaction occurred within the broader occurrence of colonial relations."

"The British monarchy must

play its part in breaking this colonial relationship by acknowledging the role that it played," added Zimbabwean-born Benyera. "And one of the biggest ways that it can acknowledge is to stop using our diamonds on their regalia, is to stop using our resources during their ceremonies, because ...we are no longer part of the British Empire."

Others said they did not feel strongly about it.

"I don't think it matters any more. Things have changed, we're evolving," said local resident Dieketseng Nzhadhaba. "What mattered for them in the olden days about being superior ... it doesn't matter to us any more."

Video Duration 28 minutes 00 seconds 28:00

What's driving the recent unrest in Kenya? | Inside Story

Since January 23, Odinga, who lost to Ruto in last year's presidential election, has held a series of countrywide rallies calling on his supporters to reject the current government over alleged fraud in the vote.

In March, he began organising twice-weekly protests to pile political pressure onto Ruto, whom he accused of rigging the election, and to highlight the high cost of living.

Thousands of Kenyans heeded Odinga's calls for anti-government protests on Mondays and Thursdays and held three rallies despite a government ban on demonstrations. Violence broke out, including fighting between police and protesters, torching of property and the use of tear gas.

In early April, the opposition suspended the protests after agreeing to talks with Ruto's



Ruto

AUSTRALIAN Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has expressed frustration at the United States's continuing efforts to extradite WikiLeaks founder and Australian citizen Julian Assange who has been in a high-security United Kingdom prison for the past four years as he fights the case.

Albanese, who is in the UK for King Charles III's coronation, said he was frustrated there had not yet been a diplomatic resolution to the issue and concerned about the mental health of the now 51-year-old.

Albanese said Assange's case had to be examined in terms of whether the time he had "effectively served" was more than a "reasonable" sentence if the allegations against him were proved.

Video Duration 25 minutes 00 seconds 25:00

The Imprisonment of Julian Assange | Fault Lines

Assange, an Australian citizen, has spent years battling in UK courts to prevent his extradition to the US, where he is wanted on criminal charges including espionage over the release of confidential US military records and diplomatic cables in 2010.

He was initially arrested in London that year following accusations of sexual assault in Sweden and two years later the UK's Supreme Court ruled he should be extradited to Sweden to face those charges.

Assange then broke bail to hole up in Ecuador's embassy in London where he sought asylum.

UK police forcibly removed him from the embassy in 2019 and the offer of asylum was withdrawn. Sweden eventually dropped the rape charges but the extradition process over

representatives but later announced the demonstrations would resume, accusing the government of not negotiating in good faith. The protests began again on Monday.

Ukraine delegate punches Russian at Black Sea meeting

A Ukrainian delegate has punched a Russian delegate in the face during a meeting of Black Sea nations after his Ukrainian flag was snatched away to stop him from photobombing a video interview.

Oleksandr Marikovski posted a video of himself thumping the Russian and retrieving the blue and yellow flag on his Facebook page on Thursday.

The incident in Turkey took place in a hallway of the parliament building in Ankara, where the Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) assembly was being held.

Earlier in the day, some Ukrainian delegates scuffled with security officers who tried to pull them away as

Australia PM against Wikileaks founder extradition

the leaks continued.

The UK approved his extradition in June last year, saying the courts had "not found that it would be oppressive, unjust or an abuse of process" to do so. However, it said Assange could appeal, which he did.

Assange's supporters say he is an anti-establishment hero who has been victimised because he exposed US wrongdoing in conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, and that his prosecution is a politically motivated assault on journalism and free speech.

US Army intelligence analyst Chelsea Manning, who was accused of stealing the classified diplomatic cables and military files that WikiLeaks later published, was jailed for 35 years for her role in the leak, but the sentence was commuted to seven years by then-US President Barack Obama and she was released in 2017.

Albanese said previously he has advocated for Assange in meetings with officials of US President Joe Biden. On Friday, he declined to say whether he would raise the issue with Biden when Albanese hosts the US leader along with leaders of India and Japan in Sydney on May 24.

Albanese said he did not want to get into an argument about whether Assange's alleged actions were right or wrong.

Originally, a UK judge ruled that Assange should not be deported, saying his mental health problems meant he would be at risk of suicide if convicted.

That decision was overturned on appeal after the US gave a package of assurances, including a promise Assange could be transferred to Australia to serve any sentence.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge alleged

that the action against Mr Gandhi was a consequence of his demand for investigation by a joint parliamentary committee to probe allegations against the Adani Group.

The conglomerate was accused of decades of "brazen" stock manipulation and accounting fraud by US-based short-seller Hindenburg Research earlier this year. The Adani Group has denied allegations of financial fraud.

Protesting MPs had planned to march to the official residence of President Droupadi Murmu. The Congress says it plans more protests against the government in the coming days.

A 2013 Supreme Court order says that a lawmaker convicted in a crime and sentenced to two or more years in jail stand disqualified from the parliament with immediate effect.

Ministers of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), however, criticised Mr Gandhi and his party for questioning the verdict.

Federal labour minister Bhupender Yadav said Mr Gandhi had insulted members of the caste grouping known as Other Backward Classes (OBC) under which the name "Modi" falls.

But India's former law minister Kapil Sibal, who quit the Congress party last year, called the court's decision "bizarre".

He also said Mr Gandhi's comments were directed at "an individual" and not a community.

In his reaction to the verdict, Mr Gandhi tweeted a quote by Mahatma Gandhi, "My religion is based on truth and non-violence. Truth is my God,

truth is my God,

they staged a protest, shouting and holding their flags next to Russia's lead delegate as she tried to address the assembly.

Pictures of the disturbance were posted by the Turkish parliament on its website, and Mustafa Sentop, the parliament's head, issued a stiff rebuke.

"I condemn this behaviour that disrupts the peaceful environment that Turkey is trying to establish," he said.

While representatives from the 13 countries in the BSEC met, Russian drones continued to attack the Ukrainian capital Kyiv. There are currently no peace talks to end the war, which has devastated Ukrainian towns and cities, killed thousands of people and driven millions from their homes.



Putin



Alisigwe set to cater for less privilege, establish studio

Chiege Alisigwe came into limelight after starring alongside Ramsey Nuoah in the blockbuster movie 'My Love' in 1998. She has since become one of the most-sought-after actresses in Nollywood. In this interview, the delectable actress talks about her NGO, which she recently set up to cater for the welfare of the less-privileged people in our society as well as her plans to establish a studio among other issues.

You recently set up an NGO. What is it all about?

What I had in mind when I set up my NGO was to use the platform to reach out to the less privileged people in our society. You know, somebody might be looking good but inwardly, he or she has a lot of problems bothering him. So, we really want to see how we can assist them in our own little way.

Have you reconciled with your husband?

I don't know. I hate talking about my private life. But what I know is that I have a child now.

Which part of your body do you like most?

There are certain things God has blessed me with that make me to feel like a real woman. They are my boobs and my face. I am not saying that anybody who is flat chested is bad, the person still looks good. But if I dress, I will first admire myself before the mirror, I always thank God for making me a complete woman.

Like something you know many are paying to have, I have it naturally. And I thank God the way he made me. I am very grateful, I cannot ask for more.

Like how much can you insure these places you like most?

Money cannot be enough when it comes to those areas. I don't pray for anything to happen to these places. I am ok the way I am.

Are you comfortable with the kind of movies that are coming out of Nollywood?

I am not comfortable at all. Though there are some good movies, the fact remains that Nollywood needs to step up its game in the area of production. Because, majority still need amendments here and there. I want the industry to produce quality movies. I want them to come out with something more challenging.

How has married life been with you?

Well, married life is good. Though there are ups



and down, it is sweet at the same time, it is sour. You cannot just say it is all bed of roses but it is good. It is good because when the going is sweet, you love it the more but when the going is bad, you will still be there provided it is not life and death.

Does your marriage affect your career (Acting)?

No, it does not.

You stopped acting for a while now, what happened?

No, actually, I didn't stop. But somehow, you do not need to act one million movies in a day. You have to advise yourself, I am the married woman that wants to combine my family with my career, and then you have to compromise. You think about your family first. No matter what you do, your family comes first.

How did you start acting?

Well, that was in 1998. When I left secondary school, I took JAMB; and I entered into the movie industry. To me then, it was a sort of whiling away time while I was still waiting for my JAMB result.

Not like now you see people desperately want to act. It was not like that for me.

Was it like a passion you wanted to use to pass time?

Number one, I love acting because, I use to

Nollywood actors/actresses who featured in international movies

The Nollywood industry has experienced major growth in recent years with the quality of the pictures, script and acting. Some of the biggest Nollywood stars have also transcended the Nigerian space and have caught the attention of international producers. Here are the Nollywood actors who have appeared in international movies:

Olu Jacobs: The legendary Olu Jacobs paved the way for other actors and actresses who have the opportunity to be featured in Hollywood movies now. His first international feature was in the 1980's action drama, 'Dog of War'. He played the role of a corrupt customs officer in the movie directed by John Irvin. In 1985, he played the role of Colonel Nsoyibo in a fantasy film set in Africa, 'Baby: Secret of the Lost Legend'. He appeared in Roman Polanski's 'Pirates' in 1986. In the movie, he played the role of 'Boomako, a pirate who was supposed to save his kidnapped captain.



Jim Iyke: In 2013, Jim Iyke was casted as 'Zuma' in the American romance movie, 'And Then There Was You.' The movie was directed and written by Leila Djansi, a Ghanaian-American filmmaker. Other cast members included Brian White, Lynn Whitfield, and Garcelle Beauvais. The movie is about a woman who was trying to pick up the pieces of her life after her husband leaves her for his secret family.



Continued on page 25

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EYE'S ON THE WORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Living

Understanding second marriage challenges

By **RACHAEL PACE**

RELATIONSHIPS come and go, and that's to be expected. What's not typically expected is becoming a second wife.

You didn't grow up thinking; I can't wait until I meet a divorced man! Somehow, you probably have always pictured someone who has never been married.

It doesn't mean that it can't be wonderful. It doesn't mean that it won't last. It just means that being a second wife comes with a lot of challenges along the way.

Here are challenges of being a second wife to watch out for:

Negative stigma

"Oh, this is your second wife." There is just something you feel from people when they realize you are the second wife; like you are the consolation prize, only second place.

One of the disadvantages of being a second wife is that for some reason, people are far less accepting of a second wife.

It's like when you are a kid, and you have had the same best friend since you were a baby; then, suddenly, in high school, you have a new best friend.

But by then, no one can picture you without that first friend. It's a hard stigma to run away from and can lead to many second marriage challenges.

The statistics are stacked against you

Depending on the source, divorce rates are pretty scary. A typical statistic out there now says that 50 percent of first marriages end in divorce, and 60 percent of second marriages end in divorce.

Why is it higher the second time around? Could be many factors, but since a person in the marriage has already gone through a divorce, the option seems available and not as scary.

Obviously, it doesn't mean your marriage will end, just that it is more likely to than the first.

First marriage baggage

If the person in the second marriage who was married before didn't have children, then chances are they never have to even talk to their ex again. But that doesn't mean that they aren't a little wounded.

Relationships are hard, and if things go wrong, we get hurt. That's life. We may also learn that if we don't want to get hurt again, to put

up a wall, or other such adjustments. That kind of baggage can be detrimental to a second marriage and undermine any benefits of being the second wife.

Being a stepparent

Being a parent is hard enough; in reality, being a stepparent is out of this world hard.

Some children may not accept a new mother or father figure, so instilling values or upholding rules with them may prove difficult.

This can make for a challenging

home life from day to day. Even if children are more or less accepting, the ex more than likely won't be ok with the new person in their child's life.

Even extended family like grandparents, aunts, and uncles, etc., may not ever see you as an actual "parent" of the other person's biological child.

A second marriage gets serious quick

Many first marriages start with two young, giddy people, unfettered by the realities of life. The world is their oyster. They dream big. Every possibility seems available to them.

But over the years, as we get in our 30s and 40s, we mature and realize that life just happens, no matter if you plan for other things.

Second marriages are like that. Second marriages are like the mature version of you getting married again.

You are a little older now, and you learned some harsh realities. So second marriages tend to have less of the giddiness and more of the serious daily life attached.

Financial issues

A married couple that stays together can rack up plenty of debt, but what about a marriage that ends?

That tends to bring with it even more debt and insecurities.

There is splitting the assets, each person taking on whatever debt there is, plus paying attorney fees, etc. Divorce can be an expensive proposition.

Then there is the hardship of making a living by yourself as a single person. All of that financial mess can translate into a financially difficult second marriage.

Nontraditional holidays

When your friends talk about Christmas and having the whole family there together—you're over there thinking, "The ex has the kids

for Christmas..." Bummer.

There are many things about a divorced family that can be nontraditional, especially holidays. It can be challenging when you expect those normally happen times of the year to be a certain way, but then they aren't so much.

Relationship issues we all face

While a second marriage can be successful, it's still a relationship composed of two imperfect people. It is still bound to have some of the same relationship issues that we all face from time to time.

It can be a challenge if wounds from old relationships aren't quite healed.

Second wife syndrome

Even though there can be many advantages of being a second wife, you might feel inadequate when filling the spaces left behind by the ex-wife and kids.

This can lead to a much-known phenomenon known as the 'second wife syndrome.' Here are some signs that you have allowed the second wife syndrome to fester in your home:

- You constantly feel that your partner knowingly or unknowingly puts his previous family before you and your needs.
- You get easily insecure and offended as you feel that everything your spouse does revolve around his ex-wife and kids.
- You find yourself constantly comparing yourself with his ex-wife.
- You feel the need to establish more control over the decisions of your partner.
- You feel stuck and feel as if you do not belong where you are.

Being a second wife to a married man can be overwhelming, and if you are not cautious enough, you might find yourself stuck in a loop of insecurities.

Hence, before you embark on your marital journey, you must understand the second marriage problems and how to handle them.



EVERYBODY'S WORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Relationship

Common reasons unhappy couples stay married

By **MARTIN HAREID**

THERE are many reasons why people decide to stay together even though they're dissatisfied with their current relationship or marriage, from financial reasons to religious pressures and even just the fear of what life would be like without their significant other. However, people overlook the fact that there are negative consequences of staying in an unhappy marriage.

To discover the most common reasons why so many of us decide to stay in an unhappy marriage or in relationships that don't make us happy found that the most common reasons why people prefer staying in unhappy marriage are as follows:

For the kids

"A common claim for why people will stay in an unhappy marriage is that they are staying together for the children," "A common misconception is that the children will be better off if the two unhappy spouses stay together.

While it is certainly true that divorce will affect children, it is a complete myth that children will be immune from their parents' unhealthy and unhappy marriage".

Fear of hurting our partners

Another common fear of getting divorced or ending a relationship is hurting your significant other. A study published in the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology in 2018 found that frequently, people are motivated to stay in relatively unfulfilling relationships for the sake of their romantic partner rather than putting their interests first.

This can make things difficult, drawing out the process even further.

Watch this video to get a clearer



idea about hurting others and post betrayal syndrome.

3. Religious beliefs

"A spouse might opt staying in an unhappy marriage if they believe there is a stigma in the idea of marriage or refuse to recognize the concept of divorce for religious purposes," says Arthur. "While the divorce rate is approximately 55%, many people still refuse to accept the idea of divorce no matter how unhappy they may feel in marriage.

"Over the years, I have represented clients who, notwithstanding having been physically and emotionally

abused by their spouses for decades, have fought to stay married for religious and cultural reasons.

In one instance, my client literally had a stack of photographs showing various bruises over the years and yet was pleading with me to help her contest her husband's complaint for divorce as she could not accept the religious ramifications".

Fear of judgment

As well as possible religious ramifications, those thinking about getting a divorce can often be worried about what their

friends and families may think. A recent study found that 30% of US adults think divorce is unacceptable, no matter the reason.

While a further 37% say, divorce is only okay under certain circumstances. As a result, it's pretty understandable that many of those thinking about getting a divorce experience fear of judgment and criticism from those around us.

Sense of identity

Those who've been in a relationship for quite a long time say they can sometimes feel unsure of how to 'be' when they're not in the relationship. That's because a marriage or long-term relationship such as this can often play an integral role in our sense of who we are.

Being a girlfriend, wife, husband, boyfriend, or partner is a massive part of our identities. When we're no longer in a relationship or marriage, we can sometimes feel lost and unsure of ourselves. This can be a pretty daunting feeling that appears to contribute to many peoples' reasoning behind staying with their current partner, despite their discontent.

Fear of the unknown

Lastly, one of the biggest and possibly most daunting reasons why so many unhappily married couples stay together is because of a fear of what might happen, how they'll feel, or how things will be if they take the plunge and opt for a divorce. It's not just the divorce process that's a daunting prospect, but the time afterwards.

'Will I ever find someone else?', 'How will I cope on my own?', 'Isn't it better to just stick with the

status quo?'... These are all widespread thoughts for those who are contemplating a divorce.

What should I do if I'm in this situation?

If any of these reasons resonate with you – know you're not alone. Whilst every marriage is different, many couples share similar experiences, leaving them feeling uncertain about their future and worried about the prospect of divorce. Getting out of a daunting relationship is far better than staying in an unhappy marriage.

Divorce doesn't have to be a daunting or stressful process. There's so much accessible information out there, alongside people who can provide judgment-free support, advice, and help, whether that's friends, family members, relationship counselors, divorce lawyers, or dedicated and reliable information sources on the topic of divorce and separation.

Taking that first step and asking for help or confiding in a close friend or family member can make all the difference in setting you on the path to a happier and brighter future.

You need to identify if you are unhappy in marriage. Do you feel suffocated in your marriage? Do you advocate that you are unhappily married? There are so many factors that need evaluation when it comes to marriage, but if you are looking for reasons to stay in your marriage, there is something definitely off.

Talk to your partner or go to therapy. Even if you want to get out of it, you should take some consultation, but you need to take charge and ensure that you are not staying unhappily married.





Reality Bites

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Commemorating victims of violence

THE human rights of persons, related to Freedom of Religion or Belief, Freedom of opinion and Expression, the right to peaceful assembly and the right to freedom of association are still a challenge in many countries including Nigeria.

Such rights are enshrined in articles 18, 19 and 20 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Nigerian constitution also gives citizens rights to freedom of religion, expression and association.

But sadly, upholding such rights that plays an important role in the fight against all forms of intolerance and of discrimination based on religion or belief is still a challenge in the country.

Rights activists call for the open, constructive and respectful debate of ideas, as well as interreligious, interfaith, and intercultural dialogue, at the local, national, regional and international levels, which they say are virtues that can play a positive role in combating religious hatred, incitement and violence.

In 2019, the US placed Nigeria on the 'Special Watch List (SWL)' of countries that have engaged or tolerated "Severe violations of religious freedom". religious persecution.

Countries like Burma, China, Eritrea, Iran, North Korea, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan were tagged to be of particular concern by the US Department for violating the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998, while Russia and Uzbekistan were placed on a special watch list, including Cuba, Nicaragua, Nigeria and Sudan for governments that have tolerated "severe violations of religious freedom".

Continuing acts of intolerance and violence based on religion or belief against individuals, including against persons belonging to religious communities and religious minorities around the world, and the number and intensity of such incidents, which are often of a criminal nature and may have international characteristics, are increasing, say many bodies.

That is why the General Assembly adopted the resolution A/RES/73/296, titled "International Day Commemorating the Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief" to be marked on August 2022, to strongly condemn continuing violence and acts of terrorism targeting individuals, including persons belonging to religious minorities, on the basis of or in the name of religion or belief.

The Member States, including Nigeria reaffirmed their unequivocal condemnation of all acts, methods and practices of terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism, in all its forms and manifestations, wherever and by whomsoever committed, regardless of their motivation, and reiterated that terrorism and violent extremism as and when conducive to terrorism, in all its forms and manifestations, cannot and should



not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group.

The Day comes right after the International Day of Remembrance and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism, 21 August.

The day is to sensitise the public, governments against acts of violence against persons on the basis of their religion or belief, as well as any such acts directed against their homes, businesses, properties, schools, cultural centres or places of worship, as well as all attacks on and in religious places, sites and shrines that are in violation of international law.

A United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) delegation came to Nigeria in June 4-11 2022 to Assess Religious Freedom to meet with Nigerian and U.S. government officials, religious communities, civil society representatives, and human rights defenders to assess religious freedom conditions and discuss threats facing Nigerians of a range of faiths and worldviews.

Head of the USCIRF team, Commissioner Frederick Davie said Nigeria is home to diverse religious and belief communities, and added "We were fortunate to learn from an array of perspectives about the state of religious freedom in the country. Our meetings highlighted the complexity of the drivers of violence in Nigeria and the intersection of religious freedom and other security and human rights concerns".

After its engagements with the stakeholders, the USCIRF said it looked forward to incorporating the findings from this visit into its foreign policy recommendations to the President, the Secretary of State, and Congress relating to religious freedom in Nigeria.

Apart from past occurrences, Nigeria has this year recorded some incidents of violence impacting Christians or Muslims. On May 12, a violent mob at Shehu Shagari College of Education in Muslim-majority Kano state stoned Christian university student Deborah Samuel to death and burned her body because they considered remarks she made in a WhatsApp thread insulting to Islam. On May 22, violent actors in the Christian-majority southeast killed

pregnant Muslim Hausa woman Harira Jubril and her four children. On June 4, a violent mob in the capital city of Abuja beat, stoned, and burned Muslim local defense force member Ahmad Usman to death for alleged blasphemy. On June 5, armed assailants attacked worshippers celebrating Pentecost Sunday in a Catholic church in Owo, Ondo state, killing at least 40 people.

There are also sad stories of how the Kidnapped Dapchi School girl, Leah

Sharibu, has still not been released from the hands of her captors Boko Haram insurgents since 2019, because she refused to denounce her Christian faith; and in 2020, the brutal honour killing/execution of a Christian student of University of Maiduguri Ropvil Daciya, by religious extremists for his faith, with the execution circulated on social media.

The USCIRF has condemned these attacks and all violence that threatens religious freedom in Nigeria stating that "All these incidents were truly horrific and demonstrated the challenges facing Christians and Muslims in Nigeria,".

In marking the 2022 UN international Day commemorating the victims of violence based on religion or belief, the United States Department of State has honoured slain Sokoto student, Deborah Samuel, the 200 Level student of Home Economics at Shehu Shagari College of Education, Sokoto, who was murdered by Islamic extremists and set ablaze after she advised her classmates against posting religious materials on their WhatsApp page.

Deborah's picture was uploaded on the website of the US Office of Religious Freedom.

Honouring Deborah, the office wrote, "In May, a mob brutally stoned, flogged, and burned to death college student Deborah Samuel in Nigeria, in an attack fueled by hatred and blasphemy allegations, even as authorities attempted to stop it. We honor her life as we continue the work to end such vicious violence.

As we remember victims who lost their lives as a result of religious intolerance, there is need for every citizen in the country to appreciate and understand that there is beauty in diversity of opinion, expression, religion, and cultural differences.



EVERYBODY'S WORLD

With *Henrietta Gonzuk*

Living

Are you sacrificing too much in your relationship?

CLOSE relationships require sacrifice. Here are seven questions to ask yourself before you give up too much.

Your spouse comes home from work and excitedly tells you that she just was offered a promotion—in another state. Do you quit your job and move away from your family to an unknown city so that she can pursue her career ambitions? Should you?

Close relationships require sacrifice. In fact, many people include sacrificing in the very definition of what it means to truly love another person—and indeed, research has shown that couples are happier and more likely to remain in their relationships if the partners are willing to sacrifice for each other. Sometimes that sacrifice can be life-changing, such as deciding to move to a different state in order to be with your partner; other times it might be something small and seemingly mundane, such as seeing an action movie instead of the comedy you would have chosen.

Sacrifice also raises questions of power: If you are happy to sacrifice early in the relationship and your partner isn't reciprocating, you may find yourself in a situation where you are the one who is always expected to give up and give in. Over time this imbalanced pattern of sacrifice may lead to an imbalance of power in your relationship—a recipe for long-term unhappiness and resentment. **1.**

How committed are you? Is this the person you plan to spend forever with, or do you still harbor reservations? In order for a big sacrifice to be worth it, you should make sure that you are invested in the relationship and confident about your future together. Nothing is certain, of course, but a sacrifice becomes much more palatable when it helps bring you closer to the person with whom you want to spend the rest of your life.

2. Would your partner do the same for you? Sacrifice is two-sided: While you are deciding whether or not to move across the country to let your spouse take his promotion, your spouse must decide whether or not to sacrifice his promotion in order to let you keep your job. So as you debate whether or not to make a sacrifice.

3. Does one of you want it more? When a situation requires sacrifice from you or your partner, the two of you may not be equally invested in the outcome. Perhaps your partner really wants to attend her family reunion, and although you don't relish missing your work event, you know your co-workers will understand, and the family reunion is a one-time thing. As you navigate the situation, make sure you are both clear about your own desires and priorities.

4. Does your partner know it's a sacrifice? There is no need to rub your potential sacrifice in your partner's face, or use it against them, but if your partner isn't aware that you consider your act to be a sacrifice, he or she won't be able to appreciate your selflessness. In addition, by not realizing that you are incurring a cost for the sake of the relationship, your partner might not understand when you want her to return the favor the next time a sacrifice is called for. Finally, it is



important to know if your partner disagrees with you and does not see your actions as a sacrifice. Has your partner expressed thanks for your willingness to sacrifice?

5. Is there a better solution? Rather than simply trying to pick through the choices at hand, you should be working with your partner to see if there is a solution that doesn't require much of a sacrifice from either of you.

6. Can you negotiate? Although close relationships require that you give when giving is needed, it doesn't mean you and your partner can't make an arrangement that suits both of you. For example, you can work it out so that you eat at the restaurant you want, and go to the movie your partner wants to see. This may even work for the bigger sacrifices. You could make the move to the new city, but agree that there will be money set aside in a travel budget so that you can fly home to visit your family some number of times a year.

7. What's your motivation? In many respects, this is the most important question you need to ask yourself. Research shows that people engage in sacrifice for many different reasons, and not all of them lead to happily ever after.

Are you moving cross-country to make your partner happy and keep your relationship going—or are you simply trying to avoid conflict? Sacrifices motivated by avoidance can undermine happiness and satisfaction in a relationship.

There is an alternative: When you sacrifice to make your partner happy, that can potentially increase trust and happiness. People who sacrifice for "approach-motivated" reasons—for long-term collective

gain as a couple or to help fulfill your partner's dreams—tend to be happier and have more satisfying relationships.

Although sacrificing to make a partner happy can be a good thing, it may be trouble if you find yourself constantly sacrificing out of a desire to be the "good" partner and satisfy your partner at the cost of your own happiness. People who consistently prioritize other's needs above their own—a situation can pay a cost in self-esteem and mental health over the long run. Sacrifice is a hallmark of a close relationship, but it should not lead to neglecting your own

needs.

Along similar lines, you should ask yourself whether your sacrifice was motivated by a desire to help your partner—or to hold the sacrifice over your partner's head. Psychologist Aleksandr Kogan has shown that genuine helping is healthy, but using sacrifice as a bargaining chip in your relationship may lead to resentment from your partner.

In addition, although there is nothing wrong with negotiating with your partner, choosing to make a sacrifice and then silently expecting your partner to take the fall the next time may mean disappointment for

both of you. In close relationships, people typically hold mutual expectations—they believe their partner will help them when they need it and sacrifice without expecting to be paid back in kind. Relationships require sacrifice, but we shouldn't give up or give in without thinking it through. It is important to consider the pros and cons, have clear communication with your partner, ask the tough questions, and make sure you are sacrificing for the right reasons. The right kind of sacrifice can bring people together, but sacrificing for the wrong reasons may be worse than no sacrifice at all.



BUSINESS WORLD

How to improve Nigeria's trade exports

I don't know anyone who will dispute the fact that trade is an all-important economic lever for many countries across the world. Whether advanced or developing, international trade enables countries to access markets and services that may not have been available domestically, thereby causing a boost in revenue for the exporting nation, options in good and services for consumers of the importing nation, and allowing both improve the economy and standard of living of the people.

THE World Bank confirms that countries that embrace international trade tend to grow faster, innovate rapidly, provide higher income, and create more opportunities for their people.

For Nigeria, trade is critical to the national economic makeup. In 2021, Nigeria exported \$57.7 billion of goods, making it the world's 52nd most exporting country. Nigeria's top export during this period was crude oil which netted the government \$41.8 billion.

Other top-selling export products were special-purpose ships and cocoa beans. Nigeria's top export destinations during the financial year of 2021 included India, Spain, South Korea, China, Netherlands, France, and the United States of America. While Nigeria remains a modest exporter of goods—the importance of which continues to be hinged on the sale of crude oil, the country still has a lot of potential to fulfil concerning trade exports.

It has been reported that existential trade-related challenges like lack of access to foreign exchange, high cost of doing business, the vast gulf in the shortage of essential trade infrastructure, the threat of crime and persistent security lacunae, corruption, lack of effective judicial process, slow and bureaucratic ports process, arbitrary governmental decision-making process, logistics constraints, limited market access, and many other minor challenges continue to deprive Nigeria of its full export potentials.

The consortium of trade constraints affecting Nigeria's export processes means that Nigeria's non-oil exports need to catch up to reach the level of many of its African peers. However, regardless of the dire nature of the situation, there remains a glimmer of hope within Nigeria's export industry.

In January 2023, the Nigerian Export Promotion Council (NEPC) reported that Nigeria generated \$4.82 billion from non-oil exports in 2022, a 39.91% increase in non-export revenues from 2021. This trade statistic shows that Nigeria's trade industry can reach greater heights if the country's non-oil export base is fully harnessed.

These are some of the methods I believe Nigeria can use to secure its export base and supercharge its economy in a way that will lift millions of Nigerians out of multidimensional poverty.

1. We need to reduce the cost of doing business

The exorbitant cost of manufacturing goods in Nigeria remains a reason Nigeria's trade export has not grown to higher



Adebayo

levels. In a survey conducted by the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN), between 2018-2021, it was discovered that close to 400 big businesses collapsed in Nigeria because of rising business costs.

Further, in recent funding conducted by BusinessDay, it was found that manufacturing firms listed on the Nigerian Stock Exchange expended more than N207 billion naira as energy costs within the first half of 2022 alone.

This was N45 billion higher than the N155 billion energy costs incurred by the firms within the first half of 2021. The manufacturing firms in question included Dangote Sugar Refinery, BUA Foods, NASCON Allied Industries, Dangote Cement, BUA Cement, and GlaxoSmithKline Nigeria, amongst many other publicly listed companies.

If we look at it deeply, we find that the two primary reasons that contribute to the rising business costs include the volatile exchange rate in Nigeria and the skyrocketing energy prices. For

instance, BusinessDay noted that the price of diesel, which traded at N288.09 per liter on average in January 2022, rose to N774.38 per liter in July. This alone represents a 168.8 percent surge in the price of diesel.

The Nigerian government must address the general economic issues at the source to boost Nigerian exports by stemming the rising cost of doing business for Nigerian manufacturers. Chief Olusegun Osunkeye, a former Chairman of Nestlé Nigeria PLC, has advised the Nigerian government at all levels to embark on a cross-cutting venture to provide Nigerians with the basic amenities needed to carry out business activities, some of which include stable electricity, potable water, durable roads and operational efficiencies at Nigerian ports.

He stressed that without the 'basic' infrastructural efficiencies, it would be nearly impossible for any entrepreneur to do business in Nigeria, talk less about exporting goods to other parts of

the world.

To this end, the Nigerian government must reduce the cost of doing business for Nigerians.. It must be noted that the Companies and Allied Matters Re-enactment Act (CAMA) 2020 which reduced the incorporation cost for Nigerian startups, and the recent \$618million tech fund are right steps in the right direction for supporting the business environment but it must as well do more to reduce the limitations, hurdles, and costs of doing business in the country.

2. We need to improve market access for Nigerian exports

In a report by the Africa International Trade and Commerce Research (AITCR) conducted in partnership with the Nigerian Export Promotion Council, it was reported that Nigerian shea butter and ginger have significant export potential in various international markets across Asia, Europe, and the United States.

While the initial question over

the business viability of many Nigerian products like shea-butter and ginger has now been settled, the ultimate question remains the market access for these goods. We should take cognizance of what we must do to allow Nigerian exporters to gain access to a wider global market with goods that meet the required standards across the world.

To improve market access for Nigerian goods, the Nigerian Export Promotion Council (NEPC) has tasked Nigerian exporters to embrace food safety systems that enable their products to gain market access to many export domains worldwide. The NEPC has sounded the alarm that with the coming of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA), it has become imperative for non-oil exporters in Nigeria to acquire additional certifications to enable them to compete effectively in global markets.

Some of the certifications and training programs provided by the NEPC to build the capacity of Nigerian exporters and improve the market access of Nigerian goods include the National Cashew Certification Programme, NEPC Common Facility Centre (CFC) for Leather and Leather Products, NEPC Human Capital Development Centre for Apparel and Garments, amongst many others.

3. We need to harmonise policies at all levels

PwC maintains that inconsistent government policies wreak far-reaching havoc on export activities in Nigeria. The report claims to have found that implementation of government policies is lacking in accountability and transparency. It also reveals that ineffective citizen engagement affects many exporters' trade activities.

We have seen incongruent government policies like the closure of the Nigerian border in 2020, the restrictions of FX for milk and corn importation and many more that have had adverse effects on manufacturers in Nigeria.

I call on the government at all levels to assiduously harmonize its policies to enhance Nigeria's trade and manufacturing industry. Only then can trade exports in Nigeria receive a massive boost.

Conclusion

I believe that the provisions above will significantly boost Nigerian trade exports. If we can create an environment that attracts investment, provide support through adequate amenities, improved market access to Nigerian exporters, and well-aligned policies, Nigerian exports can advance and become valuable export goods in the global market.

BUSINESS WORLD

FG rakes oil revenue worth N1.4tn in February

THE Federal Government earned the sum of N1.4tn from oil export in February. Earnings from oil export rose marginally last month, as oil output increased by 100,000 barrels per day, amounting to a rise of 2.8 million barrels in the month, according to data gathered from Reuters' secondary source survey for February.

A breakdown of the statistics showed that a rise in crude oil production by 100,000 per day translates to a 2.8 million output increase in February.

The total production for February was put at 1.3 million barrels per day, amounting to an output of about 36,400 million for the month.

Nigeria's crude grade, Bonny Light, was sold for \$84 per barrel in February, translating to total earnings of about N1.408tn.

According to a direct source, checks on production data provided by the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries Monthly Oil Market Report for January showed that crude oil output was 1.2 million barrels per day in January. This amounted to a production output of about 37 million barrels in the month. The commodity was sold at \$82 per barrel in January,



Kyari

amounting to earnings of about N1.405tn. The development came on the heels of a recent report by the National Bureau of Statistics, saying that crude oil production contracted by 13 per cent year-on-year in the fourth quarter of last year.

According to NBS, Nigeria recorded an average daily oil output of 1.3 million barrels per day in the fourth quarter of 2022, lower than the daily average of 1.50 mbpd recorded in the same quarter of 2021.

The Group Chief Executive Officer of the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited, Mele Kyari, recently blamed low crude oil

production on theft resulting from pipeline vandalism.

A professor of Economics and Public Policy at the University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Akpan Ekpo said that despite crude oil retaining 80 per cent of the total trade, the country should rely less on crude oil revenue.

On his part, a lawyer advising NNPC Ltd on oil and gas projects and transactions and partner at Bloomfield Law Practice, Ayodele Oni, urged the Federal Government to provide solutions to the oil theft challenges bedeviling the country in order to record more growth.

CLEARING agents operating at the nation's seaports have called on the president-elect, Asiwaju Bola Tinubu, to increase the age limit of imported used vehicles also known as tokunbo to 15 years from date of manufacture.

The agents, under the aegis of Association of Nigerian Licenced Customs Agents (ANLCA), in a congratulatory message to Tinubu on his electoral victory on Wednesday, said the new administration when sworn in should as well ensure the reduction of 15 per cent levy on used vehicles.

The congratulatory message by the association's acting president, Dr Kayode Farinto, who is also the Lagos State coordinator of the Progressive Solidarity for Asiwaju (PSA), a support group of Maritime stakeholders and allied industries in the sub-sector of the Nigeria's economy, said the group is proud of the All Progressive Congress (APC), successes at the elections and urged the President-elect to work for a better Nigeria.

He said: "on the issue of age limits on used vehicles- tokunbo vehicles- we want the government to increase the importation age limits to about 15 years from the date of manufacture and the reduction of 15% levy on used vehicles and all that we have proposed to the President-elect should

be address."

He stated that the current CG, Col. Hameed Ali (rtd), has stagnated the growth of cargo clearance and Customs operations in the country.

Farinto called on the president-elect to beam his searchlight on the maritime industry which is an alternative source of revenue for the government.

He stated that the sector is now the revenue basket of Nigeria aside oil, saying for his government to successfully reap the revenue accruing in the sector, Maritime professionals should be part of the think tank either as agency heads or as board members.

To him, "frankly, inline with international best practices, the new Comptroller General of the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) must as a matter of necessity be appointed from and among the proper officers and not this aberration that has stagnated the growth of cargo clearance and Nigeria Customs operations in our nation.

"I want the government of Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu to beam its searchlight on the maritime industry, which is now the revenue basket of Nigeria, aside from oil. For his government to successfully reap the revenue accruing in the sector, Maritime professionals should be

part of the think tank in this government, either as agency heads or as board members."

Farinto said the Nigeria Maritime industry is ready to work with the government of Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu in the sector to advance its course.

"We want the Federal Ministry of Transportation to be balkanised, thereby creating Federal Ministry of Maritime Affairs, where agencies like National Inland Waterways Authority (NIWA) and others will be part of to harness the maritime industry fully and how we can fully explore the Nigeria's Blue Economy project for increase revenue earnings for the federal government, create employment for our teeming youths and add value to the nation's economy.

'Increase age limit of Tokunbo vehicles'



Hameed

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"The hard earned victory of Bola Tinubu and his running mate Kashim Shettima at the 2023 Presidential election is a testimony of their acceptance and trust by all Nigerians to lead our country to the promised land.

"I want to urge all maritime stakeholders to support the APC Government of Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu and Kashim Shettima so that we can all benefit as professionals.

Banks' assets increase to N73tn – CBN

THE Central Bank of Nigeria has disclosed that total assets of the banking industry grew by N14.36tn or 24.24 per cent from N59.24tn at the end of December 2021 to N73.59tn in the corresponding period of 2022.

CBN made this known in a personal statement made by the Deputy Governor, Financial System Stability Directorate, CBN, Aishah Ahmad, at the last Monetary Policy Committee meeting.

She said, "Key industry aggregates also continued their year-on-year upward trajectory with total assets rising to N73.59tn in December 2022 from N59.24tn in December 2021, while total deposits rose to N45.50tn from N38.42tn over the same period.

"Total credit also increased by N5.14tn between end December 2021 and end-December 2022 with significant growth in credit to manufacturing, general commerce and oil & gas sectors. This impressive increase was achieved amid continued decline in non-

performing loans ratio from 4.90 per cent in December 2021 to 4.20 per cent in December 2022."

According to her, the financial system had provided significant support for needed domestic economic resilience amid global shocks and remained strong into 2023.

Data provided by Bank staff, she said, indicated stability in broad soundness indicators and an unprecedented improvement in asset quality, even as credit to the private sector continued to grow.

She noted that the capital adequacy as of December 2022 was robust at 13.83 per cent, 383 basis points above the regulatory minimum of 10 per cent.

Industry liquidity was also strong at 44.10 per cent over the same period and supported by significant cash reserve requirement buffers available to provide liquidity backstops, should banks require it, she noted.

Ahmad said, "The sector also benefitted from ingenious initiatives such as the naira redesign and revised cash withdrawal limit policies, all

expected to strengthen the banking channel of monetary policy transmission.

"Furthermore, results of stress tests showed resilience of banks' solvency and liquidity ratios in response to potential severe macroeconomic shocks.

According to her, the economy had continued on a path of positive growth for eight consecutive quarters, driven largely by support from the Bank and the fiscal authority to output enhancing sectors.

Based on data from the National Bureau of Statistics, she said, Real Gross Domestic Product grew by 2.25 per cent (year-on-year) in the third quarter of 2022, compared with 3.54 per cent in the second quarter of 2022 and 4.03 per cent in the

corresponding period of 2021.

Staff projections indicated that output growth recovery was expected to continue reasonably into 2023, given the expected sustained positive performance during the fourth quarter of 2022 and steady rebound in economic activities, she said.

She noted that the optimism was further supported by the marginal improvement in the composite Purchasing Manager's Index from 49.0 index points in November 2022 to 49.4 index points in December 2022, although it remained below the 50.0 index points threshold.

"Continued policy support is therefore crucial to strengthen output performance and preserve this positive output growth trajectory," she said.

Customs FOU Zone 'B' makes 130 seizures

The Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) Federal Operations Unit (FOU) Zone 'B' said it has made a total of 130 seizures of various contrabands worth total Duty Paid Value (DPV) of Three Hundred and Five Million, Seven Hundred and Ten Thousand, Five Hundred and Forty-Four Naira and Fifty-Five Kobo* (#305,710,544.55k) only.

According to the FOU Public Relations Officer (PRO) SC Isah Sulaiman in a statement he released on behalf of the Comptroller, Musa Ibrahim Jalo, he said in its efforts to weaken the activities of smugglers in the Zone, the Federal Operations Unit Zone 'B' Kaduna has from 1 January to 28 February

2023 made a total of 130 Seizures of different items at various locations in the Zone.

Units of Used Vehicles, 2 Units of Means of Conveyance, 724 Bags of Foreign Rice (50kg each), 6 Cartons of Foreign Machetes, 163 Jerrycans Vegetable Oil (25 litres each), and 646 Cartons of Foreign Spaghetti and Macaroni.

Other seized items are 90 Bales of Foreign Secondhand clothing, 569 packs of Foreign unregistered pharmaceutical products, 119 packs of unregistered Tramadol, and Tramaking 225mg 17 Sacks Foreign Secondhand Shoes, 7 Cartons of Foreign Cigarettes, 147 pieces of

Foreign Jack Knives 50 Cartons of Foreign soap and 635 Kegs of Premium Motor Spirit (25 Litres each).

The seized items he said were arrested in contravention of the Federal Government policies regarding imports and exports and were deposited at various Customs Formations in the Zone.

He further informed that in line with the extant laws and guidelines, the seized Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) was auctioned as directed by the NCS Headquarters, and the proceeds were remitted to the coffers of the Federal Government.

The Operatives of the Unit under the leadership of Comptroller Jalo he disclosed have stepped up

on the fight against smuggling across the border areas to make more arrests and cause financial loss to the smugglers.

The Comptroller he said reiterated the commitment of the Operatives of the Unit to their renewed efforts in the fight against smugglers and called on the communities around the border areas to provide useful information that will assist the Unit in achieving its mandate and also consider the Operatives of the Service as implementers of the Federal Government fiscal policies that are meant to improve and protect our industries thereby creating employments and boosting the economy of the Country.



Emefiele

ENTREPRENEUR WATCH

WITH CELESTINE D. ATTSAR

Opportunities for family-owned businesses

family-owned businesses are an integral part of the global economy, contributing to 70% of the global GDP. They have been instrumental in facilitating global economic recovery, constituting more than 30% of companies with sales over \$1 billion. CLIFFORD EGBOMEADE writes.

THESE businesses, passed down from one generation to another, have created jobs, contributed to local communities, and stimulated economic growth.

However, despite the significant contribution of family businesses to the global economy, the future of family-owned businesses is still uncertain due to various factors such as succession planning, globalisation, and technological advancements.

According to a 2021 global family business survey by PwC, 41% of family businesses in Nigeria expect a decline in sales growth. In fact, the survey shows that 60% of family-owned businesses do not have strong digital capabilities, while more than half reported that they have no governance structures and policies.

Succession planning, one of the main challenges facing family-owned businesses, involves preparing for the transfer of ownership and management of a business from one generation to the next. In Nigeria, only one out of every four family businesses has a robust, documented, and communicated succession plan in place. This deficiency in planning can lead to disputes, family conflicts, and ultimately the failure of the business.

To ensure the longevity of a family-owned business, it is crucial to have a well-defined succession plan. This plan will help identify potential successors, outline their roles and responsibilities, and establish a clear timeline for the transition of ownership and



management. A successful succession plan also involves developing the necessary skills, knowledge, and competency of the successor and providing them with the necessary resources to manage the

The rise of globalisation has also impacted family-owned businesses. Globalisation has

led to increased competition, changing consumer behaviour, and the need to adapt to different cultures and regulations. To stay competitive, it is critical for family-owned businesses to embrace globalisation and expand their operations beyond local

markets. Although expanding into new markets can be challenging, family-owned businesses can form strategic partnerships, hire local talent, and invest in research and development to create products and services that meet the needs of the local market. Family businesses in Nigeria are now placing high priority on expanding their businesses to diversify their revenue sources and mitigate risks, and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) presents opportunities for businesses to capitalise on. It is imperative for Nigerian family businesses to revamp their business processes by exploring innovative ways to leverage their domestic human capital and offer global services.

The rapid pace of technological advancements is another challenge facing family-owned businesses. The adoption of new technologies can help family-owned businesses increase efficiency, reduce costs, and improve their products and services. Many family-owned businesses are slow to adopt new technologies due to the lack of resources or the fear of disrupting traditional business practices. To remain competitive in the market, family-owned businesses should embrace technological advancements and invest in digital transformation. This includes

adopting new technologies such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, and the Internet of Things (IoT), among others.

In family-owned businesses, just like in any business, trustworthiness is often gauged by factors such as environmental, social, and governance (ESG) practices, as well as diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts, which are important not just to internal stakeholders but also to potential investors and partners. An example of a family-owned enterprise that has shown great commitment towards building a robust governance framework and promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion is Honeywell Group. This is evident in their executive leadership team, which comprises 60% women and 40% men. Through their unwavering dedication to social responsibility, sustainability, and investments in local communities, the Group has made a significant impact over the past 50 years.

In conclusion, despite the challenges that lie ahead, Nigerian family-owned businesses have the potential to adapt and thrive in the future. By leveraging new technologies, exploring new markets, and staying true to their values, these businesses can maintain their competitive edge and make significant contributions to the local and global economies.





Alisigwe set to cater for less privilege, establish studio

Continued from page 16

act drama in secondary school then. Secondly, I was waiting for my JAMB result so I want to use that to while away time. Because, I don't like staying idle. Even as a child, I used to do one or two things. I have always been an independent person. I would say that I started acting because I hate idleness.

How many movies have you acted this year?

I don't really know but it is not much.

You live outside the country most often?

I live here in Nigeria but most times, I travel out of the country because of the project I'm embarking on. I shuttle between Nigeria and the outside world. There are certain things I need to bring from there to this country that is why I travel most often. Like my cameras, I brought them down from there. Like the house of service I told you, I need some in Nigeria and likewise outside the country.

Like other actors and actresses who have ventured into the music industry. Are you planning to do the same?

I love singing, I have sang so many songs. But, we cannot keep acting all the time. Because if you continue like that, you can never have your time, you can never give your family that time they need. You act, you get another thing to fall back on in case if you are not there.

At the same time, you cut your shot. What I mean is this, if you are the boss of what you are doing, you can say, let me give this time to my family today and your assistance will take over. Also, tomorrow you can say let me go to work/location today. I don't want to spend all my time in working (acting). Where I can be answerable to somebody without being answerable to my husband.

So, you have to initiate something on your own by so doing, you can tell your workers, go and do this thing and you will go and relax. You can also be doing other things that will give you time to attend to your family. That does not mean I would not act for anybody anymore. I will act for people but I can never be the same like when I started as a young girl who does not have anybody to answer to.

Does it mean you choose the roles you act now?

Yes. I choose. I see the script. If I am not satisfied with it, I will tell you that I cannot act the script. If I am satisfied with that, I will go on with the script.

Do you think you still have a chance in the industry considering the number of actresses who are eager to act?

Well, I don't look at people's faces. I believe that whatever you are, it is on your own. If you are good, it is for your own good. I always tell people to be confident in themselves.

If you have self-confidence and a dragon is by your side, you can even say hi to the dragon and go your way the dragon would even turn back to follow your footsteps. Just be contented with yourself, how you act,, do you thing in your own way.

Don't mind how people do theirs. You will find out that a lot of people are out there who are following your footsteps without your knowledge. So I am not scared.

What are the challenges you are facing now?

Talking about my challenges now, I think it is

what I am building up that is giving me lots of challenges. The other challenge an actor/actress can face is that professionalism in the field, knowing what you are doing. By God's grace, we have the professionals in the industry. In fairness, I even love challenges so much.

What is your driving force in creating your own studio?

I decided to create my own studio because, I wanted something different apart from my acting. It is a kind of gradual step you have to take when you want to be there. I do not really want to have problem when I am there I will start looking for cameras or anything. I want to gather everything before I start the NGO. So that when I am out, they can finish everything without problems.

What do you intend to do with your NGO?

Ok, we want to reach to people because, so many Nigerians are hungry and I think I am happier if I am eating and the person beside me is eating as well. If am eating and the person beside me is hungry, I feel so unhappy. I derive joy in making people happy.

When do we hope to hear about the NGO well?

Not now because we are still working on it.

Tell us about your background?

I am Chiege Alisigwe from Orlu Local Government Area of Imo State. I am the last in the family of Eleven. I read fine and applied arts. I did my OND at Federal Polytechnic, Oko, before proceeding to IMT Enugu for Higher National Diploma. I did my youth service and now on the verge of doing my masters.



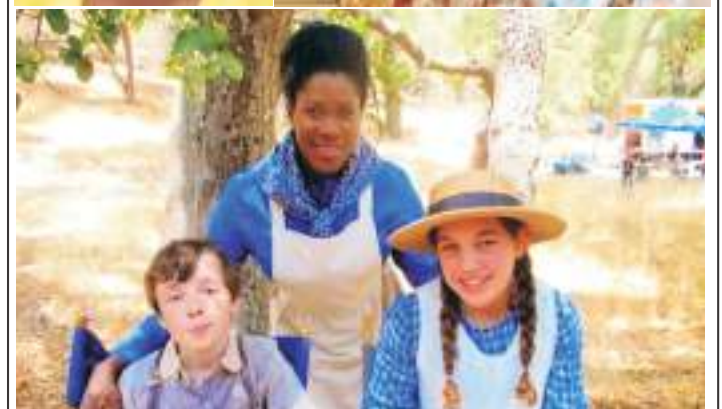
Nollywood actors/actresses who featured in international movies

Continued from page 16

Osas Ighodaro: Before Osas moved to Nigeria in 2012, she appeared in 5 American movies and three American TV series, including Tyler Perry's 'Meet The Browns'. Osas was part of the cast of the 2015 American movie, 'Where Children Play', directed by Leila Djansi. She played the role of 'Miranda Bailey', a supportive friend to the main character, 'Macy Gray' who was played by 'Teyonah Parris'.



Stephanie Linus: In 2016, Stephanie played the role of 'Doris', a compassionate former slave in Boonville redemption. The movie which was produced by American director and producer, Dan Schroeder was set in the old Western country.



Genevieve Nnaji: She acted in the 2019 British drama film, 'farming', playing the role of Tolu. Her character is the mom of the main character, 'Enitan', who she had to give up to be fostered by a white woman. The film was produced by British-Nigerian Producer, Adewale Akinnuoye-Agbaje and also featured award-winning British actress, Kate Beckinsale.

As the quality of stories, acting and production improve in Nollywood every day to match its output, more Nollywood actors are going to get recognised internationally. Hopefully, with this recognition, there will be more Nollywood appearances in award-winning Hollywood movies.



SUNDAY FEATURE

Challenges we face: Plateau journalists speak

By PALANG KEMBO

As the world marks the 2023 World Press Freedom Day (WPF), on May 3 with the theme "Shaping a Future of Rights: Freedom of Expression as a driver for all other human rights", we cannot turn a blind eye to the increasing rise in digital technology and proliferation of independent media in many countries including Nigeria enhancing free flow of information.

However freedom of information, and safety of Journalists in most parts of the world including Nigeria is farfetched. Nigerian Journalists face attacks, poor remuneration, working conditions, and the right to freedom of expression as enshrined in the universal human rights, and the Freedom of Information (FOI) is still farfetched, among many challenges.

Last year, a group of Journalists on official duty to Namu in Plateau State were attacked, while their Press Bus was burnt by political thugs, while many others were attacked in the line of duty.

Plateau State, located in North Central Nigeria has been affected by ethno-religious crisis, pre-meditated attacks and killings in communities, making journalists reporting from such beats to face danger in the course of doing their work.

With this scenerio, some Journalists working in the state share their experiences on the numerous challenges they face as they do their work.

For Masara Kim Usman, a Journalist working with a Print Newspaper 'The Light Bearer', reporting conflict for over two decades in Plateau State has been an experience. He said he has faced physical attacks on the job from security operatives, and threats from politicians, terrorists and other groups.

"I have been reporting in crisis torn communities, rocked by religious violence for more than two decades I have faced physical attacks even gun attacks at least two times. I have also faced threats. I have faced harassment from security forces from politicians and their supporters, from terrorists, and practically everyone who is not comfortable with my reporting of societal ills, human rights violations, that I see happening on a daily basis".

"But I coped in doing my job by simply trying to be courageous, relentless, and by networking with colleagues of like minds both locally and internationally for my protection. I try to know much about my environment for my safety and just keep pushing and making my work more publicized; that way I have been able to stay safe and free to do my job because there are always people watching".

"A priority for me as a journalist is to stay safe to be able to tell the story so journalists like me, especially young ones should be conscious of the environments, and where to go. They should Keep a low profile and just stay away from publicizing their movements".

"Just be unpredictable, as much as possible, do not maintain a routine in your lifestyle. Be courageous be humble but at the same time be ready to take the bullet for the people that you represent because as a journalist, you are the voice for the voiceless and so if you're taking up that all important assignment, then you must be ready to face any Goliath that you know stands in your way".

"Try as much as possible to build networks and look for writing opportunities within and outside Nigeria, so that where your work fails to sell in Nigeria, perhaps because of the threats to the profession, you can



still function by selling your stories outside".

He also called for increased awareness and sensitisation to members of the society, ordinary citizens and government officials on the job of the journalist, to make them become aware that a journalist is not an enemy of progress, safety or democracy. But instead, the journalist exist to shape society, and serve truth and justice, and no society can thrive without that.

"Government should provide journalists with protection by way of legislation and by way of provision of physical security to do their job. Every journalist Should be respected instead of being harassed therefore a

There is also lack of functional vehicles at the station to transport reporters to assignment posts which impedes the pace for news sourcing, so most of the time I have to improvise".

She said based on the challenges, a quote "Necessity is the mother of all inventions" has inspired her to get her story by exploring workable means but putting and observing safety rules come first.

"There were several occasions I had to use my personal vehicle or public transport to get to my place of assignment in instances where the office vehicle is bad, to avoid a situation for the task to fail", she disclosed.

incapacitation to work on reports that needs follow-up, especially outside the metropolis".

"Also during assignments involving high profile personalities, we struggle with security personnel in the process of covering some events, in some cases my colleagues have been harassed, injured and their work tools damaged".

"But the passion to be a change agent to contribute my quota for improved welfare for the vulnerable and marginalised communities in the society keeps motivated and benefitting from the assistance of Non Governmental Organisations, who support us to write special reports, attended training



full list of reporters is required to give us a free hand to operate and continue to expose every dark element that exist to cripple our democracy, and give us the free society we have always longed for", he advised.

Another Journalist, Priscilla Gurumnaan, with over 10 years experience in her work at the Nigeria Television Authority (NTA), Jos, says she has faced alot of challenges ranging from exposure to hazards of the job, where most often, her safety is not guaranteed on the fields of assignments.

"I faced the challenge of access to adequate and state of the art working equipment, which usually delays production and output of the stories. For example, editing suits are inadequate, access to Internet facilities are grossly limited, just as sometimes one is denied access to sensitive documents or information.

She urged Governments at all levels to ensure the safety of journalists, while striving in their quest to discharge their lawful duties.

"Government and private media should provide insurance schemes in the country, Journalists should not be denied access to information, as stated in the FOI laws, while the issue of poor remuneration for journalists should be addressed".

"This will encourage us to perform our duties diligently without cutting corners, and this will in turn reduce the 'brown envelope syndrome' within the profession".

A reporter with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), Martha Agas while sharing her experience on the limitations of her job says "We have systemic challenges in our work place, on conducive environment to work and the limitations of expression based on media ownership, there is also financial

workshops, enhances our capacity and gives us the encouragement to do our work. At such forums, I was able to share experiences with peers, senior colleagues and mentors and this has built my resilience to continue my job of reporting vulnerable groups and marginalised communities".

Agas called for improved work conditions for journalists, safety policies, insurance in media organisations, more welfare for Journalists and mentorship programmes especially within the organisation".

A reporter with the Nigeria Standard Newspapers, Hosea Nyamlong also disclosed that in discharging his duties as a Journalist, he is sometimes being faced with life-threatening situations.

"Some times, I am caught in the cross-fires between law enforcement agents, and criminals. I am lucky to be alive but many journalists in the

state and country have lost their lives because of the risk of the work and insecurity".

"Aside the dangers of the job, most times, I am denied from having access to vital information from some of the government departments and agencies despite the FOI law that is in place in the country".

"Harassment of Journalists by the government for publishing information they perceive as offensive to them is another challenge that is on the increase, while on the other hand, Journalists cannot report based on the ethics of the profession because of the fear of the unknown. Journalists are bribed to write stories that would arouse public sympathy for governments, politicians, political parties, among other groups".

"The brown envelope syndrome is a common occurrence in journalism and it simply means bribing a journalist to trade objectivity and truthfulness for peculiar gains. Some times events or reports are based on the quality of the brown envelope given".

"Sadly this has made some young people and citizens to go into the profession of journalism with the erroneous belief that they would get rich quickly. If this fails to materialize, they get easily frustrated and would go to any length to commit unethical practices. Aside that, many journalists are not paid their salaries, and when paid, not on time. This situation makes them frustrated and they engage in sharp practices to sustain themselves".

"But despite the harsh economic environment and conditions, I ensure that I uphold the tenets of the journalism profession to the best of my ability without any fear or favour in discharging my duties. But my safety is first, and when I sense that the environment is not conducive or the report is not well balanced, I do forfeit such events, to maintain the integrity of the profession" said Nyamlong.

To better the Journalism profession, Nyamlong urged government to ensure it provides a secure and healthy environment for journalists to practice their profession. "This could be in the form of attaching security escorts to journalists.

The government must ensure that it upholds the principles of honesty, fair play, and integrity at all times. They must understand that the profession of journalism is built on credibility, integrity, honesty, and objectivity.

Government should ensure that the freedom of information is being practiced by both government and private organizations", he advised as a way out of the numerous challenges" he said.

To address the growing spate of attacks on Journalists and the threat to media freedom in Nigeria, the International Press Center (IPC), Lagos announced the establishment of a Center For the Safety and Protection of Journalists (CSFPJ) as part of activities for the commemoration of the 2023 WPF, to help address, coordinate initiatives for responding to the worsening challenges and state of the safety of Journalists in the country.

Admits the challenges, National President of the Nigeria Union of Journalists, Comrade Chris Isiguzo in his message on WPF called on Nigerian Journalists to redouble their efforts and live up to the values and standards of the profession. He also condemned all forms of violence, inducements, bribes, by politicians and corrupt personalities to journalists in order to manipulate the media and its personnel for propaganda.

NEWS

FTHL sensitises public on Hygiene

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

THE Federal Teaching Hospital, Lokoja, (FTHL), has sensitised health workers, patients and the general public on the need to imbibe the culture of hand washing to prevent contracting and spreading infections.

The sensitisation was carried out at the hospital on Friday in Lokoja, as part of activities to commemorate the "World Hand Hygiene Day 2023," marked on May 5 of every year.

Speaking at the event, the Chief Medical Director of FTHL, Dr Olatunde Alabi, said the day was an important day to remind the health workers, patients and everybody on the need to wash their hands regularly.

"It is very important as healthcare workers to wash our hands properly before we start work or see any patient, and do the same after attending to every patient.

"We should also wash our hands after doing all our work for the day before going home, and do the same when we get to our houses, Alabi said.

According to him, it has been proven that hand hygiene reduces to a significant proportion the incidence of infections among the people.

The CMD noted that antibiotics might not even be able to do what hand hygiene could do in terms of infection prevention.

He stressed that the hand hygiene day was to remind ourselves and the public, and encourage them to imbibe the culture of hand washing which people were used to during Covid-19 in 2020. He added: "This is to serve as a



Ehanire

reminder that Covid or no Covid, hand hygiene is a health seeking behavior."

Dr Alabi, therefore, urged health workers and the people to imbibe the habit and culture of washing their hands regularly.

Also speaking, Dr. Abimbola Adesanya, the focal person, who spoke on Focal Person, Infection Prevention and Control (IPC), FTHL, said regular hand washing remained the best way to preventing infections.

Adesanya, who led other members of the IPC Orange Network in the sensitisation campaign, said their purpose was to colour Nigeria orange.

"This is because we want to ensure that infection is prevented to the barest minimum in Nigeria.

"Today, being the World Hand Hygiene Day, is a day set aside as

members of IPC worldwide, to remind everybody of the importance of washing hands regularly," she said.

Adesanya stressed that it had been proven scientifically that washing of hands could prevent infections from being passed from a health worker to a patient and among health workers.

The medical doctor added that hand washing was able to reduce birth fevers among women who were just having children.

"As health workers, we should wash our hands properly before, during and after carrying out our healthcare services. The most important method is to use water and soap.

Our correspondent reports that the highlight of the event was the practical demonstration of proper hand washing led by the Medical Director and other management and staff of the hospital.

By PALANG KASMI

THE Vice Chancellor (VC), University Of Jos, Prof. Tanko Ishaya recently led the Governing Council to visit Plateau State Governor, Simon Bako Lalong ahead of its 33rd and 34th combined Convocation ceremonies billed for 11th to 13th May, 2023 to woo support for a successful outing.

During the visit, the VC congratulated the governor for leading his party, the All Progressives Congress to a resounding success at the 2023 polls that produced the country's president, and the successful completion of the British American Junction flyover, which he said will be a legacy that will be remembered.

He asked the governor to put in his handing over notes, an advice for the construction of a similar road dualization for the Farin Gada/University of Jos road, to address the challenges motorists, staff and students face while plying the road on a daily basis.

Ishaya sympathised with the governor on the recent tanker accident at Bauchi junction which claimed lives, including the life of one student, with two students injured and receiving treatment.

He lamented the proliferation of illegal parks around the university roads, which he attributed to be a major cause of accidents occurring around the

UniJos woos Lalong's support for convocation



Tanko

university and urged the government to address the challenge to prevent such fatal road mishaps in the future.

Similarly, the VC called on the governor to handle the issue of illegal encroachment of the university land by neighbouring communities.

"Since last year in some of the communities, they have refused to allow contractors to work on parameter fencing around the university despite the job approval", he said calling for the full implementation of the white paper for the land, verification of landed titles by persons who are illegally encroaching the university land, and convincing the owners of the land to release it for the development of the university.

The VC used the forum to invite the governor to attend 22nd -33rd convocation of the university to be held from 11th to 13th of May 2023 at the Faculty of Social Sciences Auditorium, Naraguta Campus and will feature the investiture of his highness Ambassador

Ahmed Nuhu Bamalli, Emir of Zazzau as the university's new Chancellor, and conferment of an honorary Degree of Doctor of Law on the revered traditional leader during the convocation ceremony.

He added that among other Nigerians that will be crowned with the university's Honorary Doctorate Degrees are former TETFund Executive Director, Prof. Suleiman Bogoro, and elder statesman, Ambassador Yahaya Kwande for their role in making the university to be highly rated.

However, to make the convocation a success, the VC called for support from the government in areas of accommodation, transportation, and security.

The governor promised to support the university towards a successful and memorable convocation, including fulfilling his promises to the university and working to resolve the land encroachment disputes between the university and neighbouring communities.

Medical practitioners set agenda for incoming government

From Victor Gai, Jalingo

HEAVY weights from the Medical and Dental Consultants Association of Nigeria (MDCAN), have converged in Jalingo, the Taraba State capital in order to provide a roadmap for the health and medical sectors for the incoming administration.

The National Executive Council meeting of the association was aimed at overcoming those challenges militating against the health and medical sectors in the country.

The meeting had as its theme: Providing Quality Healthcare Services in a Scarce Resourced Environment.

"It would be prudent to set the agenda in the health and medical education sectors for the new government at all levels. This NEC will provide resolutions and recommendations that would be handy in engaging the political actors and policy makers on effective strategies for revamping our health care and medical education systems while stemming the tide of massive brain drain in the health sector.

"Furthermore, our current National Officers' Committee (NOC) is forging ahead with other relevant organizations to overcome the multitude of these challenges, including but not limited to an appropriate remuneration for our members, perennial brain drain, deteriorating standard of

medical education, dearth of Infrastructure in our hospitals, and generally, unsatisfactory conditions of service, among other issues.

"This meeting will also provide another opportunity for our association to brainstorm on strategies and policies towards improving the standard of medical education and healthcare delivery", Victor Makanjuola, MDCAN President

stated. Guest Speaker at the occasion, Professor Musa Dankyau, spoke on the quality of healthcare as part of the theme of the event.

He said one can't talk about universal health coverage without quality healthcare and that 60 percent of deaths are due to poor quality healthcare.

According to him, providing healthcare services is a

challenge once you have a fragile environment.

The meeting is expected to end with a communique which would be issued subsequently.

In attendance are notable personalities such as: President, World Medical Association (WMA), Dr. Osahon Enabulele and President, Nigeria Medical Association (NMA), Dr Uche Roland Ojinma.

Embattled Taraba traditional ruler defies court order

From Victor Gai, Jalingo

UNCERTAINTY hangs around the legitimacy of the third class traditional ruler, the Tii Ichen-Kurmi 2, Justice Emmanuel Dodo Audu, and eight new district heads who were appointed by Governor Darius Ishaku in spite of a court order restraining them from assuming the position.

The traditional ruler had on Thursday presented letters of appointment to the eighth district heads under his chieftom in spite of the court injunction restraining the action.

The High Court of Justice, Jalingo Division, before Justice Nuhu S. Adi, had on 3rd May, 2023 granted an application by the plaintiffs: Fhatso Nwunji Tukura, Williams Ibrahim Yamusa, Amos Danazumi Shamaki, Danladi Adamah, Umar D. Uriah and Danladi Danbeki restraining Justice

Emmanuel Dodo Audu from parading himself as the Tii Ichen-Kurmi.

The defendants in the suit are: The Executive Governor of Taraba State, Bureau for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, Attorney General of Taraba State and Justice Emmanuel Dodo Audu as first, second, third and fourth defendants respectively.

According to the Court Order with Suit no:TRSJ/118/2022, made available to SUNDAY STANDARD by Counsel to the plaintiffs, Dr Ibrahim Effiong, the judge granted an interim injunction "restraining the 4th defendant/respondent from parading or holding out himself in whatsoever manner as the Tii Ichen-Kurmi, pending the hearing and determination of the motion on notice dated the 1st day of May, 2023".

The Order also restrained "the 4th defendant/respondent, including his assigns, agents and legal representatives in whatever name called, from acting in whatsoever manner in relation to the stool or office of Tii Ichen-Kurmi, pending the hearing and determination of the motion on Notice for Interlocutory injunction dated the 1st day of May, 2023".

The Order also restrained the 4th defendant from taking any step that is detrimental to the interests of the plaintiffs "including but not limited to creation of new districts, appointment and coronation of District Heads in Ichen-Kurmi chieftom pending the hearing and determination of the Motion on Notice for Interlocutory injunction dated the 1st day of May, 2023".

But the traditional ruler, Justice Emmanuel Dodo Audu, in a ceremony held in his residence in Jalingo, granted official letters to the new district heads despite the court order.

According to Counsel to the plaintiffs, Dr Ibrahim Effiong, the action of the state governor and the traditional ruler was a violation of the court order earlier granted by the court.

Speaking with journalists after the event, the traditional ruler who was one time President, Customary Court of Appeal, gave reasons why he held the event at his residence in Jalingo instead of Kurmi the council headquarters.

"From the appointment of the district head and even to my own appointment, there have been so many challenges. Even when I was making recommendations for these district heads, I had a vine story that there were people

who were not happy and that they would make sure they frustrate me," he disclosed.

On the court order, he said he decided to go on with the ceremony and later on look at the court summons.

According to him, he was instrumental to the creation of more districts in his domain and had the interest of the people at heart.

"And even now, I have been receiving summons from the court. Yesterday evening, they were very busy in court trying to see how they could stop me. So, after this I would be receiving the summons to know what it contains.

"Initially, we had three districts by the government order of 2018. So I felt we should increase it. If the governor should create more chieftoms to give people a sense of belonging, let me learn from that. So I decided to increase it," he added.

NEWS

Bokkos Districts received official stamps

IT was a moment of celebration as official stamps were handed over to authority of the nine (9) newly created districts in Bokkos Local Government Area.

While performing the function, the Executive Chairman Hon. Joseph Guluwa charged recipients to be good ambassadors by reciprocating government's magnanimity to them in discharging their duties diligently.

Guluwa further reminded the new district heads the vital roles traditional institutions being closest to the grassroot has been playing in complementing government and security agencies and tasked those coming on board from Butura, Horop, Forof, Tarangol, Tangur, Mbar/Mangar, Ambul, Bargesh and Gwande/Karfa to join hands in doing same within their domains.

Listing some recent achievements, the Chairman said despite the paucity of funds his administration has been judicious in implementing key projects in the area which includes Ultra Modern office extension, bridge construction linking Ambul/Bargesh community, furnishing and equipping the legislative chambers as well providing hand pump



Guluwa

boreholes in various communities amongst others.

He therefore called on the people to unite and give him the support as he remains committed to their needs.

Responding on behalf of the nine (9) recipients, District Head of Butura, Saf John Makwal Mallo expressed their gratitude to God, he promised that with prayers and support of the people they will not fail in discharging their duties with no fear or favour.

Separate goodwill messages came from the Ag. President Bokkos Local Government

Traditional Council, Saf Lawrence Aizat, Chairman Elders Council Baba Samuel Mafuyai, Legislative Arm and Chief Michael Maqual who praised the Executive Governor of the State, Rt Hon.(Dr) Simon Bako Lalong for his landmark legacies, observing the development was first of its kind in the history of the local government.

Members of the Traditional Council along Bokkos Stakeholders were later taken round to inspect various ongoing projects inside the Secretariat.

'Poor remittances affect Plateau cooperative societies'

Poor remittances of cooperative third party deductions by employers has adversely affected the progress of many societies in Plateau State.

President Plateau State Cooperative Federation, (PLASCOFED) Mrs. Hannatu Mershak disclosed this during the 8th Annual General meeting of the federation held at the APIN Hall of the Old Jos University Teaching Hospital, (JUTH) premises last Thursday.

Mrs. Mershak explained that " In addition to that, the general economic environment was very hash in that some cooperatives that invested in money markets

treasury bills only realised what i consider peanuts from the investments. We pray that the situation will be better in the current year"

The PLASCOFED President said the federation has maintained the good working relationship with it's partners and regulators including " A German company known as GIZ, through one of their interventions called SEDIN. This programme is aimed at improving the employment and income situation of Micro, Small and Medium sized Enterprise, (MSMES). Our collaborations with SEDIN, GIZ has and is still yielding tremendous benefits among which is the training of nine Board members and fourteen

council members totaling twenty-five on Organization and Development.

She then commended Plateau cooperators for the outstanding support given the federation noting that "I cannot end my speech without thanking our partners and the regulators for their unwavering support in every way for the progress of the movement."

Earlier in his remarks, the Director, Cooperatives at Ministry of Commerce, Ayuba Azi urged cooperators to remain well focused and united to ensure sustainable progress.

The Director emphasized that the body as supervisors and regulators have done a lot in providing a solid roadmap for the various cooperatives to succeed.

The Guest Speaker, Mr. Victor Kuchili noted that cooperative societies are relevant to our contemporary society particularly in the area of creating an enabling environment for societal growth.

He wondered why despite the financial generating capacity of cooperative societies in developing nations, societies hardly have a say in the art of governance which is detrimental to growth.

In it's secretariat report, the Executive Secretary of PLASCOFED, Mrs. Rifkatus Rwang explained that " the challenges are land encroachment and dilapidated buildings. However, other frequent and reoccurring challenges include poor turn up for meetings, inactive



Mershak, President PLASCOFED

THE Executive Chairman of Jos North Local Government Shehu Bala Usman has appealed to the State and Federal Governments to construct an inter-change fly over at Bauchi Road, Jos linking other parts of the North-East.

Doing so according to the Chairman, would minimize incessant accidents and congestion on the highway.

The Chairman stated this when he led a combined Task Force including members of the Legislative and Executive Arms, men of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps, NSCDC with other non conventional security outfits to ensure compliance with earlier directives to transporters and traders along the Bauchi Road highway.

The inspection followed the Tuesday April 25th tanker inferno along Bauchi Road junction which cut off the road after loss of lives and property worth millions of naira destroyed were recorded.

The Chairman said he had held several meetings since January this year and issued letters to different traders Unions in the Market to suspend business activities on the highway but to no avail

This according to him was in accordance with the philosophy of his administration to ensure that citizens do not risk their lives anywhere in the name of looking for daily bread.

While acknowledging the fact that citizens have the right to look for their daily bread, the Chairman said they should not do so at the risk of their

Jos North boss appeals for fly-over construction

lives, stressing that his administration will soon relocate them to an alternative place.

Usman called on the business community along Bauchi road junction to be patient, as the action was taken in their own interest to safeguard lives and property.

The Chairman later held a close door meeting with various Unions at the Bauchi road junction where the council and

traders reached a consensus.

State Chairman of Road Transport Employees Association and Ward Head of Zinariya B who is a shop owner

Yahaya Muhammadu Garba appreciated the Chairman for sensitizing the traders on the suspension of business activities on the highway and appealed to other tiers of government to provide other alternative places for the displaced traders.



Usman

Riyom LGC chairman condemns renewed attacks

CHAIRMAN of Riyom Local Government Council, Mafeng Gwallson has condemned with strong feelings the renewed attacks on innocent citizens of the Council area by

hoodlums who are bent on causing crisis despite the Government's effort to restore peace in the State.

His call came on the heels of recent attacks in some communities in Riyom Local Government area resulting in the death of four persons, and the destruction of houses and farmlands.

The Council Chairman made the condemnation when he led a delegation of military and other security agencies including the

Commandant of Operation Safe Haven of Sector 6, Riyom, the Divisional Police Officer in charge of Riyom, and other heads of Security personnel in the Local Government Area.

The Chairman while conveying the condolences of the Local Government Council, decried the spate of endless and unprovoked attacks and killings and other mayhem inflicted on innocent citizens across some communities in the Local Government by hoodlums who did not mean well for the Council.

The Council Chairman, therefore called on the Military and other Security agencies to move into action and arrest the ugly situation, adding that criminal elements must not be allowed free reign in the troubled communities.

To allay farmers fear of attacks in the area and give them hope to continue with their normal farming and other economic activities, the Local government Chairman assured them of adequate security personnel in those prone areas to prevent the ugly situation.

Gwallson added that the Local Government will work with other Security agencies to uproot the criminals from their hideout, noting that anybody, no matter highly placed, that is found to be aiding and abetting criminality in the Local Government area will be dealt with according to the law.

The Council Chairman told the communities to be vigilant and further advised them to avoid keeping late hours, particularly in mining areas.

At Loton in Jol ward, the people deserted their houses for fear of attacks by the hoodlums.

In their response, the leadership of the communities and the bereaved families thanked the Local Government Chairman and the Security agencies for the visit, they expressed sadness over the violent attacks, which they described as shocking coming after a period of relative peace amidst Local government intervention, Security and spirited efforts by well-meaning individuals to promote peaceful coexistence among all people living in the Local Government Area.

The beneficiaries assured the Council Chairman of their readiness to work as a team towards bringing new ideas and development to the Local government area as a whole.

participation during PLASCOFED programmes, irregular payments of dues, payments without narration using personal names instead of cooperative names.'

...Executives commit to deliver on mandate

A three days retreat on productive workplace and mid-term evaluation organized by Choice Concept Network (CCN) for members of the Riyom Local Government Executive Council ended on a high note, with the participants resolving to apply their expertise and energy towards achieving the vision of the present administration in the Local Government Council.

The retreat held at the Kiri Country Guest Inn, Akwanga, Nasarawa State was targeted at learning new ways of doing the business of the government effectively to enhance productivity and good governance among members.

Speaking at the event, the Chairman of Riyom Local Government Council, Mafeng Gwallson explained that the retreat was borne out of the Council's need for the appointees to be exposed to new ways of doing their work, to improve their competence and delivery capacities.

The Local Government Council Chairman enjoined the participants to take the retreat seriously and ensure that the knowledge gained is internalized and put to practice in running the affairs of the Government.

The Chairman further stressed that the people expect that the retreat would

expose the participants to the rudiments of Government business in the formulation of policies and implementation of programmes and projects.

The three days retreat featured Viktor Kuchili as one of the resource persons and leader of the Choice Concept Network where he discussed topics that dealt with fresh approaches to running the business of government and delivering good governance in Riyom Local Government.

In their separate remarks at the end of the programme, the Deputy Chairman of Riyom Local Government Council, Yakubu Elisha, the Secretary of the Council, Davou Mango, and the Chief of Staff to the Executive Chairman of Riyom, Pam Nyango as well as the Supervisory Councilor for Special Duties, Mafeng David, thanked the Local Government Chairman for giving the programme a speedy approval and assured him that they will all implement what they have acquired in their various places of assignments to the benefit of their people and the Local Government Council.

The beneficiaries assured the Council Chairman of their readiness to work as a team towards bringing new ideas and development to the Local government area as a whole.

NEWS

Lalong promises support to alma-mater

By PALANG KASMI

PLATEAU Governor, Simon Bako Lalong has promised to continue supporting his alma-mater, the Shendam Old Students Association (SOSA) to make it stand out.

He gave the assurance recently at Government House Jos during a courtesy visit by SOSA executives.

Speaking at the forum, President of SOSA, Bala Gukat said they are happy to identify with the governor, who is not only their member but Legal Adviser, after successfully leading the state for the past 8 years, and played a key role towards the development of the school, Government Secondary School (GSS), Shendam.

"We are proud of you because of your achievements in the state while you led as governor for the past 8 years", he said assuring that as school-mates, they will continue to support him in his political career and attainments.

Gukat prayed the governor to rise to higher heights, and secure bigger appointments that will enable him serve the country as a whole, after he leaves office in May 29.

Lalong appreciated his alma-mater for the visit and for coming to pray for the progress of the state.



Lalong

He recalled that he was glad to be a part of the elections that ushered in the new executives in 2022, which also availed him the opportunity to visit his former secondary school, interact with the students by sitting on his former bed, and dining and wining with the students.

He assured that his heart is in the secondary school which has made him who he is today, promising further that he will continue to support the school

and the executives of the alma-mater in all their endeavours to make them continue to stand out among their peers in the state and country at large.

Sudan: Dangote supports Nigerian returnees with N100,000 each

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

THE Aliko Dangote Foundation (ADF) has commenced the disbursement of hundred

thousand naira (N100,000) and Dignity Packs to each of the Nigerian returnees from Sudan.

The money and the Dignity Packs were given out to the evacuees upon arrival at the airport in Abuja recently.. All the evacuees, irrespective of the number, will be given the sum of N100,000 and Dignity Packs each, by the Aliko Dangote Foundation (ADF), once they step into the country.

This was contained in a statement made available to our correspondentOur Correspondent in Lokoja on F r i d a y .

According to the statement, a representative of the Foundation, Maryam Buhari-Shehu, said the Board of Trustees of the foundationFoundation has resolved to be fully involved in the evacuation and resettling of thousands of Nigerians that were stranded in Sudan.

She said a total of 362 returnees including children were registered by the ADF for the exercise on the first day. Three hundred and fifty (350) received the support.

According to her, the intervention was in collaboration with the Federal Government through its agency, the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), and Air Peace to provide succor to the returnees.

Mrs. Buhari-Shehu, who was representing the Managing Director of the ADF, Zouera Youssoufou,

Accolades as Lalong clocks 60

You cared for all irrespective of tribe or religion and you will be remembered for that", said Somelat.

Speaker of the Plateau House of Assembly, Hon. Yakubu Sanda praised the governor for leading the state well and prayed for good health as he continues to represent the people of Plateau as he leaves office in May.

Special Adviser on Job Creation and Entrepreneurship to the Governor, Mr. Samuel Kwamkur said attaining the age of 60 is a great blessing. Adding, "From now we will call you an elder and veteran".

The SA said many people, including those who are yet to come in contact with the Governor love and admire him for being a very

humble person with charming smiles that attract unity and humility.

He described him as a very silent achiever who has served Plateau faithfully, stressing that when he leaves office, he will become known as one of the most celebrated governors in Plateau State.

Rev Fr. John Gopep who led a prayer session commended the governor for choosing to mark the day with prayers and thanksgiving rather than lavish celebration.

He described Lalong as man of humility and peace, who has severally asked the people of his state for forgiveness.

One of the side attractions at the low-key event was the display of the birthday cake which was a replica of the British American Junction Overhead bridge to honour the governor for his achievements in the state.

Permanent Secretary Government House, Mary Afan, who engineered the beautiful-creative cake and low-key celebrations on behalf of the staff of Government House supervised the cake display and cutting in the presence of wife of the Governor, Regina.

Responding, the Governor said being alive and attaining the age of 60 marks the beginning of a new era in his life and he appreciated God for such a rare blessing and privilege.

He appreciated the unique cake, and all his aides, family, domestic staff and citizens of the state who supported him during his 8year tenure, urging them to render the same support to the incoming government.

Among the rain of goodwill messages to the governor on the occasion was the one sent by President Mohammedu Buhari, who described Lalong's birthday as a "Landmark birthday", lauded him for his effectiveness on handling matters of security and well being of Plateau people and for being an example of unity for the whole country to emulate.

Director General of Industrial Training Fund, Sir Joseph Ari in his birthday felicitations to the Governor said he has become a political motivation and mentor for the younger generation after holding key positions of Speaker, Governor, Chairman Northern Governors Forum, and Director General of the Tinubu Shettim a Presidential Campaign Council.

Medical consultants suggest ways of revamping health sector

From Victor Gai, Jalingo

MEDICAL practitioners under the auspices of the Medical and Dental Consultants Association of Nigeria (MDCAN), have proffered solutions to improving the quality of healthcare services across the country.

This was part of the resolutions reached recently at the end of the National Executive Council (NEC) meeting of the association in Jalingo, the Taraba State capital.

In the 15 -point communique issued after the meeting, President of MDCAN, Dr. Victor Makanjuola, called on government, relevant stakeholders and well-meaning Nigerians to look into the quality of healthcare services, welfare of its

members, the brain drain phenomenon, obnoxious health legislations and the security challenges bedeviling the nation.

The association observed that "poor quality healthcare contributes to increased morbidity and mortality as well as loss of productivity and man-hours".

According to the communique, the failure of government to address certain welfare issues of medical practitioners has contributed to the "worsening effect of brain drain in the health sector".

The association also described as "obnoxious, retrogressive and unethical" the Bill for an Act to make it mandatory for fresh medical and dental graduates to provide services to Nigeria for a minimum of five years before full registration and licensing to

practice. It therefore appealed to the House of Representatives to throw away the Bill "in its entirety".

Part of the resolutions are as follows: "Government and relevant stakeholders must formulate pragmatic interventional policies and programmes aimed at improving the quality of healthcare services across the country.

"Government of Abia is called upon to as a matter of urgency offset the outstanding salary arrears of our members and that of all health workers in the State.

"Address the shortfalls in the salaries of honorary consultants, who are clinical lecturers.

"Settle the salary arrears occasion by skipping in the interest of industrial harmony.

"Substantive increase in retirement age remains one of the best ways to buffer the already dwindling numbers of health workers in Nigeria.

"Consider the several appeals of well-meaning Nigerians over the plight of university lecturers and their dependents to pay the salary backlogs of these university teachers.

"Upward review of CONMESS for all doctors in line with the increment of salaries made to other civil servants.

"Avoid unnecessary delays in the process, to avoid unnecessary confusion and insinuations that may detract from effective and efficient running of our tertiary health institutions.

"Device possible means to increase the number of medical and dental doctors graduating from medical schools while improving their practice competencies.

"Management of concerned tertiary hospitals should comply with extant laws and pay full remuneration to staff who have gone on approved sabbatical leaves".

The communique also urged government to intensify efforts at resolving the security challenges in the country.



Ehanire

SUNDAY MAGAZINE



Some burnt down houses at Murish and Jwak Maitumbi villages in Mangu LGA of Plateau State

Renewed attacks: Plateau communities devastated

Continued from page 10

where terrorists speaking the Fulani dialect according to witnesses killed at least six people and injured several others in a complex attacks in the north of Plateau.

The coalition of youth groups under the aegis of the Plateau State Youth Council, a Plateau State Indigenous Youths and Youth Wing of Christian Association of Nigeria (YOWICAN) also revealed that over 20 people were reportedly killed in separate attacks in Mangu, Barkin Ladi and Riyom Local Government Areas in the month of April 2023.

The Chairman, Plateau State Youth Council, Comrade Lot Sunday Adas, while addressing newsmen on behalf of the coalition groups said, the attacks were a calculated attempt to disrupt farming activities, people's economic livelihoods and displace people from their ancestral homes for them to grab their land.

He disclosed that "it has come to our notice that Fulani militias have resumed and are also

planning coordinated attacks and killings in Mangu, Bokkos, Barkin Ladi, Riyom, Jos South and Bassa LGAs of the state and we observed there is a serious collusion between the personnel of Operation Safe Haven and the attackers, hence the need for government to rejig Operation Rainbow and other security outfits for effective community policing.

"We demand the release of Mr Jatau Yakubu of Kuru Station in Riyom LGA unconditionally who was wrongfully arrested and continuously detained by operatives of Operation Safe Haven at its headquarters in Jos. Failure of the appropriate authorities to comply with these demands of the coalition, Plateau youths will be left with no option than to resort to self-help", Adas enthused.

The coalition blamed Operation Safe Haven for being complacent and that it has compromised on several occasions, therefore, they should be substituted with the Mobile Police Squadron in all the

affected areas, because they believe they are more proactive and effective in response to distress calls.

The Chairman, however, called on the Plateau State government to as a matter of urgency, inaugurate the taskforce on anti-land grabbing law of the state to enforce compliance. "Politicians are therefore, strongly warned to, in their best interest, steer clear and never attempt to take advantage or jeopardize this effort and process.

"The State Security Council should take immediate measures against the influx of armed Fulanis who have infiltrated the state and now in places such as Shonong and Bangai in Bachit District, Ranku (Mahanga), Guava and Fass in Jol of Riyom LGA, Josho in Daffo District of Bokkos LGA to continue with their attacks.

"The state House of Assembly should expedite legislative action to pass the Anti-open Grazing Law of Plateau State, which shall inter alia, restrict cattle from roaming around and

hopefully check the influx of alien Fulani herders. We are appealing to the Plateau State Commissioner of Police, Jos, CP Bartholomew Onyeka, to unseal the State House of Assembly complex for effective legislative business", the coalition appealed.

The Plateau State Governor-Elect, Barrister Caleb Mutfwang, condemned the attack through his Special Assistant on Media, Hon. Gyang Bere. Noted with pains the bloody attack by bandits on innocent citizens at a mining site in Farin Lamba community of Jos South Local Government Area, which led to loss of lives describing it as barbaric. He appealed to security agencies to fish out the perpetrators to face the full wrath of the law and also do all in their power to halt further attacks on Plateau communities.

Although, the usual security code was pledged by the state Police Public Relations Officer, DSP Alfred Alabo that, "We are on top of the situation, we are managing it so it does not

escalate". They were moving with the death bodies, so we were able to persuade them to remove the bodies and they agreed. We are appealing to the people to be calm.

"Unfortunately, persons were killed and we are not happy with that. We saw the alert but Farin Lamba is big so we did not know the exact location. We are appealing to people to always give timely information and the details that would help us to respond. We are working on the situation but we must emphasize precision when giving information", he appealed.

It is sad that fillers from some quarters are accusing President Muhammadu Buhari of forcing his kinsmen (Fulanis) who are not Nigerians on legitimate land owners before he hands over to the incoming President. The confusing part of this claim is the inexplicable silence of Mr. President starting from the so-called establishment of Cattle Ranges or Ganging policy in all parts of Nigeria.

METRO-FOCUS

Dance as art, entertainment and livelihood

By JIDAUNA DARING

THE significance of the World Dance Day, which is observed April 29 every year cannot be overemphasized. It is geared towards promoting the importance of dance in our culture, as long as people live on earth.

It may interest you to know that the World Dance Day was first introduced in 1982 by the International Dance Committee of the UNESCO International Theatre Institute. It is glaring that the idea behind this unique day is to celebrate dance, raise awareness about its importance, and encourage people around the world to participate in the art form during the celebration.

It therefore, indicates that since then, the day has been celebrated every year by dancers, dance enthusiasts and organizations in over 200 countries around the globe. This historic day is observed with various dance performances, which include workshops, and events aimed at promoting the diversity and of course, the beauty of dance. It also showcases the rich culture of the people as an art form worldwide.

However, dance is not only a form of art and expression but also has many physical and mental benefits. Dance equally helps in reducing stress, increasing flexibility and promoting overall well-being. The day also highlights the cultural significance of dance and how it has evolved in different regions of the world.

The day again serves as a reminder of the power of dance that brings people together and celebrates the joy or uniqueness of the day.

It was in view of this important day that Zemmies Production Jos, thought it wise to join other parts of the world to mark this year's World Dance Day. This is because the organization focuses more on youth engagement as part of its contribution to the society.

Zemmies Production was established in 2018. The vision statement of the organization centres on making positive changes in the world, especially in Plateau State, by helping the youths to discover and activate their multi-talented gifts and harnessing such gifts to promote peace and alleviate poverty.

Its mission is a creative brand with the mission of creating opportunities for young people. It does that by providing a platform for the youths to express themselves through dance and other art forms. The brand aims at job creation through skills acquisition and aiding the youths to earn a stable means of livelihood, thereby serving as a means of taking them off the streets.

In her remarks, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Zemmies Productions, Jos, Mrs. Anita Nyelong expressed delight and



appreciated their partner and Alliance Francaise Centre Jos as well as all invited guests for gracing the occasion. She stated that their presence at the event means a lot to her organization.

Nyelong said that she has gone to different places within Jos to record dancers. She explained that the purpose of organizing the event was to bring the young dancing groups together to showcase their talents.

She maintained that her organization would not relent in its effort in picking up the young people to mold them up in entertainment industry, so that they would not become wayward in the society.

Nyelong also disclosed that the organization has been engaging youths through organizing dancing competition for the younger ones. She added that they also give prizes to the best dancers to encourage them for subsequent competitions.

remains the bedrock of any given society.

Earlier in his welcome remarks, a Jos based artist, Gideon Gambo appreciated God for making the day a reality. He added that the day has been celebrated for over 40 years across the globe.

Gambo explained that dance has now become a powerful tool that helps in shaping people's lives in different ways. According to him, the event would further spur those that graced the event to see a future in dance.

He pointed out that dance also connects people to the society positively. He cautioned the youths against drug enhancers as dancers.

Speaking shortly after a dance presentation on stage, a dance instructor with the House of Recab, Orphanage Dance Kids, Henry Chinedu also showered accolades on Zemmies Production for engaging the young people in this important event to display their gifts, talent in dancing.

Some of the people who spoke with **Metro Focus** at the event said they were excited with all the presentations made on stage from all the groups and encouraged them to keep the flag of such wonderful presentations flying in the entertainment industry.

According to them, good entertainment in dance also gives comfort to those in who are bitter among others.

Our correspondent reports that, the theme in Jos for this year's World Dance Day celebration was "Say no to drug abuse". **Metro Focus** also reports that the event featured performances by Cultural Community, Sartim Ndam, House of Recab, Lai Baila, Jaspa P. D. A. M, Cypher (General) and talk sessions separately on drug abuse.

spirited individuals to support dance groups on the Plateau so that more talents would continue to be identified among the young people in the entertainment industry in the state.

Nyelong also called on parents to always give their wards or children the needed support, when it comes to discovery of talents among the young people in the dancing world. In her words, catching them young is the best for the society, looking at the increasing rate of social vices among the young people.

Commenting on the event, Director Alliance Francaise Centre Jos, Sylvanus Arum expressed joy and commended the organizer of the epoch making event for bringing the young people who have ventured into entertainment industry to come and showcase their talents.

Arum said that dance is gradually becoming like football. He also encouraged the kids to also consider education in what they have keyed into since it





PLATEAU STATE INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE (PSIRS)

FELICITATES WITH THE RESCUE CAPTAIN AT 60

The Governing Board, Management and Staff of the Plateau State Internal Revenue Service (PSIRS) heartily felicitates with His Excellency, **Rt. Hon. (Dr) Simon Bako Lalong, KSGG**, Executive Governor of Plateau State and Chairman, Northern Governors Forum as he clocks 60.

Your Excellency, this occasion provides us yet another opportunity to celebrate your record of achievements in your 60 years sojourn of service to humanity.

You have strengthened the capacity of the PSIRS to effectively harness the revenue potentials of the State in order to enable Government provide quality, timely and efficient services to Plateau citizens.

As you celebrate this milestone birthday, we pray that God gives you more knowledge and wisdom to take up higher responsibilities to continue to serve humanity.

Happy birthday Your Excellency!

Signed:

Dashe Arlat Dasogot, Fcti. Fcna
Executive Chairman, PSIRS





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NEWS

Lessons learnt from 2023 will make polls better - Buhari

President Muhammadu Buhari has again expressed satisfaction with the conduct of the 2023 general elections in Nigeria, considering the turnout of voters and the generally peaceful atmosphere under which it took place.



Buhari

The president, who stated this while addressing his colleagues at the Commonwealth Leaders Summit on Friday in London, said the country learnt lessons which would make subsequent polls even better.

A statement on Friday in Abuja by Femi Adesina, the president's spokesperson, said the summit was part of the major events leading to the coronation of His Majesty, King Charles III as King of the United Kingdom and Leader of the Commonwealth.

The theme of the event focused on the future of the Commonwealth as a body and the role of the youth.

The Nigerian leader said: "These elections saw a remarkable turnout of voters and proof that Nigeria's democracy is maturing.

Despite some pockets of violence, we have demonstrated that a government can be elected peacefully and fairly. "Lessons have been learnt and moving forward, we hope to perform even better.

"Based on this, I am delighted to note that we have taken another step towards deepening our democracy with peaceful, transparent and credible outcomes.

Though we are aware that challenges still exist, we are committed to working towards a greater participation of all Nigerians in the democratic process, including those in the diaspora."

While thanking the Commonwealth for sending a team to witness the conduct of the elections, he noted that the elections were generally free and fair.

According to him, the mood of the nation after the announcement of the winners so far shows that democracy in Nigeria is maturing and can only get better.

Mr Buhari highlighted the key role Nigerian youths played during the elections as well as in support of national development. He attributed a great part of the youth participation in the general elections to the assent of 'Not Too Young To Run' Bill signed into law by his administration in 2018.

He announced that Nigeria would also host the Commonwealth Youth and Students Summit for African Region, with the theme, 'Making Change Happen', in Abuja from May 9-11, this year.

The Nigerian leader used the opportunity to bid farewell to his colleagues, expressing joy at shared aspirations and values within the period.

Electoral lessons learnt from 2023 will make subsequent polls better - Buhari

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Pedestrian protection

CROSSING the road at Traffic Signal Point

Basically, the watchword for pedestrians here is EXERCISE CAUTION

I. When the Red Man shows, do not cross.

II. When the Green Man begins to flash, do not start to cross.

III. When the Green Man is steady, check to be sure that traffic has stopped, then cross quickly.

IV. If you have started crossing when the Green Man begins to flash, you have time to finish crossing. Do so safely to finish up.

V. Watch the traffic as well as the lights.

VI. Don not cross when the lights are on Green or Amber.

Junction without Traffic Light When crossing at a junction without traffic light, pay attention to traffic turning into the road especially from behind you.

Manned Traffic Control Point.

This is a point where a traffic officer controls traffic.

I. Do not cross the road when the officer has permitted vehicular traffic to move or has signaled you to stop.

II. Cross ONLY when the officer signals you to do so.

III. Look out for oncoming vehicles as you cross briskly.

At Bus Stop

I. Board or alight from a bus or cab at an authorized Bus Stop.

II. Do not cross the road

in front of a vehicle.

III. Do not board a vehicle while it is moving.

On Approach of Emergency Vehicle

An emergency vehicle is a vehicle designed and authorized to respond to emergencies. Emergency vehicles include, Ambulances, Fire Trucks, Law enforcement vehicles, etc.

Give way to all categories of emergency vehicles. On the road. They life they are trying to save may be yours of that of a relation or friend.

When walking with children

Children are easily distracted on the road by fancy sights like ice cream vans, siren blasting and flasher displaying vehicles, carnivals, processions etc. An adult walking with children must guide and keep them on track at all times. Children must never be let loose as they may run off to dangers. As such:

I. Walk on the walkway/extreme left facing oncoming vehicles.

II. Hold the child on the left and position yourself between the child and traffic.

III. Note that pedestrians include children have right of way immediately they step on zebra crossing. However, do not claim such right at the expense of your safety. Only the living can claim right of way.

Guide for children of School Age Using The Road

I. When crossing the road, use pedestrian bridge or Zebra crossing where they are provided.

II. Walk facing oncoming traffic.

III. Use the walkway where provided.

IV. Avoid playing on the road.

V. Scream and run away as fast as you can from total strangers who stop to give you lift. They are most likely to kidnappers and robbers.

VI. Do not accept any gift from total strangers.

VII. Wear bright-coloured clothing when walking at night.

Work Zone Warning Signals

The lives of highway construction workers depend on vehicles who are expected to obey speed limits and other signs at work zones. Do not forget, the colour orange marks a work zone and means slow down. The sign "SLOW DOWN, MEN AT WORK" may also be seen at such places. Flaggers (Traffic Control Signalers) are responsible for guiding drivers and other road users through work zone areas. They wear orange or yellow reflective vests, yellow-green reflective shirts or jackets. They use "STOP" or "SLOW" paddles or red flag to direct road users and to let workers or construction vehicles to cross the road.

Cordon Tape

This is a high visibility barrier tape used to enclose an area in order to restrict unauthorized persons. it is used at crash scene to ensure that existing pieces of evidence are not tampered with. Do not enter the area or cross the tape when in place.



SUNDAY FEATURE

Estate surveyors, valuers as experts in management

The estate surveyor and valuer is a professional trained in the art and science of estate management and valuation to direct and supervise interest in landed properties with the sole aim of obtaining optimum returns for the owners of such properties. He has an important role to play in the well being of people and overall development of the society at large, writes BABALOLA ADENIYI ADELEKE ANIVS.

AS members of the three (3) arms of government have various roles they play and perform in attaining better wellbeing and living standards for the people, so also does the Estate Surveyor and Valuer, whose roles and duties in management and maintenance of public infrastructures and assets cannot be overlooked or ignored.

Maintenance of Public Infrastructures/Assets:

Wikipedia defined infrastructure as “the basic physical and organizational structures needed for the operation of a society or enterprise, or the services and facilities necessary for an economy to function. It also defined it in military parlance to mean buildings and permanent installations necessary for the support, redeployment, and operation of military forces”.

Public infrastructure/assets are important terms used in judging a country or region's development status because they are physical components of interrelated systems providing commodities and services essential to enable, sustain, or enhance societal living conditions.

The physical state and conditions of public infrastructure/assets in Nigeria is nothing to write home about or befitting to us – a nation – as giant of Africa. I'm very sure most of you know the state in which the country's public infrastructure/assets are in today presently.

It must be sadly said at this juncture that public infrastructures/assets in Nigeria have been in serious decay and deteriorating state over the years due largely as a result of mismanagement and inadequate or poor maintenance culture, which has left some of these infrastructures/assets in dismal state of repairs and abandonment.

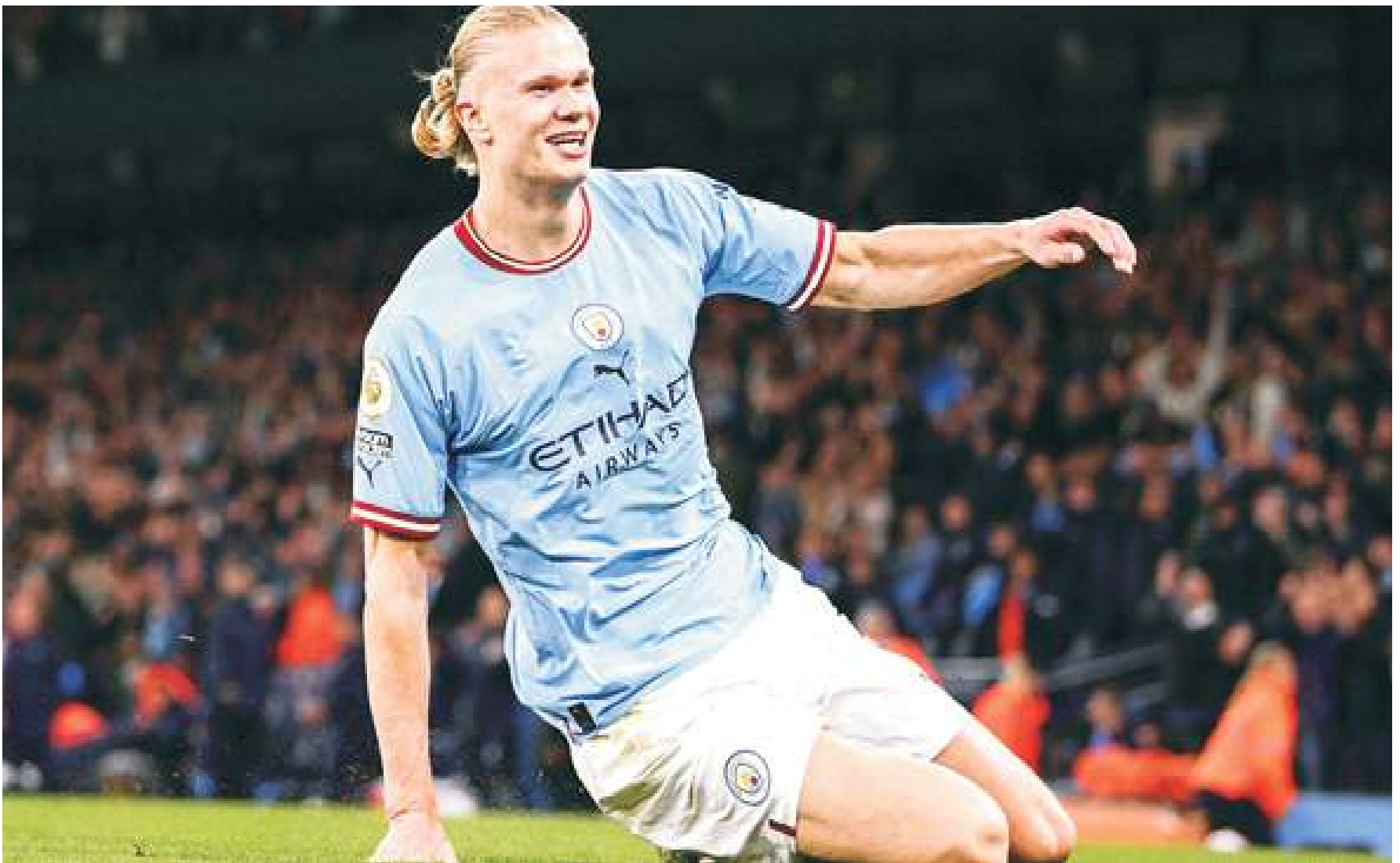
Estate surveyors and valuers trained in the art and science of estate management have important and inevitable roles to play in the management and maintenance of the nation's public infrastructures – land and buildings, plant and machinery, furniture and fixtures – based on their professional expertise, training, qualification, years of working experience and the knowledge they possess in all matters relating to land and landed properties.

Some of the roles Estate Surveyors and Valuers will/can perform in the course of managing public infrastructure/assets in Nigeria



- are: Formulate a well detailed planned preventive maintenance policy to the government for managing public infrastructure/assets
- Help to identify and establish the operative life span and renewal of the component parts that make up such public infrastructures/assets
- Carry out continuous renovation and remedial works
- on some of the infrastructure' component parts that require minor or early repairs before they affect other parts of such assets/facilities
- Continuously act in the capacity of a facility/asset
- manager of public infrastructure/assets on behalf of government for the overall beneficial interest of the government, citizens and nation as a whole.

SUNDAY SPORTS



Haaland

Haaland makes whole world jealous?

By **RICHARD MARTIN**

ERLING Haaland already has a huge list of records and achievements in his first season in English football but perhaps the most striking thing he has done has been to make his predecessors look ordinary.

Spare a thought for Premier League greats such as Alan Shearer and Andy Cole after Haaland shattered their long-running joint-scoring record.

So many strikers have graced the Premier League stage. And none have taken over with same robotic efficiency of the Norwegian.

Haaland scored his 35th goal of the season on Wednesday as Manchester City beat West Ham 3-0 to reclaim top spot in the Premier League table from Arsenal. The delicate finish, bookended by an opening header from Nathan Ake and a deflected Phil Foden volley, moved him past Alan Shearer and Andy Cole as the top scorer in the Premier League in a single season.

Article continues below

Cole struck 34 goals in his first top-flight campaign with Newcastle in 1993-94 while Alan Shearer did the same the following year with Blackburn.

But by the standards of Haaland, who has averaged more than a goal per game in his debut season with City and scores every 71 minutes, the two retired strikers are inefficient in front of goal.

Haaland is only 22 and can go down as the best out-and-out striker in the history of the game. And spare a thought for the clubs who failed to spot how good he truly was, both when he was scoring for fun for Borussia Dortmund or when he was tearing up the Norwegian top-flight

as a 17-year-old.

Pep Guardiola recalled after the game that some people suggested the striker might not be able to adapt to the Premier League after a rusty debut in the Community Shield against Liverpool.

The ensuing months have shut those people up, right?

At only 22 years of age, the Norwegian has achieved more in one season than even the very best players have in their entire careers.

The striker has the football world at his feet and can do almost anything he wants.

He has practically clinched the Golden Boot for this season and is certain to also win the European Golden Shoe for being the top scorer in Europe's top five leagues.

If he stays at City for the next four years, barring injury, then he should be aiming to match or beat Thierry Henry's record of five Golden Boots.

And he should be targeting winning the Ballon d'Or. His work might be cut out this time because Lionel Messi led Argentina to the 2022 World Cup but he can give him a run for his money, especially if he helps City win the Champions League.

Spare a thought for Alan Shearer and Andy Cole, whose record of scoring the most goals in a Premier League season was shattered by Haaland.

While they had 42 matches in a season to score 34 goals in 1993-94 and 1994-95, respectively, Haaland has beaten their tally in 33 matches, having only been available for 31.

These giants of the game, who made the Premier League the global success it is today, have been put in the shade by Haaland.

Admittedly they played in an era

when the league was far more competitive, and they did not play in a team nearly as dominant as City.

But they also played at a time when the quality of defences was worse, when opposition analysis was not as thorough as it is today.

Cole, Shearer and the likes of Thierry Henry and Ruud van Nistelrooy should still be regarded as some of the best players to have graced English football.

But one can't help but feel that their career heights will be one day be matched or even bettered by Haaland.

The 3-0 scoreline does not tell the full story of this game, and this was far from the cakewalk it looked like by the time Foden scored City's third goal.

West Ham played as City might have predicted, defending deep and allowing the hosts very little space in the final third.

For the first time in six league games, they failed to score in the first half.

But they still ended up winning comfortably, and once Nathan Ake had scored the opening goal, there was only going to be one outcome.

The final result would have been demoralising for any watching Arsenal fans who were hoping for a miracle.

Even though City were far from their best, they got the job done and picked up another three points for their title bid.

They have an easier run in than Arsenal and an extra game to play.

On this evidence, only the most optimistic of Gunners fans will believe they still have a chance of catching Pep Guardiola's side.

As City players gave Haaland a guard of honour, what must Florentino Perez and his fellow

Real Madrid directors have been thinking?

Madrid were City's biggest rivals to sign Haaland last summer but eventually pulled out of the race as they believed they would be getting Kylian Mbappe instead.

But the France striker left Los Blancos feeling badly burned when he opted to renew his contract with PSG, and by that time City had already sewn up their deal to sign the Norwegian.

Madrid may end up regretting that decision even more when they face City next week in the Champions League semi-finals.

But all of Europe's top clubs missed a trick by not targeting Haaland earlier, when he was in the infancy of his career, and will be feeling quite jealous now.

Manchester United followed him when he was playing under Ole Gunnar Solskjaer at Molde aged 17 but did not move quick enough and RB Salzburg instead landed him in 2018.

The Austrians and Borussia Dortmund did at least get to enjoy the hitman's goals for a couple of years, although it looks like City have him at the peak of his powers.

Their gain is the loss of their rivals in England and across Europe.

Until Haaland struck, the Dutchman was on course to take all the plaudits.

In his first match in three weeks and his first since suffering a muscle injury against Bayern Munich, the Dutchman looked like he had never been away.

He was as dominant as usual on the left of City's defence, holding his own against a powerhouse such as Michail Antonio.

And as City were struggling to break down David Moyes' deep-

lying defence, he leapt highest to meet Riyad Mahrez's cross and score the opening goal.

Although City managed to win their three matches without him, they are undeniably a stronger outfit with the Dutchman.

His return comes in the nick of time, a week before the first leg of the semi-final with Real Madrid at the Santiago Bernabeu.

The Hammers' preparations for an already daunting game were rocked by Declan Rice, Tomas Soucek and Nayef Aguerd being hit by a sickness bug which swept through the team.

Moyes and his side coped with the setback as well as they could, and, despite the scoreline, this was not an embarrassing performance.

Moyes seemed pleased with how well his side defended, even as he cursed the fact they gave away the opening goal from a set piece.

But his side remain in a very tricky situation, only four points clear of the relegation zone with four games left.

Even if they avoid the drop, it will have been a desperately disappointing season.

After finishing sixth in the 2020-21 season and seventh in the last campaign, not to mention reaching the semi-finals of the Europa League, West Ham should have been aspiring to cement their place in the top six.

They spent big money on Gianluca Scamacca and Lucas Paqueta, but both players, especially the Italian striker, have failed to deliver.

Moyes has achieved so much in his second stint with the club but it is also a sign of his limitations as a manager that he hasn't been able to build on that success, with the team going backwards instead of forwards.

SUNDAY SPORTS



Nigeria was unarguably the better team when both teams met, but they were unable to get the win against Morocco

How we defeated Nigeria-chiba

MOROCCO coach Said Chiba has stated that their efficiency in attack was the reason they were able to defeat Nigeria's Golden Eaglets when both teams met in their second group game of the Under-17 Africa Cup of Nations.

Nigeria defeated Zambia 1-0 in their first game of the tournament, but they could not replicate that against Morocco. An own goal from Tochukwu Ogojiri in the second minute put the Golden Eaglets behind prematurely.

Unfortunately, the Golden Eaglets were unable to

equalize. Coach Ndaka Ugbade's team created many gilt-edged chances, but their profligacy was their undoing, and Morocco ran out 1-0 winners.

Morocco boss Chiba admits that Nigeria gave them a tough time, but he is happy that they stuck to their game plan.

"The game was very difficult and we didn't have easy chances to score. But we used one of the three chances we had," Chiba told CAF Media.

"We knew that Nigeria knew some of our tactics and we knew we had to be efficient in

attack. We were patient and organized the whole game and I am pleased with our performance.

"What was difficult today is that we faced a very good and physical Nigeria side and it was not easy to get many chances.

"But it's true we have some work to do offensively and we will try to do better on that,"

Next up for Nigeria is South Africa, who bounced back from a day one loss to Morocco to defeat Zambia 3-2. The Golden Eaglets just need a draw from the game to book their spot in the semifinal of the Nations Cup.

MANCHESTER City striker Erling Haaland has broken the record for most goals in a Premier League season.

BBC SPORT said that, the Norwegian scored his 35th league goal of the campaign against West Ham to move past Alan Shearer and Andrew Cole's previous best of 34.

Haaland had already set a record for a 38-game season, beating Mohamed Salah's 32 goals for Liverpool in 2017-18.

"It's a special night and a special moment. I'm really happy and proud," Haaland told Sky Sports.

The 22-year-old has another five games to add to his tally.

"It feels amazing and I'm really happy and I'm also happy for the three points," he told BBC Match of the Day. "In the end that's what matters and I'm happy."

"Yeah, it's going well and now it's time to focus on game by game. I've said this for a long time and that's what the team is doing. The team is so good and I'm happy."

Haaland's 35th top-flight goal of the season came via a deft finish in the second half of a 3-0 win against the Hammers that sent City back to the top of the league.

He was given a guard of honour by his team-mates, boss Pep Guardiola and the club's backroom staff after the final whistle at Etihad Stadium.

"I've not seen it before either," Haaland added. "It was a nice feeling scoring that goal,

Haaland breaks Premier League record

it always is.

"It was painful when everyone hit me on the back in the guard of honour."

Cole's 34 goals for Newcastle in 1993-94 was matched by Shearer as he fired Blackburn to the title the following year but there were 22 teams in the top flight in both seasons, giving them an extra four matches to play - Shearer started all 42 in his record season, while Cole missed two in his.

Haaland, in his debut season in English football, has set the new marker in just his 31st game of the year.

His 35 goals are also the most by a player in a single campaign in the English top division since Ron Davies scored 37 for Southampton in 1966-67, while Dixie Dean boasts the record with 60 in 39 games for Everton in 1927-28.

Pep Guardiola, while speaking to BBC Sport said,

"Incredible. He's just 22 - and still has five games left. How many games I made the substitution after a hat-trick in 60 minutes, maybe he'd have scored more. But maybe he'd have got injured. He's special. Congratulations to him."

"We expected him to score goals but to break Cole and Shearer records ... I'm pretty sure what he wants is to win the Premier League."

"It's unbelievable. How many important goals he's scored to win games, we are so satisfied."

"He's a unique person and he's so special. He deserved the guard of honour because it's an incredible milestone. Another day he might break his own record. He's scored a lot of goals!"



Haaland

'Haaland is a joy, says Guardiola'

PEP Guardiola demanded a guard of honour from his players and staff to mark Erling Haaland's Premier League goal record - to show the striker just how special an achievement it is.

BBC SPORT said that, Haaland's finish in a 3-0 win over West Ham means he now has 35 league goals for the season.

He has passed the record previously shared by Alan Shearer and Andy Cole.

"When there is a special occasion, we have to show how special it is," said Guardiola.

Haaland's sublime chip over Lukasz Fabianski from Jack Grealish's through ball took him to 51 goals for the season in all competitions, 12 away from matching Dixie Dean's all-time best for goals in an English season.

All the Norwegian's team-mates, plus Guardiola and his backroom team, lined up to acknowledge Haaland as he made his way to the dressing room.

"He is a joy," Guardiola said.

"Everyone is happy to have him with us. This record will be broken sooner or later, maybe by him in the future, because he will score a lot of goals. But Andy Cole and Alan Shearer are incredible strikers and I think he deserved it."

Haaland laughed the guard of honour was "painful", telling Sky Sports: "Everyone hit me on the back."

He also tried to deflect the personal accolades, agreeing he would swap all his goals for the Treble that City are currently chasing - of Premier League, Champions League and FA Cup.

"Everyone knows it's possible, but we cannot think about Manchester United in the FA Cup final now," he said.

And instead of thinking about Dean's record, Haaland said he was going home to play video games that were "too embarrassing" to name.

Haaland talked through the execution of his latest goal without making it appear it was that special. It was Guardiola who underlined the

obvious danger Haaland poses when he started to run through his repertoire.

The striker's City scoring spree actually began against West Ham back in August, with two goals in a 2-0 win on the Premier League's opening weekend.

"He understands what we want to do," he said. "The players understand his movement. With those first two goals against West Ham, immediately we saw he is a guy who, when you provide him with the ball, he scores in all situations, from crosses, penalties, combinations, transitions."

It all seems a world away from the Community Shield against Liverpool at the end of July, when Haaland had 16 touches and "looked lost" according to one media observer.

"I remember when we lost against Liverpool in the Community Shield, people said he will not adapt in the Premier League," said Guardiola. "As journalists, you encourage incredible comments."

He started scoring at London Stadium the following weekend and has barely stopped since.

And, with a meeting with Real Madrid looming in the Champions League on 10 May, Guardiola underlined why he is so happy to have the 22-year-old.

"We cannot achieve if the club does not provide us with top quality players up front," he said. "It's not possible."

"This club had a legend in Sergio Aguero and Gabriel Jesus, an incredible worker. I was not here but [Edin] Dzeko, [Mario] Balotelli were top strikers."

"In the first half, he was not involved much but he didn't

become desperate and anxious and nervous. He was calm."

Messi not closer to Barcelona return

BARCELONA are no closer to bringing Messi back to Camp Nou than they were a couple of months ago, GOAL

understands, with their financial constraints and strong interest in the player from elsewhere proving to be major obstacles. Though Xavi is pushing for his return and the dressing room would be delighted to have him, Messi still does not have a specific offer from Barcelona. His return is not impossible, but it is very complicated.

GOAL has also discovered that there is a concrete, substantial offer for Messi in Saudi Arabia that promises an astronomical salary. In MLS, Inter Miami's interest is also legitimate - and growing - while there are Premier League teams monitoring his situation.

Even at 35, Messi's availability on a free transfer this summer has prompted an intense global battle for his services. Not only is he

still productive on the Arabia, and it remains pitch, but he is also a unclear how long PSG will massive commercial draw. persist with him when he He's currently returns considering suspended for taking an they've already run away unsanctioned trip to Saudi with the Ligue 1 title.



Messi



Erling Haaland has scored 51 goals in all competitions for Manchester City this season

SUNDAY SPORTS

Is 'limitless' Napoli striker a £100m player?

AS Napoli supporters revel in a first Italian title triumph in 33 years, it is hard to argue that any player has contributed more to capturing that elusive crown than Nigerian striker Victor Osimhen.

Back in 1990, Gli Azzurri's top scorer was a certain Diego Maradona who managed 16 goals in 28 Serie A appearances, putting him third on the list for the league that season.

Osimhen, who plays his football in a stadium now named after Maradona, has easily eclipsed that, notching 22 goals in 27 games, including the vital strike that clinched the title in a 1-1 draw with Udinese.

He currently leads the Serie A scoring chart, three ahead of his nearest rival, Lautaro Martinez of Inter Milan.

He also contributed five Champions League goals, before Napoli were knocked out in the quarter-finals by AC Milan.

'Goals win games' is the well-worn phrase in football - and there is no doubt Osimhen's goals have caught the attention. Having joined Napoli in July 2020 for a fee of around €81m, a record for an African player, daily transfer rumours now link him with all of Europe's biggest clubs for even bigger fees.

But is the 24-year-old really worth £100m?

Osimhen the leader

In a city overlooked by a volcano, Maradona's fiery temperament and outrageous virtuosity were a match made in heaven for the worshipful Neapolitan faithful who flocked to see one of football's great artists lead their club's renaissance in the 1980s.

He wore the captain's armband when lifting the team's second Scudetto in 1990 and is so revered in Naples that his number 10 shirt was permanently retired in 2000.

figurehead.

"Osimhen has really grown to be this leader that they need on the pitch," Italian football journalist Mina Razouki told *BBC Radio 5 live*.

"He doesn't give up. His performances have been ridiculous. Right now, the team are dependent on him.

"On a technical level, he's always been brilliant. And we're starting to see the consistency that he provides right now. Certainly, he's got to be one of the top five strikers in the world."

If were proof was needed of Osimhen's consistency this season, in February he bagged his nineteenth league goal in a 2-0 win at Empoli, making him the second-youngest player (24 years, 58 days) after Cagliari's Roberto Muzzi (23 years, 165 days) to score in eight consecutive games.

He also scored his one-hundredth career goal, reaching the landmark faster than either Lionel Messi or Cristiano Ronaldo - a fact that more than impressed Jose Peseiro, his international coach with Nigeria.

"Victor is a player who has an extraordinary goal scoring instinct," the Portuguese said

"He is an intelligent, fast, aggressive player with an extraordinary feeling for being in the right spot. He will score many more goals and will make history even more times."

Despite his incredible stats, Razouki says the Lagos-born star stays true to his humble origins in a poor part of the city.

"Every time we do an interview with him, he highlights how grateful he is that he is a footballer. He says just



Victor Osimhen scored the goal which clinched Napoli's first Serie A title in 33 years in a 1-1 draw at Udinese

the opportunity to be able to live out his dream is all he needs.

"He decided to forego any luxury apartment in Napoli and lives right by the training centre, just so he could go and play football all the time."

It might sound like Osimhen has had the perfect season, but that is not actually the case. Disrupted by several injuries, he has missed big games such as the Champions League quarter-final first leg against AC Milan.

It is not the first time injury has affected him, something that could put off potential suitors. Indeed, he still wears a protective face mask in every game after breaking an eye socket in November 2021, an injury that saw him miss last year's Africa Cup of Nations.

The man behind the mask

Osimhen's rise up the ranks of European football has not been meteoric.

Having starred for Nigeria at the Under-17 World Cup in 2015, where he scored 10 goals to help the Super Eagles win a fifth title, the 17-year-old left Lagos-based Ultimate Strikers Academy for German side Wolfsburg, revealing to the BBC at the time that he had turned down an offer from Arsenal.

The move was not greeted with huge fanfare in Germany - and his time in the Bundesliga also failed to hit the right notes as he went 16 games without finding the back of the net.

"They didn't have patience to let the boy develop," said former Wolfsburg striker Jonathan Akpoborie, who saw Osimhen arrive as a raw teenager.

"He was a prodigy then," the Nigerian told *BBC Sport Africa*.

"He has actually come of age and is doing really, really well. But we cannot start jumping to conclusions because he has scored 100 goals.

"Everybody knows who Victor Osimhen is now and, trust me, everybody is prepared to play against him. I hope he is really prepared for the journey in front of him."

A loan move to Belgian side Charleroi saw the young Osimhen's fortunes improve dramatically.

He netted 20 goals and was named

the team's player of the year. Unsurprisingly, Charleroi activated a clause to make the deal permanent in May 2019 for only €3.5m, a steal considering the Belgians then sold on their new asset to French side Lille for €12.5m just two months later.

"He was very, very shy, very humble. He was not talking too much," said French defender Dorian Dervite who played alongside Osimhen at Charleroi.

"He was 18, 19 - very young. But he concentrated on achieving his dream to become one of the best strikers in world football.

"You could tell he was very dedicated to it. Victor was focused, kept his head down, working very hard. He has improved a lot and where he is now, he deserves it."

18 goals in a stellar debut season with Lille saw Napoli come knocking.

"In football, it is difficult getting to the top and it is more difficult staying at the top," mused Akpoborie, thinking about Osimhen's move to Italy.

"That is why you have to put in the hard work. Everybody is expecting you to score goals in all the games you play. That extra step, extra sprint, you

must have it."

Premier League the 'ultimate aim'?

Earlier this season, Osimhen confirmed that playing in the Premier League is his "dream".

Jay Jay Okocha, who spent five seasons in the English top flight with Bolton Wanderers and Hull City, agrees this should be his compatriot's ultimate ambition.

"It's a league that improves players, you just have to find the right club that suits your game," the Super Eagles legend told *BBC Sport Africa*.

"A team like Man City, but they've got (Erling) Haaland now. I think Man United as well might be ideal for him now because they've been struggling without a quality striker in recent years. Arsenal as well."

When it comes to comparisons with big names like Haaland, Dervite does not believe them wide of the mark.

"The statistics don't lie. For me, Osimhen is in the same bracket with (Kylian) Mbappe, Haaland and Harry Kane. For me, he is a bit underrated."

How much is Osimhen worth? Manchester United, Chelsea, Paris St Germain, Bayern Munich, Atletico

Madrid...the list of clubs linked with a move for Osimhen is representative of his success.

So what is the value of potentially the hottest property in world football? Okocha is in little doubt.

"He is worth over a £100m at the moment.

"Strikers like him are very few in the market. If you think of how much players that have made lesser impacts are going for, a (Jack) Grealish can go for £100m. I think he deserves more."

Akpoborie is of the same view, although uncertain when it comes to the likelihood of a move this summer. "If he wants to go forward becoming a world best striker, he has to leave Italy for England or Spain" said the 54-year-old.

"Napoli is not really a club that will be willing to sell. (They) usually make the prices of their players very high. Osimhen will not be sold for less than €100m."

Dervite also believes the figure ultimately rest on several factors.

"If you think Haaland, Mbappe are worth £150m, £200m, I think Osimhen today is worth £100m.

"But this depends on the market, on if the club really want him."

For Nigeria, of course, Osimhen's goals comes for free.

"It has taken a very long time for somebody to emerge from the shadows of the JJ Okocha's and Nwankwo Kanu's of our own time," said Akpoborie who won 13 caps for his country.

"We want to see a Nigerian always at the top of their game in Europe."

Diego Maradona was already a World Cup winner when he lifted Napoli's last title 33 years ago, having led his country to glory in Mexico in 1986.

Having emulated the Argentinian wizard's achievements in Italy, Peseiro is hoping Osimhen will likewise produce some magic on the international stage.

"We all know the great importance of Victor in the Super Eagles.

"With him we can aspire to win the next Africa Cup of Nations and be present in the next World Cup."

Okocha agrees that Africa's hottest sharpshooter should be shooting for the stars.

"He's in the form of his life and we are all happy that he's doing so well.

"I think what he can achieve is limitless."



Osimhen has scored 27 goals in 34 games for club and country this season, catching the eye of Europe's richest and most powerful teams

SUNDAY SPORTS

American three-time Olympic medallist dies at 32

AMERICAN sprinter Tori Bowie, a three-time Olympic medallist and former 100m world champion, has died aged 32.

BBC SPORT said that, Bowie won 4x100m relay gold at the Rio 2016 Olympics, plus 100m silver and 200m bronze.

The following year, she won the World Championships 100m in London, as well as relay gold.

USA Track and Field said Bowie's "impact on the sport is immeasurable", adding she will be "greatly missed".

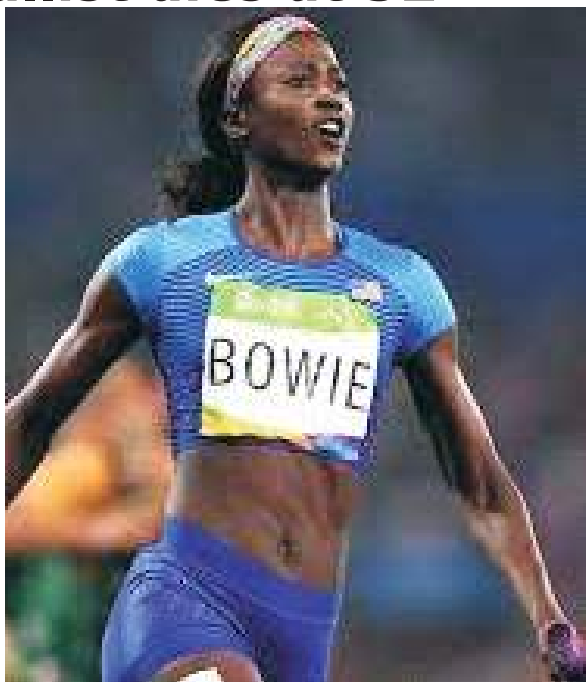
World Athletics said it was "deeply saddened" by her death.

A statement from Team USA, the country's Olympic and Paralympic fraternity, added: "She was an admired friend, team-mate, and a great representative of Team USA."

In an individual tribute, current 100m world champion Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce said: "My heart breaks for Tori Bowie's family. A great competitor and source of light."

"Your energy and smile will always be with me. Rest in peace."

Two-time men's world 200m champion and US record holder Noah Lyles said: "This breaks my heart to hear and I will keep the family in my



Bowie

prayers."

Bowie converted from long jump in 2014 and had an immediate impact on the track, becoming the fastest woman in the world that year.

She is the only American woman to have won an Olympic or world 100m title since Carmelita Jeter in 2011.

Icon Management, her

agent, said: "We're devastated to share the very sad news that Tori Bowie has passed away."

"We've lost a client, dear friend, daughter and sister. Tori was a champion...a beacon of light that shined so bright!"

"We're truly heartbroken and our prayers are with the family and friends."

BOTSWANA'S 2012 Olympic 800m silver medallist Nijel Amos has been banned from athletics for three years after testing positive for a prohibited substance.

BBC SPORT said that, Amos, whose silver in London was the first Olympic medal ever won by his country, was suspended by the Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) in July 2022 after an out of competition test detected a banned metabolite in a urine sample.

At the time of the suspension, the 28-year-old was in the United States preparing for the World Athletics Championships in Oregon.

The ban will end on 11 July 2025.

According to a statement released by the AIU, the metabolite, GW1516, was

Botswana runner receives three-year doping ban

"originally synthesised and Anti-Doping Agency's evaluated for the treatment prohibited list in 2009 after of obesity, diabetes and its illicit use as a doping other disorders caused by agent emerged.

metabolic problems but is Amos, who won 800m gold now not approved for at the 2014 Commonwealth human use." Games, has had his results

It was added to the World since 4 June 2022



Nijel Amos was Botswana's flag bearer at the 2016 Olympics following his silver medal in the 800m in London in 2012

Alcaraz, Swiatek reach Madrid open semi-finals

SPANISH teenager Carlos Alcaraz dug deep to beat Russia's Karen Khachanov in testing conditions and reach the Madrid Open semi-finals.

BBC SPORT said that, Alcaraz, who turns 20 on Friday, won 6-4 7-5 against 10th seed Khachanov after trailing 5-2 in the second set.

In the women's singles, top

seed Iga Swiatek continued her dominance on clay with a 6-0 6-3 win over Petra Martic.

Meanwhile, Britain's Andy Murray earned a much-needed clay-court win over Gael Monfils at an ATP Challenger event.

Alcaraz announced himself to the wider sporting public at the same stage of the season last year, winning titles in Miami, Barcelona and Madrid to show exactly why those in tennis circles had long predicted he would become a future Grand Slam champion.

Those predictions were fulfilled when he won the US Open in September and became the youngest men's Grand Slam champion since Rafael Nadal won the French Open in 2005.

This year, his level has continued to accelerate and, in windy conditions at the Caja Magica, this was an example of how he can now carve out victories without being at his very best.

Against Khachanov, Alcaraz faced two break points to go 5-1 down but recovered to see them off before turning the set around.

If he defends the title at the clay-court Masters 1000 event, Alcaraz will regain the world number one ranking from Serbia's Novak Djokovic.

The world number two will face Croatia's Borna Coric in the last four after he beat Germany's Daniel Altmaier 6-3 6-3 on Wednesday night.

"I had problems in the second set, he had a lot of chances to break my serve and had his chances to win the second set," Alcaraz told Amazon Prime.

"I am very happy to get through and finish the match playing such a great level."

"This is my game to try and make different shots and make tennis different. That is my style."

In the women's singles, world number one Swiatek needed just 26 minutes to win the opening set against Martic and broke the 27th seed from Croatia once more in the second to seal a commanding victory.

The two-time French Open

champion, whose only defeat in her past 29 matches on the clay came last July, will compete in the Madrid semi-finals for the first time after missing last year's event through injury.

The 21-year-old from Poland will play Russia's Veronika Kudermetova in the last four.

Kudermetova, seeded 12th, reached the biggest semi-final of her career with a 6-4 0-6 6-4 win over American third seed Jessica Pegula.

Britain's Neal Skupski and his Dutch playing partner Wesley Koolhof - the top seeds in the men's doubles - lost 6-3 6-2 against India's Rohan Bopanna and Australia's Matt Ebden in their quarter-final.

Murray, 35, decided to play in the Aix-en-Provence event - a level below the main ATP Tour - after losing in the Monte Carlo and Madrid first rounds in April.

The Briton won 6-3 6-2 against fellow veteran Monfils, who has slipped to 322nd in the rankings after injury.

Murray, ranked 52nd in the world, plays France's Laurent Lokoli in round two.

The three-time Grand Slam champion travelled to Aix-en-Provence for some more time on the match court as he prepares for the French Open, which starts on 28 May.

Murray has played little on the clay since having career-threatening hip surgery four years ago, losing both his matches on the surface this year before this event.



Alcaraz

'RBC Heritage withdrawal was for my mental wellbeing'

Rory McIlroy has said his "mental and emotional wellbeing" was a reason for him withdrawing from the RBC Heritage event last month.

No reason was given at the time for the world number three's withdrawal, which came soon after he missed the cut at the Masters.

McIlroy will make his first return to competition since Augusta at this week's Wells Fargo Championship.

"Obviously, after the disappointment of Augusta, and it's been a pretty taxing 12 months mentally, so it was nice to just try to disconnect a little bit and get away from it."

"But it's nice to come back and feel refreshed and I think we're on a pretty busy run here from now until after the play-offs so I'm excited to get going."

"I think it was a combination of a few things, and just after

the disappointment of Augusta and how I played there, it was just more for my mental and emotional wellbeing I just needed to be at home for those few weeks but, as I said, looking forward to getting back this week."

He added: "I think I'm in a better headspace than I was. Yes, you know, that run-up to Augusta is always a stressful enough couple of weeks trying to make sure everything is in the right order and making sure your game is in good shape."

"I think for me it was a nice reset because I still had to realise that there are three more majors this year, there is a ton left to play for."

McIlroy declined to do any post-round interviews after failing to make the halfway cut at the Masters, where he admitted he allowed himself to

think about the prospect of becoming just the sixth player to win all four majors.

"Me thinking that way isn't a good thing," he said, speaking at a promotional event ahead of the Wells Fargo event.

"All I should be thinking about is that first shot on Thursday. You need to stay in the present moment and I feel like at Augusta I didn't quite do a good job of that because of how well I came in playing. I maybe got ahead of myself a little bit."

On his performance at Augusta, he added: "It sucked. It's not the performance I obviously thought I was going to put up."

"Nor was it the performance I wanted. Just incredibly disappointing. But I needed some time to regroup and focus on what's ahead."

The RBC Heritage was the second designated PGA Tour



McIlroy



"I will not sell Osimhen" - Napoli President

NAPOLI President Aurelio De Laurentiis has warned potential suitors that he is not ready to sell Super Eagles striker Victor Osimhen, Soccer.net reports.

Playvolum00:09/02:50'We will celebrate until the end', jubilant Napoli fans enjoy titleTruvidfullScreen

Napoli signed Osimhen from Lille for a club-record €72million in 2020. However, after a first season that saw him score just ten goals in 30 appearances, there were doubts about his ability.

But last season, the 24-year-old Nigerian striker started showing his brilliance under coach Luciano Spalletti.

Since the turn of last year, Osimhen has been incredible, and this season, he has proven that he can be one of the best in the world if he stays fit.

The former Lille man has registered 27 goals and five assists in 33 appearances for the Partenopeans this season, helping them to their first Scudetto since Maradona led the club to victory in 1990.

He has smashed Samuel Eto'o's record for the highest goal for an African player in a Serie A season, and he is also on the brink of breaking George Weah's goals record in the Serie A.

Osimhen's displays have caught the eye of some of the best teams in the world. The Nigerian goal poacher has been heavily linked with Manchester United, Chelsea, PSG, and Bayern Munich.

However, those clubs may have to look elsewhere, as Napoli President De Laurentiis has stated that he will not sell Osimhen.

De Laurentiis is known to be very stubborn concerning his best players. But Osimhen has never hidden his desire to play in the Premier League.

Despite his stance, Napoli could shift ground in the end if a sumptuous offer. The club could demand up to €150million before they sell their star man.

Super Eagles Icon, Sunday Oliseh, reacted to Victor Osimhen's impressive performance for Napoli against Udinese on Sunday evening, soccer.net.ng reports.

Playvolum00:00/02:50'We will celebrate until the end', jubilant Napoli fans enjoy titleTruvidfullScreen

The Nigerian star guided his team to a Serie A title for the first time in 33 years following a second-half early equalizer.

Sandi Lovric scored from inside the penalty area in the 13th minute as Udinese attempted to ruin Napoli's party celebration. When the Little Zebras were in charge in the early minutes, Oliseh's response to this indicated



Osimhen

how tense he was.

The Nigerian star, though, missed a number of chances to score for Napoli, sending one header into Marco Silvestri's palms and another to the far post.

The Super Eagles icon hailed his countryman and made a future prediction in response to Mimi Fawaz's remarks about Osimhen winning for the Gli Azzurri. Following his impressive performance for the Partenopeans, the Nigerian striker has caught the attention of some clubs, including Manchester United, Chelsea, and Paris Saint-Germain.

Bayern Munich's decision to drop their interest in acquiring the striker has given the Old Trafford outfit, who has been trying to recruit a striker since Cristiano

Ronaldo left, a little boost.

Still basking in the euphoria of the Scudetto, Nigeria's Super Eagles and Napoli striker Victor Osimhen has said he will forever be grateful to the Italian League, BSNSports.com.ng reports.

Napoli held Udinese to a 1-1 draw with Osimhen scoring the equaliser to give the Naples-based club the Scudetto after 33 years of wait.

It has been amazing in terms of my hold-up play, my goal-scoring prowess and a big kudos to Spalletti and his backroom staff, they have improved me.

"The confidence the team also gave me in feeling that I am a leader has helped me improve. Also a big kudos to the Napoli fans.

When I arrived, I went through some difficult times,

but they gave me the energy and supported me, making me the striker that I am today."

He made history on Thursday night become the highest scoring African player in Italian Serie A and second Nigerian to win Italian Serie A league title, BSNSports.com.ng can report.

Former Super Eagles forward, Kanu Nwankwo was the first Nigerian to do when he won the Italian Serie A trophy with Inter Milan in 1999.

The Super Eagles striker on Thursday broke Samuel Eto'o record for the Most Goals scored by an African in a single season with 23 goals. Eto'o had score 22 goals in a single season.

The Nigerian forward scored the decisive goal in

the second half as Napoli came back from trailing to Sandi Lovric's opener at half-time.

Osimhen's title-deciding strike against Udinese was his 22nd goal in 28 league appearances and rightly caused bedlam among the massed ranks of away fans who took over Udine.

The Nigerian striker has had the best season of his career and been key to Napoli's historic charge to glory, becoming, in the process, one of the most devastating centre forwards in European football, clattering in goals left and right.

Injury slowed down the 24-year-old striker's scoring rate but between returning from a thigh injury in mid-October and the recent round of African Cup of Nations qualifiers last month, he averaged a goal a game.

Over that period, Osimhen scored 23 times in 23 matches in all competitions, propelling Napoli to the brink of a historic Scudetto and becoming a bona fide fan idol even before he scored the goal that secured the title on Thursday.

Napoli's Thursday win saw an end to a 33-year title drought, thanks to Osimhen's title-winning strike which powered the team to glory, one that was last won in 1990.

Napoli are leading second-placed Lazio with 16 points, leaving them with a month-long parade between now and the end of the season which will allow their long-suffering supporters to fully unload more than a generation of frustration.

Super Eagles legend Mutiu Adepoku lauds his countryman, Victor Osimhen, for winning the Italian Serie A for Napoli, Soccer.net.ng

reports.

Playvolum00will celebrate until the end', jubilant Napoli fans

The Nigerian forward helped the Gli Azzurri win their third scudetto title over Udinese Calcio on Thursday night, ending a 33-year wait for the Neapolitans to win the Italian Serie A.

Adepoku, who had an amazing season playing in the European League and had played in 175 games and scored 22 goals in La Liga, complimented Osimhen on his excellent season with Napoli.

In the game's 13th minute, an unmarked Sandi Lovric gave the home side the lead in an effort to delay the Partenopean's championship celebration further.

After trailing down 1-0 at the interval, Napoli got a few solid tips from Luciano Spalletti, which paid off seven minutes after the game resumed when the Super Eagles star scored a vital goal from inside the box to end Napoli's long Serie A title drought.

According to the Shooting Stars icon who commented on this, Osimhen's effort is obvious to everyone and he only merits praises.

The Napoli attacker, who has scored a total of 15 goals in 23 appearances for the Super Eagles, has also been a key member of the team.

After barely defeating Guinea-Bissau in the second leg of their doubleheader for the Africa Cup of Nations, Jose Peseiro's team is on track to clinch their AFCON tickets when they face Sierra Leone and São Tomé Príncipe in June.

The Nigerian star, having equalled George Weah's 23-year-old Serie A record, will be aiming to set a new record when his team face Fiorentina and 4 other teams in their last 5 fixtures this season.

Flying Eagles list to World Cup unveiled

HEAD coach Coach Ladan Bosso has submitted a list of 25 players that will compete in Argentina to the Nigeria Football Federation and FIFA ahead of the U20 World Cup in Argentina, BSNSports.com.ng gathered.

www.bsnsports.com.ng reports that four foreign based players made the final roster while two top players who have been part of the team to WAFU and AFCON were dropped. Fofa Academy graduate, Onuche Ogbenu, who plays for Nasarawa United, and Aminu Muhammed, who plays for Gombe United couldn't make the final list. The duo played vital roles in the midfield of Coach Ladan Bosso led team at the AFCON and also the WAFU Tournament. However the duo will be missing in action, when the World Cup commences later this month.

Topping the list of the players that are going to

represent the country are; Daniel Bamaiyi, Daniel Daga, Benjamin Frederick, Solomon Agbalaka, Samson Lawal, Ibrahim Mohammed. Also included are goalkeeper Nathaniel Nwosu and Augustine Njoku.

Flying Eagles 25-man list to FIFA U20 World Cup in Argentina

Goalkeepers: Chijioke Anigboso, Nathaniel Nwosu, Saheed Akanbi

Defenders: Benjamin Fredrick, Daniel Bameyi, Solomon Agbalaka, Augustine Njoku, Abel Ogwuche, Israel Domingo

Midfielders: Daniel Daga, Victor Eletu, Tochukwu Nnadi, John Joshua, Ibrahim Abdullahi, Samson Lawal

Attackers: Ba'akaka Aji, Vincent Augustine, Emmanuel Umeh, Mohammed Beji, Haliru Sarki, Jude Sunday.

The Flying Eagles departed Nigeria for Argentina yesterday evening via Turkish

Airlines.

Nigeria, two times FIFA World Cup finalists are in group D with Argentina,

Dominican Republic and Italy and will start her campaign against Dominican Republic on 21st May, 2023.



Flying Eagles, here, prepare for the World Cup