

Buhari has no account stashed with corrupt money - Shehu



Nigeria's inflation rate hits 22.22% in April 2023 -NBS Page 2

Gunmen kill 38, burn several houses in Plateau Page 12

IED explodes in Taraba drinking joint Page 21

THE Nigeria Standard



VOL. 13 NO. 799

WEDNESDAY, May 17, 2023

N200

Email: nigeriastandarddailynewspaper@yahoo.com

Nigeria needs N350trn for development plan.-FG

The Federal Government has stated that about N350 trillion would be needed to secure Nigeria's future in line with the National Development Plan (2021-2025).

According to the government, the NDP would ease constraints hindering the economy from attaining its full potential, particularly in the product-mapping space as it will expunge obstacles to businesses.

Minister of Finance, Budget

and National Planning, Zainab Ahmed, who spoke during a special TV forum that examined binding constraints to the implementation of NDP, 2021-2025 recently in Abuja said the government would work to ensure it meets the target.

The meeting was attended by the Special Adviser to the President on Finance and the Economy, Dr. Sarah Alade; Minister of State for Finance, Budget and National Planning, Clem Agba and Permanent Secretary,

Nebeolisa Anako.

The TV forum also featured the Special Adviser to the President on Ease of Doing Business, Dr. Jumoke Oduwole; Acting Director, Macro-Economic Analysis Department, Felix Amaechi Okonkwo and an economist, Dayo Alao.

Speaking at the occasion, Okonkwo said the NDP would be driven by the private sector with N300 trillion investment.

He said, "Let me just mention that this plan is different from other plans we

had in the past, very different. It is going to be driven by the private sector. The funding, the investment size envelope of this plan is about N350 trillion, out of which the private sector is providing N300 trillion, while the government is providing N50 trillion approximately.

"The actual figure is N348 trillion but I just decided to round up the number. So 68 per cent of investment size of the plan is from the private sector, while only 14 per cent is from the public."

For her part, Ahmed gave an insight on why the government decided to drive the NDP (2021-2025).

She said, "I want to place on record that this plan is sufficiently comprehensive with the capacity to attain various regional and global agendas including the AU Agenda 2063, the ECOWAS Integration Agenda 2050 and the Sustainable Development Goals 2030.

"In order to have the future we all desire, the plan is

Continued on page 2



Ahmed



Governor Simon Bako Lalong, CON, representative of President Buhari, NUC, ES, Prof. Abubakar Adamu Rasheed, mni, MFR, Chancellor of University of Jos and Emir of Zazzau, HRH Mallam Ahmed Nuhu Bamali, two recipients of honorary Degrees, Amb. Yahaya Kwande and Prof. Suleiman Bogoro in photograph with VC Unijos Prof. Tanko Ishaya.
Photo: DANLADI DUK

TCC/PLSG organise strategic planning, review assisted programmes

By PALANG KASMI

THE Carter Centre (TCC) in collaboration with the Plateau State Government, have organised a 2-day Strategic Planning Meeting to review TCC Assisted NTDs Programmes 2022 by mainstreaming Schisto/STH study and plans for 2023 to treat school children enrolled in the programme in the nine (9) LGAs.

The TCC Programme Director of Nasarawa, Plateau and Eboyi States, Dr. Abel Eigege, disclosed this recently, while in an interview with journalists shortly after the opening ceremony of the two-day strategic planning meeting, held at the conference hall of Nigerian Bible Translation Board (NBTT) Jos, Plateau State.

He said, "the purpose of the meeting is to review the successes and the challenges we have had. We are now looking at strategies on how to overcome those challenges. What we are doing now is that, Schistosomiasis before now has been a control programme which will take a very long time for it to be eliminated.

"It is something that needs intersectorial collaboration if we are really going to succeed in health, education, water and sanitation. So, as I said, the purpose of this strategy here is, what do we do? as funding for this programme is

Continued on page 2



Abel

Buhari, Gbajiamila, Lalong, salute UniJos @ convocation

By PALANG KASMI

President Mohamadu Buhari, House of Representatives Speaker, Femi Gbajiamila, Plateau Governor, Simon Bako Lalong and Emir of Zazzau, Alhaji Nuhu Bamali were among many high profile personalities that rained encomiums on the

University of Jos during the institution's 33rd and 34th combined Convocation ceremony.

The event which took place on Saturday, May 13th 2023 at the Faculty of Social Sciences Auditorium of the university was also to mark the investiture of the Chancellor, Emir of Zazzau,

Alhaji Ahmed Nuhu Bamali, as well as the conferment of Masters, PH.D and honorary degrees.

President Buhari represented by Chairman, National Universities Commission (NUC), Prof. Abubakar Rasheed who was Visitor at the university said the achievements recorded by

his administration in the educational sector indicates his commitment to producing human capital development.

He said his administration has funded and invested heavily in tertiary education in its 8-years of existence due to its importance to national development.

"My administration has a

liberal policy of education which allows universities to choose their programmes, patterns and local peculiarities", Buhari said.

While urging the graduands to go and impact the society with their newly acquired knowledge, he commended UniJos for its growing

Continued on page 2

News

Nigeria needs N350trn for development plan - FG



Ahmed

Continued from page 1

developed to play a sizeable role in the product complexity space internationally and also adopt measures to easing constraints that have hindered the economy from attaining its full potentials, particularly in the product mapping space."

According to Agba, the plan was carefully done to ensure that it is not seen as an agenda of the President Muhammadu Buhari; Federal Government of Nigeria and All Progressives Congress.

He said, "We wanted the plan to be a National Development Plan where there is inclusiveness and participation and that no one is left behind. The plan itself is already running because the budget is derived from the plan. But again you know that, the plan sometimes cannot be so sacrosanct, you know there is also room for flexibility."

"Some of the projections we made in terms of revenues,

we are challenged this year when from the oil sector, there were so much theft coming on that the oil producers, that is the international oil companies had a short in production, so that affected revenue drastically."

Alade also shed light on the contents of the NDP saying Volume Three is the legislative imperatives and reforms that government needed to do to be able to attract private investors and achieve relevant goals.

She said: "Instead of talking about rural development, we are doing a lot of regional developments and a lot of things. For instance, states can come together, instead of every state having a University, three Universities can come together, have a University and you have an international one."

"There is a deliberate emphasis on gender issues, women, people with special needs and the youths especially."

"There is a special emphasis given to youths to be employ and engage our youths in the development plan in the creation of jobs."

According to Anako, the NDP (2021-2025) is currently Nigeria's medium term development plan that has all stakeholders on board in its formulation.

"As the saying goes, if you don't plan, then you have planned to fail. This National Development Plan sets out

what Nigeria intends to do in terms of developing its economy for five years.

"18 laws and 10 policies were identified as being able to constitute impediments to the smooth realization of this plan."

"We set out what we intend to achieve in infrastructural development. For instance, the levels of infrastructure we need to attain, where we want to be in 2025, 2050 in line with the long term plan", he said.

Oduwale said in designing the NDP, the private sector "looked through legislative framework, they looked to access to justice, the implementation and the application of those rules. They looked at the regulatory environment, administrative law, they looked at sub-national, all the state governments across the country and even to local government because the economy is one."

Alao said the NDP is about everybody, adding that every citizen should take charge of developing the country.

"We are all tired of complaining about the same thing and then we need a whole orientation mindset change in Nigeria."

"You know it is not all about you and I, it is about us collectively looking at this plan, engaging adequately in the right way and trying to drive implementation for you and for the future of our country," he stated.

Continued from page 1

infrastructural development, academic performance and increase in student population including excellent performance in Medicine, and other courses.

Speaking at the forum, Plateau State Governor, Simon Bako Lalong congratulated all graduands for attaining the great feat, stressing further that there is no doubt that the products of the university will excel in their future endeavours.

He commended the University for making a name in the country and attracting the rating of the National Universities Commission (NUC) to be listed among top universities. And added that the new Chancellor and Emir of Zazzau has the capacity to play his part to develop the university.

"UniJos is flourishing, wherever you go all over the world, the products of this university are just progressing", the governor added.

Also speaking at the convocation, Chancellor of UniJos, and Emir of Zazzau, Nuhu Bamalli said the institution has produced many graduates that are excelling within and outside the country.

Bamalli congratulated President Buhari for his commitment to the development of the university, and Governor Lalong for supporting the university to excel, urging the incoming governor of the state to continue with the great works.

Buhari, Gbajiamila, Lalong, salute UniJos @ Convocation

The Emir gave the assurance that he will continue to build the capacity of the university across national and international lines to promote cross cultural exchange, even as he commended the university alumni for supporting the institution with library facilities and training of researchers.

"With the quality of graduands produced in the university, I believe you will contribute to the growth of the nation as you live according to the motto of the institution," he pointed.

Speaker House of Representatives, Rt. Hon. Femi Gbajiamila represented by member representing Pankshin, Kanke, Kanam Federal Constituency, Rt. Hon. Yusuf Gagdi pledged to continue to support the university to grow to higher heights.

He stated that the university has made a name among universities within and outside the country in the area of research and academic excellence.

The Vice Chancellor, University of Jos, Prof. Tanko Ishaya, in his remarks praised the Chancellor for his commitment to the institution.

While praising TETFund, Fidelity Bank, and other donors for supporting the university, he disclosed that the last Convocation took place 4 years ago in 2019. He disclosed that graduations were delayed due to

challenges of Covid-19 and the industrial action by ASUU.

He said the NUC has done so much to keep the institution afloat, adding that the graduands represent 159 PhDs, 3,669 Masters among others of which 112 were able to secure first class degrees from the various departments.

He congratulated a 69 year old student who came out tops of his class alongside two prominent Nigerians, Ambassador Yahaya Kwande, and Prof. Elyas Bogoro who were awarded honorary degrees for their input to the society.

The VC described the university as being among the top 10 institutions with high accreditation rates assuring that in a number of months, other faculties will be created.

"The university has 45,000 undergraduate students, 69 out of 75 courses have full accreditation status, and the institution has a reputation for having both global and national presence, as well as being the first to create DNA on Covid-19", the VC added.

He however called on the Federal Government to review the current funding model of the universities, and scrape the IPPIS system which he said is not sufficient in addressing the institution's numerous financial challenges.

There was a roll-call of goodwill messages from Vice Chancellors of Nassarawa State University, Bauchi State University, ABU Zaria, University of Abuja, Plateau State, University Bokoos, Karl Kumm University, Bingham University, Federal University Wukari, Federal University of Kashere, Federal University Lafia, University of Calabar, ANAN University Kwall, College of Agriculture, Science and technology Keffi, Nassarawa state, among numerous institutions across the country.

Expressing their appreciation on behalf of the honorary degree recipients, former TETFund boss, Prof. Elayas Bogoro listed the achievements of the institution, during his tenure. He described Ambassador Yahaya Kwando as an upright Nigerian with clean records at 94, appreciating the gesture from the university that has given them such a great recognition.

"I am happy that as Executive Secretary of TETFund, I was able to do a lot of things in many institutions across the country including UniJos", he said. Bogoro tasked all leaders, and Nigerians to imbibe non-tribal, non-ethnic virtues to their job to make the country develop in educational, infrastructural, and other spheres of life.

Earlier, Registrar of the University, Dr. Rejoice Sonden and Prof Christopher Okpe on behalf of Chairman, Governing Council of the University performed the rites of oath of office, presentation of University Laws, and investiture ceremony of the Emir of Zazzau as the 8th Chancellor of the University.

After reading his citation, they conferred on the Emir of Zazzau an honorary Doctor of Law degree.

TCC/PLSG organise strategic planning, review assisted programmes

Continued from page 1

reducing? Which aspect can government do?

"So, the strategy is just to see how we can mainstream STH and Schisto so that, even if funding from some donors cease, the government can continue to support it. Also, the people of Nigeria can continue to support it too. An excellent example is our collaboration with PTA of schools".

"As I mentioned to them, Nigeria is not poor. If we really know our priority, direct our priority or priorities to those resources, to these challenges because Nigeria is a rich country. We just pray that our hands would be on deck, all of us to contribute to sail and have new areas that we can help when the government tells us where they need help for us to tell our principal", Eigege assured.

The Programme Director, however, disclosed that out of the thirty-six states including the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), only Nasarawa and Plateau States have eliminated guinea worm, river blindness and interrupted the transmission of Lymphatic Filariasis (LF) as public health issues with the support of The Carter Centre (TCC).

While speaking shortly after the day-2 of Strategic Planning Meeting, Plateau State Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) Coordinator, Philemon Dagwa, said, "now, we are treating diseases we call schistosomiasis (Bilharzia

in Hausa) and distributing deworming drugs to children from 5 to 14 years old when we carried out such meetings."

"Secondly, there are some STH that we have started mainstreaming, which means transferring power from Partners to the Government. We have started piloting that in Bassa Local Government last year and it was a successful one. Now, we are adding eight (8) LGAs to make it nine (9) out of the 17 LGAs."

"The remaining eight (8) LGAs will still do the normal activities; the training and the distribution of drugs is going to be sponsored by The Carter Centre. For the other enrolled

nine (9), there will be no sponsorship completely. The government will take over and basically, we only treat in schools and also use CDD (Community Directed Distributors)", Dagwa highlighted.

On his part, the state TCC Data Manager, Bulus Mancha, said, the strategic planning meeting was an annual meeting aimed at strategizing and organising, planning and focusing on the programme activities that we are going to have for the year, hence engaging stakeholders from the Ministry of Health, Education (SUBEB) and other stakeholders that were

relevant to NTDs programme.

Responding, the Executive Chairman of Plateau State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB), Professor Mathew Sule, thanked the TCC/PLSG for the interventions to create an enabling environment for pupils and teachers to study well and promised to work together with them to achieve success.

Meanwhile, Governor Simon Bako Lalong of Plateau State, represented by the Commissioner of Health, Dr. Nimkong Lar Ndam, through the State Director, Public Health, Dr. Burna Mansok Mafwalla, appreciated TCC

for being technically supportive and instrumental in collaboration with the ministry to deal with NTDs in the state.

There were presentations of awards to the three best Social Mobilization Officers (SMOs) where Mr. Ritji Peter Adamu, from Kanke LGA emerged first (1st), followed by Mr. Sunday Innocent of Bassa LGA who came second (2nd), while Dashe D. Mathew came third (3rd) respectively. Participants were State Integrated Health Team (SIHT), Local Integrated Health Team Leaders (LIHTL) as well as stakeholders from Ministries of Health, Education and Sanitation in that order.

May 29: Buhari has no bank account stashed with corrupt money -Garba Shehu

Garba Shehu, the Presidential spokesman said the President Muhammadu Buhari is above scandal, saying the President does not

have any bank account stashed with corrupt money.

Shehu disclosed this while speaking on Channels Television's 'Sunrise Daily' on Tuesday. The Presidential spokesperson noted that Buhari has performed well in the fight against corruption.

According to Shehu, Buhari does not operate any account with funds looted from the government nor fear scandal or prosecution after leaving office for such.

He said, "The President is still what he is; he is still above board."

As his spokesperson, I go to

Nigeria's inflation rate hits 22.22% in April 2023 -NBS

The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), says Nigeria's headline inflation rate increased to 22.22 per cent on a year-on-year basis in April 2023.

This is according to the NBS Consumer Price Index (CPI) and Inflation Report for April 2023 released in Abuja on Tuesday.

According to the report, the figure is 0.18 per cent points higher compared to the 22.04 per cent recorded in March 2023.

It said on a year-on-year basis, the headline inflation rate in March 2023 was 5.40 per cent higher

than the rate recorded in April 2022 at 16.82 per cent.

"This shows that the headline inflation rate (year-on-year basis) increased in April 2023 when compared to the same period in April 2022," it said.

The report showed that contributions of items on divisional level increase in the headline index, are food and non-alcoholic beverages at 11.51 per cent.

While housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuel at 3.72 per cent.

Others are clothing and footwear at 1.70 per cent; transport at 1.45 per cent; furnishings, household equipment and maintenance at 1.12 per cent and education at 0.88 per cent, and health at 0.67 per cent.

Miscellaneous goods and services at 0.37 per cent; restaurant and hotels at 0.27 per cent; alcoholic beverage, tobacco and kola at 0.24 per cent; recreation and culture at 0.15 per cent and communication at 0.15 per cent." (NAN)



Shehu



PFAs exposure in FGN securities rise by 17%

THE hike in Monetary Policy Rate (MPR) by Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) in an effort to tackle double-digit inflation is driving Pension Fund Administrators (PFAs) to tilt towards securities as their exposure to federal government papers increased by nearly 17 per cent to N29.66 trillion in the first quarter (Q1) of 2023 from N25.36 trillion reported in the first quarter of (Q1) 2022.

The federal government securities include FGN Bonds, Treasury Bills, Agency Bonds, Sukuk, and Green Bonds.

Data obtained from National Pension Commission (PenCom) revealed that PFAs exposure in FGN securities reached N9.48 trillion in January 2023, a 14 per cent high when compared to N8.35 trillion in January 2022.

It inched up higher in February as it increased to N9.98 trillion, a 17.3 per cent growth from N8.51 trillion reported in February 2023.

PFA exposure in FGN securities closed March at N10.2 trillion, a 20 per cent increase from N8.5 trillion in March 2022.

Since June 2022, the CBN, has raised MPR five times to 18 per cent at its last Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting in a bid to curtail the steady rise in the inflation rate to 22.04 per cent in March 2023.

The MPR is the benchmark for determining the interest rate charged by banks and also influences the yields on fixed-income securities.

The hike in MPR prompted a general rise in interest rates with yields on one-month deposits rising to 7.12 per cent in Q1 2023 from 3.33 per cent in Q1 2022.

Similarly, the interest rate on the federal government's Treasury bills rose to 3.81 per cent in Q1 2023 from 1.75 per cent in Q1 of last year.

Analysts believe PFAs are taking position in FGN securities in a move to beat inflation and invest in securities that are risk-free.

According to the Vice President, Highcap Securities, Mr. David Adnori, the rush in PFAs' investments in FGN securities over the last three months is triggered by high interest rate regime following the increase of the MPR by the CBN to tackle rising inflation.

He said, "I had foreseen PFAs investment in FGN securities in the Q1 2023 to continue to grow but investments in stock market will be based on the yield environment, the performance of the stock market during the year and the corporate performance of listed companies for 2022 financial year."

On his own part, Managing Director/CEO of APT Securities and Funds Limited, Mr. Garba Kurfi, expressed that, "The Investment in FGN Bonds by PFAs is necessary because of its availability and risk-free when compared with the other securities. Most aged people prefer their money to be invested in less risky assets. There are no available instruments to invest like bonds with high interest rates.

"There is a need for more financial products that can give alternatives and provide high returns like Bonds in the financial markets in order to attract pension funds investments."

Meanwhile, further findings by Economic Confidential revealed that



Yuguda



Emefiele



PFAs exposure in stock market closed Q1 2023 at N3.1 trillion, an increase of 7.4 per cent from N2.88 trillion in Q1 2022.

The stock market in Q1 2023 added N2.44 trillion in market capitalisation to close on March 31, 2023 at N29.544 trillion from N27.915 trillion at which it opened for trading activities on January 3, 2023 but dropped by N857 billion in March from N30.401 trillion to N29.544 trillion it closed for trading.

The overall market performance measure NGX All-Share Index, which tracks the general market movement of all listed equities on the Exchange, rose by 5.11 per cent to close at 54,232.34 basis points in Q1 2023 from 51,595.66 basis points it closed on December 30, 2022.

Adnori acknowledged the PFAs' role in lifting the stock market in Q1 2023,

stressing that some high-network investors' opted to invest in the stock market.

He added, "The only thing that drives stock market performance so far in Q1 2023 has been the keen interest of PFAs investment in some fundamental stocks. Otherwise, the political tension, the Naira redesign policy of CBN, hike in the inflation rate, among others discouraged investment in the stock market. The Nigeria macroeconomy was in total disarray in the period under review."

PFAs continued to benefit from the federal government borrowing to bridge 2022 budget financing.

Analysts at Vetiva research in a report titled, "Nigeria H2 2022 outlook: A strange labyrinth," said the government expected to increase borrowings, and the global economy

tightening over the Russia-Ukraine war is to drive FGN bonds rates higher.

They predicted an increase in government borrowings in the same period as the FGN gears up for the 2023 Presidential Elections.

"This should lead to an improvement in liquidity in the fixed income space, following an easing of monthly maturities, eased from N893.2 billion in Q1 2022 to c.N354.3 billion in Q2 2022.

"The latest bond offer calendar for Q2 2022 shows that the government is expected to increase its borrowings by 50 per cent, and barring an improvement in oil revenue, we expect the government to borrow aggressively in H2 2022 as it seeks to meet its

financing needs. The expansion of the budget deficit by N965 billion should further boost liquidity in the bonds space, as the country is expected to tap the domestic market to fill the gap.

"Given that the government expects to tap the domestic market to meet its funding needs as well as raise capital for its infrastructure projects ahead of the 2023 elections, we expect this to result in an uptick in yields. Furthermore, the tightening of monetary conditions around the world will add further pressure on policymakers to raise rates, in a bid to retain foreign investors in the bonds market."

Source: Economic Confidential



Business & Economy

Senate tasks FG to address Aviation infrastructure decay, others

THE Senate Committee on Aviation has listed infrastructure deficit, incessant picketing of various agencies by unions, lingering labour matters, constant demolitions of structures around the airports and other long-standing challenges as the among the challenges stunting the growth of the sector and robbing the country the full dividends of its offerings.

The Chairman Senate Committee on Aviation, Biodun Olujimi, made the disclosure in her goodwill message on Monday, at the ongoing 2023 edition of the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) National Aviation Conferences (FNAC) holding in Abuja.

According to her, the aviation sector facilitates growth of other sectors and remains the fulcrum on which the national economy revolves, but lamented that these phenomenal offerings have not been enjoyed in Nigeria.

She said: "The aviation sector catalyses FDIs and creates 200, 0000 direct jobs and supports tourism, international businesses through air connectivity.

"Despite these, the sector is yet to contribute to economic growth due to insufficient infrastructure. The sector is bedeviled with too many challenges like picketing. This is so indecent. It should not continue.

"Another is constant demolitions around the



Saraki

airports due to incessant encroachment into airport facilities. It should be stopped before things are destroyed. It's time for NLC and the workforce to resolve their differences behind closed doors. "Safety should be upheld in the sector as well. The issue of high airfares should also be addressed. This conference should articulate developmental programmes and ensure they're well enforced", and stated.

Also speaking, the fifth and past President of the Council of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), Dr Olumuyiwa Aliu, called on all stakeholders to ensure that the huge potential of the sector is maximized.

"We should work hard to

maximize the huge potential that aviation has to offer. It should be a driver of the economy and not a drag", he said.

In his submission, the Director General of the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority, Capt Musa Nuhu said huge cost of funds, high debt exposure by operators and lack of access to foreign exchange were major challenges peppering stakeholders in the sector.

He added that the high cost of Aviation fuel, Jet A1, has dealt a dizzying blow on the airlines who are also exposed to huge debts.

He, however, said efforts were in top gear to address the industry challenges and take the sector to the next level.

THE Nigeria Employers' Consultative Association (NECA) has expressed concerns over the newly introduced Fiscal Policy Measures (FPM) and Tariff Amendment for 2023, scheduled to take effect from June 1, 2023.

The Director-General of NECA, Adewale-Smatt Oyerinde, noted that the circular by the Minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning Zainab Ahmed, introducing the FPM and Tax Amendment, with increases ranging from 20-100 percent on previously approved rates for alcoholic beverages, tobacco, wines and spirits was not only worrisome, but a landmine for businesses in the sector.

Oyerinde also faulted the introduction of Green tax, a 10 percent excise duty on single use plastics, including plastic containers, films & bags and telecommunications tax of 5 percent.

According to him, "While the government's new fiscal policy measures would largely affect manufacturers, it also has the potential to disrupt the whole Organised Private Sector's (OPS) value-chain, with consequential effects on Nigerians as a whole".

Giving further insights into the concerns of organised businesses, the NECA boss stated that "while we understand the revenue challenges faced by government, its proposed increases will naturally spike the cost of production and reduce the competitiveness of Nigerian manufacturers in both local and international markets. With recent reports of unemployment rate hovering at over 40 percent,

NECA faults fiscal measures, tariff amendment



Oyerinde

the Nigerian economy will be further hard-pressed to withstand the likely loss of jobs that will follow these increases."

He lamented that with over sixty different taxes and levies currently being paid by Organized Businesses and about 20 bills pending at the National Assembly with financial implications for businesses, the best that government could do was not to over-burden the sector or cause the relocation of many more to other climes.

"The FMP, as proposed will neither promote economic growth nor achieve the long-term revenue projection of Government."

While calling on the Federal Government to suspend the implementation of the newly introduced fiscal policy measure, he urged them to maintain status quo of no excise increase, other than as prescribed in the 2022 FPM.

"Government should, as a matter urgency and national importance suspend the implementation of the Fiscal Policy Measure and Tariff Amendment as currently

proposed and revert to the 2022 Fiscal Policy Measure roadmap, built to expire in 2024, while extensive consultation with Organized Businesses is stepped up."

NECA also expressed concerns at the policy inconsistencies of recent years, which has is largely responsible for the continued slump of Foreign Direct Investment to Nigeria as the country recorded only \$1.06 billion in capital importation in the fourth quarter (Q4) of 2022. This brought total capital importation for the 2022 fiscal year to \$5.33 billion, the lowest since 2017.

"A major factor is government's seeming policy inconsistencies, which makes planning difficult. Beyond these consequences, the proposed increases, if implemented could aggravate smuggling, stifle growth of businesses in the sector, promote the production of fake products, reduce the purchasing power of Nigerians and ultimately reduce Government's projected revenue across board," he explained.

FG partners firms to fund climate change agenda

THE Federal Government has started initiatives to bring in private capital to fund its energy transition and climate change agenda.

To foster this, the Nigeria Sovereign Investment Authority and the National Council on Climate Change signed a Memorandum of Understanding in Abuja on Monday to address climate risks.

Speaking on the agreement, the Managing Director of the NSIA, Mr Aminu Umar-Sadiq said, "A core pillar of our

environmental, social and governance strategy is to actively build strategic partnerships with relevant organisations to support climate change actions and Nigeria's energy transition ambitions of achieving net zero emissions by 2060."

He added that the agreement with NCCC was one of the strategic steps taken to meet NSIA's social impact goals and sustainability commitments.

The MoU will allow both the NSIA and the NCCC to further explore potential areas of

collaboration, which would include the development of a climate change framework to provide guidelines for regulating emissions in Nigeria, the implementation of a carbon emissions trading mechanism in Nigeria, and the management of a national carbon registry as well as a climate change fund.

As part of the agreement signing ceremony, the NSIA released its impact report, which outlined the progress made toward attaining its developmental and socio-economic impact as of 2021.

The NSIA MD added, "NSIA's maiden impact report highlights the Authority's development agenda and impact over several years of operations as well as the Authority's efforts to safeguard the environment and address relevant climate-related risks and opportunities in line best practice."

In his remarks, the Director-General of the National Council on Climate Change, Dr. Salisu Dahiru, said that the partnership was a bold signal to the global audience that the country was serious about its climate commitments.

He said, "By committing resources from its sovereign wealth fund to support climate action and an inclusive green economic growth, Nigeria is investing in its future, especially

in a vastly decarbonising world.

"This partnership between two of Nigeria's flagship institutions is expected to catalyse private finance to accelerate Nigeria's ambitious climate and national development agenda."

Operators lament rise in substandard cooking gas, cylinders

OPERATORS under the aegis of the Liquefied Petroleum Gas Retailers Branch of the National Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers, have raised the alarm over the influx of substandard cylinders and Liquefied Petroleum Gas, popularly called cooking gas, with high propane content, in circulation.

LPGAR NUPENG Branch immediate past Chairman, Chika Umudu, gave the warning while speaking at the 3rd Quadrennial Delegates Conference, with the theme "Prioritising Safety In LPG Retailing," according to a statement issued on Monday.

He, however, called on the Nigerian Midstream Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority and the Standards Organisation of Nigeria to arrest the increasing circulation of high propane LPG in the market, stressing that

the commodity was very dangerous to operators and consumers.

He was quoted as saying, "Let us assume that the substandard cylinders being imported mainly from China is a temporary measure to fill the existing vacuum; what is the long-term plan to ensure that only standard cylinders are imported and these substandard cylinders withdrawn in no distant future?"

"Again, why can't we have these cylinders and accessories produced locally as was the case in the 1980s and 1990s? Why can't these multinationals who are scrambling for retail spaces with retailers on the street be told that it is their duty to produce cylinders and other necessary LPG materials?"

"It is important to note that the 'China cylinders' hardly withstand exposure to Nigerian weather conditions

for one year. It is a time bomb as millions of low-income earners in particular are oblivious of the monsters they are living with."

He said the hope of operators was raised when Techno Oil started producing cylinders in Nigeria, "but shortly it disappeared from circulation. Perhaps what happened to its predecessors in the 1990s has happened to it."



Cooking Gas Cylinder



Climate Change



Domestic Export Warehouses (DEWs) aren't enough to boost trade

Domestic Export Warehouses (DEWs) are special warehouses where goods are kept and prepared for exportation. DEWs were recently initiated by the Nigerian Export Promotion Council (NEPC) as a warehousing system located in specific areas as one-stop shops for processing goods for international consumption. These warehouses are critical for Nigeria because of its trade imperatives to the economy. ADEBAYO ADELEKE writes.

AS I have reiterated, we cannot underestimate the importance of trade to an economy. Reports like this have confirmed that smooth trade practices can lift 80 million Nigerians out of poverty by boosting job creation, increasing the domestic value-added to goods, and reducing the nominal price of common Nigerian goods. It therefore goes without saying that if the DEWs are seamlessly harmonized with Nigeria's burgeoning trade processes, the country's trade returns could skyrocket.

In July 2022, the Nigerian Export Promotion Council (NEPC) licensed four new Domestic Export Warehouses (DEWs) to fast-track the timely delivery of non-oil exports from Nigeria, and bolster Nigeria's trade competitiveness. While presenting the approval letters of the DEW grant to the warehouse owners, the Executive Director of the NEPC, Dr. Ezra Yakusak, stated that implementing DEWs in Nigeria will significantly reduce the cost of doing business for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) who are exporting goods out of Nigeria.

While the newly commissioned DEWs may improve pre-shipment activities in Nigeria, like labelling and packaging, the regulatory environment must improve if Nigeria's trade climate will assume a favourable temperature.

He added that in line with the Presidential order, the NEPC introduced the DEW "to serve as a one-stop transit facility/terminal where pre-shipment activities like packaging, labeling, aggregation, and pre-shipment inspection on non-oil exports" are carried out in preparation for transportation and eventual shipment to their respective export destinations. The NEPC reiterates that adequate investment in DEWs can allow Nigeria to make \$200 billion from exports—a financial target set by the CBN.

Granted that the trade advantages offered by the establishment of DEWs across Nigeria are latent, some trade experts still believe that Nigeria's current trade system is laced with many challenges that may hamper the full effects of the trade benefits that DEWs may offer.

While DEWs may standardize



Adebayo

Nigerian products and allow them to meet international consumption requirements, pre-existing barriers to trade in Nigeria like harsh trade regulatory environment, slow automation of export processes, lack of exporter access to finance, high berthing and unloading costs, and many others may still hinder the efforts of the newly implemented DEWs.

This article will give reasons why DEWs alone are not enough to boost Nigerian trade while adducing points on the more things that need to be done to improve trade in Nigeria:

Improving Nigeria's trade regulatory environment

The snail-paced automation of Nigeria's export processes remains a veritable source of concern for trade in Nigeria. It appears that we will need more than DEWs to fill the void occasioned by this irregularity. While receiving a report from an ad hoc committee set up by the Presidential Enabling Business Environment Council (PEBEC), the Vice-President of Nigeria, Prof. Yemi Osinbajo, complained of Nigeria's harsh regulatory environment, which leads to "over-regulatory processes" a slower certification of Nigerian goods. The Vice-President warned that the complex regulatory environment is leaving Nigerian exporters behind compared to their neighbouring counterparts

regulatory processes will undoubtedly play a crucial role in strengthening Nigeria's trade posture when blended with the newly launched DEW system.

Reducing Nigeria's high berthing and unloading costs

Port costs remain a veritable source of trade barriers in Nigeria, one that the knock-on advantages of DEWs may only partially decimate. Deloitte, a prominent financial services firm in Nigeria, has estimated that over ₦6.5 million is needed to clear and transport a 20-foot container laden with cargo worth about \$100,000.

The consignee of the goods will pay approximately 82.5% of the clearing fees to the Nigerian Customs Service (NCS) in the mold of Import Duty, Comprehensive Import Supervision Scheme (CISS) fee, ECOWAS Trade Liberalisation Scheme (ETLS) fee, Port Development Surcharge and Value-Added Tax (VAT). Other charges to be paid by a consignee include freight charges for shipping and container deposit fees, amongst many others.

Indeed, high berthing and unloading costs remain significant challenges to trade in Nigeria. While the price of ship berthing in Nigeria has reduced by about 86.7% from \$150,000 to \$20,000 per vessel, more can still be done to improve the process. We can solve the three major issues of demurrage, detention, and per diem associated with ship berthing in Nigeria through holistic action between terminal operators, shipping companies, and key regulatory agencies like the Nigerian Customs Service (NCS). Intermittent concessions can be given to cargo owners in Nigeria to reduce the excessive ship berthing costs.

The Nigeria Customs Service

must also intensify efforts at complying with relevant international protocols like the International Convention on the Simplification and Harmonization of Customs Procedures (also known as The Revised Kyoto Convention). Duly following the protocol's provisions, will formalize Nigeria's port processes, reduce the high ship berthing and unloading costs, and place Nigeria's water-cargo procedures in line with international best practices.

Improving exporter access to finance

Finance remains a fundamental trade issue in Nigeria, and until Nigerian exporters are well liquidated to facilitate export businesses, initiatives like the DEWs may not reach their full potential.

The NEPC-sponsored Export Expansion Grant (EEG) is a laudable financing initiative for Nigeria's burgeoning export sector. The initiative was capitalized with ₦375 billion to support the 285 Nigerian exporters. It is advised that banking efforts like the EEG should be consolidated so that Nigerian exporters can stand in competitive stead with other African exporters. This way, we can fully harness the domestic export warehouses.

Conclusion

The newly promoted DEWs are a right step in the right direction for promoting export trade in Nigeria, but we must see them as something other than a standalone effort because there are other tangential efforts needed to be advanced if trade will take its rightful place as a stable income earner for the nation. I strongly believe that the above solutions will improve trade and galvanize domestic export warehouses (DEWs) to make Nigeria's trade sector more robust, sustainable, and wholesome.

in other African countries.

Now, while the newly commissioned DEWs may improve pre-shipment activities in Nigeria, like labelling and packaging, the regulatory environment must improve if Nigeria's trade climate will assume a favourable temperature.

Some things that may be done to improve Nigeria's trade regulatory environment include: fairer application of customs regulations, reducing the delays for product certification, reducing the length of multiple physical-cargo inspections by multiple pre-shipment inspection agencies, and reducing instances of overlapping documentation requirements, amongst many other regulatory processes.

Implementing straightforward

"Now, while the newly commissioned DEWs may improve pre-shipment activities in Nigeria, like labelling and packaging, the regulatory environment must improve if Nigeria's trade climate will assume a favourable temperature. Some things that may be done to improve Nigeria's trade regulatory environment include: fairer application of customs regulations, reducing the delays for product certification, reducing the length of multiple physical-cargo inspections by multiple pre-shipment inspection agencies, and reducing instances of overlapping documentation requirements, amongst many other regulatory processes".

Politics

Power abuses and Nigerian politicians

"Politicians are the same all over. They promise to build a bridge even where there is no river". I have deliberately narrowed this up to cover Nigerian politicians because all politics is local and with it political behaviour. The only common denominator is that power unmasks a man or put it brutally, power corrupts a man. NIKITA KHRUSHCHEV writes.

YES, entrust a man with power and then you know who he really is in contradistinction to who he claims or appears to be. You will find out that the outside does not match the inside.

I do not trust politicians or anybody exhibiting political behaviour. This is because they wear two or even three faces. Politics, according to Ambrose Bierce "is the conduct of public affairs for private advantage". You really cannot hold them to their promises. That is because, with all due respect, Nigerians are docile, they have failed to hold politicians accountable to their promises. That attitude emboldens politicians to be corrupt and act with impunity believing that heaven will not fall.

Let us quickly examine the nature of power because power is a monster, the most misunderstood concept or subject in social science. There are basically two kinds of power; political power and spiritual power which are diametrically opposed to each other.

Political power is the capacity to coerce others, in open or secret, overtly or covertly to do one's will. To be effective, this capacity must reside in the position or office such as kingship, presidency, or money. Consequently, political power has no relationship with goodness, intelligence, or wisdom of the person on who political power resides. That explains why very wicked, stupid and evil people have occupied political position in this country and elsewhere in the world. In our case, well known touts or "agbero" have climbed to the position of power.

Many politicians in Nigeria rely on power arising from possession of money which they use to corrupt those in political value chain during elections. They fail to realize that power resides in money not the individual which is why political power obtained with money power does not last. To succeed as a politician relying on money, you must put yourself in a position to always have money to throw about to be relevant. This is the root of corruption in politics.

The easiest way to fight corruption in Nigeria is to



remove money from politics and focus on the integrity, competence and capacity of the politician while holding political office in the past. It is people without verifiable track record that play money politics.

Because power resides in money not the politician, retiring Governors and legislators pay themselves fabulous severance package and pension for life so they continue to have money to engage in politics. That is why many politicians fail to be relevant when out of power because they rely on money which they no longer command.

Recent development seem to suggest that the strategy of removing money from politics and focus on the integrity competence and capacity of the politician has been successfully employed by a political party that does not give "shishi" in mobilizing supporters. In fact the movement is beginning to take root in Nigeria because the youths have keyed into the vision of a new Nigeria where the son and daughter

of no body can become somebody going forward.

That brings us to spiritual power. This resides entirely within the usually ordained minister and has nothing to do with the capacity to coerce others but coercion could manifest indirectly in the form of undue influence. That is why in the build up to the 2023 general elections politicians were busy trooping into religious houses to obtain support and endorsement of the religious leaders so that the congregation can be influenced to cast their votes for them.

People of great spiritual power may be wealthy and sometimes occupy high political positions of leadership but they may be poor and lacking political authority. That is why the wise religious leaders with integrity who know their political weakness refrain from asking members to vote for any political party.

The power of money in politics in our clime has weakened virtually all political and non-political institutions. Government agencies with laws establishing them which

specify their functions have been swayed by money to act or refuse to act on the powers vested on them by statute by politicians.

The chief culprit is the judiciary that had the legal power to overturn electoral results and the process subvert the will of the people by passing spurious judgement declaring a loser with less popular votes to a winner on technicalities. There are well known cases, especially in Imo State under the present jurisdiction that don't require repetition here.

The time has come for Nigerian electorate to rise against impunity of electoral officers and agencies of government that act contrary to the rule of engagement. We can call them "the People's Police" because the law that established these agencies is a public document.

These laws spell out what the agencies or Government officials can do. The "People's Police" will call their attention to dereliction of duty and ask them not to step away from the rules of engagement. Had

this institution been in place, Prof Yakubu would have been stopped from announcement of voting results that was different from what polling agents obtained at the polling booths. There would have been no need for him to impudently tell aggrieved parties to "go to court".

Finally, an x-ray of the behaviour of typical Nigerian Politicians or political class is that they are very selfish. They pursue their own narrow interest not the national or interest of the group they represent, on whose votes they climbed to power. They run the rat race for wealth, power and prestige. They exist only for themselves and they think of others only in terms of getting things out of them and living at their expense. They forget that there is God and we will all die one day and face judgement.

Selfish politicians do not know that power, prestige and wealth could be acquired but not life or indeed good health. A new Nigeria is possible but those in political positions need a rethink and align themselves with reality.

Politics

Datti urges Nigerians to make democracy work

YUSUF Datti Baba-Ahmed, vice presidential candidate of the Labour Party in the February 25 presidential election, has urged Nigerians to put in efforts to make our democracy work. His clamour comes as the country grapples with post-election intraparty political dramas, issues of fulfilment of the constitutional requirement to become president, and legal cases to address issues of legitimacy.

Baba-Ahmed made this call at a symposium titled "Nigerian on Trail: Does Democracy Matter?" held in London on Monday, where other speakers such as Pat Utomi and Aisha Yesufu spoke on the subject matter reflecting on the 2023 general elections.

The former senator who represented Kaduna North senatorial district in the 7th assembly urged Nigerians to put in more effort to protect the nation's young democracy, insisting that our lacklustre approach towards defending our democracies is the main reason why the political elite continue to enrich themselves at the detriment of the masses.

Unlike more developed democracies, African democracies, especially Nigeria, have focused on the self-wealth and enrichment of the political elite and political jobbers. Datti-Ahmed argued that mounting debt, mismanagement of the country's resources, and general insecurity are the dividends of democracy on the continent.

"Democracies belong to those who will exact it. Human rights and civil liberties belong to those who insist on claiming them and achieving them. So the struggle to practise democracy is very healthy, and I want to use this medium to encourage all of us; nobody said it would be easy," he said.

"I believe in democracy; I don't believe in dictatorship," Datti-Ahmed said. "But what I even believe in more is that democracy must be practised well."

"What is democracy?" he asked. "It is not having three arms of government. What is democracy? It is the constitution. If you don't follow the constitution, you simply do not have democracy," he answered.

"The constitution of Nigeria is different from the electoral act, and I repeat, I am not speaking of the 2023 elections; I am speaking about we, the people. I am speaking about the supremacy of the constitution of Nigeria, which states that any law that is in variance with the constitution should be declared null and void," he voiced out.

He said that he was speaking about how the legislative, executive, and judiciary share their existence in the constitution of the country. "I am speaking about what must happen to be duly elected president of Nigeria, and then, interestingly, I have spoken about the failures about how these conditions are not fulfilled.

"Without abiding by a



Datti

constitution, you do not have a democracy. A Constitution well interpreted becomes simple and understandable. The Constitution is meant to be followed as far as the office of the president is concerned. So the constitution of Nigeria is a federal document, while the electoral act is a different document," he noted.

"My principal has gone to court, and we will wait patiently to decide. If your constitution is violated and you sit watching, democracy is not for you," he said, demanding that Nigerians fight to get democracy working, taking the rudder of the ship of

Reps divided as faction backs Tinubu's choice

A break-away faction of the minority caucus of the members-elect of the House of Representatives has backed Tajudeen Abbas and Ben Kalu as speaker and deputy speaker, respectively, confirming a division in the caucus.

The decision was contained in a communique issued on Monday following a meeting of the faction of the opposition group at the Transcorp Hilton Hotel in Abuja.

Idu Igariwey, a ranking PDP member from Ebonyi State, and Alhassan Rurum, a member of the NNPP from Kano State, signed the communique.

"That in furtherance of our resolve to play a leading role in the formation of the leadership of the 10th Assembly and as a result of our diligent interactions with all aspirants for the position of Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, we hereby resolve to support the duo of the Rt. Hon. Tajudeen Abbas and Rt. Hon Benjamin Kalu, respectively as Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives.

"That we have found in the two persons of Tajudeen Abbas and Benjamin Kalu, a leadership that will allow for fairness and equity as well as provide an equal platform for all political parties represented in Parliament to have a say in the running of the legislature and expression of alternate views on issues of public interest.

"That in the next few days we will be meeting in a larger caucus of the minority parties to discuss

democracy from the political elites who are leading the country in the wrong direction.

He made reference to the mass protest actions carried out by the Israeli public over actions they felt weren't democratic and in the interest of the people.

He also lambasted Nigerians concern about the state of the country's democracy by only writing letters to powerful nations instead of acting in such a way to address violations of the constitution.

He ended his speech by saying, "Nigerians, go and make your democracy work."

and formalise the adoption of the Speaker and Deputy Speaker designates of the 10th Assembly of the House of Representatives," the communique reads.

This development shows a crack in the minority caucus as the members held two meetings simultaneously at different venues on Monday. Both camps claim to represent all the minority parties.

Idu Igariwey, a ranking PDP member from Ebonyi State, leads the faction that endorsed Mr Abbas. In contrast, another group led by Fred Agbedi, a ranking PDP member from Bayelsa State, met at Fraser Suites, Abuja, and announced a plan to get a suitable candidate to back.

The faction that met at Fraser Suites failed to get a committee to cause an upset against the ruling **All Progressives Congress** (APC) in the speakership race.

PREMIUM TIMES had reported that the coalition, which comprises the **Peoples Democratic Party** (PDP), Labour Party (LP), New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP), All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA), Social Democratic Party (SDP), African Democratic Congress (ADC) and the Young Progressive Party (YPP), set up a 13-man committee to shop for a candidate from the minority camp.

The Secretary of the Committee, Victor Afam, a Labour Party member-elect from Anambra State, said the

PRESIDENT-elect, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu, the 14th Emir of Kano, Muhammad Sanusi II, the chairman Dangote Group, Alhaji Aliko Dangote and governors of Lagos, Rivers and Plateau, Babajide Sanwo-Olu, Nyesom Wike and Simon Lalong are billed to unveil a book on Kaduna State governor Nasir El-Rufai on Saturday.

The book titled: "Putting The Peoples First", written by a veteran journalist, Emmanuel Ado, is a 412 pages collection of articles on the eight years of El-Rufai administration as governor of Kaduna State.

Briefing journalists on the book presentation event slated for Saturday, 20th May, at Umaru Musa Yar'Adua Conference Centre, Kaduna, co-chairman, Public Presentation Organizing Committee, Tony Maude, said the book as forwarded by the Deputy Senate President, Ovie Omo-Agege, provides perspectives on a wide range of issues: agenda setting, policy statements, budget, internally generated revenue (IGR), local government and public service reforms and the perennial security challenges confronting the state including the nagging Southern Kaduna question.

According to Maude, "Putting The People First: The El-Rufai Years" is a collection of articles on the eight years of El-Rufai administration as Governor of Kaduna State by Emmanuel Ado. Emmanuel Ado is a senior journalist and media consultant with very wide experience and has been a resident of Kaduna for over 50 years."

According to Obarisi, Ovie Omo-Agege, the deputy Senate president, in his forward to the book, wrote that the book provides perspectives on a wide range of issues: agenda setting, policy statements, budget, Internally Generated Revenue [IGR], Local Government and Public Service reforms, the perennial security challenges confronting the State and the

committee could not get a candidate as none of the minority caucus members showed interest.

He stated this on Monday during the meeting of the caucus at the Fraser Suites Hotel.

Mr Afam informed his colleagues that no one showed interest, saying, however, that the caucus remains united.

"The committee called on Members of the minority caucus who are interested in the speakership or Deputy Speaker position to step forward.

"I wish to report on behalf of the Chairman of that Committee and the entire members, as at the end of the period given to undertake that assignment, no member of the minority caucus, better known as the greater majority, stepped forward to contest for the role of presiding officers.

"Deductively, this means that we are not bidding for those two positions. However, we remain united as one caucus of the opposition parties," he said.

He also disclosed that the minority group met with all the aspirants in the race to decide on who to back.

"We did also meet with those aspiring for the position of Speaker of the House of Representatives, but because we've not briefed our members, I will not go into details of our interface," he said. The minority coalition may have to pick from incumbent Deputy Speaker Idris Wase (Plateau), Yusuf Gagdi (Plateau), Sada Soli (Katsina),

Tinubu, Sanusi, Dangote, Wike, Akpabio to unveil book



Tinubu

nagging Southern Kaduna question, amid the regime of conspiracy theories as well as the COVID-19 pandemic and how El-Rufai stood out amongst his peers in managing what would have been a debacle.

Furthermore, he said the book is of immense contribution to governance and political leadership in Nigeria' and that it documented political stewardship, and governance which has been lacking in Nigeria, adding that the book is a rich resource material on the El-Rufai's years of governance of Kaduna State and a must read for politicians, administrators, political scientists, researchers, students and the general public.

Speaking further on the author, Maude said, Emmanuel Ado had been a keen observer and commentator on the governance of the state and Nigeria at large.

Muktar Betara (Borno) Tunji Olawuyi (Kwara), Abubakar Makki (Jigawa), Aminu Jaji (APC, Zamfara), Ado Doguwa (Kano), and Miriam Onuoha (Imo).

Meanwhile, the ruling party, APC, aligning with the President-elect, has adopted Messrs Abbas and Kalu as the candidates for speaker and deputy speaker.

10th Speaker: Opposition parties not interest in race

Opposition parties members-elect in the 10th House of Representatives have back out from contesting for the Speaker and Deputy Speaker ahead on June 5 inauguration.

The opposition resolved not to contest for the two seats as they have no member interested in contesting for the positions.

Rep. Afam Vogene (LP-Anambra), the Co-spokeperson of the caucus known as "Greater Majority" disclosed this at a meeting in Abuja.

He said at the end of the period given to undertake that assignment, no member of the minority caucus stepped forward to indicate interest.

The political parties that made up the caucus include the People's Democratic Party (PDP) Labour Party (LP); New Nigeria People's Party (NNPP); Africa Democratic Congress (ADC).

Others include: Young People's Party (YPP); All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) and the Social Democratic Party (SDP).

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the caucus, called the "Greater Majority" had earlier muted a plan to upstage

"Though not a political appointee of the El-Rufai government, his interest in governance generally and skills as an investigative journalist positioned him to authoritatively comment on the El-Rufai administration in Kaduna State. A task he discharged with professional expertise and patriotism," he said.

He however disclosed that, "His Excellency, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu, president-elect, Federal Republic of Nigeria will grace the occasion as the Special Guest of Honour, Sen. Uba Sani, Governor-Elect, Kaduna State will serve as Chief Presenter, HRH, Khalifa Muhammad Sanusi II, 14th Emir of Kano as Chairman and HRH, Ambassador Ahmed Nuhu Bamali, Emir of Zazzau as Royal Father of the Day.

"The Guests of Honor are; Senator Godswill Akpabio, Barr. Nyesom Wike, Governor of River State, Mr. Babajide Sanwo-Olu, Governor, Lagos State, Barr. Simon Lalong, governor, Plateau State and chairman, Northern Governors' Forum, Aliko Dangote, President, Dangote Group and Dr. Bashir Jamoh, director-general, Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA)," he said.

the ruling All Progressive Congress (APC) by contesting for the Speaker and Deputy Speaker.

The source reports that an 11-man Committee charged with the task of shortlisting, screening and eventual recommendation of aspirants for presiding officers were set up.

However, Ogene disclosed that as at the end of the period given to undertake that assignment, no member of the minority caucus stepped forward to indicate interest.

Ogene said they have also met with APC aspirants and they seem to be qualified, adding that the details of the meeting with the aspirants would not be disclosed until other members were briefed.

He however said that the caucus would remain united as one of the opposition parties.

"We did meet with those aspiring for the position of Speaker but because we have not briefed our members, I will not go into details of our interface.

"I can assure you that everyone that put him or herself running for the position appear to be qualified," he said.

IMAGES

UNIVERSITY OF COMBINED CONVOCATION 2023

University of Jos 33rd and 34th combined convocation ceremony took place on Saturday with the investiture ceremony of the new Chancellor of the University, HRH Mallam Ahmed Nuhu Bamali, CFR, Emir of Zazzau at the Faculty of Social Services Auditorium, Naraguta Campus, Jos



Plateau State Governor and Chairman Northern Governors Forum, Rt. Hon. Simon Bako Lalong, CON (left) putting heads together with the representative of the President, Executive secretary National Universities Commission, Prof. Abubakar Adamu Rasheed mni, MFR



Representative of the Speaker, Federal House of Reps, Rt. Hon. Femi Gbajabiamila, Rt. Hon. Yusuf Adamu Gagdi, Member, House of Reps, representing PKK, (right) with the Speaker, PLHA, Rt. Hon. Yakubu Yackson Sanda and the Chief Judge, Justice David Mann



Chancellor and Emir of Zazzau, HRH Mallam Ahmed Nuhu Bamali (left) decorating Prof. Suleiman Elias Bogoro with honorary Doctorate Degree being assisted by the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Tanko Ishaya



Amb. Yahaya Kwande (middle) displaying his certificate after being decorated with honorary Doctorate Degree by Uni-Jos



Chancellor and the Emir of Zazzau, HRH Mallam Ahmed Nuhu Bamali (left) with the Member, House of Reps, Hon. Beni Lar



Cross section of graduands at the ceremony



Plateau State Governor, Rt. Hon. Simon Bako Lalong, CON (left) in a warm handshake with the Governor-elect, Barr. Caleb Mutfwang at the Combined University of Jos convocation



Cross section of royal fathers within and outside Plateau at the convocation

Politics

On 2023 elections, INEC, media and Nigerian growing democracy

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sadly, the role of the media in Nigeria has been complicated by various factors, with several organisations and platforms being used to promote hate speech, attacks on people,



Yakubu

politicians and political parties, as well as counter attacks on journalists and media organisations.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Ahead of the elections in February and March, the Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP) had reason to call on President Muhammadu Buhari to intervene and demand the immediate withdrawal of a recent threat by the NBC to revoke the licence of broadcast stations over their coverage of the upcoming elections. SERAP urged the President to call Lai Mohammed, the Minister of Information, and the NBC to order and ensure that the NBC's actions do not limit freedom of expression and the ability of broadcast stations to cover important issues around the 2023 general elections.

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

The Nigerian media is barely surviving under severe financial stress and there are many pressures that make it difficult for the media to deliver on its

mandate of enhancing the people's rights to know and holding individuals, organisations and corporations accountable. These include ownership burdens, excessive pressure from advertisers and other patrons who try to dictate content, a sustainability challenge caused by dwindling advertising revenue, and attacks on journalists and media organisations.

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

Furthermore, attacks on journalists and media organisations must be addressed as well. There is a need for the government to uphold the principles of transparency and accountability during the electoral process and ensure that the media is allowed to carry out its watchdog role without fear of reprisal or censorship. These pressures make it difficult for the media to deliver on its mandate of enhancing the people's rights to know and holding individuals, organisations, and corporations accountable. The government should also protect journalists and the press doing their work and citizens should support and respect the media's role in enhancing our nascent democratic practice. The media plays a crucial role in shaping the public's perception of the electoral process and ensuring that it is conducted in a free, fair, and transparent manner. We must uphold that role, come what may.

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

NEWS

Emir, 24 others lead 2023 Bauchi pilgrims

From **ABBAS GUNGURA, Bauchi**

THE Executive Governor of Bauchi State, Sen. Bala Abdulkadir Mohammed, has confirmed the appointment of His Royal Highness Alhaji Yunusa Mohammed Danyaya OON, the Emir of Ningi, as the Bauchi State Amirul Hajj for the 2023 Hajj exercise.

The Emir's letter of appointment which was signed by Secretary to the State Government, Barr Ibrahim Mohammed Kashim, reads that his appointment along-side 24 other prominent citizens of the state was based on their individual track records of hard work, commitment, patriotism, trustworthiness, and above all, fear of Almighty Allah. He therefore called on them to demonstrate these qualities in the discharge of this onerous task to justify the confidence reposed in them by the government and the entire people of Bauchi State.

The Amirul Hajj team is expected to work hand in hand with the Bauchi State Muslim Pilgrims Welfare Board and other relevant agencies at the state, federal and international levels to provide sincere, effective and purposeful leadership.

Other members of the Amirul Hajj team include the Deputy Speaker, Bauchi State House of Assembly, Rt. Hon Danlami Ahmed Kawule



Mohammed

as Deputy Amirul Hajj, Hon Justice Rabi Talatu Umar, Chief Judge, Bauchi State, Hon Khadi Umar Liman Grand Khadi of Bauchi State, Imam Bala Ahmed Baban Inna, Chief Imam Bauchi Central Mosque, Hon Tijjani Mohammed Aliyu, Majority Leader BAHA, Hon Bakoji Aliyu Bobbo Minority Leader BAHA, Hon Bala Abdullahi Dan of BAHA, Hon Umar Babayo Kesa, Hon. Commissioner of Religious Affairs, Hon. Abdulrazak Nuhu Zaki, Hon. Commissioner Ministry for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs.

Also in the team are; Alh Ibrahim Y.M. Baba Sarkin

Duguri, Alh Aliyu Yakubu Lamé Sarkin Yakin Bauchi, Alh Bala Sulaiman Adamu, Danggaladiman Bauchi, Alh Iliyasu Aliyu District Head of Akuyam, Alh Umar Ibrahim, Sarkin Shira, Alh Yayanuwa Zainabari State PRO PDP, Sheik Salisu Sulaiman Ningi, Barr Garba Hassan, Sheik Ibrahim Dahiru Bauchi, Mal Mustapha Baba Ielah, Alaramma Zakari Ya'u Dan-Yusuf Dauduwo, Mal Ahmed Inuwa Na'ibi, Deputy Chief Imam Bauchi, Alh Bala Hadith, while Yahaya Abubakar Umar and Aliyu Adamu Abdulkadir are to serve as Secretary and Deputy Secretary of the delegation respectively.

The New Nigeria People's Party (NNPP) in Gombe State has passed a vote of confidence on its leader and Governorship candidates in the last election, Khamisu Ahmed Mailantarki, for his sacrifice to the party.

The confidence vote was passed Monday afternoon during a review meeting of the party that brought together the state executives and stakeholders of the party.

The party came a distant third after the governorship election and rumours had been flying that some members compromised and sold the party out including the governorship candidate, Khamisu Ahmed Mailantarki. The ruling APC won the election with PDP coming second at the polls.

State Secretary of the party, Comrade Nasiru Mohammed Baba-Sherif, told newsmen shortly after the meeting that though the party lost the election, they however passed a vote of confidence on its leader and governorship candidate in the last election, Khamisu Ahmed Mailantarki for his enormous contribution to the party.

He said after receiving reports from the members of the party, the executives will seat to forge a way forward for the party.

He described as a lie, the rumour alleging that Mailantarki received #1b from Governor Muhammad Inuwa Yahaya as compensation shortly before the Governorship election.

According to him, "I was together with Mailantarki at the particular moment the rumour filtered out that

NNPP passes vote of confidence on governorship candidate

By **WILLIE ATTAH, Gombe**

Mailantarki was at the Government House receiving money from Inuwa Yahaya. It was not true", he insisted.

Also speaking, the Minority Leader in the Gombe State House of Assembly and a stalwart of the party, Rambi Ibrahim Ayala, said "there is nothing that we didn't see or hear. We saw a fake court order being paraded around that barred our candidate from contesting.

"It was not true, but it was circulated all over that our candidate was disqualified. The PDP was jittery, APC was jittery too. There were all kinds of propaganda, lies, just to sell their products.

"Within six months before

the general election, Mailantarki brought the party, nurtured it to become a nightmare to the ruling APC government and the PDP. He was seen as a threat, that was why they brought all kinds of lies.

"You heard #2b, some people heard #200m, some said #100b. They were just trying to package their products, sell their party. The PDP said Mailantarki was working for the APC. The APC said he was working for the PDP, which one will you take?" He queried.

He said in their review during the meeting, Mailantarki had done extremely well for the party. "We contested and didn't win. We are launching ourselves back in 2027", he boasted

Gov'ship tribunal to conclude job within 180 days

From **Abbas Gungura, Bauchi**

BAUCHI State Governorship Election Petition Tribunal (GEPT) on Monday, 15th May, 2023, held its inaugural sitting assuring that it will do everything possible to complete its assignment in 180 days in accordance with the laws.

The Chairman of the 3-man panel, Justice P T Kwahar, therefore called on counsels to try as much as possible to avoid technicalities that will cause unnecessary delays.

He stressed that in accordance with the laws, the

tribunal has 180 days within which to complete its assignment, promising that the tribunal will work as stipulated.

The Chairman assured that the panel is well prepared to hear and determine all the petitions brought before it within the time frame. He urged the counsels to co-operate with the tribunal.

He then announced adjournment of sitting to next week Monday when hearing of the petitions will commence and called on the counsels to be time conscious.

Speaking to journalists after the inaugural sitting, lead Counsel to APC and its gubernatorial candidate in the election in Bauchi State, Hakeem Afolabi SAN said that his team is prepared to pursue the petition to a logical conclusion.

The legal practitioner assured that the petition will be argued within the time frame stipulated, stressing that his team will co-operate with the tribunal in the dispensation of justice.

Hakeem Afolabi who is leading other Counsels to prosecute the APC and its gubernatorial candidate's petition, assures the tribunal of the best of professional conduct throughout the petition.

On his part, the Counsels to PDP and its gubernatorial candidate, Barr Ben Ogbuchi gave the assurance that his legal team is ready to defend the case brought against his clients by the APC.

According to him, "We are ready to defend the mandate massively given to Sen Bala Mohammed Abdulkadir as the Governor of Bauchi State by the people. As you can see, he was elected by the people of Bauchi State and we will stoutly defend the people's mandate."

Ben Ogbuchi said that, "We are well prepared to respond to the petitions. We have nothing to fear because the mandate is given by the

Kogi NSCDC Commandant honours 15 officers

From **AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja**

THE new Commandant, Kogi Command of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) Ahmad Gandhi, has honoured 15 officers and men of the command for their commitment and dedication to duty.

The commandant said that the gesture which is aimed at boosting productivity in the system, was part of the activities to celebrate his 100 days in Kogi.

Gandhi said he took time off to celebrate the day in order to mark the successes and challenges that the command has so far recorded saying it was simply stock taking event.

He said it was awesome for him that in short notice, the organisers were able to package such a colourful event to mark his presence in the state.

According to him, the officers and men of the command are wonderful people who approach their duties with diligence, commitment and above all, craving for excellence that have repositioned the command for excellent performance.

The commandant said the award to the fifteen deserving officers and men was to spur them to put in their best and become a benchmark for others to strive to attain.

He noted that the command under his watch is working as a system and as such, no part of the system can work alone to achieve success.

Gandhi added that whatever milestone he would have achieved in a short space of time were attributed to the commitment of all the personnel.

He, therefore urged the awardees not to rest on their oars as he that much is given, more is expected of him.

He pledged to institutionalise the award to be given periodically to officers that have distinguished themselves, while promising to make the overall welfare of personnel his priority.

He promised to ensure that the award formed part of their CVs in the headquarters, stressing that the Commandant General is pleased with their contributions to the success of the command.

He advised them to remain faithful to duty and to step up

their performances, saying the award could be withdrawn at any time if any officer was found to have compromised his office.

Earlier, the Deputy Commandant, DCC, Stephen Alabi, said that in just 100 days in office of the present commandant, he had recorded milestones in the quest to ensure free crimes and criminality in the state.

The deputy commandant explained that the command was able to arrest illegal miners and their barons who have remained untouchable until his assumption of office.

"Within the period under review, the commandant has ensured the refurbishment of broken down vehicles which have assisted officers for smooth operation.

"The hitherto conflict between the Fulani herders and farmers was resolved by the men of the Agro Rangers which has restored mutual relationship between them.

"For optimal performance, officers across departments have been trained and retrained. As a result, the Legal Department was able to secure 8 convictions with offenders spending various terms in correctional centers.

"The commandant has also given facelift to the command believing that a conducive environment has multiplier effects on the output of the personnel, and females armed squad are being trained and retrained," Alabi said.

He commended the commandant for his people's oriented leadership that has inspired officers to be in competition for excellent performance, saying the command had benefited immensely from his

leadership.

Speaking on behalf of other awardees, Deputy Commandant Abubakar Hassan Aboki, thanked the Commandant for the award, saying it was the greatest honour he ever received in service.

Aboki, who doubles as the Head of Administration Department, NSCDC Kogi Command, assured the commandant of their commitments to continue to put in their best for optimal performance.



Gandhi

News

Two killed in Taraba ethnic clash

From VICTOR GAI, Jalingo

THE Police in Taraba have confirmed the death of two persons as a result of an ethnic clash between the Wurkun and Karimjo in Karim Lamido Local Government Area of Taraba State.

The Police Spokesman, Abdullahi Usman, who confirmed the incident to **THE NIGERIA STANDARD** said security forces have been deployed to the area and that the situation has been put under control.

"There is a clash between Karimjo and Wurkun. The mobile police and conventional police have been deployed. The military are already there. The situation is relatively calm. There is fear of reprisal but the situation is calm. So far, we have registered two casualties," he disclosed.



Alkali

A reporter with the state radio station, Amos Adamu also told **THE NIGERIA STANDARD** that the incident started as a result of chieftaincy tussle between Karimjo and the Wurkun community.

The new chief of Wurkun, Yakubu Abubakar Haruna,

was coronated and presented with the Staff of Office, which went against the wishes of the Karimjo community, says Adamu.

According to him, protests by one of the warring parties led to a clash with the attendant burning of homes.

Bauchi judiciary joins global best practice

From ABBAS GUNGURA, Bauchi

BAUCHI State Chief Judge, Justice Rabi Talatu Umar, has disclosed that Small Claims Court (SCC) is a simplified judicial process that ensures speedy dispensation of simple debts and liquidated money demand cases in accordance with the soul and spirit of doing businesses.

Justice Rabi confirmed that the Bauchi State Judiciary has started this judicial intervention on Thursday 11/05/2023 with three courts across the state under Magistrates Kawu Bala Esq, Abdullahi Garba Esq, and Zainab Shu'aibu Esq.

The Chief Judge, while unveiling the Small Claims Court, at High Court 1 in Bauchi said the successful

operationalization of the court is largely dependent upon a functional and highly committed Judicial Committee under the chairmanship of Justice Mu'azu Abubakar.

"The Bauchi State Judiciary is starting this judicial intervention with three courts in which two will be situated in Bauchi Judicial Division and one in Katagum Judicial Division. The monetary jurisdiction of this court is a maximum of three million naira (N3,000,000)".

Justice Rabi Umar assured that the intervention would be improved upon as time goes on in order to ease accessibility to the courts across the state, saying the judicial committee has already posted key court support officials like Sheriff's, Bailiffs, Court Clerks, Court Registrars, among others, to

the various courts.

She said that in addition, a website has been created for the High Court of Justice and a portal for the Small Claims Court hosted on the website.

"The profile page will be populated by historical information on Small Claims Court, Copy of the Practice Directions No.2 of 2022 and Handbook, location of each court, names and designation of each presiding judge, performance reports, copies of judgments and any other information the committee may prescribe from time to time".

Justice Rabi Umar further said "All necessary forms, summons and files have been printed. I can comfortably assure you that we are 'good to go', as she formally inaugurated the Small Claims Court of Bauchi State on 11th Day of May, 2023.

The Chief Registrar of the Bauchi State High Court, Barrister Subilom Emmanuel Danjuma, in a welcome address, said that the SCC is a judicial intervention derived from the global best practice in facilitating enforcement of contracts for micro, small and medium size enterprises (MSMEs) and improving access to justice for small business holders.

Barrister Subilom Danjuma explained that the Small Claims Courts are a specialized fast-track courts primarily established to within the existing structure of magistrate courts designated to provide claimants with an accessible, inexpensive, and speedy resolution platform for simple and liquidated debt recovery disputes.



Umar



Reflecting on our many failings

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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



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

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

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

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

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

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

News

INEC displays names of governorship candidates, running mates

From **AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja**

Ahead of the Kogi State governorship election scheduled for November 11, 2023, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has cleared a total of 18 candidates jostling to take over from the incumbent Governor Yahaya Bello in January 2024.

The list of the candidates from the various political parties was contained in documents displayed by INEC at the state headquarters in Lokoja weekend for objections, claims, and counter-claims and to put the record straight where parallel congresses were conducted during the party primaries in the state. Among those whose names were published by the INEC are the All Progressives Congress (APC) candidate, Ododo Ahmed Usman; Senator Dino Melaye of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP); Leke Abejide of African Democratic Congress (ADC); Olayinka Braimoh – Action Alliance and Okeme Adejoh of the Labour Party. Also displayed along with the governorship candidate was the list of their running mates. For the Accord Party, the governorship candidate is Jimoh Francis Ayo, while his running mate is Ahmed Ibrahim. AA has Braimoh Olayinka Gideon as governorship candidate while Ogwu Simeon Ojone is his deputy. AAC has Abel Yaba Emmanuel and Abu Moses Felix as the governorship candidate and deputy, respectively. Sunday Frank Onoja will fly the APP flag while Kekere Rahamaat is his running mate.

For the ruling APC, Ododo Ahmed Usman is the governorship candidate while Suleiman Abubarka will serve as his deputy. APM has Dauda Utenwojo as its candidate while his deputy is Ologe John Kola. APGA will field Arkigofa Musa Abdulazeez and Nweke Benjamin Ikechukwu as the governorship and deputy governorship candidates, respectively. Julius Elupo and Mohammed Yahaya will fly a joint ticket of the ADP.

ADC will field Leke Joseph Abejide and Dauda Usman, while Boot Party has Mohammed Kabir Umar and Elejo Usman. Labour Party's governorship candidate is Okeme Adejoh while Ocheja Edegbo is his deputy. NRM will field Sirius Bala Abdulgafar and Onoja Ernest Braiwere.

PRP will also field Abdullahi Bayawo and Sunday Davis Ozomata. YPP's governorship candidate is Omale Samson Agada, while Suleiman Abubarka is his running mate. For the ZLP, Suleiman Taiye Fatimah will fly its ticket jointly with Oluwole Mathew.

The list also shows that Musa Salihu Mubarak and Tanimu Idris will contest for NNPP while SPD will field Jimoh Sheik Ibrahim with Ajodo Damian



Yakubu

Mondy as his deputy. Senator Melaye Daniel Dino will run jointly with Mohammed Deen Habibatun on the platform of the PDP.

Sources however, hinted that the list is tentative because it is subject to change and substitution before the end of June.

PDP suspends former Kaduna State Governor

From **John FWAH, Kaduna**

THE People's Democratic Party, PDP has suspended the former Kaduna State Governor, and former Senator and Acting PDP National Chairman, Senator Ahmed Muhammad Makarfi for anti-party activities.

In a two-page suspension notice which was dated Sunday, May 14th, 2023, signed by the Chairman, Tudun-Wada Makarfi Ward, Saidu Aliyu and five others said the suspension was as a result of persistent contravention of the party's constitution.

The letter of suspension notice reads:

"You are hereby notified that as a result of your persistent contravention of the provisions of Sections 58 [3] [1, 58 [1] (h) and 58 (s) of the Constitution of the Peoples Democratic Party (as Amended in 2017), engaging in anti-party activities, promoting factions within the party, and causing disaffection among members of the party all at the Tudun-Wada Makarfi Ward of Makarfi Local Government".

"Showing yourself to be highly self-opinionated and intolerant of dissenting views irrespective of their merit, fractionalizing the party using your influence as a member of the national leadership of the party".

". Undermining the party's laid down guidelines and procedures in the day to day management of the affairs of the party

. Engineering and promoting the arbitrary expulsion of loyal members of our party at the Tudun Wada Ward without recourse to due process".

The party in the letter also

accused the former Governor, Senator Makarfi for undermining the party's mobilization during the recently concluded General Elections by engineering a skewed distribution of the resources meant for campaign

mobilization for the elections. "The Executive Committee of the Tudun Wada Ward of Makarfi Local Government Area, therefore at its meeting held on May 14, 2023, resolved to suspend you

forthwith from your membership with the Tudun Wada Makarfi Ward of the Kaduna State Peoples Democratic Party pending further appropriate disciplinary action against you".

NSCDC arrests 21 over illegal mining

DRIVERS on the run as NSCDC intercept two trucks laden with 90,000 litres of adulterated Diesel in Cross River

Arrested on May 11, the suspects were paraded on Monday by the state Commandant of the NSCDC, Mr Samuel Fadeyi, at the NSCDC headquarters in Calabar, the state capital.

Fadeyi said illegal mining could worsen security challenges and cause natural disasters in the community.

The Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, NSCDC no fewer 21 suspected illegal miners have been arrested in Cross River state communities.

Vanguard learnt the suspects were arrested by the NSCDC personnel in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Mines and Steel Development in the Utanga community in the Obanliku Local Government Area of the state.

The commandant said "Our searchlight was able to identify a place in the Utanga community in the Obanliku Local Government Area where we raided 21 suspects caught in the act of illegal mining.

We arrested them together with their implements and tools. The suspects are undergoing investigation and soon, we will prosecute them.

"Some communities are complicit in these illegal mining activities in their area because they rely on peanuts that come out of it and forget



Audi

the challenges that may come thereafter.

"These illegal activities can attract criminal elements, warlords, insecurity and disaster in the area during the process of digging.

"Rather, they would have approached the Federal Mines Office and get a licence and allow the mines officer to put them through before undergoing such activities."

The Federal Mines Officer, Federal Ministry of Mines and Steel Development, Cross River State, Mayowa Omosebi, said efforts had been on to arrest the suspects and stop illegal mining in the area.

Omosebi said, "What we are asking for is more funding

Gunmen kill 38, burn several houses in Plateau



Daput

community at about 1:00 a.m. and went on a shooting spree to smoke the inhabitants out of their respective houses.

"Before the gunmen attacked our community, they had earlier attacked Kubat, a village bordering

the Bokkos local government area of the state. The village is close to us, and when we heard of the gunshot, we told our women and children to come out to avoid being trapped in their houses.

"Before we could put our act together, the gunmen who were in large numbers struck, shooting at random, and in the process killed twenty-nine people, mostly women and children, who were escaping in a truck from the community.

As I am talking to you, I am beside the 29 corpses that have been recovered, and there are others still missing. We are tired of this incessant attack; we want the security agencies to come to our aid," said the source.

The Nigerian Tribune further gathered that in Kubat village, through which the gunmen attacked the Fungzai community, no fewer than nine people were also killed and houses burned by the attackers.

It was learned that the village at the moment is deserted, as most of the survivors have taken to their heels and are now taking refuge in neighboring communities.

Meanwhile, Plateau State Governor Simon Bako Alalong has condemned the overnight attack on Kubat Village in Mangu Local Government, where some people, including women and children, were reportedly killed, and directed security forces to pursue the attackers and ensure they are arrested.

The Governor, in a statement signed by the Director of Press, Dr. Makut Simon Macham

described this as yet another attempt by crisis merchants and criminals to return the state to the dark days of pain and agony, vowing that the government will stop at nothing to ensure that those behind this scheme are dealt with mercilessly.

Foreign Commentary

African leaders undertake peace mission to Ukraine, Russia

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa said Russia's Vladimir Putin and Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelenskyy have agreed to welcome a group of African leaders to discuss a potential peace plan. Russia unleashes a large aerial attack on Kyiv overnight, which Ukraine describes as an "exceptional" onslaught involving the highest number of missiles fired by Moscow in the shortest time. Top Chinese envoy Li Hui begins a tour of Ukraine, Russia and other European countries in a trip Beijing says is aimed at discussing a "political settlement" to the war. Ukraine's first lady, Olena Zelenska, meets South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol and asks for non-lethal military aid. Edna Mohamed and Virginia Pletromarchi writes.

RUSSIA said it is still undecided on renewing the Black Sea grain export deal, which is set to expire on May 18. "There are a lot of unanswered questions regarding our part of the deal. ... Now we have to make a decision," Peskov told reporters.

Russia has repeatedly threatened to withdraw from the deal, saying obstacles remain on its exports of food and fertiliser.

Russia has laid out a list of conditions for it to agree to an extension, including allowing the Russian Agricultural Bank (Rosselkhozbank) to reconnect to Swift, the international electronic payment system.

Turkey, a mediator in the grain export talks, expressed optimism that a deal could be reached. During recent talks in Istanbul, its defence minister, Hulusi Akar, said: "We are heading towards an agreement on the extension of the grain deal."

Putin has decided to hand over The Trinity, a 15th-century painting considered one of the holiest and most artistically important Russian icons, from a museum to the Russian Orthodox Church because of its importance to believers, the Kremlin's spokesman says.

Andrei Rublyov's artwork, displayed for nearly a century in the Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow, is thought to have been painted to honour St Sergius of Radonezh in Sergiyev Posad near Moscow.

The Moscow Patriarchate said in a statement that it would be displayed for a year at Christ the Saviour Cathedral in central Moscow before returning to Sergiyev Posad.

Peskov told reporters: "This concerns a large number of believers in our country, for whom this is a very sacred object. For these, our believers, of course, hiding it in a museum doesn't fulfil their desire."

Two people have been killed in Russian shelling in the village of Dvorichna in Kharkiv, the top Ukrainian official in the region says.

"Unfortunately, two civilians – a man and a woman – were killed as a result of artillery shelling in the village of Dvorichna in the Kupyan district," Governor Oleg Synegeubov said on Telegram. "Another man received shrapnel wounds and was hospitalised. Yesterday evening, the enemy massively shelled the city of Vovchansk, Chuguyiv District.

"At least three residential buildings, farm buildings, a local hospital building were damaged, [and] several shells hit an open area. In the village of Tyshchenkovka, Kupyan district, as a result of shelling from multiple rocket launchers, at least four residential buildings and commercial buildings were damaged, and fires broke out."

Putin and Zelenskyy have agreed to receive an African mission that will propose a peace plan, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa says.

"My discussions with the two leaders demonstrated that they are both ready to receive the African leaders and to have discussion on how this conflict can be brought to an end," Ramaphosa said at a news briefing with Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong.

"Whether that will succeed or not is going to depend on the discussions that will be held," he said.

Ramaphosa said the peace plan is backed by the leaders of Senegal, Uganda and Egypt, adding that the UN secretary general, the US and Britain have also been briefed.



Putin

Ramaphosa

The Kremlin says its special services are tracking Western intelligence after the posting of a YouTube video encouraging Russians to speak to the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

The short video in Russian titled Why I Made Contact with the CIA: My Decision appeared on the CIA's official YouTube channel.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said he had not paid attention to it but added: "I am convinced that our special services are monitoring this space in the necessary way."

"We all know perfectly well that the CIA and other Western intelligence services are not reducing their activity on the territory of our country."

Russia's Ministry of Defence says it destroyed a US-built Patriot surface-to-air missile defence system with a Kinzhal missile in an overnight strike on Ukraine.

The military news outlet Zvezda quoted the military as saying the overnight strikes had been aimed at Ukrainian fighting units and ammunition storage sites.

Ukrainian Defence Minister Oleksiy Reznikov said his country had shot down 18 Russian missiles overnight, including six Kinzhals.

The head of Ukraine's Supreme Court has been detained over an alleged bribery scheme, a prosecutor from the Specialised Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office (SAPO) says.

The prosecutor said at a news briefing that the head of the court had yet to be served with a formal "notice of suspension".

On Monday, the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine (NABU) and SAPO announced they had "exposed large-scale corruption" at the court and shared a photograph of piles of dollars lined up on a sofa.

"You see that we are showing through real cases, real deeds, what

our priority is: It's top corruption, it's criminal organisation at the highest levels of power," NABU Director Semen Kryvonos said at Tuesday's briefing.

Ukraine's first lady, Olena Zelenska, has asked South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol for non-lethal military aid, South Korea's presidential office says.

Zelenska met Yoon as a special presidential envoy and told him that she hoped to get equipment such as mine detectors, Yoon's spokesperson, Lee Do-woon, said at a news briefing.

Yoon said South Korea would help the Ukrainian people, Lee said.

In an interview with South Korea's Yonhap news agency, Zelenska raised the possibility of Yoon visiting Ukraine and said a visit would be "very supportive".

She also called for "more radical" support.

Ukrainian Colonel General Oleksandr Syrskyi, who visited troops in Bakhmut, says the Wagner Group fighters had walked in like "rats into a mousetrap".

On Telegram, Syrskyi said, "Using the principle of active defence, we resort to counteroffensive actions in some directions near Bakhmut. The enemy has more resources, but we destroy his plans."

"Together with the commanders of units and subdivisions, they discussed and adopted the necessary decisions for the continuation of the defence operation. all possible scenarios of the development of events were calculated," he said.

Last week, President Zelenskyy said Kyiv's anticipated counteroffensive was not ready yet and that they "still need a bit more time".

China's special Ukraine envoy Li Hui will visit Warsaw on Friday following his two-day trip to Kyiv, Poland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said.

"That will be the case," spokesman for the ministry Lukasz Jasina told AFP news agency, confirming earlier reports in Polish media.

The envoy will also meet the Polish deputy foreign minister during their visit to Warsaw.

Beijing announced Li's visit last week, saying that apart from Ukraine and Poland he would also visit Russia, France and Germany.

China said the aim of the tour was to "communicate with all parties on the political settlement of the Ukrainian crisis".

European leaders will travel to Iceland for a two-day summit to build up support for Ukraine.

Tuesday's summit of the Council of Europe (CoE) is the fourth time the 46 member countries have come together since it was founded after World War II.

"The Council of Europe is often underestimated in its importance," Frank Schwabe, a German lawmaker who was closely involved in the planning of the summit, told the Reuters news agency.

"The summit will also be about saying what happens if you don't respect the rules."

"The threat of expulsion is already a sharp sword. Even Russia didn't want to leave the Council of Europe, Turkey doesn't want to leave either," Schwabe said.

Russian forces have taken control of Ukrainian fortified areas near Avdiivka, the Tass news agency reports.

The head of the Russian-backed Donetsk People's Republic, Denis Pushilin, said on Soloviyov TV: "Our guys are moving in the direction of Pervomaisky; there have been improvements in positions in recent periods, that is, they have taken several fortified areas of the enemy, and this is also on the other side of Avdiivka."

While Pushilin said the positions

were within "walking distance", he said the heap of waste remained an obstacle.

"The enemy has dug in there, and the structure of the slag heap is such that, for now, it allows the enemy to hold this position. Not for long. Nevertheless, this is a dominant height, artificial. Of course, it still helps the enemy. Not for long," he added.

In an [interview](#) with the Financial Times, European Union's foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said the EU must crack down on India reselling Russian oil into Europe.

"If diesel or gasoline is entering Europe ... coming from India and being produced with Russian oil, that is certainly a circumvention of sanctions and member states have to take measures," the EU's chief diplomat said.

"That India buys Russian oil, it's normal ... But if they use that in order to be a centre where Russian oil is being refined and by-products are being sold to us ... we have to act," Borrell said.

Borrell said he would raise the issue with India's Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar when they meet on Tuesday.

India has become a key buyer of Russian oil following Moscow's invasion of Ukraine due to its low cost.

Here are some words from [Mansur Mirovalev](#), a journalist in Kyiv who regularly reports for Al Jazeera, on the overnight attacks:

"This was the longest and loudest shelling in Kyiv since the war began. I woke up after a loud bang that made the windows of my downtown apartment shake.

"Each shelling fills you with adrenaline and irrational fear."

Ukraine says it downed six advanced Russian hypersonic missiles during an overnight barrage of missiles and drones.

Foreign News

Three killed in Senegal as Sonko snubs trial



Supporters of the presidential hopeful says his rape charge is a political ploy

THREE people are now known to have died during clashes between Senegalese police and supporters of the opposition politician, Ousmane Sonko. He's currently on trial accused of rape. The protests broke out on Monday in the capital Dakar and in the southern city of Ziguinchor ahead of Mr Sonko's scheduled court appearance.

The powerful cyclone that hit Myanmar on Sunday has killed at least 32 people, locals have told the BBC, but the toll may rise further.

Cyclone Mocha was one of the strongest storms to make landfall in the region this century, packing winds of about 209km/h (130mph).

The confirmed deaths are in Rakhine state, home to many people living in low-lying coastal areas, and Magway division in central Myanmar.

Hundreds of homes have collapsed.

Unconfirmed reports put the death toll much higher, especially in camps where the internally displaced Rohingya minority live. It is thought those casualties are not being counted by the military junta who seized power in a 2021 coup.

In Sittwe, the capital city in Rakhine state, roads have been blocked by uprooted trees and fallen power pylons.

In other, less peaceful, areas of the country there are also reports of military attacks on locals following the storm.

Thousands of people have fled their homes in the north-

Cyclone Mocha: Death toll in Myanmar at least 32



Cyclone Mocha toppled trees and pylons in Myanmar's Rakhine state

western Sagaing region as the army entered villages under cover of the cyclone.

"It has been raining since 12 May, we had run from the overflowing streams," a resident in the region's Kani township told the BBC. "The soldiers also punched.

[Residents are] fearing the danger of the soldiers more than the danger of the storm."

Locals who the BBC spoke to estimate that some 15,000 residents from the Kani and Khin Oo townships have been affected by military attacks in the last two days. They said a four-year-old boy in Inpa village was receiving medical treatment after being hit by a bullet.

"Myanmar is facing a storm on many fronts, with reports that the Myanmar army attacked villages in other regions while Cyclone Mocha unfolded in Rakhine state. The needs of families continue to be great," NGO Partners Relief & Development, which works in the cyclone-hit Rakhine state, said in a Twitter post on Tuesday.

Communities in Sagaing have put up some of the strongest opposition to the

military. The division also houses a large number of anti-coup militias, known as the People's Defence Force.

There were no immediate reports of casualties in neighbouring Bangladesh, but the category five storm crushed thousands of shelters in the world's largest refugee camp at Cox's Bazar. It is home to one million Rohingya refugees from Myanmar.

About 750,000 people fled low-lying areas ahead of Mocha's landfall last Sunday. It came 15 years after one of Asia's deadliest cyclones, Nargis, smashed into Myanmar's Irrawaddy Delta and claimed 140,000 lives.

Cyclones are the equivalent of hurricanes in the Atlantic and typhoons in the Pacific. Scientists say these storms have become stronger and more frequent due to climate change.

Global executions in 2022 at highest rate for five years

The number of executions recorded globally in 2022 was the highest in five years, as several Middle Eastern states ramped up their use of the death penalty, Amnesty International says.

A total of 883 people are known to have been put to death across 20 countries, marking a rise of 53% compared to 2021, according to the group's annual review.

Iran, Saudi Arabia and Egypt alone carried out 90% of those executions. The figures exclude China, which is thought to execute thousands each year.

Data on the death penalty is classified in China, which Amnesty said impaired its ability to make an accurate assessment about the numbers put to death in the country.

The group was also able to confirm that executions were carried out in North Korea, Vietnam, Syria and Afghanistan, but there was insufficient information to provide credible minimum figures.

According to Amnesty's

place since 2020.

On a single day in March 2022, authorities carried out the mass execution of 81 people. At least 41 were members of Shia Muslim minority, including two convicted of crimes related to their participation in anti-government protests.

Amnesty has previously accused the Saudi justice system of meting out death sentences following trials that are grossly unfair, including basing verdicts on "confessions" extracted under torture or other ill-treatment.

In Egypt, 24 people were put to death last year. However, that represented a 71% decrease compared to 2021, when 83 were executed.

Amnesty also reported executions in Iraq (11), Kuwait (7), the Palestinian Territories (5), Yemen (4) and Syria (unknown).

Agnès Callamard, the group's secretary general, accused Middle Eastern states of violating international law and demonstrating "a callous disregard for human life".

-Amnesty

"It's time for governments and the UN to up the pressure on those responsible for these blatant human rights violations and ensure international safeguards are put in place," she said.

Elsewhere in the world, 18 people were executed in the US, up from 11 in 2022, and 11 were put to death in Singapore, where executions for drug offences resumed after a two-year hiatus during the Covid pandemic.

Ukraine war: Kyiv hit by 'exceptional' number of missiles

THE Ukrainian capital Kyiv has been targeted by further Russian air attacks, described by one official as "exceptional in density".

Ukraine said all 18 missiles were shot down and footage showed air defences destroying targets over the city.

But Russia said its attack - which used drones and missiles - had hit all its targets.

Moscow has stepped up its air campaign in recent weeks, ahead of an expected Ukrainian offensive.

The air raid alert sounded at around 02:30 local time (23:30 GMT Monday) and was lifted two hours later in the eighth attack to hit the capital this month.

An unusually high number of loud explosions was heard in the city centre, as authorities told residents in online messages that air defence had been activated.

The head of Ukraine's armed forces, Valerii Zaluzhny, said Russia attacked Kyiv from the north, south and east and that 18 air, sea and land-based missiles had been used.

Serhiy Popko, head of the Ukrainian capital's military administration, described the barrage as being the

"maximum number of attack missiles in the shortest period of time".

"According to preliminary information, the vast majority of enemy targets in the airspace of Kyiv were detected and destroyed," he added.

Gen Zaluzhny said that included nine Kalibr cruise missiles, which were launched from ships in the Black Sea, and three land-based missiles.

He added that Kyiv also destroyed six Kinzhal hypersonic missiles, which are capable of reaching speeds of more than 11,000kmh (7,000mph).

Russia has claimed in the past that these could not be taken out by any of the world's air defence systems.

Hypersonic weapons are harder to defend against because of their speed as well as the fact they fly at low altitudes - beyond the line of sight of ground-based radars - and can manoeuvre mid-flight.

Ukraine said it had shot down a Kinzhal for the first time last week during an earlier attack on Kyiv.

If these claims are true, Moscow will be feeling frustrated that the finest weapons from its missile fleet

is now able to be intercepted. This is in large part due to the arrival of modern Western defence systems, including Patriots.

Russia claimed that it destroyed a Patriot system during Tuesday's attack on Kyiv. Ukraine declined to comment. The BBC cannot independently verify the claims made by either country.

Residents on Tuesday were warned to keep away from windows as debris from intercepted missiles fell from the sky.

Mayor Vitali Klitschko said rocket debris had fallen in central districts, including the city's zoo. No animals or workers were injured.

The Solomyansky district, which includes the international airport, is reported to have been the hardest hit.

Mr Popko said that a fire that broke out in a non-residential area in the district has since been put out.

Kyiv resident Kseniia told BBC Radio 4's Today programme that she and her husband were asleep when they heard a "series of very loud explosions" above their building. She compared the intensity of the attack to a Star Wars film or an action videogame.



People protested outside Iran's UN mission in New York after the execution of two protesters in December

Feature

Bridging information gap for immigrants

By **OLOLADE BAMIDELE**

MIGRATION is possibly the most singular phenomenon that defines the human experience in a crosscutting manner, as people have always moved around for millennia, out of curiosity about other realms, but largely in search of better opportunities. Many of these movements have been chronicled all through history, as they led to journeys of quest – near and far, the exploration of other spaces, then continents, in the pursuit of gainful economic activities and novel markets. Some of the darker emanations of these journeys revealed in the conquest and domination of other people and great swathes of spaces in between, such as in the slave trades, colonial invasions and occupation.

While human flows across different spaces and continents will continue to be fundamental to the human experience, these have gained higher degrees of attention in more recent times, due to ubiquity of the media, new media and the interwoven nodes of massive communication networks, that have grown on the back of a hyper-information age and driven by the latest manifestations of capitalism.

Also, the push and pull factors motivating migrations have entered newer force-fields, from high skills sets looking for commensurate engagement and reward, to those seeking resettlement following the displacements of conflict or natural mishaps, or even those impelled purely by the need to escape modern poverty and immiseration. Certainly, the pursuit of better opportunities for personal development, and dwelling in environments that enable growth, while equally offering security of the individual, are some of the greatest pull factors for migration.

While the numbers bear witness that there has been greater intra-continental migration in Africa, with about 21 million people having moved between and living in other African countries as at 2020, still there have been significant movements of Africans out of the continent from, say, 2010, to Europe and North America, particularly; and also Asia.

The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) estimates that some 280.6 million people migrated from one part of the world to the other in 2020. Of this number, 48.1% were female and 12.2% were over the age of 65, according to the Migration Data Portal.

Whereas the Pew Research Center projects that over one million migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa sought asylum in Europe between 2010 and 2017, it also observes that of the over 400,000 sub-Saharan Africans who moved to America between 2010 and 2016, about 110,000 of them were resettled there as refugees. More so, 13.4% of immigrants to Canada are said to be from Africa.

With these continuous immigration flows across the world, a crucial aspect of which is impelled by the need for better economic opportunities, as broached above, the unfortunate reality of many migrants, however, is that they usually lack the vital information needed to find where their skills are appropriately needed to become



employed at levels commensurate with these skills in their newer locations. Hence, a significant demography of migrants is employed below their skills, as they settle for jobs that will essentially cater for them and their dependants in the most basic of terms.

It is the recurrent lack of apt matches between skills and opportunities that sullies the experience of migration for many, a number of who might end up within the underclass segments of their newer environments, leading to attendant frustrations, if not mental health situations like frustration.

This is the very important gap that iQuolify, a civil society-driven recruitment portal for professionals, is set to bridge for immigrant job seekers in North America and Europe, in the first instance, before extending to other zones. This very important tool for matching talents with placements, serving as a salient resource and solution to both the demand and supply sides of needs in the job market, and which was unveiled publicly on Tuesday 9th of May, is intent on creating a digital community where skills and needs are cross-matched.

Now, consider being afforded the opportunity of making a presentation in which others can quickly learn about you, your qualifications, experiences/track records, in addition to career goals and aspirations through a video résumé spanning a few minutes. Through this, potential recruiters and hiring organisations are offered an ever-expanding bouquet of personal skills and attitudes that can be matched with what they are looking for, while also taking note of communication capabilities, and connecting with other-non-verbal, yet expressive qualities that tick their required boxes. Curating these raft of résumés, whilst targeting them at the necessary uptakers, is the promise of iQuolify.

A project of Akin Fadeyi, a serial human capacity enhancement enthusiast and innovator, this vision of building a virtual community of skills exhibition and shopping that

has coalesced around iQuolify "will focus on showcasing immigrants to prospective employers, while the inevitable data spin-off from this endeavour would serve as invaluable resource for skills and employment analytics that is very important to local and global policy makers. Other significant dimensions of this will empower mentoring and training engagements, till target immigrant demographics are able to optimally unlock their potentials and integrate", as he put it.

Witnesses to the unveiling and partakers in the conversation that followed included a plethora of distinguished persons from diverse locations – Nigeria, Europe, North America, etc. – and different professions. Some of these notable personalities were DrKoleShettima, the director of the Nigeria office of the MacArthur Foundation; Kate Henshaw, an award-winning Nigerian actress; Tracy Docheff, a Canadian immigration resettlement expert; Professor Sola Akinrinade, a board member of Tech Herfrica; DrBankoleOdole, a co-founder of iQuolify; IT and human resource experts, alongside international development experts, among others.

In his remarks at the unveiling of this online platform, DrKoleShettima observed how the mission of iQuolify, about promoting inclusion for many through the facilitation of access to employment information, also enhances human diversity and equity in a fundamental way. This, he said, intersects with the core values of the organisation that he leads in Nigeria, making iQuolify and the MacArthur Foundation share some sort of commonwealth.

As Shettimaelcudated, "At MacArthur Foundation, we ensure that our decisions and actions are rooted in the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion by embracing the unique attributes of all individuals; creating a fair playing field for all; and cultivating environments where everyone feels respected, valued, and have a sense of belonging." As such, "iQuolify is therefore a very compelling fit into our work culture and work I commend the initiative".

Whilst Kate Henshaw expressed delight at the possibilities of this new recruitment platform, describing iQuolify as a project whose time has come, considering the many people who have good reasons to migrate but yet find themselves disadvantaged in finding relevant and rewarding employment later as migrants, and then – rather unfortunately – resorting to menial jobs. As such, for her, iQuolify is a great solution for maximising opportunities for many, whether abroad, or even at home. In addition, she urged people to prioritise the need for constant self-improvement, in order not to become victims of desperation in Nigeria or other climes.

Equally, Professor Sola Akinrinade, a former vice chancellor of Osun State University, who is a board member of Tech HERfrica, and former Provost of the Independent and Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) Academy, affirmed how – having also worked in a few continents – several educated migrants do not get to live up to their potential due to the lack of information on commensurate employment. He, therefore, sees the liberating possibilities represented by iQuolify and encouraged as many people as come into awareness of the platform to take advantage of it towards resolving their needs.

On her part, Tracy Docheff, an immigrant resettlement expert and director of marketing and communications at Toronto Newlife Wellness Place said her job as an immigrant settler within various Canadian communities is going to be a lot easier and simpler with such a platform as iQuolify coming on board.

In shedding light on the challenges involved in recruiting for organisations within and outside Nigeria through the years, and having to sort through several piles of résumés on a continuous basis, Olufunmilola Bucknor, the founder and lead consultant at HR Madam Consulting, pointed out how iQuolify is bound to make this a less daunting task for many like her, going forward.

Other participants from the Nigerian diaspora in North America who spoke during the unveiling of the online employment resource, and who shared their experiences as immigrants who had striven very hard before being able to find jobs that aligned with high skills included Dr Kunle Ojoleye, an IT expert, consultant and former sessional professor at the University of Calgary, Alberta. Also, Mr Victor Ogunmola, a geo-scientist with ExxonMobil in the United States and Mr Dapo Rotifa, a business development expert in the US.

A co-founder of iQuolify, who is based in Canada, Dr Bankole Odole, noted that, "as an immigrant with five Masters degrees, I experienced, first-hand, the challenges that immigrant professionals grapple with. Hence, the idea of iQuolify is a ready solution capable of shielding other incoming immigrants from the same challenges."

iQuolify as a virtual and easily accessible community of the highly skilled, recruiters and potential employers, is a portal built to solve a growing range of problems associated with unemployed and underemployed migrants, including potential job seekers in North America, and beyond, who can have their concerns around job placements resolved before setting out to. This is so that they do not arrive in their new locations only to get stranded.

In the methodology of presentation of iQuolify, sample videos are available on the portal to aid users in the presentation of their résumés, which are then vetted for quality control before they go live on the platform. Recruiters can then find the sort of applicants they are looking for in categories that will be promoted on the portal.

A civil society solution, driven by Akin Fadeyi et al., that is designed to build a digital community for those offering and also those seeking professional work skills, iQuolify is a very interesting innovation that would take migrants and other potential job-seekers from where they are, to where they want to be.

THE NIGERIA STANDARD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Health

Is turmeric good for you?

YOU can find turmeric in many tasty recipes, but did you know that this spice could be beneficial for your body and brain? We take a look at the health conditions turmeric may be able to help prevent or treat.

Turmeric is a Southeast Asian plant in the ginger family. Its stem is used as a popular cooking spice, commonly used in curry powders and other Asian and Middle Eastern inspired dishes. You may recognise turmeric for its vivid yellow-orange colour and its ability to dye the foods it flavours.

What is turmeric used for?

Traditionally, turmeric has been used as a medicinal herb - Chinese medicine and Ayurveda medicine have both used this spice to cure and prevent illness for thousands of years¹.

It's been adding flavour and colour to Southeast Asian, Indian, and Middle Eastern meals for just as long, and its popularity as a culinary spice has now spread to kitchens all over the world.

Today, it's often touted as a super food and is also formulated into a dietary supplement that people take in the hopes it will ease a variety of health conditions.

Turmeric benefits

In recent years, more scientific evidence has started to emerge that supports the traditional claims reaching back thousands of years - that turmeric may help prevent and treat health problems.

The main active ingredient in turmeric is curcumin. This compound benefits our health through²:

- Anti-inflammation** - long-term inflammation plays a role in several diseases, and curcumin fights inflammation, although high doses are needed to for medicinal results.
- Antioxidation** - oxidative damage caused by reactive molecules is believed to be an important mechanism behind many diseases. Curcumin can neutralise these molecules.



Clinical trials have also explored potential turmeric benefits for specific health conditions and diseases.

Viral infections

Many people sip turmeric tea when they have a cold or generally feel under the weather. Evidence suggests that turmeric may indeed help to fight off a variety of viruses, from the common cold and flu to norovirus. Curcumin limits the replication of many viruses, bacteria, and fungi in the body³, although keep in mind that the amount of curcumin in turmeric tea is unlikely to have a significant effect.

bacteria, and fungi in the body³, although keep in mind that the amount of curcumin in turmeric tea is unlikely to have a significant

effect.

Preventing or treating type 2 diabetes

Many scientists believe that curcumin in turmeric may be useful in preventing or treating type 2 diabetes in the future. This is because it can keep blood sugar levels steady and reduce inflammation, but more clinical trials with people are needed to determine any meaningful treatment methods⁴.

Protecting heart health

Turmeric and curcumin may help to keep your heart and blood vessels healthy. Current research suggests that it may help people at risk of cardiovascular disease by lowering blood lipid levels - the amount of bad cholesterol in your blood⁵. This in turn can lower blood pressure.

healthy. Current research suggests that it may help people at risk of cardiovascular disease by lowering blood lipid levels - the amount of bad cholesterol in your blood⁵. This in turn can lower blood pressure.



Delaying or reversing Alzheimer's disease

While research is in the early stages, there's some evidence that the benefits of turmeric and curcumin extend to brain health. Curcumin may increase brain levels of BDNF (brain derived neurotrophic factor), a protein that supports learning and memory. Many brain disorders, including Alzheimer's disease, are linked to decreased levels of BDNF⁶.

Fighting cancer

Turmeric may inhibit the growth and spread of cancerous cells and the growth of new blood vessels in tumours. It may even help to prevent certain types of cancer, particularly cancers of the digestive system⁷. However, always discuss with your doctor any supplements you may be using and turmeric should not be used instead of modern medicine.

Easing depression

The health benefits of boosting BDNF levels in the brain can also be seen in the treatment of depression. There's also some evidence that

turmeric increases serotonin and ne - neurotransmitters associated with feeling happy⁸.

dopamine - neurotransmitters associated with feeling happy⁸.

Relieving joint pain

Given that turmeric has anti-inflammatory properties, it makes sense that it could ease the symptoms of arthritis - a health condition causing pain and inflammation in your joints. In one study of 45 people with rheumatoid arthritis, those treated with turmeric extracts experienced the most improved symptoms.

Turmeric side effects and considerations

1. While many studies continue to explore turmeric benefits, the impact of this natural substance in humans remains unclear and requires more research.

2. Turmeric spice and over-the-counter supplements or creams are generally considered safe in the recommended amounts. However, mild side-effects may occur in some people, particularly when used in large amounts - reported examples include diarrhoea, nausea, and stomach pain.

3. Some alternative practitioners administer turmeric and curcumin through IV (intravenous) therapy. This is unsafe, as scientists are yet to understand how high doses affect the human body. Turmeric administered through IV has

resulted in one reported death so far.

4. When consumed in amounts greater than those commonly found in food, turmeric may have adverse effects in pregnant people.

How much turmeric is safe to consume per day?

The recommended daily dose is around 1.5-2 g of turmeric powder per day, as there have been no reported side-effects at this dosage¹⁰.

What does this look like?

•In food and drinks - this is around 1/3-1/2 of a teaspoon per person. So, if you're making a curry for four people, you can add around one and a half to two teaspoons of spice.

•As a tablet supplement - never exceed the recommended dose on the label

What about turmeric shots?

Consuming turmeric in liquid form can also make it easier for your body to absorb the nutrients. Ginger and turmeric shots are an increasingly popular health shot - discover our recipe and the benefits of ginger here.

Source: Patient.info.com.



EVER'S WORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Living

Set healthy boundaries to preserve emotional well-being

BOUNDARIES are not just a critical component of self care—they're also the cornerstone of any healthy relationship, including those you have with even your closest of friends. Often, boundaries are built into a friendship at its foundation, but sometimes, new boundaries are required as the relationship progresses over time. This is when things get tricky, because it typically means that one friend is asking another to change something about their established dynamic. That's not an easy thing to do, but it can be critical for preserving the emotional well-being of one or both parties.

Before you jump to cutting problematic individuals out of your life, testing out new boundaries may work to mend what ails. "Having boundaries in a friendship is not just about saying 'no'," "It's about managing walls, but also managing doors and windows—essentially navigating the space between you and another person."

In *normal* times, you might have one or two friends in need of support at any given moment. These days, however, it can feel more like everyone you know is in need of help—all while you're likely struggling, too. This can be tricky to navigate, as you don't want to tell a dear friend you can't deal with them right now, even if you have very good reasons for feeling as though you can't. But sometimes you truly do not have the bandwidth to take on someone else's struggles, in which case you have no choice but to prioritize your own needs first.

Your availability has changed

Even when the world isn't in utter chaos, sometimes a friend can ask more of you than what you're able to give or have been able to give in the

past. For example, if you're at a certain life stage wherein other demands are exhausting your bandwidth—e.g. kids—you might not be able to devote the same amount of time or resources to your friend as you did in your pre-motherhood life.

The relationship is too one-sided

It's common, for friendships to require new boundaries when they're out of balance. "When one person is giving so much more than the other person, there can be a desire to set a boundary so that one person doesn't feel like they're under-benefiting in the friendship," says Dr. Franco. The goal of such a boundary, would be to ensure a mutually-beneficial relationship.

You don't feel safe to share

"Boundaries around trust are probably the most foundational to a friendship," You have to be able to trust that you can be vulnerable and that what you share with your friend is not going to go further than the ears you intended to hear it. Often, friendships are predicated on this innate trust; however, if the trust has been broken, it may be necessary to establish boundaries around what you are willing to share moving forward, or what your expectations are around sharing confidences in the future.

You find their politics difficult to stomach

This is a tricky one; given the current climate, some people are opting out of friendships with people who hold certain political perspectives, full stop. If you feel you want to keep the friendship, however, but find it difficult to do so peaceably when politics come up in conversation, Franco says you may want to set a boundary around those



discussions—as in, ask for certain topics to be off limits.

Alternatively, you may want to set boundaries around interactions with your friend that are contingent upon them compromising.

You don't appreciate their teasing

Sometimes friendships can be so close that one party loses sight of the other party's sensitivities. This may force you to set boundaries around teasing or jokes at your expense, says.

You have different communication styles

Not everyone feels comfortable communicating in the same manner when they're not in a shared space. Some people prefer texting, while others may be more comfortable with calls, for example. Whichever camp you're in, it might make sense to set a boundary if you find yourself stressed by the type of communication you're being consistently asked to engage in.

You feel like you're always on call

You might also need to set a boundary around how available you are by text or phone. If you feel that someone has an expectation that you'll always pick up or respond immediately, it might make sense to overtly reset that expectation.

How to set boundaries with a friend Open a dialogue

Dr. Franco recommends opening a dialogue with your friend about the relationship dynamic. She suggests explaining to your friend what it is that's bothering you and how you would want it to change, and then asking the friend for their thoughts.

Be explicit

"To set solid boundaries, you have to be able to explain what the problem clinical psychologist Aimee Daramus" I need you to stop acting like everything is about you' doesn't give them anyplace to go with it. 'I need you to listen to me more often instead of doing all the talking' gives them something to work with."

Nip the problematic behavior in the bud as early as possible

"Start setting boundaries when you first notice a problem instead of waiting until you're ready to explode.

It's scary, but it's not as bad as repairing things after a huge argument."

Emphasize the value of your friendship

No matter how you frame it, boundary setting can still feel hurtful, especially when the friendship has had a long run. To soften the blow, Hill recommends emphasizing how important the relationship is to you, and that you're having this boundaries conversation specifically because of how much you value the friendship. If you didn't care, after all, you might prefer to walk away rather than engage in difficult conversations.

Offer alternatives

You may also be able to sweeten the new deal by offering an alternative to whatever you were offering the friendship before that you no longer feel you can give to it.

Consider a compromise

Sometimes, you may need to meet your friend in the middle, as they could have a boundary that is in direct opposition to yours.

Be assertive

While you want to be kind, and ensure the focus is on your feelings and not blaming the other person, you also want to make sure they know you're serious about the boundaries you're trying to set, says Hill. "If you're minimizing your need for the boundary, you're setting a weak boundary which means you're probably going to spend more time reinforcing it, or you're going to end up frustrated that it's not being honored," she explains.

Source: Talkingcircle therapy.



Editorial

On Nigeria's Speakership tussle

One of the major factors in the National Assembly leadership is the zoning of roles to reflect the diversity of the country, since the membership is made up of representatives from all the geo-political zones in the country. It is a conglomeration of the various ethnic groups from across the country. The major criteria for joining the race is belonging to the political party with the majority in the house. Legislators usually follow this agreement to share principal offices. There have been few exceptions like the infamous election that made Dr Bukola Saraki the Senate President when he was able to unite opposition Senators with a faction from his own party to emerge victorious like his colleague in the House of Representatives, Yakubu Dogara that was able to achieve same.

As the election for the Speakership draws close, the APC must look within itself and remain steadfast to do the right thing for the purpose of national unity in sharing these positions. Competence, character, experience, contribution to the party must take centre stage, just as the principle of Federal Character must be the influential factor in the sharing of roles for peace to reign. These are all factors that will determine the speakership position and this will also depend largely on the Senate Presidency tussle.

After the success of the APC ticket, it is apparent that the Senate Presidency will be zoned to either one of the two Christian majority zones- the South East and the South-South in order to emphasize national unity. Seeing as both the President (South West) and Vice President (North East) are Muslims, it goes without saying that the Senate Presidency is now a straight battle between the other two Southern Zones. After competence and experience are considered most legislators will be expecting the party leadership and the President-elect to provide instructions on this.

According to a poll by the intelligence company SBM, interest in National Assembly elections by the electorate was below 20% before the election on February 25. This a testament to the fact that people do not understand the importance of the National Assembly. Nigerians must immediately change this attitude and follow the nomination and election of leaders in the 10th Assembly keenly as they did the presidential election.

There is no doubt that the North West, Nigeria's most populated zone with the most states was where voters contributed immensely to APC's victory in the Presidential election. President-elect Bola Ahmed Tinubu polled 2,652,824, some 31% from the North West region alone, more than any other zone. The zone will definitely make a strong claim for Speakership and they have experienced legislators to present to the party and the House of Representatives.

One of the experienced lawmakers that is expected to throw his hat into the ring is Hon. Tajudeen Abass, Kaduna (APC), a 4th term representative that is cool headed, a requirement for a potentially volatile 10th National Assembly. Hon Abass sponsored the most number of bills assented to by the President in both the 8th and 9th Assembly, showing his effectiveness and brilliance in law making.

Another strong contender in the North West is Hon Sanda Soli (Katsina APC). Hon. Soli is well experienced and can also be considered by the party. The other experienced lawmaker from the North West is Hon. Ado Doguwa who is currently immersed in elected related violence and will not put the party in a good position with Nigerians if considered.

With the names above, it is clear that the North West's claim to speakership, counting for experience and competence is solid and it will be very good for the progress and unity of the country if the party leadership and the President-elect provide immediate guidance and leadership in order for us to have a peaceful and effective 10th National Assembly.

IN a traditional African society, the male child is considered as more important, much emphasis is placed on the female gender, little is asked of young men about their participation and responsibility in doing house hold chores. It is believed that being a man, is to succeed in the financial and economic aspects.

Most parents base their parenting on the female gender thereby leaving the male gender to fend for himself overtime, this has prove costly and detrimental to the society. The male child that was abandoned has become a bane in the society and the wheel of progress. The time is right for the narrative to change to avoid stories that touch the heart.

Most vices perpetuated in the society is carried out by the male gender ranging from armed robbery, kidnapping, rape, theft etc, their actions have broken homes and shattered the dreams of aspiring individuals. Most parents base their sex education at the tender age on just the girl child, they seldom leave the male child to his fate, little wonder we are having increasing number of unwanted pregnancies and abortions. The male gender at the tender age depends on his peers to teach him what his parents considered irrelevant to impart in him.

Furthermore, most parents consider house

chores to be mainly for the girl child thereby allowing the male child to have a filled day, playing with friends.

It is mundane to think certain responsibilities and teachings are for just a particular gender, this nasty and backward belief is costing us much

more than we are willing to pay. The boy child that was neglected is unleashing terror, pain and agony on the girl child. This is evident in the spate of rape and senseless killings on rampage, its obviously a carnage, which is endemic on the society.

It is gradually becoming a norm which must urgently be nipped in the bud.

Its time to salvage the future, we can't continue to have girls and women who are traumatised and rendered useless. Abortion and unwanted pregnancies have cut short the dreams and aspirations of our dear children. For how long will the boy child continue to uproot the good morals inculcated in the girl child? It is heart breaking and mind blowing.

Parents should as a matter of urgency consider both gender as equal in other to avoid one sided discipline. Parents should learn to appreciate their children and give them the necessary support. Family values should be



The male child

upheld and the girl child has gotten enough. Sex education should be taught with the impending danger associated in practicing pre-marital sex. The boy child should be taught contentment, to be satisfied with whatever might be given to him, so as to distance himself from theft and robbery.

Values of prayer should also be encouraged amongst children, their closeness to God will distant them away from vices that will corrupt the good morals imbedded in them.

By Ajang Ajiji John, Jos.

Planting with a security plan

I write through this medium of the Nigeria Standard to remind households to exercise caution in choosing the type of crops for planting within the vicinity of their compound during this planting season.

Although farming is good as a means of providing food for the family, it has also become ideal to plant those crops that will not endanger lives and property.

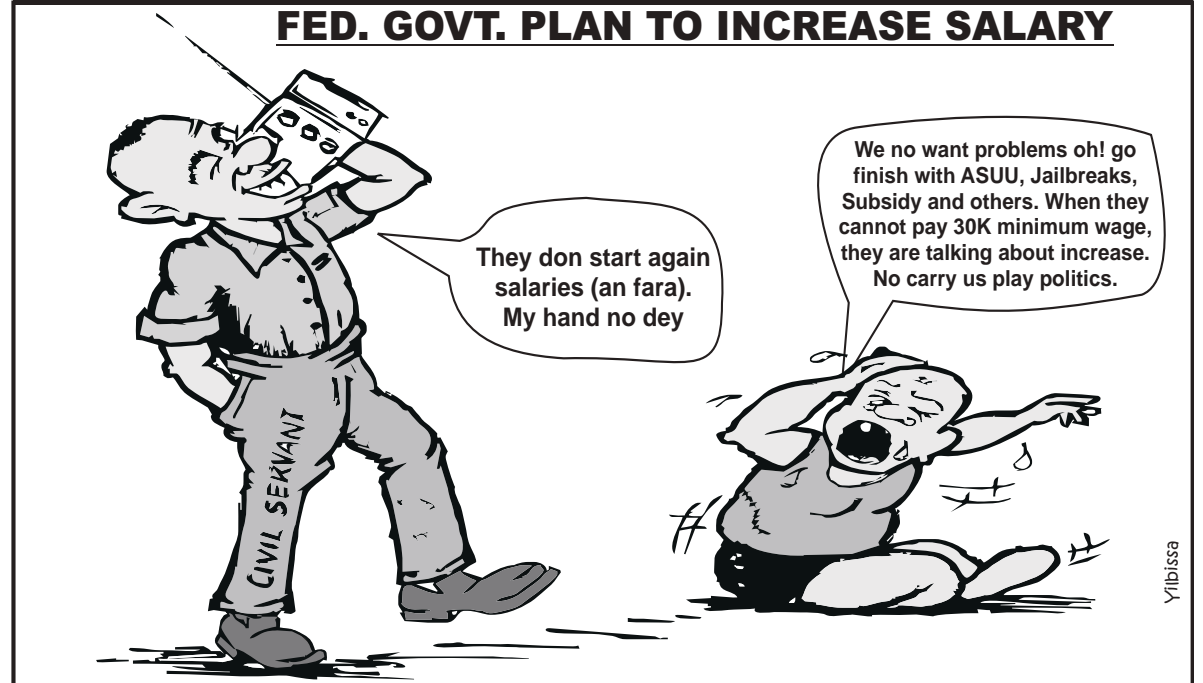
Let's not forget what happened in the recent past where those who planted corn within their houses in some communities provided cover for unknown gunmen who attacked some house holds especially in Bassa, Riyom and Barkin Ladi LGAs.

We are living witnesses to recent happenings in farming communities where high crops like corn block or prevent rural residents from noticing attackers most especially at the peak of the rainy seasons and worse, at night.

By Gyang Dung Gada, Gada Biu.

Standard Cartoon

FED. GOVT. PLAN TO INCREASE SALARY



Yibissa

Opinion

By MICHAEL JIMOH

Bandit are back and bolder

FOR an appreciable period during the currency swap from February to April, there was a drastic reduction in crime across the country. Pickpockets went on recess. Burglars didn't dare break into houses because there was nothing to steal. Bandits and terrorists even had a harder time of it. Reason? No cash for ransom, period. So, they stayed in their dens, hideouts bemoaning their fate, cursing PMB and CBN governor Godwin Emefiele for putting a cog in the wheel of their money-making machine. Now, they are back and bolder, rampaging through dozens of communities in

Benue, Kaduna, Katsina, Niger, Taraba and Zamfara as if the lull during the Naira swap for two months galvanised them to double down in their criminal escapades. THEWILL considers some recent incidents of abductions and killings. Michael Jimoh reports...

Career criminals used to say money is the root of all action. In the lingo of the underworld, it means that nothing much happens without money to be made at the end of the day. If you have to stick out your neck in any criminal enterprise – a bank heist, say, burglary, or an abduction, there has to be some pile to be made for your troubles.

But for once in the history of banditry, the Federal Government under President Muhammadu Buhari took the bread out of their mouth with the currency swap policy initiated and implemented by CBN governor Godwin Emefiele. It was a hard and unexpected blow to the bandits.

True, Nigerians complained bitterly about the Naira redesign from old to new ones. The old ones were no longer legal tender at the time and the earlier you took them to the bank in exchange for new ones, the better for you. But the new ones were scarcer to get, resulting in the sharp drop of the

naira in circulation.

It is also true that sometime in early February, soon after the naira swap exercise began, one Kachalla Baleri, a notorious bandit, displayed denominations of the new notes like a drunk out of kilter. Along with members of his gang, they made a video showing off the notes mostly in N1, 000 and N200 bills, chest-thumping at the same time they already had in their possession millions and millions of the new notes while ordinary folk were cash-strapped.

"They redesigned the naira, poor innocent people don't even know about it," Baleri spoke in Hausa in

the video. "Some don't even own up to N10, 000. He has to wake up early in the morning to go and hustle. What of those who have millions in the cities? You see, it is between them. The money they are saying people are changing, we that are in the bush are changing it, some people who are in the cities haven't even received it."

Continuing in a gloating manner, Baleri thundered: "But you see, the people they are referring to as terrorists have hold of the money. This is the new N1, 000 note; this is the new N200 note. We are just showing them a little of what we have. We have plenty of sacks of the new money, and only Allah knows the amount of the new notes that we have."

IN mid-April during a Ramadan Tafseer in a Kano mosque, Governor Umar Ganduje of the state begged for forgiveness from those he might have offended in the course of carrying out his duties as the state's number one citizen for eight years. Days later, at a send-forth in Banquet Hall Aso Villa, President Muhammadu Buhari asked for pardon from those he may have hurt while in office. Then just last week, Ganduje's counterpart in Taraba state, Darius Ishaku made his own plea in a church to the people of Taraba. His apology was more dramatic: on his knees, left hand raised to the heavens as if cementing a covenant with his own people with God as his witness. Except before and during elections, politicians are not known to go on their knees to the electorate to ask for forgiveness. They are even less inclined to do so once they've completed their terms in office for the very reason that they won't be answerable to voters anymore. So, what is the reason behind this season of

A season of executive begging

By MICHAEL JIMOH

executive begging? THEWILL asks. Michael Jimoh reports...

Chief executives seldom say they are sorry to subordinates in the workplace let alone beg for forgiveness. As the boss, admitting to your subordinates that you were wrong in some of your decisions might be interpreted as a sign of weakness or fecklessness. Begging them to forgive you for the same mistakes is even worse because, by virtue of your position, you ought to have avoided those mistakes in the first place. In other words, you can avoid saying sorry by simply doing the right thing.

So, what is one to make of the recent plea for forgiveness by the chief executive officers of two states in Nigeria and by the number one

citizen of the country itself?

Of course, politicians are not above stooping to conquer. Pounding the pavement in pinstripe suits on the streets of London or New York, in Gallabias glad-handing voters in Kasbahs in Morocco, smiling affectionately under huge Sikh turbans to waving supporters in Punjab, giving the V-sign in *agbada* or *baban riga* at campaign stopovers in Abuja or Aba, Benin or Bauchi, politicians are just about the same everywhere – they beg, usually before elections and not after.

But it does seem that some politicians in Nigeria have taken executive begging to another level. In a crowded mosque in central Kano on April 14 during the Ramadan Tafseer presided over by Sheikh Nasidi Abubakar Gorondutse, the governor of the state did what none of his predecessors had

done before while in office. He made a public plea for forgiveness from those he may have wronged in the course of performing his duties as governor.

Appropriately enough, Sheikh Gorondutse's sermon for the day was on forgiveness, as if preparing the congregants for what is to come. Ganduje wasted no time in taking matters up from there.

"With this," the governor began, "I can say the end of my tenure has come as governor of Kano state. I am bidding you farewell and I am wishing you all the best in life. For those whom we have offended, already our Imam has preached about forgiveness. From my own side, I have forgiven you all. Whatever someone said about me, I forgive him. I also beg you to forgive me. Thank you."

On disparity between varsity and polytechnic degrees

OYIBO SALIHU

DESPITE the concerted efforts made by the National Assembly to put an end to the long term lingering disparity between graduates of Higher National Diploma (HND) and Bachelor of Science (BSC) degrees, investigation revealed that the trend has continued in some government-owned institutions and seemed to continue unchecked by the appropriate authorities.

It is on record that it was Senator Ayo Akinyelure, (PDP Ondo Central) who sponsored a bill titled, 'A Bill for an Act to Abolish and Prohibit Dichotomy and Discrimination between First Degree and Higher National Diploma in the Same Profession/Field for the Purpose of Employment; and for Related Matters' which was passed by the two chambers of the National Assembly in the month of June, 2021 with a view to ending the dichotomy between the two certificates awarded to graduates of polytechnics and universities.

The bill also stipulates sanctions against any form of disparities and discrimination against holders of Higher National Diploma in the country. Sadly, almost a years after the passage of the bill which received wider applause from Nigerians especially holders of HND certificates that have suffered all manner of suppression, denials and marginalisation in their places of works, the controversies arising from the disparities between the two certificates still remain unabated.

Many are of the opinion that the inability of President Muhammadu Buhari to give assent to the bill has further dashed the hope of Nigerians who are eagerly and earnestly looking forward to see the end of the dichotomy.

Fragrant disregard for NA act Investigation has revealed that despite concerted efforts made so far by the National Assembly to end the existing disparity between the two certificates, some institutions of higher learning in the country especially Prince Abubakar Audu University Anyigba in Kogi state still promotes the disparity through issuance of admission for postgraduate studies.

One of the complainants who complained to Blueprint, Musa Audu, a Higher National Diploma Certificate holder with Upper Credit grade lamented that the institution practically denied him the opportunity to run his master degree because he possesses a HND certificate.

According to him, the institution in its recent advertisement in one of the national dailies placed for admission into postgraduate programme (Master Degree) duly signed by the registrar of the university Alhaji Nuhu A Ahmed and pasted on the institution's notice board stated categorically that "Holders of HND without degree certificate need not apply."

According to Audu, "Imagine, with all my good grade I can not proceed to read for my Masters Degree until I pass through Post Graduate Diploma (PGD) programme. If that is the case then, what is the value of the grade I suffered to acquire?" he

queried.

Obviously, this statement from the advertisement did not only serve as a discouragement to holders of HND certificates, but has further undermined the struggle and selfless effort put in place by Nigerian lawmakers to end the lingering dichotomy between HND and degree certificates.

As this controversy rages, efforts were made to get the response of the university's public relations officer, Mr Tahir Momoh through phone call and text messages, but all efforts were not responded to as at the time of filing this report.

Voices from within But speaking on the issue, the national president of Academic Staff Union of Polytechnics (ASUP) Mr Anderson Ezeibe expressed disappointment over the attitude of the executive arm of government at foot-dragging the matter rather than willing to sign into law the Act to abolish the lingering dichotomy between the two Degree certificates.

Ezeibe who stated this during the union's 79th Zonal Executive Council (ZEC) meeting of zone 'B' held at the Federal Polytechnic Idah in Kogi state, advised that if the government does not want the HND to exist, they can as well systematically phase out the certificate and replace it with Bachelor of Technology so that the country can stop deceiving its selves as a nation.

"It is very disappointing that after the bill had passed through the two chambers of the National Assembly and eight months after

the presentation of the Act to the executive arm of government, they are still dilly-dallying towards signing it to completely abolish the dichotomy between HND and Degree certificates.

"ASUP is saying now without any fear of contradiction that if the executive arm of government does not want the HND to exist they can as well systematically phase out HND certificate and replace it with Bachelor of Technology.

"The bill is a progressive one which was sponsored by Senator Ayo Akinyelure of which the House of Representatives and the Senate had deliberated on and passed it to the executive arm of government to assent into law. I wonder what is delaying the presidential assent. "It is unfortunate that till today, the disparity between graduates of Higher National Diploma (HND) and Bachelor of Science (BSC) continued in places of work and in gaining admission for further studies" he said.

The ASUP national president however called on President Muhammadu Buhari to ensure that the effort put in place by the National Assembly before passing Act to him should not be a waste in the interest of millions of HND certificate holders who are waiting earnestly to see his assent in order to make it a law. Lending his voice, a lecturer in Kogi State Polytechnic Lokoja, Mr Joel Tope Ebenezer, said the dichotomy between the university degree and the Polytechnic HND has been a long term battle which permeates not

only academic circle but the larger society.

According to him, the inability of President Muhammadu Buhari to sign into law the Bill for an Act to Abolish and Prohibit Dichotomy and Discrimination between First Degree and Higher National Diploma may not be unconnected with input of some stakeholders who believe strongly that the Polytechnic education has its own objectives while the university education also has its objectives.

He stated that, "It is very obvious that the two systems of education are not the same because they don't have the same directives, goals, objectives and p r o c e s s . "What is being introduced in the Polytechnics is middle manpower and the curriculum has been streamlined in that direction while that of the university are more of theoretical than practical . So the method of training differs and that dichotomy whether we like it or not existed in other areas.

"The argument in this situation should be in the remuneration and there should not be any dichotomy in grade level placement and remuneration," he said.

Apparently, despite previous laws and policies, discrimination against HND holders persisted because there were no sanctions for non-compliance, but the recent legislation, if properly passed into law and well implemented, would address the problem that has caused setbacks to technological growth and the nation's quest for industrialisation.

CHANGE OF NAME

<p>DABILONG</p> <p>I, formerly known as EMMANUEL DABILONG, now wish to be known and address as EMMANUEL DANLADI DABILONG. My correct date of birth is 19/3/2001. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>CHINKOP</p> <p>I, formerly known as CHINKOP YOWEL, now wish to be known and address as CHINKOP DATANG YOWEL. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>KASSAM</p> <p>I, formerly known as KASSAM CHARITY WAKDABUL, now wish to be known and address as KASSAM, TZE DAKAH CHARITY-WAKDABUL. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>
<p>YACHIN</p> <p>I, formerly known as YACHIN DANIEL MOSES, now wish to be known and address as MOSES DANIEL YACHIN. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>BOK</p> <p>I, formerly known as DUNG PAM BOK, now wish to be known and address as BOK PAM DUNG. My correct date of birth is 17/06/1984 not 17/06/1987. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>DAPAR</p> <p>I, formerly known as WILLIAMS DAPAR, now wish to be known and address as WILLIAM DOGARA DAPAR. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>
<p>MURTALA</p> <p>I, formerly known as MURTALA AISHATU MUHAMAD, now wish to be known and address as MURTALA AISHA YUSUF. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>SALOME</p> <p>I, formerly known as SALOME SEMWAN LONGTAAR, now wish to be known and address as SALOME SEMWAN MANOMI. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>ANTHONY</p> <p>I, formerly known as ANTHONY MANDONG SOONKEN, now wish to be known and address as ANTHONY MUANDONG. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>
<p>VINCENT</p> <p>I, formerly known as ZACHERIAH VINCENT DAUDA, now wish to be known and address as VINCENT YAKUBU. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>BELLES</p> <p>I, formerly known as CHRISTOPHER GOLEP, now wish to be known and address as BELLES CHRISTOPHER GOLEP. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>ADIKO</p> <p>I, formerly known as ADIKO JUMMAI AHUK, now wish to be known and address as ADIKO JUDITH AHUK. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>
<p>Correction of date of birth</p> <p>I, Mohammed Abdulmalik wish to inform the general public and concerned authorities that my correct date of birth is 02/02/2005 not 28/10/1998 as wrongly captured on my BVN.</p>	<p>MONDIRGA</p> <p>I, formerly known as MON HANANIYA, now wish to be known and address as MONDIRGA HANANIYA. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>SOLOMON</p> <p>I, formerly known as SOLOMON ISA JAMES, now wish to be known and address as SOLOMON BULUS JAMES. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>
<p>SUNDAY</p> <p>I, formerly known as OKECHI PAULIUS, now wish to be known and address as OKECHI SUNDAY PAULIUS. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>LAMWANG</p> <p>I, formerly known as LAMWAG YAMICIT DUL, now wish to be known and address as LAMWANG YAKMICIT DUL. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>MAKUT</p> <p>I, formerly known as TANBEN MATHEW TABITHA MAKUT, now wish to be known and address as MAKUT TABITHA TAMBEN. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>
<p>MARKUS</p> <p>I, formerly known as MARKUS FAVOUR AFORDIA, now wish to be known and address as MARKUS AFORDIA. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>NDAM</p> <p>I, formerly known as NDAM BYENCHIT BLESSING DIBIT, now wish to be known and address as NDAM BLESSING BYENCHIT. My correct date of birth is 27/12/1987 not 04/06/1987. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>FELIX</p> <p>I, formerly known as SCOTT EMMANUEL JATAU, now wish to be known and address as FELIX UTTAH RHODA. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>
<p>EZEKIEL</p> <p>I, formerly known as EZEKIEL MATHEW, now wish to be known and address as EZEKIEL KAM DUNSHIK. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>NENROT</p> <p>I, formerly known as SCOTT EMMANUEL JATAU, now wish to be known and address as NENROT EMMANUEL JATAU. My correct date of birth is 14/02/1994 not 14/02/1982. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>NDASAM</p> <p>I, formerly known as JAMES NDASAM DAVID, now wish to be known and address as NDASAM DAVID JAMES. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>
<p>MUHAMMAD</p> <p>I, formerly known as EMOHAMMED HASSAN MOHAMMED, now wish to be known and address as MUHAMMAD SANI HASSAN. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>NANSHIN</p> <p>I, formerly known as NANSHIN NANKLING SIMON, now wish to be known and address as NANSHIN NANKLING SATI. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>MARTINA</p> <p>I, formerly known as MARTHA EMMANUEL, now wish to be known and address as MARTINA EMMANUEL. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>
<p>AJANG</p> <p>I, formerly known as ISHAYA DAVID CHRISTIANA, now wish to be known and address as AJANG CHRISTIANA ADOH. My correct date of birth is 25/12/2000 not 25/12/1983. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.</p>	<p>THIS SPACE IS FOR SALE</p>	<p>THIS SPACE IS FOR SALE</p>

PROBATE NOTICE

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE OF PLATEAU STATE OF NIGERIA PROBATE DIVISION

WHEREAS the person whose name is set out in the first Column hereunder died into on the date and place state in the said column.
AND WHEREAS the person whose name(s) and addressed and relations to the deceased are set out in second column hereto has/have applied to High Court of Plateau State if grant of letter administration of the Real and personal properties/ estate of the said deceased NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that letters of Administration will be granted to such person/persons unless a "NOTICE TO PROHIBIT the grant is filed in the Registry within twenty one (2) days of from the date hereof.

NAME OF DECEASED PERSON	NAME OF ADDRESS OF APPLICANT'S FOR GRANT
NDIDI ABRAHAM ALIEGU of late of Plateau State. Died on the 11th November, 2022. At Jos, Plateau State.	MARTHA NKEM ALIEGU of ECWA Staff Jos, Plateau State. Lawful widow of the said deceased.

NAME OF DECEASED PERSON	NAME OF ADDRESS OF APPLICANT'S FOR GRANT
NUHU PAM late of Plateau State. Died on the 10th Nov., 2022. At JUTH, Plateau State.	GYANG MONDAY ILIYA & AYUBA MONDAY GYANG of Nding Barkin Ladi LGA, Plateau State. Lawful sons of the said deceased.

NAME OF DECEASED PERSON	NAME OF ADDRESS OF APPLICANT'S FOR GRANT
IBRAHIM ABDULMUMINI late of Plateau State. Died on the 11th March, 2023. At JUTH, Plateau State.	FARIDA ABDULMUMINI IBRAHIM AMINU ABDULMUMINI IBRAHIM of No. 135 Yakubu Gowon Way, Jos, Plateau State. Lawful daughter/son of the said deceased.

NAME OF DECEASED PERSON	NAME OF ADDRESS OF APPLICANT'S FOR GRANT
KUCHETI KLISHA ABASHI late of Plateau State. Died on the 21st Sept., 2020. At Jos, Plateau State.	KUCHETI JAPHETH ELISHA of No. 42T Busabuji Laranto Jos, Plateau State. Lawful son of the said deceased.

NAME OF DECEASED PERSON	NAME OF ADDRESS OF APPLICANT'S FOR GRANT
HABILA DENIS MIDUT late of Plateau State, Died on the 25th Nov., 2022. at Zamko (JUTH) Langtang.	HABILA NANKWAT MIDUT of 1st Baptist Church Garkawa, Plateau State. Lawful son of the said deceased.

NAME OF DECEASED PERSON	NAME OF ADDRESS OF APPLICANT'S FOR GRANT
SAMUEL EKAINU late of Plateau State. Died on the 20th June, 2022. At JUTH, Plateau State.	ADA EKAINU SAMUEL of No.1 45 Atiku Street Rayfield Jos South LGA, Plateau State. Lawful widow of the said deceased.

NAME OF DECEASED PERSON	NAME OF ADDRESS OF APPLICANT'S FOR GRANT
DINATU DAUDA LANGSHIT late of Plateau State Died on the 18th Jan., 2023. At Barkin Ladi, LGA Plateau State.	NENTAWEH DAUDA LANGSHIT & DAUDA ROKJINGHA LANGSHIT of No. 24 State Lowcost Barkin Ladi LGA, Plateau State. Lawful daughter/husband of the said deceased.

NAME OF DECEASED PERSON	NAME OF ADDRESS OF APPLICANT'S FOR GRANT
TONGSUK JOSEPH late of Plateau State. Died on the 31st April, 2023, at JUTH, Plateau State.	TAKFUNAAN TONGSUK & MICHAEL DANLADI of Kwall Qua'an Pan LGA, Plateau State. Lawful son/brother of the said deceased.

NAME OF DECEASED PERSON	NAME OF ADDRESS OF APPLICANT'S FOR GRANT
PAUL GOBIR late of Plateau State. Died on the 22nd February, 2022, at Jos, Plateau State.	GYANG MERCY KANGYANG & NENPAN MOSES GOBWIR all of St. Thomas Catholic Church Shen, Jos-South LGA, Plateau State. Lawful daughter/son of the said deceased.

NAME OF DECEASED PERSON	NAME OF ADDRESS OF APPLICANT'S FOR GRANT
Gomo Sunda Fatip late of Plateau State. Died on the 5th February, 2023, at Jos, Plateau State.	Monday Sunday Vonga COCIN Diye Zarmaganda Jos South LGA, Plateau State Lawful son of the said deceased.

NAME OF DECEASED PERSON	NAME OF ADDRESS OF APPLICANT'S FOR GRANT
Blessing Babah Chidawa late of Plateau State. Died on the 15th December, 2022, at JUTH, Plateau State.	James Itsegok Magaji of No 59T Bauchi Ring Road Jos, Plateau State. Lawful husband of the said deceased.

NAME OF DECEASED PERSON	NAME OF ADDRESS OF APPLICANT'S FOR GRANT
YUSUFU ILIYA GOMOS late of Plateau State died on the 16 th Dec, 2022 at Jos, Plateau State	SIHIYONA YUSUFU GOMOS & PANSYAK YUSUFU GOMOS of No. 13 Rock Haven Street Jos Plateau State. lawful widow/son of the said deceased.

Signed
(ANDRAWUS MAIKAI)
PROBATE REGISTRAR
PLATEAU STATE OF NIGERIA, JOS

News

APC chairman charges committee to unravel anti-party activities

From **TERESE TUHWA, Makurdi**

THE chairman, Benue State chapter of the All Progressives Congress (APC) Comrade Austin Agada has charged members of the Facts Finding/Disciplinary Committee to unravel all forms of anti-party activities and disunity in the party.

Agada gave the charge at the state secretariat of the party in Makurdi, the state capital during the inauguration of the Facts Finding/Disciplinary and Commissioning Committee of the remodeled state secretariat.

He said it became incumbent on the State Working Committee of the party to ensure that the unity of the party remains sacrosanct. He added that the party was committed to ensuring that all forms of anti-party activities aimed at distracting the party from being focused and a united family will be resisted in order to give the needed support to the incoming governor to provide the much needed dividends of democracy.

The state APC chairman maintained that he was totally committed to the ideals of the party and promised that he will do everything possible to ensure that all forms of internal wranglings within the party are nipped in the bud.

Responding on behalf of members of the Facts Finding/Disciplinary Committee, chairman of the committee, Chief Terlumun Akputu promised that the committee will observe the rule of law, fairness, justice, equity and uphold due process in carrying out its assignment. He added that the committee's recommendations at the end of its assignment will be such that will engender internal democracy.

He asserted that having been aware that the All Progressives Congress (APC) in the state is on the threshold of ushering in a government that will supplant the current Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), the committee's recommendations will form the fundamentals of good governance in the mother party in the state. Mr. Terver Aginde promised on behalf of the commissioning committee that they will justify the confidence reposed in them.

The committee has Chief Terlumun Akputu as chairman, Ajuma Success as secretary and three other members.

News

FG confirms over 2 million benefits from NG-CARES

THE federal government programme through the COVID-19 Action Recovery and Economic Stimulus has recorded over two million beneficiaries in Sokoto State.

The Minister for state on Budget and National Planning, Clem Agba, stated this in Sokoto State during the maiden Ministerial town hall meeting on NG-CARES beneficiaries in Sokoto Kebbi and Zamfara States.

Represented by the Chairman of NG-CARES technical committee, Mr Aso Vakporaye, the Minister said part of the current administration is to intermittently meet with and engage stakeholders as part of Government's accountability to the states.

He said the purpose of the meeting was to basically hear the first-hand views of the beneficiary people on government policies and programmes as well as to feel the pulse of Nation.

"This interaction is even more imperative given the fact that NG-CARES programme draw some of it's beneficiaries from the National Social Register.

"It is important to enquire from you how effective this approach is as we seek the consolidation of the National Social Register as a major



Agba

source of credible data for social protection in the country. "The government of Nigeria will listen to you and let me assure you that your views and contributions will be invaluable in our effort to build a socially inclusive nation. We would not rest on our oars in reaching out to Nigerians.

"The Buhari-led administration will continue to strive and deliver developments to Nigerians even if it has only a few seconds to hand over to the next

administration" he added. Earlier in his remarks, the chairman NG-CARES technical committee represented by Mustapha Alkali said the programme has recorded tangible results and has positively affected so many poor and vulnerable Nigerians affected by COVID-19 pandemic and other shocks across the country. Highlights of the event was testimonies by some of the beneficiaries in and across the three states in the zone.

IED explodes in Taraba drinking joint

From Victor Gai, Jalingo

SEVERAL persons suffered injuries after an improvised explosive device (IED), exploded in a local drinking joint in Jalingo, the Taraba State capital.

It was gathered that the explosion went off around 9pm Sunday at the drinking spot in Dorowa, a red light district in the heart of the city.

Some persons were injured but no casualty was recorded.

An eyewitness, Peace Danjuma said: "yesterday as at

the blast broke my friend's leg."

9pm, we were at a local joint called Jika, drinking, when something under the chair we were seated on exploded.

"The whole place was filled with smoke while we took to our heels.

"We ran outside for safety but

Spokesman of the Police in Taraba, Abdullahi Usman, has confirmed the incident. He however said details are still sketchy but men of the anti-bomb squad are doing their investigation.

Dana Air gifts Hilda one-year free ticket

Dana Air has greatly supported the record-breaking Nigerian chef, Hilda Effiong Bassey, by gifting her a one-year free ticket for all domestic flights.

Hilda, who, against all odds, surpassed the world record for the longest cooking marathon by an individual on Monday, has drawn the attention of many.

Speaking through the Chief Operation Officer of Dana Air, Emembobong Ettete, the airline as a brand has promised to support the creativity, innovation, and crafts of young Nigerians who embody the true Nigerian Spirit.

The airline took to its Twitter page to release the statement made by him. They tweeted:

"We have always blazed the trail in terms of support for the arts and entertainment



Bassey

industry, health care, and ticket. We have always blazed the responsibility has been all-trail in terms of support for the encompassing. We will be arts and entertainment supporting Hilda's local travels industry, health care, and for one year, and we are culture and our corporate social inspired by her strength and responsibility has been all-determination for success." encompassing."

Hilda's mum was not also left "We will be supporting Hilda's out in this deal. The airline also local travels for one year and gifted her a 3months free We are inspired by her..."

Knowledge, skills and expertise drivers of development

BY EZEKIEL DONTINNA

PRESIDENT Muhammadu Buhari, has disclosed that his administration has made adequate provisions for knowledge, skills and expertise as part of critical aspects of development in 2023 national budget, describing them as main drivers of sustainable development in any contemporary society.

He stated this recently, while delivering his address at the occasion marking the 33rd & 34th Combined Convocation ceremony of the University of Jos, where he was a visitor at the Auditorium of the Faculty of Social Sciences, Naraguta campus, the venue of the occasion.

Represented by the Executive Secretary, National

Universities Commission (NUC), Professor Abubakar Rasheed, the president said, "the celebrations of today are a reflection of the commitment of my administration to the education sector and my firm belief that sustainable development can only be guaranteed by the quality of nation's human capital development.

"Challenges in infrastructure are being addressed by Needs Assessment Programme of Nigerian Public Universities, as well as massive interventions by the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) and statutory allocations to the institutions. Gradually, our tertiary institutions are becoming models of excellence in the institutions.

"Under the current

administration, no fewer than eighty-three (83) internal road projects have been constructed by government and its agencies across the nation's federal tertiary institutions. Our special focus has been on Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) for the obvious reason that knowledge, skills and expertise are main drivers of sustainable development in contemporary society.

"It is for this reason that we have made adequate provisions for these critical aspects of our development in the 2023 national budget. We must always be mindful that no nation can achieve accelerated development without a stable and respectable university system", he enthused.

The Visitor, however, congratulated the Emir of Zazzau, His Royal Highness, Alhaji Ahmed Nuhu Bamalli, CFR, on his installation as the 8th Chancellor of University of Jos and commended the Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of the 14th Governing Council of the University, Professor Attahiru Muhammadu Jega, CON, and members of the council for their diligence.

He also congratulated the graduands for taking this vital step in the journey of life. "It is a stepping-stone to greater achievements. I also congratulate your parents, guardians and family members for being part of your success story. Now that you have been found worthy in character and learning' to earn the certificate of this great

university, I urge you to go out and conquer the world and be good ambassadors of the University of Jos and Nigeria.

While congratulating the Chancellor and the Recipients of our Honorary Doctorate Degrees, the Plateau State Governor, Rt. Hon. Simon Bako Lalong, commended Professor Attahiru Jega for doing wonderfully well while as Pro-Chancellor of Plateau State University Bokkos (PLASU) and expressed confidence that he would do same while in the University of Jos, as Pro-Chancellor.

On his part, the newly installed Chancellor of the University of Jos, Alhaji Ahmed Nuhu Bamalli, thanked His Excellency, the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Muhammadu Buhari, for deeming it appropriate to appoint him as Chancellor of this great institution. "I gratefully receive this ceremonial title from the University of Jos as I take over from other illustrious personalities who had, in the past, served the University in this same capacity", he said.

Meanwhile, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Jos, Professor Tanko Ishaya, has promised that "as an IT professional myself, I am determined to ensure that we have an ICT driven university. I am championing the deployment and effective use of technology for online teaching and learning which provide for a student-centred method of learning that offers a great deal of flexibility in terms of time and space.

terms of time and space.

Akpaumontia takes over HQ 12 Brigade

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

BRIGADIER General Isang Akpaumontia has taken over the command of 12 Brigade Nigerian Army (NA) Lokoja, Kogi State.

Brig. -Gen. Akpaumontia took over from Brigadier General Nsikak Edet who was redeployed to HQ 9 Brigade Ikeja, Lagos.

In his remarks, the outgoing Commander, appreciated the Chief of

Army Staff(COAS), Lt. -Gen. Farouk Yahaya for appointing him the pioneer Commander of HQ 12 Brigade which saddled him with the rare privilege of setting up the new Brigade.

He thanked all the officers and soldiers of the Brigade of the total support and co-operation he enjoyed during his tour of duty in the Command.

He stated that the successes recorded was a collective one, while urging them to give the same level of support and co-operation to the new Commander. Also speaking, the new Commander called for same level of cooperation extended to his predecessor to enable him to continue with the development of the new Brigade.

Until his appointment as the second Commander of HQ 12 Brigade Lokoja, Brig. Gen. Isang Akpaumontia was the immediate past Commander HQ 9 Brigade Ikeja, Lagos.



Buhari



Akpaumontia



PLATEAU STATE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, GARKAWA

P. M. B. 001, GARKAWA
(Office of the Registrar)

VACANCIES

Internal and External Advertisement for the vacant positions of Provost and College Librarian

The Plateau State College of Agriculture, Garkawa hereby invites applications from suitably qualified candidates to fill the post of Provost and Librarian of the College which has become vacant.

1. PROVOST

The Provost shall be the Chief Executive and academic officer of the College, the accounting officer and responsible for the execution of policies of the Council and the day-to-day administration of the College. The Provost will have ultimate responsibility for the character, discipline, wellbeing and development of the entire College community.

The candidates for the post must possess the following qualifications and qualities:

- i. Must have a good honours degree/HND and Masters degree preferably doctorate in any of the approved programmes offered in the College plus relevant professional qualification.
- ii. Must be a Chief Lecturer with at least five (5) years experience.
- iii. Must demonstrate strong evidence of academic and administrative leadership, initiative and creativity in policy formulation, good human relation and positive managerial attributes.
- iv. Must provide evidence of scholarly publications in reputable journals within and outside Nigeria as well as presentation of invited papers at educational conferences, seminars and workshops.
- v. Must be a person with initiative, vision and capacity to sustain the accelerated pace of development of the College even under financial and other challenging constraints.
- vi. Must be fair minded and dynamic individual with impeccable reputation and demonstrate integrity.
- vii. Must be a person who is not likely to pursue racial, ethnic, gender, political, religious and other sectional interest.
- viii. Must be morally sound, of impeccable character and free from financial embarrassment.
- ix. Must enjoy excellent physical and mental health with evidence from a government hospital.
- x. Must be proficient in information and communication technology.

OTHER CONDITIONS

- a) Must have a minimum of twenty (20) years teaching experience for master's degree holders and seventeen (17) years for doctorate degree holders.
- b) Must show evidence of community service.
- c) Must not be more than sixty years (60) of age upon appointment and within the service years age at the expiration of his/her tenure.

2. COLLEGE LIBRARIAN

The College Librarian is the Chief Library Officer and shall be responsible to the Provost for the administration of the College Library and coordination of the Library services in the teaching units of the College. He/she is one of the Principal Officers of the College. In addition to proven experience in Library management and leadership, the successful candidate must have demonstrable passion for academic endeavours and must be credible.

QUALIFICATION AND QUALITIES

- i. Must have a good honours degree or HND and Master's degree preferably doctorate degree in library science or library and information science plus relevant professional qualification in Library recognized by the Federal Government.
- ii. Must be a chief Librarian with at least three (3) years experience on the post. Must demonstrate strong evidence of academic and administrative leadership initiative and creativity in policy formulation, good human relation and positive managerial attributes.
- iii. Must provide evidence of scholarly publication in reputable journals within and outside Nigeria as well as presentation of invited papers at

- iv. educational conference, seminars and workshops.
- iv. Must be a person with initiative, vision and capacity to sustain the accelerated pace of development of the Library even under financial and other challenging constraints.
- v. Must be a person who is not likely to pursue racial ethnic, gender, political and other sectional interest.
- vi. Must be fair minded and dynamic individual with impeccable reputation and demonstrate integrity.
- vii. Must be morally sound, of impeccable character and free from financial embarrassment, must enjoy excellent physical and mental health with evidence from a government hospital.
- viii. Must be proficient in Information Communication Technology (ICT).
- ix. Must not be more than fifty-Nine (59) years upon appointment and within the service years of age at the expiration of his/her tenure.
- x. Must have a minimum of seventeen (17) years experience for first degree or fifteen (15) years for Higher degree holders, five (5) of which should be in a tertiary institution.

3. TENURE

The successful candidate for the office of the Provost shall serve for four (4) years while the College Librarian shall serve for five (5) years in the first instance and renewable for another four (4) and five (5) years respectively following satisfactory performance.

4. SALARY/CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

The Salary/Conditions of service shall be as applicable to similar positions in Plateau State tertiary institutions and as may be determined from time to time by the State Government/Governing Council.

5. METHOD OF APPLICATION

- i. Each application should be made in fifteen (15) copies and be accompanied by fifteen (15) copies of the candidates Curriculum Vitae (CV) dully signed and dated. The Curriculum Vitae must contain details of the candidate's name (surname first and underlined), date and place of birth, state of origin and Local Government Area, marital status, contact address, phone number/email address and any other relevant information.
- ii. Each application should include names and address of three (3) referees (Employer, Educational and Personal) who are to forward confidential reports directly to the Registrar Plateau State College of Agriculture, Garkawa. Such referees should be able to attest to the candidates claim of high academic and managerial capabilities as well as to the candidate's notable uprightness.
- iii. Each candidate is to forward a statement of his/her own vision of the College for the office of the Provost and for the post of College Librarian.
- iv. All applications should be submitted in a sealed envelope and marked "Application for the post of Provost" and "College Librarian" respectively at the top left hand corner of the envelope and addressed to:

The Registrar,
Plateau State College of Agriculture,
P.M.B. 001 Garkawa,
Mikang L.G.A.,
Plateau State.

- v. The sealed forwarded envelop(s) should reach the Registrar not later than six (6) weeks from the date of this advertisement.

NB: Only Shortlisted candidates shall be contacted and previous holders of these positions in any tertiary institution need not to apply, please.

Signed:
Rechar I. Dingsan
REGISTRAR



VICTOR ALI

IT need to be stated from the set here that Nigeria has virtually everything in abundance. The abundance of its God-given resources is fantastically amazing. In all sectors of human socio-economic endeavour, Nigeria can hold its head high. Hence the quoloqual saying that "Naija no dey chop last" is a truism. What about its cashcow, petroleum? Think about myriad mineral resources under its earth? What about its seemingly unhindered agricultural exploits? And fancy the many tourists sites that adorn the length and breadth of the country then you are already in paradise.

In spite of all these potentials, Nigeria is a paradox. For instance, with its vast landmass and the farm produce therein, food shortages have been the

country's difficulty and where available, the exorbitant prices of the food items are prohibitive to the common man. Eating thrice a day is out of the menu arrangements in majority of homes in Nigeria. Hence, families now adopt the eating

decided to release water through its pipes perhaps after two or three months, the residents scavenge as if it is not the same water board that affirmed "water is life." And the committing repercussion of not having a clean, safe drinking water is certainly the



Nigeria as Federal Republic of scarcity

formular we used in the university over three decades ago -101,110,011. It is so sad, indeed.

Water they say is life . In my neighbourhood and environs, water scarcity has become a dreadful nightmare to residents. Simply put, residents rely on water vendors whose sources are quiet questionable. Or boreholes where such exists. Even at this commotion and confusion that usually ensure calls for concern. For the water vendors one has to give advance booking in most instances. And for the borehole whose price is relatively cheaper, one has to wake up as early as 4:00 a.m. get the piece of the action.

One is talking from a position of a participant observer. Since money is involved it is alleged that those who do not have the cash often resort to stream and polluted rivers nearly for cooking, washing and bathing in their households. Whenever the water board

outbreak of diseases.

Petroleum and its other sister products have remained the live-wire of the nation's economy since independence. The persistent and consistent scarcity of the product over the years has had monumental negative effects on the lives and well-being of the people. Virtually all sectors of the economy depends on the petroleum sub-sector, therefore, the stability of that sector is of paramount importance. However, the vulnerability of the sector is all too discerning. Scarcity of petroleum and petroleum products in Nigeria has constituted a big dent on the image of the country. Sad, indeed!

Needless to say, the prices of commodities and services are closely tied to the prices and availability of petrol and its sister products in the market. Whenever there is hike in the price of petrol, certainty, there would be a spiral effect on other goods and services. Alas, the poor masses on the

streets must groan under the suffocating condition.

Then, enter the almighty naira scarcity. In organized and decent climes, the country's currency is a thing of pride. Periodic branding and redesign of such currencies is therefore in line with global financial best practices. However, the Nigerian experience recently proved a disaster. To say that Nigerians suffered with the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) policy of Naira rebranding and redesign under the governorship of Mr. Godwin Emele is an understatement. Indeed, Nigerians are still licking their wounds.

As stated earlier, there is nothing bad about the policy of rebranding and redesign of the Naira as it is in conformity with international best practices. This is not the first time that the country had embarked on this policy. What went wrong this time around? Was the Central Bank of

Nigeria really prepared for the exercise? Or was there sabotage along the way?

It is disheartening that depositors cannot have access to their monies. Imagine a situation like this: You have in your account one hundred thousand naira and you are confronted with a serious problem of fifty thousand naira. You go to the bank and you are told you can only access twenty thousand naira only. For crying out loud, how are you going to solve the problem? Rationing naira for depositors as a result of cash crunch? What a shame!

It is high time government puts its acts together, look at the pros and cons of its intended policies before implementation. The latest Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Naira rebranding and redesign has provided a monumental disaster and shame. And of course, policy somersault is not a good image for any country under the sun!

Social Media and a divisive Nigeria



By Ezekiel Dontinna

IT first came to us as a new born baby over two decades ago and we so accepted it with great nostalgia because it brought a new dimension that eased communication and connectivity. At first, there were no smart phones and it somehow regulated the possible excesses of the present days' predicament that has to do with internet fraud that is causing great harm to the political journey as Nigerians.

It would be recalled that, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo in

the year 2001, took Nigerian Communication Sector to a new dimension after decades of living without global link. When the Global Satellite Mobile Network popularly known as GSM was introduced, Nigerians embraced it with both hands, because they felt they were part of globalized information technology.

Today, the number of people using smart phones have out weigh those using the analogue phones and the percentage of Mobile Telecommunication subscribers in Nigeria is over 90% and it proved how much we have accepted GSM as our way of communication.

It has no doubt impacted positively on the lives of Nigerians considering the fact that it enables for effective communication not only in cities but even in rural areas where network is available and they can now use their mobile phones to do many things including making voice calls, sending short messages, services and other high level of services like, transmitting and receiving still and line images, watching live events from any part of

the world etc.

However, this celebrated fits has also come with its ills that started impacting negatively on the overall gains. We are now miss-using GSM and it is impacting negatively on us both politically and otherwise. It has become a practical tool for self-destruction to the point that every smart phone user can sit down in his comfort room and cook any fake news, unguided story and send to the open internet space not minding the cost implication.

When INEC came out with the Presidential, National Assembly, Governorship and State Houses of Elections' Time Table, all the dried leaves from the desert forced themselves to survive using dew to push their ways to the battle field. That was the beginning of throwing missiles at each other up till date.

The most worrisome of it all is, how religious leaders also key into this act of character assassination that has caused all forms of unrest in our communities. Religious leaders who by right are supposed to be apolitical now

use the internet to sent messages that are unguided and misleading or fake information.

It is quite unfortunate that the display of our shameless extremism in everything has been what denied us the opportunity to logically think before rushing to publish what we know nothing about. It was for this reason that President Muhammadu Buhari, was brought on board because of the series of hate speeches and character assassination using the internet against former President Goodluck Jonathan.

Unfortunately for PMB, the same train and tools used against GEJ resurfaced and all through his tenure, the good intention he might have had for Nigerians was distracted with volumes of unpalatable condemnations and his 8 years in office went down the drain without anything reasonable. Whether it is for the good and development of citizens, no reasonable consideration was given to change our suffering.

There is no denying the fact that, more of this ugly incident will continue because we have deliberately positioned our

mindsets on celebrating bad news than the good one's and it has denied us the opportunity to see things from positive perspectives than just hearsays and has affected the mindsets of so called respected personalities who have gone through the peak of the four corners of class rooms.

In fact, right thinking minds keep asking questions if there were any regulatory structure in Nigeria that monitors the excesses of those who pour out inciting words causing disaffection among people? Could it be that the regulatory body is part of it and cannot arrest those causing disharmony among us? This question needs to be answered to give Nigerians hope that the future is safe.

The 10th National Assembly should swing into action and ensure that a Special Bill is sponsored and passed into law to address the ills in it this internet misuse for us to nip in the bud. We have no any Country or home than Nigeria and if we destroy it, it will not only affect our generation, but generation to come and we may not be safe to contain it. May God save Nigeria!

PROBATE NOTICE**IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE OF PLATEAU STATE OF NIGERIA
PROBATE DIVISION**

WHEREAS the person whose name is set out in the first Column hereunder died into on the date and place state in the said column.
AND WHEREAS the person whose name(s) and addressed and relations to the deceased are set out in second column hereto has/have applied to High Court of Plateau State if grant of letter administration of the Real and personal properties/ estate of the said deceased NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that letters of Administration will be granted to such person/persons unless a "NOTICE TO PROHIBIT the grant is filed in the Registry within twenty one (2) days of from the date hereof.

NAME OF DECEASED PERSON	NAME OF ADDRESS OF APPLICANT'S FOR GRANT	NAME OF DECEASED PERSON	NAME OF ADDRESS OF APPLICANT'S FOR GRANT	NAME OF DECEASED PERSON	NAME OF ADDRESS OF APPLICANT'S FOR GRANT
DORA CLEMENT late of Plateau State. Died on the 16th Dec. 2021 at Garkawa, Mikang LGA, Plateau State.	CLEMENT EMMANUEL. St. Joseph Catholic Church Garkawa, Mikang LGA, Plateau State. Lawful Son of the said Deceased.	INSPR. DARING SAMSON late of Plateau State. Died on the 22nd Sept., 2022, at Mangu, LGA Plateau State.	DARING FRIDAY MICHAEL & PANSHAK SAMSON of COCIN Lahir Mangu LGA, Plateau State. Lawful Brother/Son of the said deceased.	KUNGABA ELIDAH BWEFA late of Plateau State. Died on the 16th Jan., 2023, at Jos, Plateau State.	JORDAN KUNGABA Fed. Uni. Wukari, Taraba State. Lawful son of the said deceased.
REBECCA GYANG late of Plateau State. Died on the 24th Jan, 2023 at Jos, Plateau State.	GYANG PETER DAWENG. of Longwa Phase II, Jos South LGA, Plateau State. Lawful son of the said deceased.	MONDAY JOHN AGBODGJE late of Plateau State. Died on the 14th April, 2021. At Jos, Plateau State.	LIMEH AMANDA MONDAY & REJOICE MONDAY JOHN of COCIN Church Jenta Adamu. Lawful daughters of the said deceased.	AYUBA MAMMAN late of Plateau State. Died on the 19th Jan. 2023, at Jos, Plateau State.	EMMANUEL AYUBA ANAHAT & DAUDA AYUBA of ECWA Church Zagun Bassa LGA, Plateau State. Lawful sons of the said deceased.
NICHOLAS LONGKOOM SHITMI, late of Plateau State. Died on the 7th Feb. 2023, at Jos, Plateau State.	YAHAYA MOHAMMED ZAKARI of Akiri, Awe. LAG, Plateau State. Lawful brother of the said deceased.	CHARLES KURAH TURAKI late of Plateau State. Died on the 20th Dec. 2022. At OLA Hospital Jos, Plateau State.	GODIYA SIMON & GODSWILL CHARLES of Jenta Mangaro Jos North LGA, Plateau State. Lawful widow/son of the said deceased.	BULUS DALYOP TOK late of Plateau State, Died on the 8th Dec. 2022. At Rantya Med., Centre Hospital Jos.	LANG BULUS TOK & JUMMAI BULUS TOK of COCIN Church Dahwak Kuru, Jos South LGA, Plateau State. Lawful widow/son of the deceased.
WALBE PATRICK COSMOS late of Plateau State. Died on the 25th Oct., 2017. At Kanke LGA, Plateau State.	TOBIAS NENMANE WALBE of St. Innocent Catholic Church Langtang LGA, Plateau State. Lawful son of the said deceased.	INSPR. ISHAYA THOMAS. late of Plateau State, Died on the 7th Jan., 2023. At Awe, Nasarawa State.	AARON MARY & BENENCHEH ISHAYA of Bukuru Road Jos South LGA, Plateau State. Lawful widow/daughter of the said deceased.	MUSA ZELA late of Plateau State. Died on the 19th May, 2022. At Jos East LGA, Plateau State	YAKUBU MUSA ZELA GODONG, Jos East LGA, Plateau State, Lawful son of the said deceased.
MICHAEL TIMSHAT late of Plateau State. Died on the 20th June, 2020. At Dangre Bwarat, Langtang North LgA, Plateau state.	KUDAM MICHAEL JOHN of Dangre Bwarat Langtang North LGA, Plateau State. Lawful son of the said deceased.	ABUBAKAR IDRIS DANGARBA late of Plateau State, Died on the 30th Sept., 2022. At Jos, Plateau State.	MUSTAPHA IDRIS ABUBAKAR & LAWAN SALEH of NEPA, Zaria Road, Jos North LGA, Plateau State, lawful son/brother of the said deceased.	TOKCHI AMOS SAMCHI late of Plateau State. Died on the 24th July, 2021. At Jos, Plateau State.	SAMCHI JWANSHAK TOKCHI of Opp. COCIN Yantrialer Jos North LGA, Plateau State Lawful son of the said deceased.
PYENTIM NANZING SELZING of Plateau State. Died on the 10th Sept., 2022. At Jos, Plateau State.	PENTIM SAKMICIT COMFORT of Behind Nta Jos Hwholshe, J-Yep Jos South LGA, Plateau State. Lawful sister of the said deceased.	JOSEPH ISHAYA late of Plateau State. Died on the 31st July, 2022. At JUTH, Plateau State	ROSE JOSEPH ISHAYA of Jenta Adamu Jos, Plateau State, lawful widow of the said deceased.	MUHAMMAD ALHAJI DANLADI late of Plateau State. Died on the 10th March, 2023. at Jos, Plateau State.	JUBRIL DANLADI MOHAMMED of No. 7416 Dodo Street Masalachin Juma'a Jos North LGA. Lawful son of the said deceased.
SGT. AKAK HOSEA late of Plateau State. Died on the 15th Jan., 2022. At Kishika, Bassa LGA, Plateau State.	ABIGAIL AKU KASAKUK of St. Louis Catholic Church Kishika Bassa LGA, Plateau State. Lawful widow of the said deceased.	MATHEW SULE late of Plateau State. Died on the 18th Feb., 2023. At Jos.	DICKSON MATHEW of No. 3A Aliyu Makama Street Jos, Plateau State. Lawful son of the said deceased.	UZOH RIFKATU BONIFACE late of Plateau State. Died on the 19th Feb., 2023. At GRA Pankshin LGA, Plateau State.	UZONWANNE CHINYERE BONIFACE of 5/6 Bacht Long Drive Aliyu Makama GRA Jos, Plateau State. Lawful daughter of the said deceased.
ASP JACOB JALWAP late of Plateau State. Died on the 12th April, 2021. At Jos, Plateau State.	HILLARY JACOB & LINDA GONKURUM DUNGSHIK of Anglo Jos Police Barracks Jos South LGA, Plateau State. Lawful widow/son of the said deceased.	MUSA BAGANDI REKKU, late of Plateau state. Died on the 17th Oct., 2021. At JUTH, Plateau State.	ESTHER MUSA RIKKU of Namu'a Abattoir, Jos South LGA, Plateau State. Lawful daughter of the said deceased.	GOLMWEN SIMON late of Plateau State. Died on the 17th Nov., 2022. At Pankshin LGA, Plateau State.	ISUWA GOLMWEN of Rukuba Barracks, Bassa LGA, Plateau State. Lawful brother of the said deceased.
AKOLOS FLORENCE EMMANUEL late of Plateau State. Died on the 4th April, 2023. At Jos, Plateau State.	WILSON AKOLOS EMMANUEL of COCIN Church Abattoir Jos, Plateau State. Lawful son of the said deceased.	EZUGWU LEVI EJIKE late of Plateau State. Died on the 8th May, 2022. At Bokkos LGA, Plateau State.	EZUGWU CHIKA of Majilisa, Bokkos LGA, Plateau State. Lawful brother of the said deceased.	NANPUP MOSES HOSEA late of Plateau State. Died on the 16th Aug., 2022. At Mangu LGA, Plateau State.	MOSES NAANKANG HOSEA of Gurandok Abattoir Jos South LGA, Plateau State. Lawful son of the said deceased.
TANZE SIMEON DANLADI late of Plateau State Died on the 30 th Sept, 2020. At Jos, Plateau State.	FRANKLINE SIMON TANZE of Dong Village Jos North LGA, Plateau State lawful son of the said deceased.	Signed (ANDRAWUS MAIKAI) PROBATE REGISTRAR PLATEAU STATE OF NIGERIA, JOS		KUTLONG SHWARGUN ALEXANDER late of Plateau State died on the 13 th oct, 2022. At Jos, Plateau State.	KUTLONG AFINIKI ALEXANDER of Pajat Langtang North LGA, Plateau State lawful widow of the said deceased.

IMAGES

LALONG RECEIVES UNI-JOS CHANCELLOR, HRH AHMED BAMALI

Plateau State Governor, Rt. Hon. Simon Bako Lalong, CON on Friday received on courtesy call the University of Jos, Chancellor and Emir of Zazzau, HRH Mallam Ahmed Nuhu Bamali at the Old Government House Rayfield, Jos



Governor Lalong, CON (left) welcoming his guest, Emir of Zazzau, HRH Mallam Ahmed Nuhu Bamali to Government House Jos



Cross section of members of the Plateau State Executive Council



Emir of Wase, HRH Muhammad Haruna Abdullahi, (left) flanked by some royal fathers during the visit by the Emir of Zazzau



Representative of the President, Plateau State Traditional Council and Emir of Wase, HRH Muhammad Haruna Abdullahi (left) with the SGS, Prof. Danladi Abok Atu



Cross section of Traditional Rulers from the Zazzau Emirate Council that accompanied the Emir



Emir of Zazzau, Chairman, Kaduna State Traditional Council, HRH Mallam Ahmed Nuhu Bamali delivering his courtesy call message



Deputy Chief of Staff Government House with Special Advisers to the Governor at the visit



Plateau State Governor, Rt. Hon. Simon Bako Lalong, CON, Emir of Zazzau, HRH Mallam Ahmed Nuhu Bamali and others in a photograph after the courtesy call

Odd World

Baby with expanding head that won't stop growing

A mum whose daughter's head keeps growing to an abnormal size due to a rare condition has hit back at the cruel trolls who call her names. Adalgisa Soares Alves fell pregnant with her first child, Graziely, and immediately knew something wasn't quite right as she struggled with intense stomach pain. Medics told her little Graziely had hydrocephalus, a build-up of fluid on the brain causing pressure and subsequent damage to the skull, with them estimating she would only live for three months in Brazil. Now, the mum-of-three, 48, is sharing her daughter's daily battle with the condition, which saw her being dubbed a "giant baby" at birth. She said: "I don't think it's cruel because 'baby' is an affectionate word, but when they call out her 'big head' I feel sad, because then that is just being cruel. "But the important thing is that me, and all our family and friends, love Graziely the way she is." Adalgisa says nothing could have been done before or immediately after the tot was born and now, she's unable to walk,

and has recently lost her eyesight. She said: "Every day I take care of her, bathe her and feed her with all my love. "I'm dedicated to Graziely and it makes me happy to see her well cared for, from me and all of our family. "Nephews, cousins, aunts and many more family members love to come and see her and care for her. "I don't work, I just take care of her — I'm happy to take care of her and it is rewarding when I see her smile.

Source: The Mirror



The ISSUE BULUS GAMBO SMS Only: 08111186564. E-mail: wolfcatcher2004@yahoo.co.uk

Pharaohs and the rest of us

AS a Christian, I have formed the habit of looking at historical Biblical stories with keen interest in most recent times. For sure, some of these stories of great men and women of the old have taught us a lot about the changing signs of our time. While in some cases, such stories have taught us to guard our loins, be diligent and continue to exhibit high sense of responsibility in our anticipated obligations, some have continued to remind us that nothing in this world last for ever. Each of these Biblical stories have served as pragmatic source of inspiration in our journey of life.

Fast forward this development to our today, most of our politicians have not learned any lesson from these obvious experiences of the past. Many of them have continued to think that any opportunity given them by God to serve will not go with the wind someday. Some of them also think such lucrative positions which they occupy is but an opportunity to subjugate the common man and make him subservient for life. One is not surprised as many of them have been too engaged to read their Bibles and understand the benefits of becoming servant leaders. Worse of it all is that when an elected official has no developmental blueprint for the possible transformation of his immediate community; the electorate suffers the most. In this case, while such an office holder is knee-deep into looting the scarce economic resources, his people are left wallowing in abject poverty and unending lamentations. No doubt, over 90 percent of the unprecedented difficulties and challenges Nigeria is facing today is attributed to the issue of administrative ingenuity by the political class. It is also not far-fetched that the selfish interest of our political class couple with their retrogressive ideological disposition have contributed to crippling the prospects of this nation. It is unimaginable for instance that despite the huge human and natural resources this country is blessed with; we are still struggling to find our footings in the scheme of things. If one should put into use the amount of monies stolen from our national treasury since the advent of this democratic dispensation in 1999, no Nigerian citizen would have been suffering the way and manner more than half of our population are experiencing at the moment.

Unfortunately, many citizens of the nation have become lovers of themselves and careless about the progress of the country. Though we all know that it would be difficult to entrench monarchical democracy and or regional political gimmick in a heterogeneous nation where everyone needs a sense of belonging, some cynics have continued to tow this path to plunge the nation in chaos and a state of anarchy. We cannot continue to dwell on issues which promotes disunity, political imposition and or disrespect to one another and think that it shall be well with us as a struggling developing nation of the world. The truth is; nothing last forever and even this tenure of elected political officeholders and the offices they occupy shall always pass away. I wish our political juggernauts and those who govern us with iron first including those who loot our common resources will have a rethink and fear God by doing the needful so that their names will be written in gold when they are no longer occupants of such offices. I wish that our political officeholders will see reason that Nigeria is at the moment sitting on a time bomb where any wrong move will lead to our complete disintegration. Knowing too well the various challenges this country is managing to overcome, it is becoming obvious that we must all sacrifice the little we can for the general interest of the citizens of the nation.

If the late President Nelson Mandela who had the opportunity to continue leading South Africa on a platter of gold refused to do so when the ovation was high, it should serve as a lesson to many of our political leaders to emulate. Our leaders must desist from any form of manipulation which is aimed at promoting elitism to the detriment of the common man as has been the case all these years. We must begin to believe in our nation and its prospects and sacrifice the least we can towards laying a solid foundation for national integration and growth of our beloved motherland.

Yet, Pharaoh was too power-drunk to appreciate the reality of the fact that his time was up and that he must unconditionally let the Israelis go back home. On the contrary, Pharaoh had concluded that diamonds are forever. At the end of it all however, one of Egypt's wicked rulers was destroyed alongside his family, regiment and other unrepentant sycophants right from his city center to the epic stage of the drama in the Red Sea. Fast forward this scenario to our contemporary times, we also had rulers in the likes of Idi Amin of Uganda, Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire, Gaddafi of Libya, and even our own General Sani Abacha of Nigeria who became tyrants and never imagined that power had its eventual end. Throughout their reign, these tyrants never gave it a thought that there is a time and season for everything in this fragile world of ours. Without the fear of God, these ruthless rulers decided the fate of thousands and killed many innocent souls who opposed them.

At the end, all these despots and tyrants were eventually humbled by God in a miserable way and manner. Their fall from grace to grass was a lesson which would not be forgotten for more decades to come. Unfortunately, some of them have been inducted into our history books as leaders who were barbaric and complete failures as far as their obligations to changing humanity for the better was and or is concern.

Feature

Issues with studying abroad

By **OBOLI AUGUSTINE**

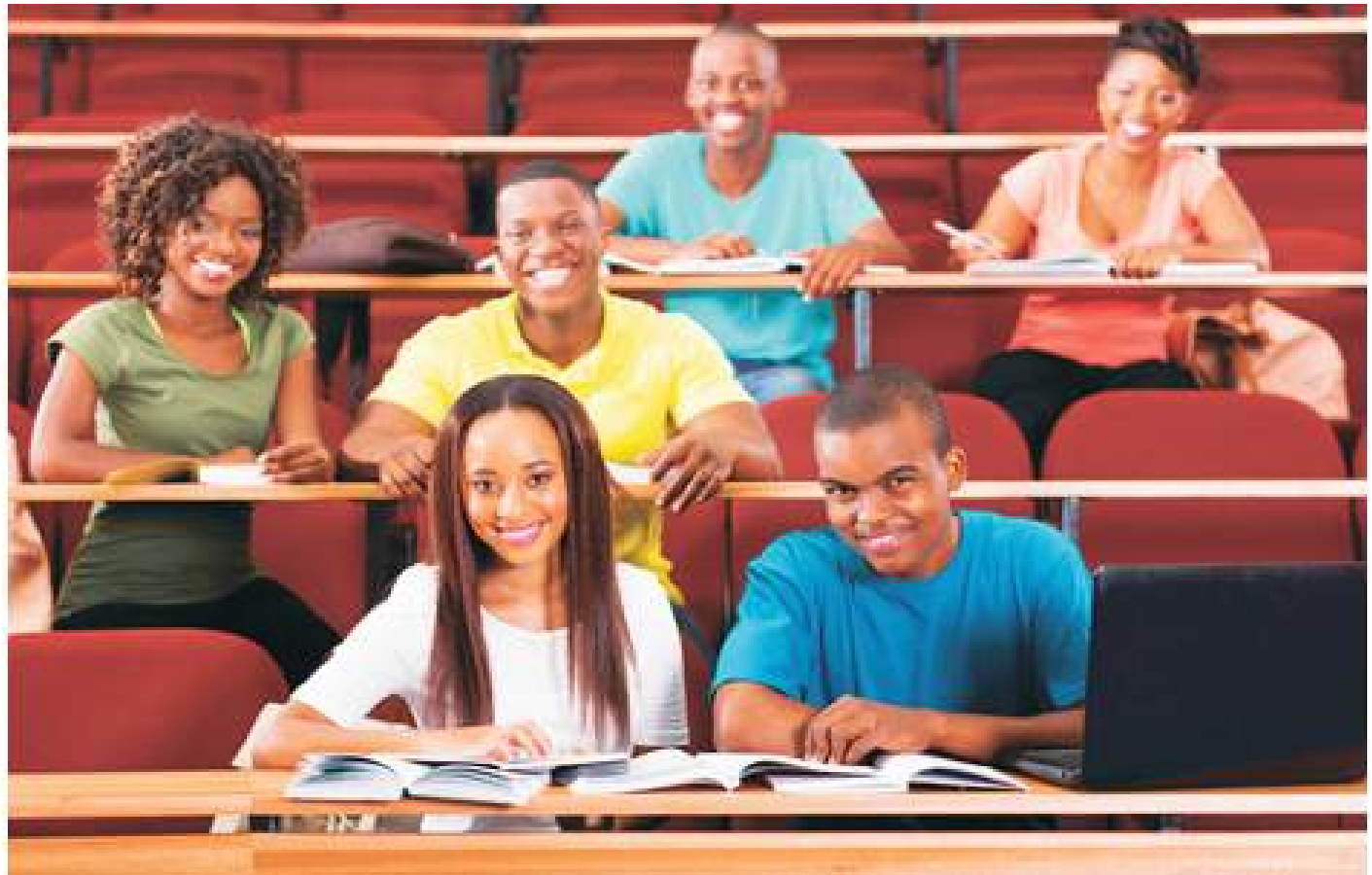
EDUCATION is defined as the process of receiving or giving systematic instruction, especially in an organized structured environment like school. Yet education goes beyond the systematic order. Education is also a process of socialization and it is a lifelong affair. Whether formal or informal education ensures a shift from our raw state to the refined, thereby making us better beings. Through the process of informal education, the child from the prism of his cultural milieu learns the intertwining relationship of man, his surroundings, cosmology, and the primacy of survival in the most adverse conditions. Education never ceases because the world and development are in constant flux, thus only death quenches one's quest for new knowledge and learning. With education, our mind is tasked to ponder and think out of the box, broaden our horizons, and push the borders to breaking limits. Education remains the best thing to happen to a man.

It is therefore not out of place or surprising that in the quest to swim in the wider stream of knowledge, people go out of their way to seek it at the four corners of the world. The lure is so much and intense that they seek it across the valley, desert, ocean, and anywhere.

And so, studying abroad was born. It is a chance to continue secondary education and further studies in domains other than one's native country. With studying abroad, there are new experiences, places cultures, friendships, and global perspectives to be gained: Intercultural communication, foreign languages, adaptability, and problem-solving skills will also be added to the mix. International education in some cases gives diverse course options and opens a new world of educational possibilities.

Going abroad to study is as old as colonialism in Nigeria. A good number of our early nationalists studied abroad, to learn the white man's secrets. Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, and a host of others are products of foreign education. The missionaries also had a profound impact on this. But they probably went abroad because the facilities and the faculties were not available in their time.

Though the colonizers tried to build higher institutions to domesticate knowledge, what they did was too little, too late. Interestingly, with political independence, there was a huge drive to increase the number of educational institutions and enhance their capacity to deliver sound and quality education, yet the managerial sickness and lack of foresight still ail us. The numbers have even increased astronomically, but the rate at which we sought higher education abroad has also witnessed a



geometric progression. Yet, studying abroad does not come cheap. It costs a fortune for an average Nigerian.

Ordinarily, one would have expected an inverse relationship between the increasing number of our higher education institutions and the rate at which people travel abroad to study, but it is not the case.

Perhaps, the reason is not farfetched, higher educational studies, particularly, the University system have been bastardized and messed up, and as such it is no longer attractive to persons with means. The educational system is volatile and punctuated by incessant strikes by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASSU). And it is because the government is not alive to its educational responsibilities to the teeming population of the youth. Is only in Nigeria that your ward would go to the University for a four-year program and graduate seven years after, not because he was not brilliant enough but due mainly to a flawed and decadent system. This brings frustration and pain to both students and parents. For well-heeled parents that cannot stand that maddening level of frustration for their wards, the immediate option is going abroad.

That is how we got to where we are. Would you blame them? Those we love should be catered for and given hope because hope is the substance of life.

There is no basis for a ward to stay in the University for eternity. Life has stages for every natural activity, and once one crosses into another, a disruption is created which may never be reversed.

Thus we dispatch our children all over the place, including

places we nurse reasonable suspicion about the quality and quality delivery of their educational system. We are just averse to our disruptive system that continuously fails. Nigerians are studying in all nations in the world, with a greater proportion of the students in some than others.

One thing never foresaw by persons going abroad to study was the kind of disruption seen in Ukraine last year, following the Russian invasion of the former Soviet enclave and the current warlord's war in Sudan. Both conflicts have presented different outlooks and dimensions of studying abroad. Life has not and will never be the same again for the affected students. Since the shooting wars became, their lives have witnessed a dramatic change.

Escaping and getting out of harm's way was nightmarish for most of them. It was a situation and scenario never anticipated which weighed down on them. If my memory will not fail me, I could recollect watching the macabre dance of escape from Sumi, Ukraine by some Nigerian students last year. It was a moving scene that made me cry because I imagine myself in the position of the parents of those students as death stares them in the face. It was difficult to watch. But their ordeals did not end there. At the Polish border, it was a different kettle of fish. There was racism and segregation. The evacuation gave priority to Ukrainians over their guest students, who to make matters worse were black. Maybe the evacuees were querying why they opted to leave instead of joining the defense of their country, to be used as cannon fodder. That is how it is. When

the chips are down, the true color of what your host thinks about you shows.

Luckily, despite a late start, most of those trapped students were brought back home to continue their studies at lower levels in Nigerian Universities. How ironic! Sadly, as I write some of them have not been settled or absorbed into any University.

So, it was utterly heartbreaking therefore to see the Ukrainian pains and suffering repeat themselves nearly a year later in Sudan. Such experience is not what one should wish for his worse enemy.

In April, the Sudanese power struggle conflict broke out, and Nigerian students were once again caught in the morass. As always our government operated with the speed of the snail. While countries like Ghana, and South Africa had ferried the people home and safe, we were contemplating and dilly-dallying without minding that time is of the essence. When we eventually moved, our students were already feeling the heat of the fight. A badly arranged rushed attempt to bus them, first to Aswan, Egypt, did not go as planned. They were abandoned in the middle of the desert by the transporting company because they were yet to be paid. Their agonizing time in the desert with little or nothing was heart rendering. Again, like in Ukraine, when they got to the Egyptian border, they were denied passage and asked to get a transit Visa. Well, most of them are back in Nigeria. Thankfully, they were counted and none was found missing.

Like Ukraine, like Sudan, I read somewhere that the Registrar of the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) has

during a meeting with the Chairman/Chief Executive Officer of the Nigerian Diaspora Commission, promised to work with National Universities Commission to absorb the Sudanese returnees into the Nigerian Universities.

And I asked: is it not already one too many, when will there be stability in our educational institution to keep our children from running abroad for education? Less I forget, Togo, Benin, Cameroun, Niger, Chad, etc are the foreign countries Nigerians troop to for education abroad. I am pained, that the giant of Africa, now has the feet of a mosquito due to poor leadership and management. For how long shall we continue to move in circles to the detriment of our people?

On behalf of our marooned people, I beg the incoming administration to place a high premium on education and redeem our battered image. No Nigerian deserves to suffer the Ukrainian-Sudanese experience. It is awful. Everything humanly possible should be done to bring sanity back to tertiary education in Nigeria and to keep our children at home. We should strive for a return to the good old days of the '70s and late '80s. The slide which has taken us down the wrong road started in the mid-'90s and seemed to have gotten worse and seemingly intractable. We have now seen that going abroad to study is not always smooth. It has its other sides, and our children are disgustingly forced to swallow their vomit. Save our education to strengthen our global competitiveness and launch and build our knowledge economy.



At upgrade of two Berom traditional stools, UNIJOS convocation

Last week, the seat of power was host to Emir of Zazzau and Chairman Kaduna Council of Chiefs, Alh. Ahmed Nuhu Bamali who was in Plateau state for the 33rd and 34th combined convocation ceremony of the University of Jos.

The Emir was also to bag the conferment of an honorary Doctorate degree as well as investiture as the Chancellor of the university, therefore he had come into the state, alongside key stakeholders and traditional leaders from his state for the epoch making event.

After paying a courtesy visit to the Governor, Simon Bako Lalong, on Saturday, May 13th, 2023 at Government House Jos, they all headed to the Faculty of Social Sciences Auditorium of the University for the combined convocation. Speaking earlier during the visit, the Emir had described himself as "A Friend of Plateau State", and for peaceful coexistence among citizens.

Emir Bamalli who was accompanied by Emir of Tula, members of Zazzau Emirate Council, and a very large entourage described Governor Simon Bako Lalong, whose tenure will be coming to an end in May 29th, as a detribalised Nigerian Leader who has



Climax of the event was the conferment of the traditional title "Suagha of Jos South" on the Governor.



demonstrated inclusive leadership that promotes peace unity, tolerance and urged other leaders in the country to emulate his template.

A key aspect of the convocation was the conferment of honorary doctorate degrees to former TETFund Executive Secretary, Prof. Suleiman Elayas Bogoro, Elder statesman, Ambassador Yahaya Kwande for their impactful role in the country.

Governor Lalong was happy to receive the Emir as part of his last assignments in the state before he leaves office.

He also described the coronation and official presentation of staff of office to two traditional rulers in Berom land from Jos South Local Government Area as one of his most joyous moments.

The event which took place on Thursday 11th May 2023, at the Jos South LGA Secretariat Bukuru attracted top government functionaries, traditional rulers, party leaders and well wishers.

Sons and daughters of the land, traditional dancers and kingmakers displayed excitement as they danced and showcased their traditional attires and culture.

The two traditional rulers whose stools were upgraded were the Dagwom Rwey of Gyel, Da Nga Danyang (2nd class), and Da Sir Christopher Mancha (3rd class).

Lalong recalled that when he assumed office in 2015, the first person to come to visit him when he came to office, was the Dagwon Rwei Gyel. He congratulated the monarch for being one of the longest serving traditional leaders for over 6 decades, before his present elevation to 2nd class status. Likewise, he described the Dagwom Rwey Zawan as an old time friend and accomodating leader.

He said his administration had prioritised the traditional institution in the state, by elevating and restoring stools to make traditional rulers play their part in supporting government to address security and other challenges affecting their domains.

"We need to value the traditional institution in Plateau state and the middle belt. As long as instituting it is done to meet the the yearning of the people and Plateau, then, it is for the development of the state", he said.

He commended the Emir of Kanam, a first class traditional ruler, for coming to him to spearhead the elevation of the chief of the People Bogghom to 2nd class status, urging other traditional rulers to emulate him to bring development of other stools in their domains.

"If you get, let your neighbour get it and that's the spirit of Plateau", he said.

The Governor urged the traditional rulers to accommodate and carry everybody along in their domain adding "A leader is supposed to accommodate everyone in his domain except the criminals. Criminals are in found in every tribe, even in families, but we must do our best to address their activities".

Book Review

GRACE FOR EACH DAY: A Review

By WULIME GOYIT

It was inspired by a fortuitous occurrence over twenty years before the book itself found concrete expression. But it needed to come anyway, for it was the only way to bring sanity to the troubled mind of Esther Nanko Domyil, Pastor, Counsellor and author of Grace for Each Day.

Within the covers of this book, therefore, lies an effort which defies tradition in its choice of audience and style of writing. Yet, the writer is able to establish an effective line of communication which can only be by what she ascribes to "divine inspiration".

Designed for infants, Grace for Each Day is not structured in line with the conventional book format that is set apart by winding grammar, wordy paragraphs or long chapters. In bold typeface, short and sharp phrases, Bible passages and prayers are found on each of its 365 pages and these are expected to be inscribed on the minds of the infants as they are read out to them every day of the 365 days of the year.

The author rationalizes the idea of a

book for infants this way: "There is no better time to begin to teach the word of truth to our own children than when their souls are pure and the table of their hearts plain". According to her, it all began when "the Lord helped me more than twenty years ago to understand the difference between speaking the word of God to a child from day one of birth and doing that when the child is older."

The book comes in crisp, catchy colors that easily appeal to the sensuality of the child. But it is the regimentation of the routine that tends to impede the task at hand. But the author does not leave the reader to their fate. A veteran in child training, she provides a guide for effective usage of the book in order to ensure maximum impact.

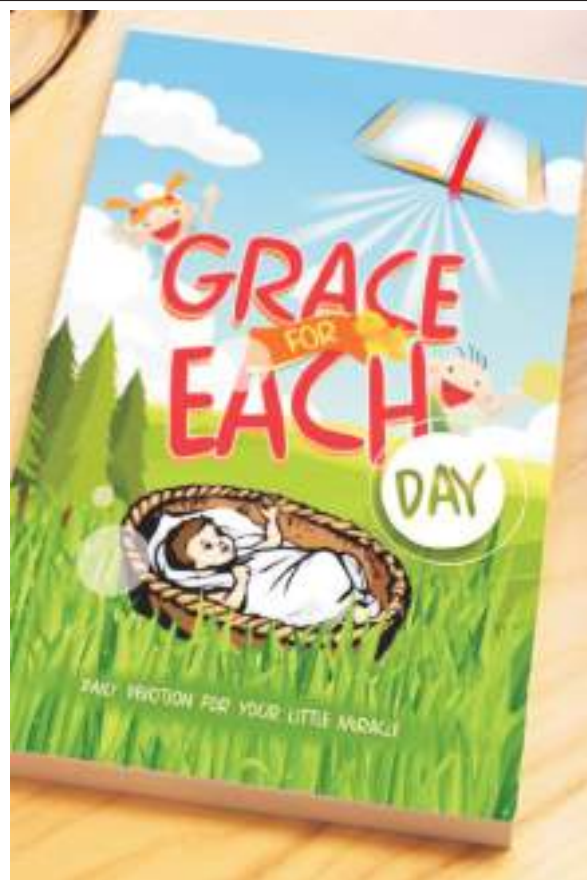
Under 'How to Use It', the user is enjoined to find a suitable time for the activity, be it morning, afternoon or evening; be consistent with it; and ensure that the child is not distracted by sleep, discomfort or hunger. Additionally, she admonishes that the atmosphere for prayer must be created because "you are in the presence of God Almighty."

In anticipation of moments of exasperation that this novel exercise is

wont to engender, the author suggests that a "deliberate" attitude should be adopted in speaking with the child. And where she makes a passage incomplete, she provides a dash, then implores you to insert in the blank the name(s) of the child(ren) as you read it out.

Acknowledging the centrality of love in the relationship between God and His creation, the author makes this virtue the thematic concern of her work. From both the old and new testaments of the Holy Bible, where her messages are taken, Grace for Each Day is a wash with God's love for the child for whom in any case the book is written. But more than that, the book offers the chance "to find true love at infancy."

No doubt an uncharted endeavor, the book carries a message that is intended for homes, hospitals, orphanages and, indeed, anywhere infants for whom we seek a loving relationship with God can be found. An essential addition to devotionals as a genre of spiritual literature, Grace for Each Day is billed for public presentation/dedication on Sunday, May 21, 2023, at the Shekinah Global Gospel Ministries, Abattoir, Jos.



Sports

US PGA Championship: Thomas bidding to defend title



Both of Thomas' major victories have come at the US PGA Championship

Justin Thomas said he is "seeing light at the end of the tunnel" as he bids to defend his US PGA Championship title this week at Oak Hill in New York.

The American world number 13 has had only one top-five finish this year and missed the cut at the Masters in April.

However, he was joint 14th at Quail Hollow two weeks ago - the site of his first US PGA victory in 2017.

"How you learn is failure and negatives and I've had a great opportunity for a lot of learning," said the 30-year-old.

"There are going to be days where 70 might be the best that I have that day, but it's better than 71. Or 75 might be the best I have, but it's



Micheel finished second in the 2006 US PGA Championship, his only other top-10 finish in 25 major appearances

better than 76. That's just felt so far and so close at the kind of how I have always same time.

been taught. "That is a hard thing to

"How I described it for a explain, and it's also a very couple months is, I've never hard way to try to compete and win a golf tournament."

"How I described it for a couple months is, I've never felt so far and so close at the same time. That is a hard thing to explain, and it's also a very hard way to try to compete and win a golf tournament."

birdied two of the last four holes and salvaged an under-par round on a tough golf course.

"That 70 gave me an opportunity to play myself into contention with nine holes left. I felt I turned a little bit of a corner."

Thomas won last year's title by beating Will Zalatoris in a play-off after a final-round charge that saw him come from seven shots back, but he insisted that victory will have little bearing on this week.

"It's so long ago in terms of your golf game," said the two-time major winner.

"The feelings can translate and the memories can translate, but a lot of things - swings and putts and chips - have happened since then. That part is hard to relate."

Oak Hill Country Club, which has hosted three US Opens, is staging its fourth US PGA Championship and in 1995 was the scene of only the second away Ryder Cup victory by Europe.

Thomas credits his third round at Quail Hollow as proving that he is returning to form at the right time.

"I showed a lot of really good signs in Charlotte," he said. "Saturday was a great example. It just was a round where I didn't really have very much. I felt like I left a couple of shots out there putting-wise and just wasn't sharp.

"I was hitting a lot of very poor wedges and irons. I

Sports



Taiwo Awoniyi is the second ever Nottingham Forest player to score consecutive Premier League braces, after Brian Roy scored three in a row in April 1995

Premier League relegation run-in: Which teams affected?

THE battle for relegation looks like it's going to the wire. Relegation was confirmed for Southampton with a 2-0 defeat by Fulham, ending an 11-season stay in the Premier League.

Everton remain one point above Leeds and the bottom three after Sunday's 3-0 defeat by Manchester City.

Leicester's 3-0 defeat by Liverpool kept them in the relegation zone - and they could be relegated by next Monday.

With four points separating Nottingham Forest, Everton, Leeds and Leicester, there is plenty more drama to come.

Simon Gleave, head of sports analysis Nielsen's Gracenote, said: "Leicester City's defeat means that they are now the most likely to go down of the quartet of clubs still battling against relegation."

"Thirty-four points remains the total where it becomes more likely to stay up than go down."

Nottingham Forest are in the Premier League for the first time since 1998-99 after winning promotion from the Championship last season and Steve Cooper has signed 30 players in a bid to keep them in the top division.

Two wins and a draw from the past four games leaves them as the best of the bottom five, with 34 points.

Nottingham Forest have made fewer passes this season than any other Premier League team and their percentage of completed passes (73%) is the lowest in the competition.

Everton's results improved after Sean Dyche became manager at the end of January following the sacking of Frank Lampard, but not enough to steer them clear of trouble.

Sunday's 3-0 defeat by Manchester City dented their goal difference, which could end up being key.

Their two remaining fixtures are against Wolves and Bournemouth, both of whom are in the bottom eight.

Only Bournemouth (589) have conceded more goal attempts from their opponents than the 551 Everton have faced this season. Leicester City have conceded the third most and Nottingham Forest fourth.

Jesse Marsch was sacked as manager in February with Leeds on a seven-game winless run but, after an encouraging start, things got tough for new boss Javi Gracia and he was subsequently replaced by Sam Allardyce.

Leeds boosted their survival hopes with a spirited 2-2 draw at home to Newcastle at Elland Road on Saturday.

The Whites, who have won only twice away from home, travel to West Ham next and finish the season at home to Tottenham.

Winger Luis Sinisterra, whose goal against Leicester on 25 April was his third in five games, will miss the run-in with an ankle ligament injury and Junior Firpo will miss the trip to the London Stadium after receiving a red card in the draw with Newcastle.

Leeds have conceded a goal from 14% of the attempts they have faced this season, the worst in the Premier League. Brentford are now the best, allowing a goal from 8% of attempts faced.

Leicester finished eighth last season and reached the Europa Conference League semi-finals, but they made an awful start to this campaign, picking up only one point in their first seven matches.

Manager Brendan Rodgers has been replaced by Dean Smith until the end of the season, but they have dropped into the relegation places.

Should Everton win at

Wolves on Saturday and Dean Smith's side lose at Newcastle two days later, Leicester will be relegated.

Leicester have an array of attacking talent, but their problem has been conceding goals, having failed to keep a clean sheet in their past 20 matches.

With 10 goals and nine assists in this season's Premier League, Leicester's James Maddison is the only player from a relegation-threatened team with at least 14 goal contributions this term.

Southampton will be playing Championship football in 2023-24 after a 2-0 loss to Fulham on Saturday extended their winless streak to 11, including eight defeats, and confirmed their relegation.

They are another side on their third manager of the season after they sacked Ralph Hasenhuttl in November.

He was replaced by Nathan Jones, who only lasted eight Premier League matches and picked up one win before he was also dismissed.

Ruben Selles, assistant manager under Hasenhuttl, was next in line, but he has not been able to keep them up.

Southampton have kept only four clean sheets this season. The bottom four for clean sheets are all in the relegation battle as Saints are joined by Leeds United (five clean sheets), Leicester (six) and Forest (seven).

We apologise for stopping women finalist's speeches

MADRID Open organisers have apologised to players and fans for the "unacceptable decision" to not allow the women's doubles finalists to make presentation speeches.

Victoria Azarenka and Beatriz Haddad Maia beat Americans Jessica Pegula and Coco Gauff 6-1 6-4 on Sunday.

All finalists in the singles and the men's doubles addressed the crowd after their matches.

Organisers say they have apologised directly to the four players involved.

Tournament chief executive Gerard Tsobanian said: "We sincerely apologise to all the players

and fans who expect more of the Mutua Madrid Open tournament.

"Not giving our women's doubles finalists the chance to address their fans at the end of the match was unacceptable and we have apologised directly to Victoria, Beatriz, Coco and Jessica.

"We are working internally and with the WTA (Women's Tennis Association) to review our protocols and are committed to improving our process moving forward. We made a mistake and this will not ever happen again."

Organisers had initially said they would "not comment on the matter" when contacted by BBC

Bairstow, who has not played for England since breaking his leg in August, will take the gloves against Ireland on 1 June.

Fast bowler Archer has a recurrence of the stress fracture in his right elbow.

James Anderson is named in the 15-man squad despite suffering a groin injury whilst playing for Lancashire.

The four-day Test against the Irish at Lord's is England's final preparation for the Ashes series against Australia, which begins on 16 June.

Ben Stokes (Durham captain), James Anderson (Lancashire), Jonny Bairstow (Yorkshire), Stuart Broad (Nottinghamshire), Harry Brook (Yorkshire), Zak Crawley (Kent), Ben Duckett (Nottinghamshire), Dan Lawrence (Essex), Jack Leach (Somerset), Ollie Pope (Surrey), Matthew Potts (Durham), Ollie Robinson (Sussex), Joe Root (Yorkshire), Chris Woakes (Warwickshire), Mark Wood (Durham).

Anderson is joined by Stuart Broad, Ollie Robinson and Matthew Potts in the fast-bowling department, while Mark Wood provides a high-pace option after missing the 1-1 draw in New Zealand.

There is also a recall for Chris Woakes, who last played a Test in March of last year and is yet to feature since captain Ben Stokes and coach Brendon McCullum took charge.

Batter Ollie Pope has officially been confirmed as Stokes' vice-captain after leading England in warm-up matches over the winter. His elevation is significant, given Stokes' recent trouble with a long-standing knee complaint.

Surrey's Foakes, 30, can consider himself unfortunate. Regularly labelled by Stokes as "the best wicketkeeper in the world", he has been a regular for England in their run of 10 wins from their past 12 matches.

However, after Bairstow suffered his freak injury slipping on a golf course, his replacement Harry Brook enjoyed a stellar start to his Test career, with four hundreds in six matches.

That left England with a dilemma of how to accommodate the returning Bairstow, who himself smashed six centuries in 2022

Archer ruled out for summer, Bairstow recalled



Archer

before suffering the injury.

Any suggesting of re-jigging the batter order was always unlikely - some even advocated Stokes as opener - leaving a straight choice between Bairstow and Foakes.

Bairstow, 33, has kept in 49 of his 89 Tests and will take his place behind the stumps for the first time since September 2021.

"It was a seriously tough decision to leave Ben Foakes out of the squad. He has been excellent for England in the last year, but Jonny Bairstow is one of the best players in the world whose performances last summer epitomised what we are about," said England director of cricket Rob Key.

The new elbow injury is the latest setback for 28-year-old Archer, who has not played a Test since February 2021.

After a string of back and elbow problems, Archer returned to play white-ball cricket for England earlier this year.

However, he made an early return from his spell with Indian Premier League side Mumbai Indians after suffering further discomfort in his elbow and a scan has revealed the stress fracture.

He will spend time recovering with medical teams from England and his county Sussex, but there must now be huge doubts over whether Archer will ever add to his 13 Test caps.

"It has been a frustrating and upsetting period for Jofra Archer," said Key.

"He was making good

progress until a recurrence of the elbow injury, which kept him out for an extended period previously.

"We wish him the best of luck with his recovery. I'm sure we will see Jofra back to his best and winning games for England, whatever the format. Hopefully, sooner rather than later."

For all the talk of rejigging the batting order to accommodate the returning Jonny Bairstow, it was always likely to be Ben Foakes that was most vulnerable.

Realistically, Foakes has lost his place to Harry Brook, whose four centuries in six Tests demanded inclusion.

There will be concern that England have opted for Bairstow's runs over Foakes' superior glovework - Cricviz rate Foakes as the best keeper to have played 10 or more Tests since 2016 and his impact with the gloves give him a 10-run advantage over Bairstow over the course of a Test.

But Bairstow is no novice behind the stumps. A catch completion rate of 88% in the 49 Tests he has taken the gloves is even better than Foakes' 81%.

Foakes has been a reliable presence in England's middle order - a fireman who can navigate from danger when the flash players ahead of him have had their fingers burnt.

He played important innings in the defeats of New Zealand at Lord's, South Africa at Old Trafford and Pakistan in Karachi.

Sport earlier this week.

Pegula said the decision was "disappointing" and questioned "what century everyone was living in,"

while Belarus' Azarenka called the situation "unacceptable".

"There's a lot of conversations, obviously,



The Madrid Open is one of the most prestigious tournaments outside the four Grand Slams

-Madrid Open organizers

internally, of what happened and I want to see how that develops and what are the consequences of those decisions," **Azarenka told the Guardian.** "So that's why I don't want to make too many comments.

"I believe to give people the opportunity to figure out what's the best course of action. Do I think it's unacceptable? It's absolutely unacceptable."

The Professional Tennis Players' Association said the players had been denied "the right to freedom of expression".

The WTA, the governing body of the women's tour, has not commented.

Sports

THE fans who remained until the end screamed "you're not fit to wear the shirt!" - just as they did in the demoralising 5-3 loss at Fulham last time out - and hopes of survival seem to have evaporated with further chants of "we are going down".

Chairman Aiyawatt Srivaddhanaprabha witnessed another dismal defeat, shaking his head in the stands at full-time alongside director of football Jon Rudkin.

"The crowd are here to see us try to win football games," Smith told Sky Sports. "They get disappointed when you're two goals down at half-time. You understand that when goals go against you.

"That is only my third home game and it's the first home defeat we've had. They were magnificent in the first two against Everton and Wolves. No football fan wants to see their team get beaten."

Asked why they have struggled so badly this season, returning defender Jonny Evans said: "It's hard to put your finger on it. We haven't been good this season. That's the bottom line. We've lost too many games and other teams have been better than us.

"Two more games left, we'll have to put in the same effort we did tonight."

On this very day only two years ago, Leicester were riding the crest of a wave as they stunned Chelsea at Wembley to win the FA Cup.

And, on this day in 2016, Leicester went to Stamford Bridge where they were given a guard of honour by Chelsea having clinched their incredible title triumph.

Those heady heights now seem a lifetime away.

"They look drained," former Manchester United full-back Gary Neville said on Sky Sports. "Not just on the pitch but off the pitch, which is worrying.

"The fans have obviously turned, at half-time they were booing and it's a massive problem for them. You think Leicester may have to win two games - they're in massive, massive trouble.

"I think they look like a group of players who are beaten. Anything can happen, but I genuinely feel Leicester tonight have gone and there's no coming back from it.

"I think that's the end of them tonight."

Ex-Liverpool defender Jamie Carragher added: "You hear the fans singing 'you're not fit to wear the shirt...' going into training tomorrow, I don't know how they lift themselves for that Newcastle game."

We asked for your views on Monday's Premier League game between Leicester and Liverpool.

Here are some of your comments: We need to pick ourselves up and get a result out of West Ham although we did play poorly. Dean Smith needs to add a physical attitude to the team for the Newcastle game.

Watched the Liverpool game and the team seem to lack passion and desire. As soon as Liverpool scored, their heads dropped and there was nothing that you saw to make it seem that the players wanted to go for a positive result. We are going



That sombre mood soon turned into venomous anger

Leicester 0-3 Liverpool: Have Smith's side 'gone' after damaging defeat?

A cacophony of jeers and rattling of seats from supporters emptying out of the stadium after Trent Alexander-Arnold's stunning strike on 70 minutes echoed loudly around the arena. Liverpool were already cruising at that stage following two goals from Curtis Jones in the first half, and it could have been so much worse but for poor finishing from the visitors.

down.

Blimey I thought last week was bad! This was as bad if not worse! Poor defending again! What is wrong with them? On ideas going forward, too slow and passive and just, well rubbish. Time to accept we're down and time to have a proper clear out from top to bottom and start again. This was just a disaster. Just nowhere near good enough to stay up.

Terrible display by Leicester and most disappointing of all no real effort or heart. Other sides in the relegation battle have at least shown some fight. Tielemans in particular and Maddison should be ashamed. Leicester are crippled by high wages for average players. Poorly managed on and off the pitch.

OK until they scored and then fell apart. Liverpool won without having to break sweat. Need to plan now for a mass clear out and start again. It will take at least three years to get over this Rodgers madness.

I don't want to get my hopes too high as I still think we will probably just miss out on Champions League, but that was a great performance from the Reds. We took full advantage of our chances and Trent Alexander-Arnold's free-kick was a stunner. With new midfielders and key players resting and returning to form, we will be ready to challenge the top four next season.

Professional performance from Liverpool. Still think the results are masking this new Trent Alexander-Arnold role though. He's still made to look average when he is out of possession and he reverts back to his right-back role. Overall a great but expected result. Leicester

looked lost for large parts.

Another solid performance. Probably a little too late in the season to make the top four given the run ins. But a good omen for next season.

After we got our first goal there was no looking back. Curtis Jones has never played so well. Trent's free-kick - sublime. Salah hat-trick of assists and Ali's clean sheet, what a game. Roll on Villa.

Good, solid performance. We should have had more goals though. What a difference these performances are from a shambolic season. Bigger test on Saturday with Villa coming. Bring on next season.

A new episode of BBC Radio Leicester's When You're Smiling podcast is available now.

Owynn Palmer-Atkin is joined by former Leicester winger Matt Piper to analyse Monday's disappointing 3-0 defeat to Liverpool.

There is also reaction from City boss Dean Smith after a loss that leaves the Foxes two points from safety with two games to play.

Former Premier League goalkeeper Paul Robinson believes that Leicester are a team "drained of confidence" and that staying in the Premier League may be out of their hands after their 3-0 loss to Liverpool.

The Foxes are two points from safety with two games remaining and face a difficult away trip to Newcastle next.

The loss to Liverpool follows their heavy 5-3 defeat to Fulham, in which James Maddison described the Leicester players as "not hungry enough".

Speaking on BBC Radio 5 Live's Monday Night Club, Robinson said: "I don't think it is the margin or the

defeat but the manner of it. James Maddison was misquoted after the Fulham game for criticising his players lack of fight and commitment.

"He has reworded what he said but to me it is the same thing was apparent in the game.

"It is a team deprived and drained of confidence. As soon as they went 1-0 down it was as if the plan was gone and it was going to be an uphill battle and that is how it proved.

"I don't give them much hope away at Newcastle, as they have been excellent and want to get in the Champions League. Then you go to the last game of the season against West Ham, where they have a chance but I don't think three points will be enough.

"Leicester next play on Monday night so they are going to know what has gone on before them after the weekend and it could be a very good thing or bad thing."

Dean Smith says Leicester made a "really bright start" against Liverpool but they ended up being "beaten by a better team".

The 3-0 defeat last night has left the Foxes two points from safety with just two games to play.

"I thought it was a really bright start," he said.

"We played in their half. Unfortunately the first goal they put a ball over the top and score from it. It's a talented team with supreme athletes. The better team won on the day. The goals we concede are disappointing. The third isn't a free-kick, it's disappointing.

"We've conceded the first goal, and even the second - we give the ball away and it's a great strike, marginally onside, but just disappointing straight from the kick-off to give the ball away.

"What we did really well in the first half was make their centre-backs run back towards their goal."

Smith reiterated that narrow margins contributed to Leicester's defeat.

"It is two marginal onside goals and a free-kick that should never have been," he added.

"I can't question the players and I won't."

On what he has said to his players, Smith said: "Not an awful lot. It's a tough time to lift the players. Liverpool made it very tough for us. We have to keep believing."

Leicester look doomed and are prime candidates to join Southampton in the Championship next season.

The Foxes have collected just one win in their last 14 games - earning six points in total during that run - and lost at home for a club-record equalling 10th time this season.

Their frailties lie at the back where boss Dean Smith made another change by giving a start and handing the captain's armband to Jonny Evans, who has played one minute of top-flight football in the last seven months.

But it was ill-fated defensive partner Wout Faes - the scorer of two own goals in December's reverse fixture - who was culpable for both of Jones' strikes.

The Belgian lost the flight of the ball for the first, failing to clear as the ball dropped from the sky, and was caught out of position for the second, running out to intercept a pass without success.

The hosts had shown bright sparks early on but their confidence ebbed away alarmingly once they conceded.

Harvey Barnes forced Liverpool goalkeeper Alisson into a fine flying save with a curling effort in the second half, but the sorry home side never looked like making a comeback.

The Foxes have fixtures remaining at Newcastle and home to West Ham as they bid to avoid the ignominy of relegation just seven years after their remarkable title triumph.



Quest



writer



FRAGMENT

"Religious leaders must face the reality that here in Nigeria and elsewhere around the world, millions of people are leaving Christianity and Islam. While we are busy building walls of division with the blocks of prejudice, our members are becoming atheists but we prefer to pretend that we do not see this. We cannot pretend not to hear the footsteps of our faithful who are marching away into atheism and secularism. No threats can stop this, but dialogue can open our hearts."

Bishop MATTHEW HASSAN KUKAH

Bishop MATTHEW HASSAN KUKAH

To mend a broken nation

Hello brothers and sisters in Christ, men and women of goodwill everywhere, I send you hearty greetings and felicitations as we celebrate the risen Christ. Easter is here again. For all Christians, Easter is a metaphor for our lives as individuals, families, communities or nations. Easter is a metaphor for how shame, scandal, powerlessness, weakness, and opprobrium suddenly transform into glory, honour, pre-eminence, laudation and applause. It is a fulfilment of what the Master himself had foretold when He said, 'Unless a grain of wheat falls on the ground and dies, it remains only a single grain, but if it dies, it bears much fruit' (Jn. 12: 24). And the Psalmist had said, 'Those who sow in tears will sing when they reap.' (Ps. 126:5).

The crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus are central to the Christian faith and yet, as St Paul said, 'We preach Christ crucified, a scandal to the Jews and nonsense to the Gentiles' (1 Cor. 1: 23). St Paul continues: 'What seems to be God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom and God's weakness is stronger than human strength' (1 Cor. 1:25). Without the claims of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, millions of people would be Christian today. As with the times of Jesus, the very idea is preposterous and incomprehensible yet St. Paul still insists that 'If Christ has not been raised, then our faith is a delusion and we are still in our sins' (1 Cor. 15:17). It is faith in the resurrection of Christ that inspires us Christians to hold firmly to the fact that, like the people of Israel, our dry bones shall rise again (Ez. 37: 11).

Our dear country, Nigeria, still totters and wobbles as we screech towards a dangerous and avoidable canyon of dry bones. Nonetheless, we still cling to hope, a hope in the resurrected Christ, knowing as St. Paul; said, 'this hope does not disappoint us' (Rm.5:5). Nigerians can no longer recognise their country which has been battered and buffeted by men and women from the dark womb of time. It is no longer necessary to ask how we got here. The real challenge is how to find the slippery rungs on the ladder of ascent so we can climb out. Yet, we ask, ascend to where? For us as Christians, ascent is to the loving embrace of the resurrected Christ who is Lord of history.

One would be tempted to ask, what is there to say about our tragic situation today that has not been said? Who is there to speak that has not spoken? Like the friends of Job, we stare at an imponderable tragedy as the nation unravels from all sides. The government has slid into hibernation mode. It is hard to know whether the problem is that those in power do not hear, see, feel, know, or just don't care. Either way, from this crossroad, we must make a choice, to go forward, turn left or right or return home. None of these choices are easy, yet, guided by the light of the risen Christ, we can reclaim our country from its impending slide to anarchy.

The greatest challenge now is how to begin a process of reconstructing our nation hoping that we can hang on and

survive the 2023 elections. The real challenge before us now is to look beyond politics and face the challenge of forming character and faith in our country. Here, leaders of religion, Christianity and Islam, need to truthfully face the role of religion in the survival of our country. The Nigerian Constitution has very clearly delineated the fine boundaries between religion and politics. Yet many politicians continue to behave as if they are presiding over both the political and the spiritual realms in their states rather than governing in a Democracy.

This conflict between Caesar and God is inbuilt in faith and is part of world history. Many religious leaders often measure their power by how close they are to Caesar, yet Caesar's embrace is often full of thorns. The challenge is for the religious leader to know that both Caesar and those he represents are answerable to God who created them. The welfare of citizens constitutes the cornerstone for measuring the legitimacy of any political leader. As such, religious leaders must focus more on the issues of welfare, safety and security of ordinary citizens. They must raise their voice when these rights are being trampled upon. A leader must know when to call Caesar a fox and not a horse (Lk. 13:32).

The greatest challenge for Nigeria is not even the 2023 elections. It is the prospects for the reconciliation of our people. Here, the Buhari administration sadly has divided our people on the basis of ethnicity, religion, and region, in a way that we have never witnessed in our history. This carefully choreographed agenda has made Nigerians vulnerable and ignited the most divisive form of identity consciousness among our people. Years of friendships, cultural exchange, and collaboration built over time have now come under serious pressure from stereotyping. Notwithstanding these challenges, religious leaders must recover and deploy their moral authority and avoid falling victim to the schemes of politicians and their material enticements.

Today, the values of Interfaith dialogue have come under severe strain and pressure with extremists from both sides of our faiths denigrating the idea of dialogue with their counterparts of other faiths. Ignorance and miseducation have combined with prejudice to create the falsehood that somehow, one religion is superior to the others. With so many ill equipped fraudsters posing as religious leaders, there is an obsession with defaming the others and widening our differences.

Religious leaders must face the reality that here in Nigeria and elsewhere around the world, millions of people are leaving Christianity and Islam. While we are busy building walls of division with the blocks of prejudice, our members are becoming atheists but we prefer to pretend that we do not see this. We cannot pretend not to hear the footsteps of our faithful who are marching away into atheism and secularism. No threats can stop this, but dialogue can open our hearts.

Thank God, in the last few years, we have had some good news from outside the shores of Nigeria. The most noteworthy is the initiative undertaken by both Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Mosque, Egypt, Shaikh Mohammed Al-Tayeb in 2019, when both of them met and signed the Document on Human Fraternity. Pope Francis followed up with the publication of an Encyclical titled, Fratelli Tutti, We are all Brothers, in 2020. The following year, the United Nation's General Assembly declared February 4, World Day of Fraternity. Both leaders agreed that: 'We need to develop the awareness that nowadays, we are either all saved together or no one is saved. Poverty, decadence, and suffering in one part of the earth are a silent breeding ground for problems that will end up affecting our entire planet.'

We need to start thinking of a Nigeria beyond banditry and kidnapping and the endless circles of violence that have engulfed our communities and nation. We cannot continue to pretend that there are no religious undertones to the violence in the name of God that has given our religions a bad name. The way out is for the state to enforce the secular status of the Nigerian state so as to give citizens the necessary freedoms from the shackles of semi-feudal confusion over the status of religion and the state in a plural Democracy. We must be ready to embrace modernity and work out how to preserve our religions and cultures without turning religion into a tool for tyranny, exclusion, and oppression.

In finding our way forward, the President must concede that it is within his powers to decide how we are going to end the war that has engulfed and is tearing down our nation. It seems that the federal government has shown far greater commitment to integrating so called repentant terrorists than getting our children back from kidnappers or keeping our universities open. Earlier last month, Operation Safe Corridor announced that it had graduated 599 members of various terrorist groups who have acquired new skills and are now ready to be integrated into society. The total comes to over a thousand now. It is plausible to note that the programme involves psycho-social support, rehabilitation, vocational training, skill acquisition and start-ups. Despite all this, the larger issue is that their various communities have expressed their reluctance to receive their erring sons back. Nigerians have no access to the transcripts of the texts of the confessions of these terrorists not to talk of evidence of their commitment to not sin again. We have only the words of the terrorists and the same military that they have been fighting a war with. It speaks volumes when the President and his military hierarchy choose to believe these young men who took up arms and for years waged war against their country, killed, maimed and wasted thousands of lives, destroyed entire communities and now, they are being housed, fed, clothed with public funds. All this while their victims have been forced to make the various IDP camps their new homes! Where is the justice for the

victims and the rest of the country they have destroyed?

As a priest, I cannot be against a repentant sinner or criminals changing their ways. After all, the doors of forgiveness must always remain open. However, in this case, Nigerians have very little information as to the entire rehabilitation processes. Have these terrorists felt the heat or have they seen the light or, is their repentance a mere strategic and tactical repositioning? So far, we have no evidence that these terrorists have been able to confront their victims not to talk of seeking forgiveness from them. Something is wrong. We see these terrorists adorned in our national colours in their green and white kaftans, trousers, and looking like heroes of the state! Are we to assume that they have become acknowledged models for Nigerian youth? Perhaps the next graduating set might be treated to Presidential handshakes, receptions at the villa with full national colours!

Only last week, as if in delayed solidarity, the Jama'atu Nasril Islam, JNI, in a Statement stated that: 'It appears that the continuous callous acts of mayhem, killings and arson happening almost on daily or weekly bases around us; either within communities or on the roads we ply, has automatically reset our human psyche that we now have accepted such dastardly acts as part of our lives, to the extent that we no longer feel...Any government that is incapable of protecting the lives of its citizens has lost the moral justification of being there in the first place....our humanity is being eroded and that erosion is become a new normal.' Similarly, the Northern Elders Forum, NEF, and the House of Representatives have finally called on the President to resign since, in their view it is now clear that he cannot protect his citizens. This has come three years after the Catholic Bishops' Statement issued on April 26th, 2018 made the same call that was greeted with cynicism.

The challenge of fixing this broken nation is enormous and, as I have said, requires joint efforts. With everything literally broken down, our country has become one big emergency national hospital with full occupancy. Our individual hearts are broken. Our family dreams are broken. Homes are broken. Churches, Mosques, infrastructure are broken. Our educational system is broken. Our children's lives and future are broken. Our politics is broken. Our economy is broken. Our energy system is broken. Our security system is broken. Our Roads and Rails are broken. Only corruption is alive and well. So, we ask with the Psalmist, We look up to the hills, from where shall come our help? Our help shall come from the name of the Lord (Ps. 121:2).

2023 beckons and the stage is set. The challenge is whether we have learnt any lessons from the tragedy that has afflicted us in the last few years. The Presidency of Nigeria is not a human right based on ethnic, religious or regional sentiments. The next President of Nigeria must be a man or woman with a heart, a sense of empathy and a soul on fire that can set

limits to what human indignities visited on citizens that he or she can tolerate. We have no need for any further empty messianic rhetoric laced with deceitful and grandiose religiosity. We need someone who can fix our broken nation, rid our people of the looming dangers of hunger and destitution. Our Presidential aspirants must show evidence from their legacies and antecedents that they know the country well enough and its severe wounds. Whoever wants to govern us must illustrate that he or she understands what has turned our nation into a national hospital and show us plans for our discharge from this horror. Support for INEC and its infrastructure is fundamental to a free and fair election and we condemn in very strong terms all those criminals who continue to threaten the society with violence. They should meet the full force of the law.

I thank the President for accepting the report of the Committee on the Prerogative of Mercy and granting pardon to over 150 Nigerians serving various terms of imprisonment. The more serious challenge is to immediately free all innocent Nigerians who are held captive and whose only crime is that they are living in Nigerians. With the news of the purchase of new sophisticated weapons, we hope that the President and the military will quickly roll out a strategy for routing this cancer that has afflicted our country. The general feeling is that the military has the capacity to end this tragedy. In reality, the military cannot fire beyond the radar set by their commander-in-chief. If the President can end this tragedy, he will immediately get the support of all citizens and hopefully leave office with his head held high.

We cannot end this Message without sparing a thought for the untold sufferings being experienced by the people of Ukraine as a result of the invasion of their country by Russia. We turn in prayer to the Lord to touch the hearts and minds of those in power and in position to reverse this avoidable loss of human lives. May the spirit of the resurrected Christ and the appeals of all men and women of good will help to bring an end to this human tragedy.

Finally, in the last few years, my Messages have been borne out of a sense of moral revulsion over how life has been destroyed in my country. No country anywhere in the world is undergoing these self-inflicted wounds, citizens randomly murdering innocent citizens and getting away with it. For me as a Christian, there is a minimum threshold of human indignity that I can live with because the reason why Jesus came is so that all of us will have life and have it to the full (Jn. 10:10). We must shout at what diminishes any and every life in our society. Once human dignity is respected and restored, we will change our tone, but for now, our voice must have a sense of urgency. We Christians believe that to redeem the world, Christ allowed His body to be broken. We know He can heal out broken nation. May the light of His resurrection scatter the clouds and rout the men of evil, inspire a new birth in our dear nation and restore us to wholeness. A happy Easter to you all.